

BUCKLAND ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL
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Tel: 01460 495107
Chairman: Councillor Keith Every
Parish Clerk: Mrs S Coombe

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Public Session

The Minutes

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Buckland St Mary Parish Council held at The Village Hall on Thursday 7th March 2024 when the following business was conducted.

Members Present

Councillors K Every (Chair), I Farmer (Vice), R Barton, N Parsons & D Spencer.

In Attendance

Clerk, Mrs S Coombe & Councillor Kenton. There were no members of the public in attendance.

2023/138 To receive apologies for non-attendance

Apologies were received from Cllr's Rich & Marshall.

2023/139 To receive declarations of interest

There were no declarations on interest.

2023/140 To receive & approve the Minutes of the last Parish Council meeting on 1st February 2024

Minutes were received & approved by all councillors.

2023/141 Matters arising from the minutes

Cllr's Every & Farmer have now changed the tap in the well house. Cllr Every thanked Cllr Farmer for purchasing the tap & helping fit it.

2023/142 Somerset Councillor Wale reported that Somerset Council have voted through plans to set a balanced budget for the coming financial year but gave a stark warning of significant challenges in the years ahead. Described as a "budget to avoid a S114 notice", Members agreed to a range of measures to bridge a funding gap of £100m for 2024/25, including significant savings, increasing Council Tax by 5%, and using reserves (a council's equivalent of savings). The proposals also include a 'capitalisation direction' of £36.9m – this is where councils are given permission by Government to borrow money or sell assets to pay for day-to-day running costs. Since declaring a financial emergency in response to the soaring cost of social care, Somerset Council have done everything in their power to avoid a S114 notice. They have looked at all our non-statutory services to find savings and have taken a series of decisions, including cuts to services, increases to Council Tax, fees and charges, spending reserves, selling assets and property, and embarking on a top-to-bottom transformation programme which will reduce the size of their workforce by more than 20%. Despite this, the council are still reliant on the Government agreeing to a capitalisation direction – a short-term, one-off measure which, although welcome, does nothing to address the long-term issues. Despite Somerset Council setting a balanced budget it has a broken model for funding local government and social care which urgently needs a national solution. The Chief Financial Officer provided assurance around the estimates and the adequacy of reserves for this year, but also warned there is 'high level of concern around future years and the financial sustainability of the Council'. It highlighted a need for new and significant savings in future years and concluded that based upon current forecasts there is a high likelihood that a Section 114 notice will need to be issued in respect of the 2025/26 financial year. Some of the services initially put forward for savings have been protected through devolution and partnership working with City, Town and Parish Councils.

2023/143 Planning

(i)

Application No.	24/00293/COL
Applicant	Mr Barry Taylor
Proposal	Application for Certificate of Lawfulness for the proposed siting of a static caravan whilst self build dwelling takes place
Location	Middle Barton, Blindmoor Lane, Buckland St Mary, Chard, TA20 3RD

Decision: No objections**2023/144 Finance**

(i) The following payments were approved:

BSM Village Hall Hire – Feb 24	£14.90
Vanished Lives – Domain Renewal	£123.00
BSM Cricket Club (S137 Grant)	£120.00
Bishopswood Short Mat Bowls (S137 Grant)	£120.00
FOBS (Divided equally between Nursery & School) (S137 Grant)	£240.00
BSM Baby & Toddler Group (S137 Grant)	£120.00
Narked Ltd – 2 Year Website Domain Registration	£240.00
Chris North Fencing & Grounds Maintenance – Drain Clearance	£1760.00
Clerks Pay – March	£404.94
Clerks Expenses – March	£45.40
HMRC PAYE – March	£81.00

2023/146 Appointment of Internal Auditor

The council agreed to appoint Martyn Powe as the Internal Auditor. **Action: Clerk to email Martyn Powe for confirmation.**

2023/147 Housing Survey

The clerk has consolidated the report for future reference. **Action: Clerk to email GTH.**

2023/148 Website

The clerk reported that the new website www.bucklandstmarypc.gov.uk is under construction & will go live in the next few weeks.

2023/149 New CBO

Unfortunately, this subject is still ongoing. **Action: Clerk to contact Neil Wells for update.**

2023/150 Defibrillator Location

The Defib that has been supplied to the school is for internal school use only. Therefore, councillors agreed to keep the Defib in its current location in the school porch. There was concern that if the gate is locked nobody on the council has the code to access the defib. There was discussion regarding siting another Defib at the Village Hall either inside or outside. Councillors agreed to discuss with members of the Village Hall Committee. **Action: Clerk to contact the school head to discuss having the code & councillors to speak with the Village Hall Committee.**

2023/151 BHPN

After discussion all councillors decided not to renew the annual BHPN subscription due in June. **Action: Clerk to inform BHPN.**

2023/152 Correspondence

All correspondence circulated via email.

2023/153 Parish Matters for report

Cllr Spencer queried where the official 99 bus stops are located throughout the village. Clerk found the timetable.

2023/154 There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.03pm. Date for next meeting is Thursday 4th April 2024 where the Annual Parish Meeting will commence at 7.30pm.

K Every - Chair
4th April 2024

S Coombe – Clerk