

**WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 1st November 2022 AT 7.30PM**

Present:	Vice-Chairman Cllr Margaret Piper (MP), Cllr Stephen Owen (SO), Cllr Amanda Townsend (AT), Cllr Peter Bennett (PB), Cllr Alison Carr (AC),
In attendance:	Anne Oliver Parish Clerk, DCC/EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey, 4 members of the public attended the meeting
Apologies received from:	Chairman Cllr Della Cannings (DC)

AGENDA – ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Item (a)	Discussion and decisions (b)
22/321	<p>Welcome and Chairman’s announcements The meeting started at 7.30pm. As the Chairman was unable to attend the meeting Cllrs agreed that the Vice Chairman Cllr Piper would chair the meeting. Attendees were advised of technical problems with the microphone recording the meeting.</p> <p>It was announced that Cllr Alan Cook has decided to stand down as a Parish Councillor with immediate effect. Cllrs thanked Cllr Cook for his service to the community over many decades and in particular taking a key role in the development of the Village Hall in the 1980s. Cllrs wished him every success with the newly formed West Hill Arboretum Group.</p> <p>Action: Vice Chairman to send a letter of thanks to Cllr Cook on behalf of the Council.</p> <p>The vacancy will be advertised by the Parish Council.</p> <p>Cllrs were advised that Morrisons had just announced the closure of a further 132 McColls stores across the UK. It was confirmed that the West Hill store was not on the list of closures.</p>
22/322	<p>Apologies. To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence. Apologies from Cllr DC were noted and accepted.</p>
22/323	<p>Public question time (3 minutes) From 7.30pm residents are invited to give their views and question the Parish Council on issues on this agenda or raise issues for further consideration at the discretion of the Chairman, before the start of the Parish Council meeting. Members of the public may not take part in the Parish Council meeting itself. <i>Individual contributions are limited to 3 minutes.</i> This item includes issues submitted to the Clerk prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Two members of the public wished to speak</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> West Hill Footpath Warden, Eileen Perkins, reported that Devon County Council had written to a landowner regarding Japanese Knotweed on Footpath 7. However, the weeds were still present and it appears no action has been taken. Action: Cllrs agreed to contact the landowner in person to follow up the DCC letter. A member of the public asked a number of questions regarding the Draft East Devon Local Plan, in particular regarding housing targets and lack of infrastructure. It was explained that the further development at Cranbrook was already factored into the plan and would not reduce the East Devon housing target for the coming decades. Members of the public were encouraged to attend the WHPC drop-in “Local Plan” event on Friday 18th November, 3.45-8.00pm at the Village Hall.

22/324	<p>District and County Councillors' reports for information (items raised for decision will appear on the agenda for the next meeting)</p> <p>DCC/EDDC Cllr JB gave a short report to the meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDDC have decided to return to face to face meetings. The plans to livestream meetings or upload recordings were not finalised. • Local Plan – it was expected the Draft Local Plan will be available on the EDDC website on 7th November and a public consultation period would start. Cllr Bailey encouraged members of the public to get involved and submit their views. • The recent DCC bulletin highlighted the serious financial pressures on services. • Cllr Bailey's full report is available on the WHPC website DCC/EDDC Cllr Bailey - Report to West Hill Parish Council November 22
22/325	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Register of Interests: Councillors are reminded of the need to update their register of interests. b. To declare any personal interests in items on the agenda and their nature. To declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in items on the agenda and their nature (Councillors with DPIs must leave the room for the relevant items). <p>Cllrs MP, AT and AC each declared no interests. Cllr PB declared a pecuniary interest in item 22/340. He also declared a personal interest in items 22/341, 22/342+22/347 Cllr SO declared a personal interest in Item 22/328, planning application 22/2369/FUL as a family acquaintance.</p>
22/326	<p>Confidential/exempt items. In consideration of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted): to agree any items to be dealt with after the public and press have been excluded. Proposed items, to be considered in Part A and continued in Part B, if appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22/342 Seeking Resolution with a Resident <p>The Chairman proposed that this item should be discussed in public session but would revert to confidential session 22/347 for further consideration. In favour – Cllrs MP,AC,AT,SO Against - PB</p>
22/327	<p>Minutes: To approve and sign the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 4th October 2022 previously circulated. Four Cllrs voted in favour, one abstained. The minutes were approved and signed.</p>
22/328	<p>Planning Applications received</p> <p>22/2324/TRE Meadowgate West Hill Road EX11 1UZ Applicant Mr Amos Various treeworks: T1, Common Beech: Crown raise and reduce spread. T3, Common Beech: reduce height and radial spread of canopy. T4, Common Beech: Crown raise and reduce side of canopy. Cllrs noted the submission of a detailed arboricultural report supporting the proposed works. Cllrs supported the application.</p> <p>22/2325/TRE 6 Hayes End EX11 1GG Applicant Mr Rider T1, Lawson cypress : remove tree. T2, Lawson cypress :- remove tree Cllrs noted the submission of a detailed arboricultural report supporting the proposed works. Cllrs supported the application.</p> <p>22/2369/FUL Silverwood, Brackendown EX11 1NT Applicant Mr Cross Single storey rear extension, porch to front, garage link in-fill and single storey side and rear extensions to garage Cllrs supported the application.</p>

	<p>To confirm decision made under delegated powers to enable EDDC deadline to be met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22/1977/FUL White Chimneys Bendarroch Road EX11 1UW Applicant Mr Jeacock Installation of two air source heat pumps to heat the main house and annexe <p>Cllrs supported the application principle but raised concerns regarding noise levels of the devices. WHPC asked for consideration of the level of noise produced by the pumps and the impact on neighbours.</p> <p style="color: red;">Cllr PB reported that he had not received details of the application and did not have the opportunity to submit comments. The Chairman advised that notifications of planning applications are sent to all Cllrs via their email account.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22/2108/FUL Aloha Lower Broad Oak Road EX11 1XQ Applicant Mr Bruseker Two storey front extension, first floor rear extension, first floor side extension with alteration to fenestration, installation of detached garage with (home office/workshop) at first floor, proposed loft, removal of conservatory and garage, PV installation on South facing roof. <p>Cllrs submitted objections, primarily the adverse impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.</p> <p style="color: red;">Cllr PB reported that he had not received details of the application and did not have the opportunity to submit comments. The Chairman advised that notifications of planning applications are sent to all Cllrs via their email account.</p> <p style="color: red;">Both consultee comments were noted and confirmed.</p> <p style="color: red;">Cllr AC attended the EDDC Planning Committee meeting on behalf of WHPC to support the comments submitted on 22/1094/RES. In particular, Cllrs were concerned that the Arboricultural Reports considered with the application were several years out of date. The application was approved by EDDC.</p>
<p>22/329</p>	<p>Planning decisions received for information (*denotes WHPC differed)</p> <p>22/1832/TRE 11 Heather Grange West Hill Ottery St Mary EX11 1XZ Status: Decided* Various Treeworks</p> <p>22/2584/FUL Mount Houlditch Farm Toadpit Lane EX11 1LQ Status: Refused* Demolition of two barns and three outbuildings and the construction of a residential annexe ancillary to the main dwelling house, a pool house also ancillary to the main dwelling house and an extension to the house for a home office.</p> <p>22/1543/FUL Dene Lower Broad Oak Road EX11 1XH Status: Approved Single storey front, side, and rear extensions (with remodelling and alteration to fenestration) and erection of detached garage. (Partial demolition of existing house and garage.)</p> <p style="color: red;">All decisions were noted.</p>

WHPC Groups + Initiatives

<p>22/330</p>	<p>WHPC Strategic Planning Group:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To receive a verbal update on the progress of the Emerging East Devon Local Plan.
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	<p>A member of the WHPC Working Group, gave an update from the EDDC Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) meeting held earlier in the day. The SPC agreed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To hold a public consultation on the draft plan which will run from 7th November to 15th January 2023. • The Draft East Devon Local Plan document would be available on the EDDC website. • To support, in principle, the development of a new town in East Devon. <p>Cllrs encouraged the West Hill Community to attend the WHPC drop-in session in the Village Hall on Friday 18th November from 3.45 – 8.00pm. Local Plan information, including maps, will be displayed and councillors will be available to answer questions. Information specific to West Hill would be available. Cllrs urged members of the public to have their say and submit their comments directly to EDDC.</p> <p>Cllr PB stated that he had not received information. The Chairman advised that information is sent to all Cllrs via their email account and it is Cllr's choice whether they access it. The Chairman referred Cllr PB to decision 22/315, 4th October WHPC meeting.</p> <p>2. To confirm arrangements for the West Hill Community Drop-in Session on Friday 18th November.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to circulate the agreed rota for the meeting.</p> <p>3. To receive a verbal update on the request from Ottery St Mary Town Council who propose a review of the current Ottery St Mary & West Hill Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Cllr MP reminded Cllrs that a Neighbourhood Plan training session has been arranged for November 8th. This was in preparation for the 6th December meeting when they will consider a request from Ottery St Mary Town Council (OSMTC). OSMTC intend to review their neighbourhood plan and have asked if West Hill Parish Council wish to be part of the review.</p>
<p>22/331</p>	<p>Village Hall Pedestrian Link: To receive a verbal update on the application to EDDC and if approved, confirm arrangements for the Tendering process.</p> <p>An EDDC Planning decision on the Council's application for a variation to the approved layout for the pedestrian path was expected soon.</p> <p>Cllrs resolved to begin the Tender Process, subject to the EDDC decision.</p>
<p>22/332</p>	<p>Community Engagement Group:</p> <p>1. To receive an update on the October drop-in session.</p> <p>Cllr AC gave an update on the activities to encourage residents to consider becoming a Cllr at the Parish Council election in May 2023. A new page will be created on the Councils website which will be used to provide information on becoming a Councillor. Cllrs encouraged residents to attend the monthly Parish Council drop-in event at the RBL but were disappointed to note that no members of the public had attended the September or October events.</p> <p>Cllr PB expressed concern regarding a news item on the Council's website which included a video featuring Jackie Weaver. Cllr AC explained that this was a video provided by the National Association of Local Councils to encourage people to put themselves forward to be a Cllr.</p> <p>2. To confirm the training course booking for Cllrs Carr + Piper: Recruiting and retaining councillors £30pp + vat.</p> <p>It was resolved that Cllrs AC + MP should attend the training course at a cost of £60 +vat.</p>

	<p>3. To consider arrangements for the Annual Parish meeting on Friday 10th March 2024.</p> <p>It was resolved to adopt the format of the 2022 Annual Parish meeting: WHPC Chairman's report, short reports from village groups, DCC/EDDC, guest speaker, information boards plus refreshments. Cllrs were asked to suggest guest speakers for the event.</p>
<p>22/333</p>	<p>Remembrance Service 2022:</p> <p>1. To confirm arrangements and costs for the Remembrance Service on Sunday 13th November 2022 Cllr AC reported on a meeting with representatives of the Royal British Legion to finalise arrangements for Remembrance Service on Sunday 13th November, including road closure (School Lane), risk assessment and First Aiders.</p> <p>2. To confirm the WHPC representative(s) to attend the event. It was resolved Cllr AT or AC would represent the Parish Council at the service.</p> <p>3. To confirm the use of S137 monies for the donation for the WHPC Remembrance wreath. It was resolved to use S137 monies for a £50 donation to the RBL for the Remembrance wreath.</p>
<p>22/334</p>	<p>Finance Working Group:</p> <p>1. To consider a Financial Report for 1st Half 2022-2023.</p> <p>Cllrs considered a Finance Working Group paper circulated prior to the meeting. In particular, Cllr AC reported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council had incurred significant unbudgeted costs during the first half year such as an additional External Audit fee, £1,597.50 which were outside the Council's control. • S106 monies, approved by EDDC, were overdue <p>The Finance Working Group had analysed each area of the budget and prepared a detailed forecast for the year end:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A National Local Government pay award (effective from 1st Apr 2022) is expected to increase staff costs above budget. • Overall, the accounts were in good shape, however unbudgeted costs such as mediation with a resident may be incurred. These are expected to be funded from contingency funds. <p>2. To consider a draft budget for 2023-24. Cllr AC gave an overview of the assumptions used to prepare a draft budget for 2023-24: including inflation, staff costs, Neighbourhood Plan development costs (subject to Council decision). Cllrs also noted that the budget would cover the first year of the new Council to be elected in 2023-24. Provision for its projects plus several current projects had been considered.</p> <p>Cllrs noted the draft budget and agreed this would be updated for consideration at the next Council meeting on 6th December.</p> <p>3. To receive a review of WHPC Internal Financial Controls. It was resolved to adopt the amended WHPC Internal Financial Controls.</p> <p>4. To consider arrangements for the appointment of an Internal Auditor 2022-2023. The Clerk reported that an Internal Auditor had not yet been found and work would continue to identify suitable candidates. An update would be provided to the next Council meeting.</p> <p>5. To receive an update on S106 funding for the playpark equipment The Clerk reported that EDDC Cllr Bailey had made enquiries on WHPC's behalf and reported that the overdue S106 monies should be received in the coming weeks.</p>

	<p>6. To note the updated CIL schedule. The Clerk advised that this would be presented to the next meeting.</p>
22/335	<p>WHPC Arboretum Group: To note a progress report.</p> <p>Cllr MP gave an update. A promotional leaflet had generated interest in the formation of a West Hill Arboretum Group. At an inaugural meeting of interested residents the group agreed there was sufficient support for a viable community group. This group would be independent of the Parish Council. Cllr MP proposed that the WHPC Working Group had raised the profile of West Hill's woodland character and the community group would continue this work.</p> <p>It was resolved to suspend the WHPC Arboretum Working Group.</p>

Other Matters

22/336	<p>Clerks Report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To confirm decisions taken under Delegated Powers <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Clerk to attend DALC Conference + AGM £35.00+vat b. Clerk to attend two training courses 2x£30+vat <p style="text-align: center;">Noted and confirmed</p> 2. Action points from previous WHPC meetings <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. EDDC Tree Officer recruitment: EDDC have filled two of three vacancies. b. Outstanding Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid Memorial Tree – St Michael's Church PCC have chosen to plant a heritage apple tree. This will be planted in the community garden area during November/December. 3. Matters arising <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Letter from South West Ambulance Service Trust (SWAST): WHPC received a letter from SWAST thanking the Parish Council for the purchase of an additional kit for the West Hill Community Responders team. b. Morrisons response to WHPC: WHPC received an acknowledgement to its letter to the Morrisons CEO in support of the West Hill store. c. EDDC Transfer of Assets Procedure: Cllrs consider the EDDC scheme and noted the assets in West Hill: a storm drain. Cllrs did not accept a transfer to WHPC. d. Lengthsman <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 2023 Contract: has been signed by both parties b. Work completed October: included verge cutting, cleaning and clearing road signs of vegetation. c. Road Signs in need of repair: a number of damaged signs were reported to DCC Highways + EDDC. 4. Resident Communications <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Road safety at junction of West Hill Road + Lower Broad Oak Road <p>Cllrs considered a resident's email expressing concern about road safety at the junction due to parked cars and traffic speeds. Cllrs were aware that this had been a long-standing problem which had been discussed with Highways who advised "no action".</p> <p>Cllr PB stated that cars were parked dangerously. Cllr MP noted that residents were encouraged to report dangerously parked cars to the Police as the relevant authority.</p> 5. Any urgent matters arising <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Devon Communities Together AGM 3rd November 2022 <p>No Councillor was available to attend the AGM.</p>
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22/337	<p>WHPC Half Year Review of WHPC Plan for 2022/23</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the Half Year Review 2. To consider priorities for the next six months and agree these. <p>Cllrs noted the review (available on the WHPC website).</p> <p>Cllrs considered the priorities for the 2nd half of the Council year. Comments included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We don't have the capacity to take on more projects - The Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan is a huge commitment <p>The following priorities were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Devon Local Plan • Neighbourhood Plan • 'Become a Councillor' campaign • Village Hall pedestrian path project. <p>Cllrs considered membership of the Working Groups following Cllr Cooks resignation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Village Hall Pedestrian Path WG – Cllr AC to join the group - Remembrance Service – replacement not required - Exeter Airport Committee – Cllr MP or Cllr AT subject to availability.
22/338	<p>West Hill Playpark:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To consider and approve, if appropriate, an amended WHPC playpark notice Cllrs approved a revised Playpark Notice subject to the agreed changes. 2. To receive the annual RoSPA playpark inspection report and consider remedial actions, if required. Cllrs noted the RoSPA report (previously circulated). All of the equipment had been inspected and rated as Low/Very Low risk except the Playboat where the risk rating had been increased to Medium. Cllrs agreed no actions were required as the decision had previously been taken to remove the playboat. <p>Cllr PB requested a copy of the RoSPA report. Cllr MP explained that the report had been circulated to all Cllrs via their email account. Cllr PB requested a new password for his Council email account.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To receive "blue sky" options for additional playpark equipment. Cllrs considered proposals from three equipment suppliers which set out their ideas for how the space created by the removal of the playboat could be used to provide new play activities. Cllrs thanked the suppliers and in particular noted their suggestions for an all-weather surface. Cllrs also noted the proposed equipment designed for younger children as they were not currently well served. Cllr AT felt that all primary school age groups should be considered. <p>Cllrs considered whether this project could be postponed until the new Council is in place. It was felt that this would lead to an unacceptable delay in the installation of new equipment. It was agreed to begin the preliminary stages of the project.</p> <p>It was resolved, in principle,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To replace the Playboat with new equipment including an all-weather surface b. To use S106 monies for the purchase of new playpark equipment and all-weather surface. <p>Action: The Clerk to contact EDDC to confirm the S106 process including the requirements for a public consultation.</p>
22/339	<p>To consider preparations for West Hill events to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III on 6th May 2023.</p>

	<p>Cllr MP proposed to hold a meeting in January with community groups, organisations and interested members of the public to share ideas for village events. All Cllrs agreed to the proposal.</p>
22/340	<p>To receive a Cllrs request to take the annual Members Allowance, £305. Cllr PB left the room</p> <p>Cllrs noted the receipt of a request from a councillor to take the annual Members Allowance of £305. Cllr MP advised that Parish Councils Policy provides the allowance to cover expenses such as telephone, stationery etc. She noted that in recent years WHPC members have not taken the allowance and when the current year budget was set all councillors opted to remove the provision for the allowance. She advised the claim would have to be met from contingency.</p> <p>Cllrs were reminded that a Members Allowance for any council is subject to Tax/NI where applicable and is processed through the Council's payroll, so anyone wishing to take the allowance will have to provide the necessary information as required by HMRC.</p> <p>Cllr MP asked each Cllr if they wished to claim the allowance: Yes – Cllr PB No - Cllrs MP, AC, AT, SO</p>
22/341	<p>Complaint: To note the outcome of the review of the complaint against the Clerk. Cllr MP reported the complaint was processed according to the Parish Council's complaints policy by the chairman and one other councillor. The outcome was that the complaint was not upheld and that the matter is now closed.</p>
22/342	<p>Seeking Resolution with a Resident: To receive a briefing paper and to consider next steps. Cllr MP stated that the Council was committed to seeking resolution with a resident concerning a long running issue stretching back over several years. She commented "This is stressful and distressing to all involved, it is taking up far too much of limited council time and resources, and it cannot continue."</p> <p>All Cllrs agreed to consider a briefing paper detailing several mediation service providers, options and costs in confidential session, Part B.</p> <p>Cllr PB returned to the meeting.</p>
22/343	<p>Police Matters: To receive the monthly West Hill crime stats: August 2022 if available (for information) Noted</p> <p>Two members of the public left the meeting.</p>
22/344	<p>Financial matters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To consider and approve the Schedule of Payments for WHPC 1st November 2022 <p>The Clerk presented two additional invoices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. PLG Services – VAS Transfers £91.20 11. Village Hall – Room Hire (Oct) £20.25 <p>All payments approved and signed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To receive if available: WHPC Finance Tracker, Bank reconciliation September 2022 All noted and signed
22/345	<p>Councillor questions, reports and items for future agenda Each Councillor is requested to use this opportunity to report minor matters of information not included elsewhere on the agenda and to raise items for future agendas. <i>Councillors are respectfully reminded that this is not an opportunity for debate or decision making.</i></p> <p>Cllr PB presented a claim for reimbursement for two invoices.</p>

	<p>Cllr MP explained that the expenditure had not been approved by Council and the Council did not provide ipads (or such) to Cllrs to conduct their Council business (Ref 4th October WHPC meeting 22/315).</p> <p>Cllrs did not approve the claim for reimbursement.</p>
22/346	<p>Next meeting: To confirm arrangements for the next WHPC ordinary meeting Tuesday 6th December 2022 7.30pm at the Village Hall.</p> <p>Cllr PB, DCC/EDDC Cllr JB and all members of the public left the meeting.</p>

Part A of the meeting ended at 21.18pm.

Part B began at 21.18pm

Part B

Confidential/exempt items. In consideration of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted): to agree any items to be dealt with after the public and press have been excluded.

22/347	<p>Seeking Resolution with a Resident: To receive a briefing paper and to consider next steps.</p> <p>Cllrs considered a briefing paper detailing proposals from several mediation service providers, risk assessment, options and costs.</p> <p>Cllrs resolved to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - commit to seek resolution - appoint a mediator - delegate the Chairman and Clerk to carry out pre-mediation with the mediator - set a capped budget for the mediation process - seek to start the process as soon as possible.
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Part B ended at 22.18pm

The meeting closed at 22.20pm.

Signed: *Anne Oliver*, Clerk to the Council, 3rd November 2022