

West Hill Parish Council Meeting 7th May 2024
Agenda Item: 24/140
Plan for 2024/25 and Organisation Structure

1. Background

The WHPC strap line is, “Working with the Community to maintain and enhance West Hill’s special character” and this is our steer as to what the Council does and how it does it.

One of the key words is ‘with’ and this Council seeks to put greater emphasis on this aspect – engaging with and working with residents to meet community needs now and into the future.

The Council consists of up to 7 Councillors, who give their time freely for the benefit of the community, supported by a part time Clerk. The Council has to be mindful of the realistic capacity it has to directly ‘do’. To achieve its plan the Council needs to work with others to ensure the delivery of benefits for the community: other organisations and the West Hill community. During the year, the Council hopes there will be the opportunity for members of the community to join some of our working groups.

2. What we do

As a Parish Council there are activities we must do and some that, within our powers, we have chosen to do for the benefit of the community following consultation with West Hill residents.

We have divided these activities into 6 groups:

- A. Maintain and enhance the built environment for present and future generations
- B. Maintain and enhance the natural environment for present and future generations
- C. To improve safety, including road safety, by working with residents and relevant agencies.
- D. To maintain and develop infrastructure and key facilities and other services that enhance the quality of life in the village.
- E. Support and engage with all sectors of the community
- F. Provide effective, efficient and accountable local government for the Parish.

The Parish Council undertakes numerous activities that could be described as ‘business as usual’ including such as:

- Ensuring good governance
- Being a statutory Consultee on all Planning Applications to the East Devon District Council,
- Providing input to various consultations from other agencies, and raising matters pertinent to the community with relevant agencies,
- Representation on other bodies, eg Exeter Airport Consultative Group,
- Providing Grant funding to local organisations and charities in their work in the community
- Publication of a regular informative newsletter to every household in West Hill
- And much, much more.

Other activities, such as the creation of a new pedestrian path linking West Hill Road to the Village Hall site, are long term strategic projects.

As the Council has limited resources it must consider how best to organise itself to ensure it meet its statutory obligations and deliver its plan.

3. Proposed Organisation Structure

The Council proposes to create Working Groups and/or Task+Finish Groups to focus on specific activities.

- 3.1. Protocol for Working Group and Task+ Finish Groups
 - a. In accord with WHPC Governance arrangements no Working Group, Task+Finish Group, or any subgroup will have any decision or spending ability – they are each to make

- recommendations based on their research, collation of facts etc to the full Council for decisions and budget provisions to be agreed.
- b. The working groups will operate within WHPC's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Local Government Law
 - c. Communication with external parties eg Devon County Council, East Devon District Council etc will be in accord with the WHPC Communications Policy and thus coordinated through the Parish Clerk.
 - d. Notes will be made available after any meeting held by a working group. A copy should be provided to the Clerk for record keeping. The notes or a report should be reported to the next Full Council meeting.
 - e. Working Groups have no budget.
 - f. It may be appropriate for members of the public to join specified Working Groups. In this instance co-option of members of the general public is welcomed, where individuals can add key skills or qualifications, relevant to the Working Group to which they wish to join. This will be by written request to the Clerk who will then add it to the full council agenda for full council resolution.

3.2. Proposed Working Groups

The functioning of the WHPC has to ensure good governance and in order to support that there will be two Standing Groups:

- a. **Finance WG** – this group is essential in ensuring good fiscal governance by WHPC.
- b. **HR + Policy Group** – this group will focus on employee matters, Code of Conduct matters and to support the Clerk in the processing of Complaints, Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests. This group will identify and draft additional policies required, as well as, ensuring the review and updating of current policies.

In addition, further groups will be established to focus on specific activities. Each Group will draft its Terms of Reference for approval by Full Council.

- c. **Strategic Planning Group** - EDDC is currently developing a new Local Plan for East Devon. This Group will monitor EDDC's progress to identify aspects of the proposed plan that may impact on West Hill. In due course, the Group will consider a start date to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for West Hill.
- d. **New Pedestrian Access to Village Hall Group** - This is an ongoing project. This is an example of working with others within the Community and there is an established Joint WHPC/Village Hall Trustees Working Group. The Group anticipate construction will take place during 2024.
- e. **Playpark WG** - this group will focus on operational and strategic issues relating to the West Hill children's playpark.
- f. **Road Safety WG** - This group will manage the Vehicle Activated Sign scheme, ensure regular updates on the impact of the Scheme and liaise with the Community Speed Watch.
- g. **Emergency Plan WG** - This is a new project to develop an Emergency Plan. The Group will liaise with external bodies and work with the Community to prepare the village in the event of an emergency.
- h. **Communications WG** - This group will focus on communication with the community.
- i. **Infrastructure WG** - To monitor the condition of West Hill infrastructure for which WHPC has accepted responsibility (excluding Playpark).
- j. **Remembrance Service T+F** - this Group will work with the Royal British Legion to provide a safe environment at the West Hill War Memorial for a public commemorative event organised by West Hill Parish Council on Remembrance Sunday.

3.3. Membership of Working Groups

The Council consists of 7 Councillors: Cllr Alison Carr (Chairman) (ACr), Cllr Francis Pullman (Vice-Chairman) (FP), Cllr Trevor Ingram (TI), Cllr Andrew Gorton (AG), Cllr Ann Cooper (AC), Cllr Shirley May Saunders (SMS)

Proposed Group Membership

Cllr	FP	TI	AG	SMS	AC	ACr	Vacancy	Clerk	TOR Agreed Y/N
Finance Group	Y				Y			Y	
HR + Policy	Y			Y				Y	
Strategic Planning		Y	Y	Y					
VH Pedestrian Path	Y			Y				Y	
Playpark		Y			Y				
Road Safety	Y	Y							
Emergency Plan	Y	Y	Y						
Communications		Y	Y						
Infrastructure	Y	Y							
Remembrance Service	Y				Y				

3.4. WHPC Representatives on External Bodies

The Parish Council is represented on outside bodies:

Airport Consultative Committee	Cllr FP	Police & Crime Commissioner Cllr Advocates	tba
Leisure East Devon (Ottery St Mary)	tba	Ottery Health Matters	tba
Community Safety Group	tba		

4. Decisions

Councillors are asked to approve:

- The WHPC 2024-5 Plan.
- The 2024-25 Working Groups, the membership and the Terms of Reference for each Group.
- To agree representation on outside bodies.
- To use the next WHPC newsletter to publish details of the plan and to seek community feedback.

Cllr Alison Carr (Chairman)

Cllr Francis Pullman (Vice-Chairman) 26th April 2024