

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL
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The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 28th April 2026 at 7.30pm, in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall.

Present: Cllr's Ms S Drury (Chair), S Bellamy and Mrs N Francis-Bellamy.
In attendance: Somerset Cllr S Wakefield and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

201/04/26. To receive apologies for absence. Apologies were accepted from Cllr's C Silverlight, Mrs B Moore and A Paul.

202/04/26. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. No disclosures.

203/04/26. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 31/03/26 as an accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

204/04/26. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda (for information only). None.

205/04/26. Reports

a) Somerset Councillors. Cllr Wakefield explained that councillors had not received a report from her in early April as she had been away for most of March. She reported the budget gap of £25million is closing. Somerset Council met in late February to agree the 2026-27 budget as the settlement was pushed back. 66% of the budget is spent on adult social care and children's services. Council Tax for Somerset Council is lower than some other councils. £5million has been received from the government for digital transformation as Somerset Council is pulling the systems from the four former District Councils into one. Next year anyone who wants to receive their Council Tax bill by email will be able to do so. 16,332 road defects were reported in the winter of 2026, four times more than in 2025. From 20th February the number of teams dealing with defects was increased to enable more potholes to be filled in. In wet weather they carry out temporary repairs. Cllr Ms Drury said she had reported one pothole five times, it had been marked up twice but had still not been repaired. Cllr Ms Drury will give Cllr Wakefield the reference number so this can be followed up. It was also noted that potholes in Calways Lane are forcing motorists into the ditch. Highways are looking at whether teams can repair other potholes close to the ones they have been sent to repair, while they are there. Somerset Council has received a good rating from the Department for Transport and is doing better than many other counties, Over the next five years £5million will be invested to clean up roads, clean signs, clean gullies, replace road markings and make improvements to public reporting. From the Somerset Highways Annual Works Map it can be picked out where drains are and when they will be looked at. Not many homes in Somerset were flooded because of dredging on the Somerset Levels. The Somerset Rivers Authority only receives £14/£16 per Band D property equivalent, the same as in 2016. Giving grants to communities to tackle local flooding issues has worked well.

There will be new ward boundaries for the next Somerset Council elections in May 2027 and Cllr Wakefield explained that West Buckland will then be in the Outer Wellington ward and she would be standing in a different ward. Councillors

were disappointed to hear that.

b) LCN meeting 27th April. Cllr Bellamy gave a verbal reported on the meeting which he had attended on the previous evening. The meeting had received a Police update that while crime has gone down, harassment has gone up. There is not much serious crime in this area. A presentation was given on the Community Payback scheme. The Parish Council could look at putting together a package of work that needs doing in West Buckland. Regular NHS health checks can be arranged in villages for people who cannot get to a check in towns. The Parish Council could look at tagging this onto the Talking Café.

206/04/26. Democratic Period. No members of the public present.

207/04/26. To continue to discuss broadband issues in the parish. No update. Cllr Ms Drury is going to Starlink.

208/04/26. Planning:

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

46/26/0008/CQ 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. No comment.

46/26/0009 Change of use of holiday let into 1 no residential dwelling art Church View, West Buckland. Comment: West Buckland Parish Council support the approval of this application.

46/26/0010 Erection of two storey and part single storey extension to the rear of Orchard View, Silver Street, West Buckland. No comment.

b) To receive decisions from planning applications determined by Somerset Council. The following decisions were noted.

46/25/0020 Erection of food store (Use Class E) with associated works including parking, access and landscaping on land to the south of the A38 and east of West Buckland Road, Wellington. Decision: conditional approval.

46/26/0003/HNN Application to determine if approval is required for a proposed larger home extension at Chelston Cottage, Haywards Road, West Buckland. Decision of Prior Approval Approved (No Conditions).

46/26/007/LPW Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed formation of access to serve hardstanding parking area and erection of store/garage at Chelston Cottage, Haywards Road, West Buckland. Decision: refusal.

c) Planning Committee Reforms: Statutory Consultation on Draft Regulations and Guidance. Noted.

d) Any other planning matters. The Clerk reported that shortly before the meeting she had received an email about the Somerset Local Plan timetable which came into effect on 24 April 2026 and the Notice of Intention to Commence. This will be discussed at the May meeting.

209/04/26. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SC. Cllr Ms Drury has continued to report potholes online. She has reported one dangerous pothole in Gerbestone Lane five times and it has been marked up for repair twice but has still not been properly repaired. This pothole has also been reported by Cllr

Silverlight who sent photos to show how big it is. A traffic cone had been placed in the hole but the top has now been broken off.

b) Dates for meeting with Highways Officer re outstanding highways work (Kerb at Dyers Close and drainage in Silver Street. No dates provided.

c) Report of broken drain cover and confusion about who is responsible. A missing drain cover just off the main highway was reported to Highways but they claimed it was not one of theirs and advised reporting it to Wessex Water. Wessex Water were contacted but said it wasn't their responsibility and claimed it was the responsibility of Highways. The Clerk has asked Highways to take another look but has not received a reply

d) New Somerset Connectivity and Integrated Transport Strategy (SCITS). Carried forward.

e) Any other highways matters. Kate Brown, Somerset Council Highways Engineer, is arranging to meet with the Headteacher of the Primary School to look at marking a disabled parking bay as requested.

210/04/26. To receive a report on the monthly Talking Cafe on 29th April. Numbers were low for the March Talking Café but the Parish Council has committed to holding them for six months. Some grant funding is available from SALC until September should councillors agree to make an application. Local Reach is a new, free publication and details of the Talking Café could be advertised in it.

211/04/26. Finance:

a) To agree and authorise any payments. It was resolved to make the following payments:

Mr N Richards	£80.00	Grass cutting in village	2627/01
Countrywide	£149.02	Grass cutting contract for playing field	2627/02
Jill Larcombe	£318.59	Clerk's salary & expenses for April	2627/03
HM Revenue & Customs	£71.20	PAYE for April	2627/04
West Buckland Village Hall Trust	£14.00	Hall hire 28 th April 2026	2627/05

A bank service charge of £7.00 will be taken from the current account on 30th April 2026.

Transfers were made from the Current Account to the Instant Access 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 balances. Since the last meeting bank interest of £86.88 and the first half of the precept, £7,642.50, have been received.

The current account balance is £8,642.50 and the Instant Access Account balance is £15,346.36.

c) Bank reconciliation 31.03.26. As Cllr Paul was not present this was carried forward to the next meeting.

d) Finance report 2025 – 2026. The report was noted. The Annual Governance and Accounting Return Forms will be presented at another meeting.

e) To approve internal auditor for 2025-26 audit. Carried forward.

212/04/26. Playing Field:

a) Any points to note from the regular inspection. Cllr Bellamy had provided a copy of his checks for the month of April to the Clerk. Cllr Bellamy and Cllr Francis-Bellamy were thanked for rubbing down and painting the rusty goalposts. The replacement of the nets will be looked at in the next meeting. Most Councils do not provide nets. It was noted there is a dip in the ground in one of the goal mouths.

b) To report on recent security concerns. It is believed that travellers have been looking at the gate to the playing field to see if they can get access. Suspicious activity was spotted by a member of the public and it was also recorded on the Village Hall CCTV. A red car had pulled into the car park by the gate and had parked erratically. The men in the car had got out and looked at the gate. This was reported to the Police along with the registration of the car. but they were not helpful and just reported that the car registration was local.

c) Review of Playing Field Policy to include increase in security. The policy will be reviewed at the next meeting when more councillors are present. Changes to arrangements to allow parking on the field are needed to address security concerns.

d) Any other playing field matters. None.

213/04/26. Footpaths

a) Report of walkers not replacing insulated electric fence handles. A local farmer contacted the Clerk to report that people were undoing an electric fence on a footpath across their land using the insulated handle provided for this purpose but were not connecting it back to the fence. This had allowed cattle to stray into fields that were being shut off to allow the grass to be cut for silage.

b) Any footpath matters. None.

214/04/26. Update on the installation of a new ethernet cable for the EV Charging Point. The electrician has been booked and the work will be carried out on 7th May.

215/04/26. Correspondence. No further correspondence to discuss.

216/04/26. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion (Not for Decisions). None.

217/04/26. To note the new date for the Annual Parish Council Meeting. This will now be held on Tuesday 26th May at 7.00pm

218/04/26. To note the date of the next meeting. The next meeting will be held on 26th May 2026. This will be the Annual Parish Council meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Signed:
Chair

Date: