

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES

These minutes will be agreed at the Parish Council meeting on 28th July and might be subject to slight amendment.

The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 30th June 2026 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall.

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

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

19/06/26. To receive apologies for absence. No apologies.

20/06/26. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. None.

21/06/26. To agree the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 26/05/26 as an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and were duly signed by the Chair.

22/06/26. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda (for information only). No matters arising.

23/06/26. Reports. Cllr Wakefield told councillors there was nothing to highlight from her June report, which had been circulated by email earlier in the month. Somerset Council's Initial Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Report (2026) has now been published. This contains the assessment of sites submitted to their previous Local Plan Call for Sites between 13 January 2025 to 24 February 2025. They have now re-opened the Call for Sites on a rolling basis, meaning sites can be submitted to them for consideration at any time. Somerset Council is about to start the development of a new Local Plan in October. Previously it would take five years to produce a plan but they will now be expected to complete it in eighteen months. There will be policies but they will not be as detailed as before. Cllr Wakefield told the meeting her view was that all villages should be allowed a few houses. The Government requires Somerset Council to plan for a minimum of 75,000 new homes between 2025 and 2045. This includes 21,000 places in care homes etc. Somerset Council has pushed back twice. 13,000 people are on the waiting list for social and affordable housing in Somerset. People are now living longer, there are more split households and people are not moving, often because they have nowhere to move to. By 2030 30% of people over 65 might want to be in a house more suitable for their needs. Workers who are building the new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point are taking up housing and homes are needed for the people who will be working at the new battery plant near Bridgwater. Gideon Amos MP has called a meeting at Cheddon Fitzpaine on 16th July for parish council representatives on the subject of rural fibre broadband rollout in Taunton & Wellington. Cllr Wakefield is unable to attend. Airband are now putting up poles in Neroche to provide fibre broadband and another provider is trying to use the voucher scheme to provide fibre broadband to

harder to reach properties.

Cllr Wakefield was asked about the council house in West Buckland that has been unoccupied for some considerable time. Cllr Henley was trying to fight against it being sold. This was one of four similar properties in the ward. In order to let it out again it would have to be brought up to the decent homes standard and as Somerset Council say it will be too expensive to do this, the property will be sold. Unfortunately, the money received will not be invested back into social housing in West Buckland.

Cllr Wakefield left the meeting at 8.10pm.

24/06/26. Democratic Period. The member of the public questioned why Somerset Council couldn't bring the property just discussed up to a reasonable standard when people on the TV programme 'Homes under the hammer' are able to turn properties round at a reasonable cost. The lack of suitably skilled employees was suggested as a reason. He mentioned two other empty properties in West Buckland.

25/06/26. To continue to discuss broadband issues in the parish. Gideon Amos MP has secured the attendance of Government officials from Building Digital UK (Department for Science, Innovation and Technology), as well as representatives from Openreach, Airband and Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) at the meeting on 16th July. Cllr Ms Drury and Cllr Silverlight are planning to attend.

26/06/26. Planning:

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

46/26/0017 Demolition of dutch barn and erection of 1 No. dwelling and associated access, landscaping and infrastructure at Huntspath Farm, West Buckland Road, West Buckland. Comment: West Buckland Parish Council does not support this application. Permission was granted to convert the barn to a dwelling under a Class Q application. Councillors feel that granting permission to allow the barn to be demolished and a completely new dwelling built amounts to allowing development in the open countryside, on the edge of an AONB, which is contrary to Policy DM2 (Development in the countryside)

46/26/0018 Application for approval of reserved matters following Outline Application 46/21/0037 pursuant to Condition No. 01 for Phase 1 of the development in accordance with approved proposed phasing diagram 20-80, PP01 discharged under Condition No. 10 for the appearance, layout and scale on land at Chelston Heath, Wellington. No comment.

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

46/25/0016LPW Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed erection of a single storey extension to the rear of 16 Church Drive, West Buckland. Decision: approval.

c) Any other planning matters. None.

27/06/26. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SC. Potholes have been marked up for repair.

b) Update from Highways Officer re outstanding highways work (Kerb at

Dyers Close and drainage in Silver Street. No update. The Clerk to chase to see whether anything is ever likely to be done.

c) Update on missing drain cover and confusion about who is responsible.

This will continue to be chased.

d) Any other highways matters. No other highways matters.

28/06/26. Report from the monthly Talking Cafe on 24th June. The Talking Café planned for 24th June was cancelled due to the heatwave. They have now run for six months and Cllr Moore, supported by other councillors and some members of the Village Hall Committee, has done a good job in arranging and promoting them but numbers attending have remained very low. It was agreed that they will not be continued. The Village Hall Committee will be informed that the room will no longer be required.

29/06/26. Finance:

a) To agree and authorise any payments.

Mr N Richards	£280.00	Grass cutting in village & trimming footpaths	2627/15
Countrywide	£149.02	Grass cutting contract for playing field	2627/16
Hydra	£90.00	Subscription for EV Charging Point	2627/17
Jill Larcombe	£321.09	Clerk's salary & expenses for June	2627/18
HM Revenue & Customs	£71.20	PAYE for June	2627/19
West Buckland Village Hall Trust	£14.00	Hall hire 30 th June 2026	2627/20
Somerset Council	£101.40	Dog bin emptying Quarter 1 2026-27	2627/21

A bank service charge of £7.00 will be taken from the current account on 30th June 2026. £47.00 was paid to the Information Commissioners Office via direct debit on 20th May 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. Since the last meeting there have been no receipts.

The current account balance is £1,960.00 and the Instant Access Account balance is £21,342.05.

c) Bank reconciliations for 31.05.26. Checked and signed by Cllr Paul.

d) To receive the report from the Internal Auditor for 2025-26. Not available for this meeting.

e) To agree the Annual Governance Statement for 2025-26. Agreed.

f) To agree the Accounting Statement for 2025-26. Agreed.

30/06/26. Playing Field:

a) Any points to note from the regular inspections. An issue with the surfacing under the climber was reported. Cllr Mrs Francis-Bellamy will circulate a photo. This needs to be assessed and made safe, particularly as the summer holidays will soon be starting. Advice will be sought.

b) To discuss quotes to replace the goal nets. These have been patched up and are being used and are felt to be good enough for this season. With the Football World Cup taking place they are being used more than usual at the moment.

c) Any other playing field matters. Cllr Mrs Moore raised concern about the issue of dog poo on the area of the football pitch and suggested marking out the football pitch and asking people to keep their dogs off that area. She was asked to obtain costs for the marking of the pitch.

31/06/26. Footpath matters

a) Report that the footpath in the field next to the playing field is overgrown. This is the responsibility of the owner of the land the footpath is on. The Clerk will try to make contact with her.

b) Any other footpath matters. None.

32/06/26. Update on the EV Charging Point. This has been tested by Cllr Silverlight and Cllr Ms Drury. The charging cost was discussed with all costs to the parish council taken into account. It was agreed to set the charge at 60p/KwH. The parking space in front of the charger needs to be marked 'EV Charging Facility Only'.

33/06/26. Correspondence. No further correspondence.

34/06/26. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion (Not for Decisions). No urgent business.

35/06/26. To note the date of the next meeting. 28th July 2026.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Signed:
Chair

Date: