

WEST BUCKLAND PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES

These minutes will be agreed at the meeting due to be held on 27th October and might be subject to slight amendment

The minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 29th September 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 and A Paul.

In attendance: Somerset Cllr S Wakefield and the Clerk, Mrs J Larcombe.

68/09/26. To receive apologies for absence. Apologies were accepted from Cllr Mrs Francis Bellamy and Cllr Mrs B Moore.

69/09/26. Disclosure of interest in items on the agenda. No disclosures.

70/09/26. To agree the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 25/08/26 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.

71/09/26. Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda (for information only). None.

72/09/26. Reports - Somerset Council. A written report from Cllr Wakefield was circulated by email earlier in the month. Cllr Wakefield spoke about some of the issues in her report including proposals to put up parking charges and charge for parking on Sundays. These will be going back to Executive next week. The charge for parking has not increased for eighteen months and the Council has to cover the cost of repairs and refurbishment. It is proposed that increases to charges will be phased, starting with an increase of 10% in January 2027. Charging for parking on Sundays will probably be left until after the elections in early May 2027. Increasing the cost of parking is likely to displace people to residential areas. Better parking machines will be installed and parking spaces will be made bigger in the Orchard multi story car park. Cones are now being placed outside of the school to prevent people parking on the junction. Councillors will monitor. Planning measures to reduce phosphates have not made much difference and there may be a change in policy. Wessex Water are extracting more phosphate from the water. If Somerset Council produce a local plan to last for fifteen years, they will only be required to have a housing target of 57,000 instead of 75,000. More affordable housing is needed. There are plans for 220 houses to be built on the edge of Ruishton and Nexus 25. Somerset Council will be announcing the sites they will be taking forward to allocate for housing in the local plan. Cllr Wakefield was thanked for coming to West Buckland's Parish Council meetings and dealing with the issues brought up.

Cllr Wakefield left the meeting.

73/09/26. Democratic Period. No members of the public present.

74/09/26. To continue to discuss broadband issues in the parish. Cllr Ms Drury reported that the last resident in Ruggin who was struggling with broadband speed has now signed up to Starlink. She has contacted Sky but they are failing to understand that she cannot have fibre. Analogue phone lines are due to be retired at the end of January 2027 and everyone will have to use wi-fi instead. This will not work with keypad operated systems. A lot of people in the village still have copper wire or fibre from the cabinet. Gideon Amos MP has been trying to help but those involved are not talking to each other. There is nothing else the Parish Council can do as it has taken the matter up with the right people but they are not doing anything.

75/09/26. Planning:

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

46/26/0022 Change of use from warehouse (Class E(g)/ B2 / B8) to flexible use as an indoor padel court facility (Use Class E(d)) with associated works at Unit 2, Poole Works, Higher Poole, Wellington. Comment: West Buckland Parish Council support the application because it will provide a sporting activity but it does have concerns about traffic.

b) To note the following planning appeal: 6016175 (46/26/0001) Site address: Former Blackbird Inn Car Park, Wellington Road, West Buckland, TA21 9HX.

Proposal: Change of use of car park into a self storage container yard (including garage building) on former car park of Blackbird Inn, Wellington Road, West Buckland (retention of part works already undertaken) as amended by agents email of 2 March 2026 and Dr Nos. 2725.3.a and 2725.4.a. The appeal will be determined on the basis of written representations. The appeal was noted

c) To receive decisions from planning applications determined by Somerset Council. No decisions received.

d) New National Planning Policy Framework - presentations and recording from the Parish Briefing Session. The Clerk received a link to a recording of the briefing session and the slides from Somerset Council and these were circulated to councillors.

e) Update on outcome of report to planning enforcement. Planning enforcement has established that the sale of vehicles by West Buckland Motors was intended as a temporary venture during a period when the owner's primary business, race horse training, and they have been advised that the activity is now being wound down. There are only a small number of vehicles remaining to be sold, after which West Buckland Motors will cease trading altogether, with the associated website and Facebook page also being removed. In view of this, the matter has been successfully resolved through informal engagement and compliance, without the need for formal enforcement action.

f) Cllr Silverlight and Cllr Mrs Drury to report following attendance at the Wellington Town Council meeting on 7th September when planning application 46/26/0021 was discussed. Following the meeting Cllr Ms Drury wrote a report which was circulated to councillors. Both Cllr Silverlight and Cllr Ms Drury were concerned that Wellington Town Council agreed to support the application in principle subject to a change to the boundary to move the development inside of the Wellington boundary in order that they can receive the

CIL funding. The Town Clerk has confirmed Wellington Town Council is planning on submitting a proposal for a boundary change when Somerset conducts its Community Governance Review after the 2027 elections. Councillors were concerned about their plans but there will be a consultation before any decision is made.

g) Any other planning matters. No other planning matters.

76/09/26. Highways.

a) To note any required work to be reported to SC. A gap is appearing on a joint on the bridge over the M5 and is now a hazard, particularly to motor bikes and cycles. There is no warning signage. Drivers can drive at the national speed limit over the bridge and the mornings and evenings will soon be getting darker. The work at the Worlds End/A38 junction which was supposed to have started in August still hasn't happened. Highways to be asked for information about what they are planning to do and when.

Cllr Bellamy reported that traffic is stopping on the A38 to let people out of this junction which is causing queuing traffic and he felt a warning sign is required.

b) Update from Highways Officer re outstanding highways work (Kerb at Dyers Close and drainage in Silver Street. No update.

d) To continue to discuss replacing the bollards on the verge in front of the play area. Kate Brown, SC Traffic Engineer has confirmed she doesn't have any issue with the parish replacing the wooden bollards for verge masters as long as they are set back at least 450mm from the edge of the carriageway. It's not a conservation area so wooden ones aren't required aesthetically, and verge masters are used throughout the County for this sort of thing. Councillors decided they would like to replace them with wooden rather than the flex markers and it was suggested that 6' wooden posts could be purchased and cut to size. Cllr Ms Drury will measure how many are needed and will get a price for the posts and this will be discussed at the next meeting.

e) Any other highways matters. No other highways matters.

77/09/26. To consider a request from the Chair of Nynehead Parish Council for a meeting with the Parish Council to discuss thoughts about the various developments and to perhaps consider a closer working relationship between our respective Parish Councils. It was agreed to invite the Chair of Nynehead Parish Council and councillors to meet with West Buckland Parish Council at 7pm on 27th October.

78/09/26. To receive an update on the Asham Lane Flood Prevention Project. Stage 2 of the project has been completed as planned. Until there is some heavy rain it will not be possible to see how successful it has been. Members of the group were congratulated. The Clerk will submit the form to reclaim the grant.

79/09/26. Finance

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

Countrywide	£149.02	Grass cutting contract for playing field	2627/31
Luke Aplin	£14,767.39	Flood prevention work Asham Lane	2627/32

Jill Larcombe	£332.47	Clerk's salary & expenses for September	2627/33
HM Revenue & Customs	£73.80	PAYE for September	2627/34
West Buckland Village Hall Trust	£14.00	Hall hire 29th September 2026	2627/35
Somerset Council	£109.20	Emptying dog bin Quarter 2 2026-27	2627/36
West Buckland PCC	£1,300.00	Churchyard Grant	2627/37
Somerset Citizens Advice	£200.00	Grant	2627/38
PKF Littlejohn LLP	£300.00	External audit	26/2739

A bank service charge of £7.00 was taken on 31st August and the next one will be taken from the current account on 30th September 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 £1,000.00

b) To note any receipts since the last meeting and the bank accounts balance. Since the last meeting £7,642.50 has been received from Somerset Council, the second half of the precept.

The current account balance is £8,649.10 and the Instant Access Account balance is £18230.78.

c) Bank reconciliation for 31.08.26. The bank statements and the reconciliation were checked by Cllr Paul who signed the reconciliation.

d) External Audit Report. The External Audit Report had been circulated to councillors and the Notice of Conclusion of Audit has been published (29th September). The report noted the Parish Council does not have a generic email address hosted on an authority owned domain. Other matters not affecting their opinion which they drew to the attention of the Parish Council: In the prior year, the Parish Council was exempt from their review, thus they have not reviewed any evidence to support the prior year comparatives on the AGAR. They also noted their previous address was on the 'Notice of Public Rights',.

80/09/26. Playing Field:

a) Any points to note from the regular inspection. Cllr Bellamy has sent the inspection reports for August and September to the Clerk. Cllr Mrs Francis Bellamy had carried out the inspections while he was away and they were both thanked.

b) Update on obtaining quotes to remove dead trees on the playing field hedge. Boundary ownership needs to be obtained to check which trees the Parish Council is responsible for. Details could be obtained from Land Registry.

c) To agree to replace the dead fruit tree in the playing field at the appropriate time. Cllr Paul reported that two trees need to be replaced because of the drought. It was agreed that an apple tree and a pear tree could be purchased for planting in November at the earliest. A decent stake will be purchased for each tree. There are three of the original trees which are viable. Cllr Paul will find a stake for one of these.

d) To receive a request to use the playing field on 11th and 12th September 2027 for Rally Dog Show (Use to include parking on the field). Permission

was agreed subject to the same security arrangements as for this year.

e) To discuss a proposal for painting some of the concrete blocks in the playing field. Councillors thoroughly discussed Cllr Bellamy proposal to invite the children from the school to paint some of the concrete blocks on the edge of the playing field to make them more attractive. While there was recognition of the community value there was concern that they could soon look scruffy and untidy. It was also noted that the Village Hall Committee had paid for the blocks. A vote was held and it was agreed the blocks would not be painted.

f) Any other playing field matters. The repairs to the surfacing under the climber have still not been carried out and that will be chased up. The provision of a path from the car park to the pedestrian gate for the play area will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

81/09/26. Any footpath matters. A works order has been issued to clear the vegetation on the footpath below the playing field.

82/09/26. Update on the marking of the vehicle space for the EV Charging Point. It was agreed to purchase a stencil and marking paint.

83/09/26. Correspondence. The following correspondence was noted:
Somerset Council – City, Town and Parish Preparedness Survey. This will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.
Cllr Ms Drury would like to see some new equipment added to the play area and she expressed her disappointment that plans to do that had been affected by the costs of removing the travellers. She suggested a small piece of wooden climbing equipment for young children and it was suggested that a quote could be obtained.

84/09/26. Any urgent business at the Chairman's discretion (Not for Decisions). None.

85/09/26. To note the date of the next meeting. 27th October 2026.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Signed:
Chair

Date: