

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 31st March 2026 at 7.30pm, in the Committee Room, West Buckland Village Hall.

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

In attendance: the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

- 181/03/26. To receive apologies for absence.** Apologies were accepted from Cllr C Silverlight and Cllr Mrs B Moore. Apologies were received from Cllr S Wakefield, Somerset Council.
- 182/03/26. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda.** None.
- 183/03/26. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 24/02/26 as an accurate record of the meeting.** The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed by the Chair of the meeting.
- 184/03/26. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda (for information only).** Notification was received today that the application made to Somerset Rivers Authority for funding towards further flood prevention work at Asham Lane, Ham was successful and the full amount applied for was agreed. The members of the Ham Stream Maintenance Group were congratulated and thanked for their work in putting the application together.
- 185/03/26. Report from Somerset Councillors.** No report.
- 186/03/26. Democratic Period.** No members of the public present.
- 187/03/26. To continue to discuss broadband issues in the parish.** Cllr Ms Drury reported that she had emailed Gideon Amos MP. Together with his group he is really pushing the Government about the issues rural communities are facing without a good broadband connection and the impact of the planned switch off of analogue phone lines in early 2027 which will leave some hard to reach properties without communication. He is asking for details of the work that has been done in the parish. Some properties have Fibre to the Premise but others still have Fibre to the Cabinet.
Starlink were charging £75 per month for satellite broadband with a speed of 100Mbps but are now offering it at £25 per month for six months and then £35 per month. An Amazon version is trying to be cheaper. To receive Sky and Netflix cable will soon be the only option.
Councillors felt that Gideon Amos MP is very supportive and has done more about broadband in the period he has been in office than Rebecca Pow, former MP, did in all the time she was the MP for West Buckland.
- 188/03/26. Planning:**
- a) To consider any planning applications received by the Parish Council prior to the meeting.** No applications received.
 - b) Planning application for notification only.** Noted.

46/26/0003/HHN Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed larger home extension at Chelston Cottage, Haywards Road, West Buckland.

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

16/26/0004/LPW Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed erection of an agricultural store at Chelston Cottage, Haywards Road, West Buckland. Decision: refusal.

46/26/0005/LPW Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed formation of access at Chelston Cottage, Haywards Road, West Buckland. Decision: refusal.

d) Any other planning matters. Planning Enforcement Case Ref SWT791071744 (New gateway onto Gerbestone Lane) The Enforcement Officer has investigated and has reported that it appears that this is an old existing access that has been enlarged/put back into use. This is allowed under permitted development so is not a planning breach. However, permits are required to do this next to a highway and he has forwarded the report to his colleagues in the Highways Dept. for investigation.

189/03/26. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SC. Cllr Ms Drury reported she had reported lots of potholes, particularly on Calways Lane and a bad one on Gerbestone Lane. They are not being marked and not being dealt with for about a month after they have been reported. It has been particularly wet along Gerbestone Lane. People need to be encouraged to report potholes. The emergency temporary road closure was for Wessex Water to carry out a repair.

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

c) To discuss a request for support to establish a disabled parking bay outside of West Buckland Primary School. The Headteacher has requested the parish council's consideration in establishing a marked disabled parking bay outside our school. This request arises from the needs of a parent within our school community who has a recognised disability and currently faces significant challenges when accessing the school site safely. When the school hosts events they often have grandparents who come and several of these require walking aids or wheelchairs. The Parish Council agreed in principle subject to a suitable site being agreed with Highways.

d) Update on fly tipping on Buckland Hill. The Forestry Commission were responsible for the tyres on the verge. They had moved them there to make it easier to move them. They have now put up a trail camera.

A sofa has been dumped in a gateway at the top of Buckland Hill.

e) Any other highways matters. There is restrictive two way working on the A38 during evenings/nights.

190/03/26. To receive a report on the monthly Talking Cafes on 25th February and 25th March. The Village Agent and someone from Reminiscence Learning attended but only one person came on 25th February and only two on 25th March. The Talking Cafés will be held for six months and the Council will then re-evaluate. Posters have been placed around the village and information has been put on

Facebook. Cllr Mrs Francis-Bellamy offered to deliver leaflets.

191/03/26. Finance:

a) To agree and authorise any payments. As approved at the last meeting the following payments were made to clear the current account today. The last day of the financial year.

Countrywide	£143.77	Grass cutting contract for playing field	2526/73
Jill Larcombe	£331.79	Clerk's salary & expenses for March	2526/74
HM Revenue & Customs	£58.00	PAYE for March	2526/75
West Buckland Village Hall Trust	£28.00	Hall hire 6 th January and 31 st March	2526/76
Somerset Council	£101.40	Dog bin emptying Qtr 4	2526/77

Since the last meeting a bank service charge of £6.00 was paid from the account on 28th February and £7.00 has been taken on 31st March 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 there have been no receipts.

The current account balance is £1,000.00 and the Instant Access Account balance is £15,259.48 prior to bank interest being received.

c) Bank reconciliation 28.02.26. The bank reconciliation was checked by Cllr Paul.

d) To agree the contract for emptying of the dog litter bin for 2026-27. The contract was agreed.

192/03/26. Playing Field:

a) Any points to note from the regular inspection. Cllr Bellamy reported that the goal nets have holes and there is grass growing up around the nets. The arms of the goalposts are also bent. Cllr Bellamy will look to see if the nets are repairable and the price of new goal nets will be obtained.

The grass in the playing field has been cut for the first time this year but the contractor only strimmed the grass edges and didn't cut the grass in the play area.

Cllr Bellamy will draw a plan for a path from the car park to the play area first pedestrian gate. Once the area is calculated alternatives for the surface can be costed.

b) To agree the grass cutting contract for 2026-27. It was agreed to accept the quote from Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Ltd.

c) Any other playing field matters. None.

193/03/26. Footpaths: to note any footpath matters. The broken and hazardous Stile (Asset 44108) on Footpath WG14/30 has still not been repaired. A farmer using Booby's Lane, a restricted byway, is making indents into the surface. This will be reported.

194/03/26. Update on the installation of a new ethernet cable for the EV Charging Point. This will be booked for the day the heating is being changed in the committee room.

195/03/26. To review/adopt the following policies and documents. The following policies and documents were approved:

- Standing Orders
- Safeguarding Policy.
- IT Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Model Publication Scheme

196/03/26. To discuss how to gather information for the Project Co-ordinator for Together in Tone, a SALC/council initiative to increase and support music-making in the Wellington and Wiveliscombe area this year. The Village Hall has been asked if any musical groups use the village hall but none are. Councillors were not aware of any other music making in the parish. Cllr Bellamy will report back.

197/03/26. Correspondence. There was no further correspondence.

198/03/26. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion (Not for Decisions). It was reported that the dog bin near the bridge over the motorway hasn't been emptied and is overflowing. It should be emptied weekly and the Clerk will contact Somerset Council Grounds Maintenance.

199/03/26. To discuss arrangements for the Annual Parish Council Meeting. It was agreed to hold this on April 28th at 7pm. Prior to the Parish Council meeting (This was later changed to 26th May).
The School and PTFA; Church; Village Hall Committee; PCSO Bramley, Somerset Councillors and Taunton Model Engineers will be invited to give a report at the meeting. A report can be sent to the Clerk if no one is able to attend.

200/03/26. To note the date of the next meeting. The next meeting will be held on 28th April 2026.

Signed:
Chair

Date: