

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES

These minutes will be agreed at the meeting due to be held on August 25th and might be subject to slight amendment.

The Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 28th July 2026 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall.

Present: Cllr's C Silverlight (Chair), Ms S Drury, S Bellamy. R Deer, Mrs N Francis-Bellamy, Mrs B Moore and A Paul.

In attendance: Somerset Cllr S Wakefield, one member of the public and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

36/07/26. To receive apologies for absence. There were no apologies. Cllr Mrs Francis-Bellamy had sent a message to say she would be late.

37/07/26. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. There were no disclosures.

38/07/26. To agree the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 30/06/26 as an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and they were duly signed by the Chair.

39/07/26. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda (for information only). No matters arising.

40/07/26. Co-option of a councillor. The Chair said he was delighted the Council had received an application. It was unanimously agreed to co-opt Robert Deer. Proposed by Cllr Miss Drury and seconded by Cllr Mrs Moore. Cllr Deer signed an Acceptance of Office Form and joined the meeting.

41/07/26. Reports

a) Somerset Council. A written report from Cllr Wakefield was circulated by email earlier in the month. She highlighted the measures SC have taken since 2023 to make savings including developing a whole council transformation programme to improve outcomes and make savings from all the council's directorates.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government issued Somerset Council with a Best Value Improvement Notice on 15 July 2026, formally notifying the Council of Government concerns about its capacity to comply with the Best Value Duty.

The M5 Junction 26 Chelston Link Project took the top prize in the 'Project Excellence and Innovation Award' at the NEC Contracts Annual Awards 2026, beating international competition.

SC has been awarded £50m from DEFRA to invest in flood resilience and prevention.

A sale has been agreed on the empty council house in Frogs Lane. The house at Sawyers Hill that was reported as being an empty council house is privately owned.

Cllr Wakefield advised that a noise/nuisance issue that was mentioned at a previous meeting should be reported to Environmental Health.

From 30th July to 8th August Wessex Water will be performing emergency sewer repair works on the A38 on the junction with Bradford Road and Silver Street.

These works will be performed under 24 hour two-way signals with closures on Bradford Road and Silver Street. This work needs to be completed before improvements to the junction commence on 10th August. Re-routing will be through the village. No details have been given about the junction improvements and Cllr Wakefield will try to obtain the plans.

Councillors raised the issue of people involved with the school parking all day in areas that should not be used for parking and reducing the start of France Lane to one lane which is making it difficult for residents to get out. The new Headteacher will be asked to make staff and parents aware of Highway Code Rule 243 which clearly states where people shouldn't park.

The issue of no one accepting responsibility for a missing drain cover in Gerbestone Lane was discussed. Cllr Wakefield said she would go and have a look on her way home and would follow this up with Highways.

Cllr Mrs Francis-Bellamy joined the meeting during this item.

b) Wellington & Wiveliscombe LCN AGM 22nd July 2026. Notes from the AGM had been circulated by email. Although Cllr Bellamy is recorded as attending the meeting he had sent his apologies. Michelle Brooks, Local Community Network Link Officer, is leaving and will be replaced by Laura Smedley. The Chair reported that he had met someone from the LCN who was looking at Public Rights of Way.

42/07/26. To continue to discuss broadband issues in the parish – report from meeting organised by Gideon Amos MP. It was agreed to move this item forward on the agenda. Cllr Silverlight and Cllr Ms Drury attended this meeting which was attended by a lot of Parish Councillors who had questions. Gideon Amos OBE MP convened this public meeting to provide residents, parish councils and community representatives with an opportunity to question senior representatives from Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS), Building Digital UK (BDUK) and Openreach regarding rural broadband delivery, Project Gigabit, Airband's rollout, voucher schemes and the continuing challenge of securing fibre connectivity for hard-to-reach communities across the Taunton and Wellington areas. The discussion focused particularly on communities affected by Airband's reduced rollout commitment, the future of Very-Hard-To-Reach-Premises (VHTRPs), the operation of voucher schemes, communications with affected communities and the role of Government subsidy in supporting broadband deployment where commercial delivery is not viable.

No one represented Airband at the meeting as the company is being sold.

Lack of communication was brought up.

Cllr Ms Drury recommended that anyone who is in a hard to reach or very hard to reach property should get Starlink now but the more people that join the more it drains the satellite. Speeds will be far less than those able to obtain superfast broadband.

The MP concluded the meeting by reaffirming his commitment to maintaining pressure on Government, delivery bodies and suppliers to ensure that rural communities in particular are not left behind in the transition to a full-fibre, digital economy. Notes from the meeting will be circulated.

43/07/26. Democratic Period. Mrs Harding, Chair of West Buckland Village Hall Committee explained she was attending the meeting as a start to improving the way the Parish Council and Village Hall Committee work together. Cllr Silverlight

had attended the last Village Hall Committee meeting.

44/07/26. Planning:

a) To consider any planning applications received by the Parish Council prior to the meeting.

43/25/0064 Application for Outline Planning with all matters reserved, except for Access, for the erection of up to 320 No. dwellings, public open space, drainage and associated infrastructure on land east of Wardleworth Way, Wellington. This application is in Wellington parish. Councillors were concerned about infrastructure but decided not to comment as it is not in West Buckland parish.

b) To receive decisions from planning applications determined by Somerset Council.

46/26/0008CQ Application for Prior Approval for proposed change of use from agricultural building to 1 No. dwelling house (Class C3) and associated building operations at Buckland House, Hockholler Road, West Buckland. Decision: prior approval approved (conditional).

46/26/0009 Change of use of holiday let into 1 No. residential dwelling at Church View, West Buckland. Decision: refusal.

46/26/0010 Erection of a part two storey and part single storey extension to the rear of Orchard View, Silver Street, West Buckland, Decision: refusal.

c) Any other planning matters. Planning Enforcement were asked to investigate the Parish Council's concerns that West Buckland Motors were operating without planning permission/without the correct planning permission but nothing more has been heard. They will be asked for an update.

45/07/26. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SC. Some work has been carried out near the school but there is more to do.

b) Update from Highways Officer re outstanding highways work (Kerb at Dyers Close and drainage in Silver Street. The Clerk has still to chase this up.

c) Update on missing drain cover and confusion about who is responsible. This was discussed under item 41/07/26.

d) Any other highways matters. None.

46/07/26. Finance:

a) To agree and authorise any payments.

Countrywide	£149.02	Grass cutting contract for playing field	2627/22
Jill Larcombe	£331.69	Clerk's salary & expenses for June	2627/23
HM Revenue & Customs	£71.40	PAYE for July	2627/24
West Buckland Village Hall Trust	£14.00	Hall hire 31st July 2026	2627/25

A bank service charge of £7.00 was taken on 30th June and the next one will be taken from the current account on 31st July 2026. Transfers were made from the Instant Access Account to the Current Account. An internal transfer will be made to bring the Current Account balance to £1,000.

b) To note any receipts since the last meeting and the bank accounts balance. Bank interest of £92.10 was received on 30th June 2026. The current

account balance is £1,007.00 and the Instant Access Account balance is £19,912.44.

c) Bank reconciliation for 30.06.26. The bank reconciliation was checked and signed by Cllr Paul.

d) To report on budget v actual for Quarter 1 2026-27. Councillors reviewed the figures in the budget v actual report and the reserves figures. Figures were as expected and there were no areas of concern.

47/07/26. Playing Field:

a) Any points to note from the regular inspections. Cllr Bellamy reported that there are brambles growing out of the play area hedge and they need cutting off. The Clerk will contact Mr Richards and ask him to carry out the work. He will also be asked for a price to trim the top of the hedge and the side in the play area in the autumn. Due to the ongoing dry weather the grass he normally cuts for the Parish Council has not been growing and as he hasn't had to cut it he hasn't charged. Cllr Bellamy will be away during some of August and Cllr Mrs Francis-Bellamy will carry out checks during his absence.

b) To report on the damage and repairs to one of the goal posts. When a Countrywide employee was cutting the grass they caught one of the goal nets in the mower and the goal post and net were badly damaged. This was caught on the Village Hall's CCTV and the Clerk reported the damage to Countrywide who appeared to be unaware of the incident. They have paid for the goal post to be repaired and have replaced the net.

c) To discuss a request to use the playing field on 12th and 13th September for Rally Dog Show (Use to include parking on the field). Councillors discussed the request which also included the need for vehicles to park on the playing field, something the Parish Council recently decided not to allow due to the risk of travellers getting onto the field. It was agreed to give permission for the playing field to be used for the Rally Dog Show and in this instance to give permission for vehicles to park on the field for the safety of the dogs. This permission is subject to the gate always being manned during the event and a vehicle being parked in front of the gate once the concrete block is moved and when it is not manned. The organiser will be given a key to the gate and she will arrange for the concrete block to be removed for the event and replaced afterwards.

d) Any other playing field matters. Cllr Miss Drury asked how much CIL funding the Parish Council has as she would like to add more play equipment. There is a preference for the CIL funding to be used to purchase Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs).

The replacement of the bollards on the verge in front of the play area will be discussed at the next meeting.

48/07/26. Any footpath matters. The footpath across the field below the playing field is still overgrown. In the first instance this is the landowner's responsibility but if she does not do this a request could be made to Community Payback to get it cut.

49/07/26. Update on the EV Charging Point. The charging point is working again. West Buckland Village Hall Committee has given permission for the parking space for the charging point to be marked as 'EV Charging Point Only' and the Clerk will obtain quotes.

50/07/26. Correspondence. Somerset Connectivity and Integrated Transport Strategy

(SCITS) Connectivity Plan Consultation Phase 2 – an email was received shortly before the meeting. The consultation ends on 11th September 2026.

51/07/26. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion (Not for Decisions). No urgent business.

52/07/26. To note the date of the next meeting. 26th August 2026.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Signed:
Chair

Date: