

BUCKLAND ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL

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Chairman: Councillor Neal Parsons

Parish Clerk: Mrs S Coombe

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Public Session

The Minutes

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Buckland St Mary Parish Council held at The Village Hall on Thursday 2nd October 2025 when the following business was conducted.

Members Present

Councillors N Parsons, I Farmer, A Rich, K Every, R Barton & K Albon.

In Attendance

Clerk, Mrs S Coombe, Councillor Kenton, Councillor Wale & 3 members of the public.

2025/59 To receive apologies for non-attendance

Apologies were received from Councillor Marshall.

2025/60 To receive declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2025/61 To receive & approve the Minutes of the last Parish Council meeting on 4th September 2025.

Minutes were received & approved by all councillors.

2025/62 Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

2025/63 Reports from Somerset Councillors

Councillor Kenton reported that Somerset Council is utilising a portion of its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to purchase up to 15 properties across the county, in an effort to address the growing demand for emergency housing. The HRA funding is ring-fenced and must be spent on housing-related purposes each year; currently, there is an underspend within the budget. The Council incurs significant costs in securing emergency accommodation through private landlords, and this initiative aims to reduce reliance on such arrangements. The allocated funds cannot be diverted to any other area of expenditure

The Slinky Bus service is available to individuals who are either unable to access a conventional bus stop or live in areas without a scheduled bus service. While there is a charge for all users—including those with concessionary bus passes—the service offers doorstep pick-up. Users must register and book journeys in advance, with bookings accepted up to two weeks ahead. Current fares are £4.40 (or £2.20 concessionary) for a return journey of up to 3 miles, and £5.40 (or £2.70 concessionary) for return journeys over 3 miles. Somerset Council is currently trialling a digital booking system for the service in selected areas.

Councillor Wale reported that Somerset Council has implemented a 12-week emergency action plan starting July 28, 2025, to address a significant backlog of planning applications. This is due to increased application volumes, staffing shortages, and legacy IT system issues after the move to a unitary authority. During this time applicants, councillors, and the public are asked not to chase updates on applications, planning officers will limit attendance at non-essential meetings & site visits are restricted to essential cases only. He also spoke about the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (2025). This is a flagship government initiative aimed at accelerating the delivery of new homes and critical infrastructure to support economic growth and meet clean energy targets.

Somerset Council is in a financial emergency with a projected £101 million deficit, they are taking drastic measures to cut costs and raise income. The council has approved a new phase of its “Improvement and Transformation Programme,” which includes bringing in a consultant partner to help identify and implement changes to improve efficiency and reduce costs. The aim is to get a return of at least £2.50 for every £1 invested over four years.

Somerset Council is consulting on proposals to standardise parking charges, including introducing Sunday charges and potentially charging in car parks that are currently free. The aim is to make the parking service self-funded and consistent across all towns.

To conclude, he announced that plans are underway for a new primary school and nursery, designed to accommodate approximately 250 children it will be sited within the grounds of Holyrood School.

2025/64 Planning

Application No	25/02031/FUL
Applicant	Mr & Mrs Mockford
Proposal	Change of use of land to extend the domestic garden to include a ground floor extension & to site ground mounted solar panels.
Location	Tanlake Cottage, Madgeon Lane, Otterford, Buckland St Mary, Somerset

A parishioner raised objections to the application, expressing concerns about the potential strain on the shared water supply and sewerage system. It was noted that the water supply had run extremely low in recent months; however, this was believed to be a result of the exceptionally dry summer. Following consideration of all comments and representations, the councillors unanimously resolved to approve the application.

2025/65 Finance

- i. The following payments were approved by all councillors:

BSM Village Hall Hire – 1 May 2025	£15.20
Clerks Salary & Expenses – October 2025	£469.82
Bradford's (A Every)	£117.30
B & Q (A Every)	£8.77
FOBS – (S137/CIL/Bequest)	£3500.00

- ii. The clerk shared the 2nd Quarter Year to Date Spend with all councillors

- iii. The clerk shared the Bank Reconciliation up to 30th September 2025 with all councillors

2025/66 Fish & Chip Van

Councillor Parsons previously proposed the possibility of having a fish & chip van come to the village to provide a complimentary meal for parishioners over the age of 70. All agreed that coinciding it with the Christmas light switch on in the village was a good idea. 28th November 2025 was proposed as a suitable date. Councillor Parsons agreed to look into costs, timings & availability.

2025/67 Parish Matters

Councillor Barton announced plans to hold a Christmas Bazaar this year, with the proposed date set for Saturday 29th November 2025. She also reported that the first issue of CBO Life is now live. Despite some initial delivery issues, spare copies are available in the church porch for those who have not yet received one.

Councillor Albon complained again about the surface dressing through the village. Clerk to send a complaint to Highways.

Councillor Every reported a sunken road on the road from Little Hill to Bishopswood. Clerk to report to the council.

2025/68 There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.05pm. The next meeting will take place on Thursday 6th November 2025.

N Parsons - Chair
6th November 2025

S Coombe – Clerk