

**WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021 AT 7.30PM**

**\*\* The meeting was held by video-conference due to the Covid-19 situation**

Present:	Chairman Cllr Margaret Hall (MH), Cllr Alison Carr (AC), District Cllr/WHPC Cllr Jessica Bailey (JB), Cllr Della Cannings (DC), Cllr Margaret Piper (MP), Cllr Amanda Townsend (AT), Cllr Alan Cook (ABC)
In attendance: Apologies received from:	Anne Oliver Parish Clerk, eight members of the public attended the meeting DCC Cllr Claire Wright (CW)

**AGENDA – ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

Item (a)	Discussion and decisions (b)
21/145	<p><b>Welcome and Chairman’s announcements</b> The meeting started at 7.30PM. The Chair MH welcomed everyone and reminded everyone that the meeting was being sound recorded.</p>
21/146	<p><b>Apologies.</b> To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence. Apologies were received from DCC Cllr Claire Wright.</p>
21/147	<p><b>Public question time (3 minutes per speaker)</b> 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. This item included issues submitted to the Clerk prior to the meeting.  Attendees expressed an interest in item 21/153. No members of the public asked to speak during the public session.</p>
21/148	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Register of Interests: Councillors are reminded of the need to update their register of interests.</li> <li>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).</li> </ol> <p>Cllrs expressed a personal interest as registered patients at Coleridge Medical Centre (ref planning item 21/0927/FUL) but would take part in discussion. Cllrs MH, ABC, AC, DC, AT, MP - no further interests declared. Cllr JB declared an interest as an EDDC District Cllr, a member of the Planning Committee (any comments made are preliminary only) and as a candidate for Devon County Council election. Cllr JB declared a personal interest as a friend of a neighbour (ref 21/0400/TRE) but would take part in discussion. All noted and accepted.</p>
21/149	<p><b>Confidential/exempt items. In consideration of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960</b> (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. N/A</p>

**21/153**  
Brought  
forward

**Chairman suspended Standing Orders** to enable residents to raise questions on this matter  
**Chairman brought forward item 21/153**

To receive an update on planning matters:

- Land to the north of Oak Road: To consider a letter from Morrish Homes received on 19th April 2021.

Cllr MH reported the Parish Council had received a letter from Morrish Homes regarding land to the north of Oak Road. The letter outlined

- a. the Morrish Homes submission to the EDDC Local Plan Review “call for sites” - an outline proposal for “a small-scale housing development of 35 homes”.
- b. a desire to engage with the community.
- c. A proposed public exhibition at the Village Hall on 10<sup>th</sup> September
- d. A request to use the “Woodland Village” image on the WHPC website

Householders in the vicinity of the site had also received letters from Morrish Homes outlining their proposal. Many residents had contacted the Council on this matter and several had attended the Council meeting.

The Clerk read out a letter on behalf of a resident outlining their concerns regarding the proposal, the current Local Plan, Built Up Area Boundary (BUAB) and expected timetable for the Local Plan Review.

Cllrs urged residents to share their comments directly with Morrish Homes via their dedicated website or email address

- [Morrish Homes | Oak Road, West Hill Land Opportunity](#)
- [info@oakroadwesthill.co.uk](mailto:info@oakroadwesthill.co.uk)

The agent for Morrish Homes, attending the meeting, offered to answer any questions from the village residents at the meeting. No matters were raised.

#### **Chairman resumed Standing Orders**

Cllrs expressed concern regarding the timing of the Morrish Homes letter. Other Developers have not contacted the Parish Council at this stage. Cllr ABC felt it was inappropriate to engage with a developer at this moment as EDDC will, in due course, seek the Parish Council views on all of the West Hill sites submitted to the Local Plan Review. Cllr JB stressed the Local Plan Review process will identify how many homes West Hill will be expected to accommodate and once this is known the Council and residents will be in a better position to evaluate developer proposals. Cllr MH agreed that the Morrish Homes letter was premature and not aligned to the Local Plan Review process and timetable. She noted 12 West Hill sites have been proposed and WHPC needed to be fair to all Developers and suggested it would be appropriate to invite them to an event to engage the public and inform Cllrs later in the Local Plan Review process, when there is more information about the likely number of houses that West Hill will have to accommodate.

Cllr MP raised concerns specific to the proposed scheme. In particular the scheme is described as “low density”, whereas she suggested it would be a high density development for West Hill and out of character. Cllr ABC supported this view and raised concerns regarding the impact on trees.

Cllr DC proposed that the Council doesn't approve the use of the website image as this could be construed as support for Morrish Homes. Cllr ABC noted that copyright of the image belongs to an individual outside the Council, and therefore the Council cannot give permission for its use.

	<p><b>It was agreed</b> to write to Morrish Homes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expressing the Council's wish to treat all Developers fairly and not engage with Morrish Homes at this stage.</li> <li>• Declining their request to use the WHPC website image.</li> </ul> <p>Cllr MH thanked the public for attending the meeting.</p>
<p><b>21/150</b></p>	<p><b>Planning Applications received</b></p> <p><b>21/0923/FUL</b> Brackenbed Bendarroch Road EX11 1JY Applicant Mrs E Erwin Construction of front porch, alterations to roof design and provision of new external materials.</p> <p>Cllrs supported the application.</p> <p><b>21/0940/FUL</b> Banjul Toadpit Lane EX11 1LQ Applicants Mr+Mrs Ali-Hassan Construction of single storey rear extensions</p> <p>Cllrs supported the application.</p> <p><b>21/0927/FUL</b> Bendarroch House Bendarroch Road EX11 1JY Applicant Dr S Kerr Construction of greenhouse</p> <p>Cllrs supported the application in principle but raised the following concerns:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The application states the greenhouse is sited close to the boundary and in close proximity with a neighbour's tree requiring branches to be removed. Cllrs expressed concerns that the footings and groundworks for the large greenhouse will adversely affect the tree roots.</li> <li>b. The application states the large greenhouse is sited very close to the boundary which could adversely affect the neighbour's amenity.</li> </ol> <p>Cllrs ask if an alternative location, a little further from the boundary, would be feasible.</p> <p><b>21/0914/FUL</b> Samguri Bendarroch Road EX11 1TS Applicant Ms C Hunt Construction of two storey side and rear extension and single storey side extension</p> <p>Cllrs were disappointed to note that the application was partly retrospective as groundworks have been undertaken.</p> <p>The Parish Council considered a letter from a neighbouring property and supported the concerns raised regarding the overbearing impact of the proposed extension and resultant loss of light.</p> <p>Cllrs did not support the application for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Groundworks have already begun.</li> <li>b. The scale of the proposed extension is very significant when compared to the existing property resulting in over-development of the site.</li> <li>c. The extension will have a considerable adverse impact on the neighbouring property, The Vee. The relative ground levels across the neighbouring properties exacerbate the problems of overbearing and loss of light. Cllrs expressed concern that the submitted plans did not include information on ground levels for the property and neighbouring properties.</li> <li>d. The proposed extension would encroach on the tree lined southern boundary of the site, adjoining West Hil Road. The roots of these mature trees are already compromised by the road and building works could impose further stress on them. The trees are a significant feature in character of the area forming part of a tree-lined avenue, typical of the village as set out in the Neighbourhood Plan.</li> </ol> <p>Cllrs ask for an arboricultural assessment on the application plus EDDC Tree Officers to be consulted on this application.</p>

**21/0400/TRE** The Vicarage Bendarroch Road

Various tree works: G1, row of leylandii : reduce back to previous height where they were cut to create a hedgerow. Where necessary replant if inadequate vegetation is left. T2 and T3 : fell hollies as low amenity value and crowding other trees. T4, Cherry : fell limbs/stem growing over The Ridings that are currently covered in ivy due to poor health. T5, Ash : fell due to showing signs of ash dieback in the crown. T6 and T8, Oaks : crown lift lowest branches or reduce back where possible to open up garden and reduce crowding of smaller plants/trees. T7, Oak : crown lift over driveway to standard highway clearance.

Councillors considered the amended plan.

The Parish Council considered a letter and photograph from a neighbouring property and supported their concerns regarding the resultant height of the hedge and timing of the works.

Cllrs supported the application, subject to

- a. The resultant height of the hedge to be stated and the neighbour consulted
- b. Works to be scheduled for the autumn, post nesting season.

**DCC/3944/2017** Straitgate Farm, Exeter Road EX111LG Applicant Aggregate Industries UK Ltd

Extraction of up to 1.5 million tonnes of as raised sand and gravel, restoration to agricultural land together with temporary change of use of a residential dwelling to a quarry office/welfare facility.

This application is on the boundary of the two parishes and vehicles serving this proposal would have to travel along a road partially in West Hill.

Cllrs agreed that comments previously submitted in 2017 still apply:

- grave concerns about the loss of amenity due to the removal of trees and hedgerows, these are very old with a diverse range of species, although remedial planting would ultimately repair the damage this would take tens of years;
- grave concerns about the visual impact upon a rural and beautiful part of our village especially as it will be very visible from the A30 and Barrack Road. It would seriously affect the first impressions of visitors and potential residents;
- grave concerns over safety of 44 tonne lorries in Birdcage Lane and turning into Barrack Road, the latter has fast moving traffic and we feel that there would be real danger of accidents. A quiet rural part of our village will be industrialised. Massive lorries will damage the lane, hedges and verges will be destroyed, people and wildlife will be under threat from the constant flow of heavy vehicles. The topography of Barrack Road means that cars and bicycles may be invisible to turning lorries. These will be slow moving in an area where there is no speed limit.
- concerns about the sustainability of taking the minerals 23 miles to be processed and that vehicles might use minor roads which would cause considerable nuisance and road safety issues.
- We assume that the Environment Assessment will attempt to mitigate the wildlife issues but feel that the impact upon the diverse wildlife will be catastrophic.

In addition, Cllrs expressed concerns that much of the information submitted in response to the Regulation 22 queries is out of date due to the lengthy application timescales. In particular:

- the Transport Assessment, does not reflect traffic associated with recent housing development including Kings Reach, and was completed in 2018. Also accident statistics do not reflect the period post 2016.
- The Transport Assessment states that there is “no need to intensify cattle crossings”, which is incorrect if the farmer wishes to maintain his dairy herd. They will need to be kept on fields south of the B3174, and move across the road 4 times a day to access the milking parlour. The Public Health England concerns about dust management have not been adequately addressed.

	West Hill Parish Council considers that the proposal should be refused for the reasons stated above.
21/151	<p><b>Planning decisions received</b> for information (*denotes WHPC differed)</p> <p><b>20/2442/FUL</b> Land At Higher Metcombe Farm Higher Metcombe <b>Approved</b> Change of use of land to include equine use and construction of field shelter and store. <b>Noted</b></p>
21/152	<p><b>TPO notifications</b> - for information n/a</p>
21/153	<p>To receive an update on <b>planning matters</b>:</p> <p>Land to the north of Oak Road: To consider a letter from Morrish Homes received on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021. <b>See earlier item.</b></p>

### Coronavirus

21/154	<p>To consider the impact of Legislation permitting councils to hold <b>remote meetings</b> ending on 7th May 2021, in particular to consider the arrangements for Council and Committee meetings taking into account covid guidance.</p> <p>a. To consider the WHPC Risk Assessment for the return to in-person meetings b. The proposed meeting schedule, including the Annual Parish Meeting</p> <p>a. Cllrs noted WHPC will not be able to hold virtual Council meetings after the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021. In preparation for a return to in-person meetings Cllrs considered a checklist recommended by NALC and SLCC which covered business need, venue, safer workplace legislation, risk assessment and actions to reduce risk.</p> <p>Cllrs then considered a draft Risk Assessment for In-person Council Meetings (at the Village Hall) prepared by the Clerk and Chairman. This took into account the Risk Assessment prepared by the Village Hall Trustees.</p> <p>Cllrs considered the impact of returning to in-person meetings on the Clerk. The Clerk thanked Cllrs for their concern and confirmed that she had been consulted and was willing to return to in person meetings. Cllr AC proposed it was unreasonable for the Clerk to carry out the room preparation pre/post meeting including cleaning. Cllr DC asked if someone could be employed to do this. Cllrs suggested a Cllr rota to assist the Clerk.</p> <p><b>Cllrs agreed to</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return to in-person Council meetings at the Village Hall.</li> <li>• Adopt the risk reduction measures set out in the Risk Assessment</li> <li>• Finalise the checklist assessment at the WHPC meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> May.</li> <li>• Approve the WHPC Risk Assessment for In-person Council Meetings at the WHPC meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> May, subject to the addition of a QR code.</li> <li>• Agree a rota for venue preparation pre/post meeting (moving/cleaning furniture)</li> </ul> <p>b. Following DALC advice Cllrs considered the upcoming meeting schedule and what could be done to in order to reduce risk and the Clerk's workload.</p> <p><b>Cllrs agreed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To restrict the WHPC Full Council meeting schedule to one meeting per month for 3 months.</li> <li>• The dates for the meeting were confirmed as 1<sup>st</sup> June, 6<sup>th</sup> July, 3<sup>rd</sup> August.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To suspend the Open Spaces Committee (OSC) and cancel meetings for May and June.</li> <li>• To delegate OSC operational matters to The Clerk as per the WHPC Scheme of Delegation.</li> <li>• To review the period of delegated OSC operational matters and assess the ongoing organisational and schedule requirements at the WHPC meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July.</li> <li>• Planning applications would continue to be dealt with during Full Council meetings. If deadlines for comments cannot be achieved, planning comments will be gathered by email, following the procedure in the WHPC Scheme of Delegation</li> </ul> <p>c. <b>Cllrs agreed to cancel the 2021 Annual Parish Meeting.</b></p>
<p><b>21/155</b></p>	<p>To discuss the impact on <b>WHPC plans for 2021/22:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Priorities for work programme 2021/22</li> <li>b. Clerk's workload</li> <li>c. Working Groups and Committee</li> <li>d. Committee and working group membership and structure in the Council year 2021/22</li> </ul> <p>Following DALC advice Cllrs considered the upcoming work programme and what could be done to in order to reduce risk and the Clerk's workload.</p> <p>Cllrs had a lengthy discussion regarding the methodology and scope for the Slide Working Group. Contrary views were expressed particularly relating to the Playpark Lease and Playboat. Cllr MH noted that conflicting decisions had been made at the Open Spaces Committee and Full Council. Cllr ABC, Chair of the OSC, stated that the OSC minutes were incorrect (23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 2021) and were decisions were taken under duress. However they were approved at the OSC meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021, and at Full Council on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021.</p> <p><b>Cllrs agreed</b> the Slide WG should continue research into the feasibility of installing a slide in the Playpark. Terms of Reference to be confirmed at the WHPC meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> May.</p> <p><b>Cllrs agreed</b> the following:</p> <p>Open Spaces Committee – suspend (as per 21/154 above)</p> <p>Operational, ongoing Working Groups (WGs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance WG – continue on ad hoc basis.</li> <li>• People &amp; Policy WG – continue on ad hoc basis.</li> <li>• Traffic WG – continue as an ongoing project for VH path. VAS and other Highways matters - as required</li> <li>• Community Events WG – currently only Remembrance Day – to continue in preparation for 2021 events</li> <li>• Planning Policy (Local Plan, AONB) – continue on ad hoc basis.</li> </ul> <p>Project WGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Engagement / Community Survey – continue planning &amp; design for survey in September.</li> <li>• Emergency Plan –postpone until July.</li> <li>• First Responders – cancel – work to be led by SW Ambulance Trust</li> <li>• Open Spaces – cancel</li> <li>• Slide/Play park –feasibility/scoping work to continue.. TOR to be agreed.</li> <li>• Trees – continue research &amp; develop Action Plan.</li> </ul> <p>WGS + Committee Membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will be finalised at the 4<sup>th</sup> May WHPC meeting.</li> </ul>

<b>21/156</b>	To consider the WHPC response to the <b>Government’s Call for Evidence</b> regarding virtual Council meetings.  <b>Cllrs agreed</b> to respond to the Call for Evidence. Cllr MP to draft a response.
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**Committee & Working Groups**

<b>21/157</b>	<p><b>Finance Working Group:</b> For information</p> <p>a. To consider the findings of the review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control The Clerk reported the 2021-22 Internal Audit had been completed and report circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. The audit report no matters of concern.  Cllr MP noted the Auditor had complimented the current and previous Clerk on the detailed record keeping and controls.  As previously reported, as per best practice, a new Auditor will be sought for the 2021-22 audit as the current auditor, Paul Hayward, has been in place since 2018.  Cllrs thanked Paul for his thoroughness and support to the Council.</p> <p>b. To receive an update on the 2021/22 end of year Financials.  The Clerk reported the AGAR return will be completed and presented for approval at the WHPC meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> May.</p> <p>c. To consider a recommendation for the Cyber Insurance renewal 2021-22, £319.20 incl tax.  The Finance Working Group had reviewed the renewal documentation and recommended approval.  <b>Cllrs agreed</b> the 2021-22 renewal of the Cyber Insurance policy at a cost of £319.20.</p>
<b>21/158</b>	<p><b>Traffic Study Working Group</b></p> <p>a. To approve the VAS schedule for Apr-Aug 2021. <b>Noted and approved</b></p> <p>b. To approve the VAS report , highlighting B3180 data, to be submitted to the Penninsular Road Safety Partnership. <b>Noted and approved</b></p> <p>c. Proposed pedestrian path: To receive an update on the Memorandum of Understanding between WHPC and Village Hall Trustees ((if received). Cllr MH reported</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. the revised MOU had not yet been received.</li> <li>ii. In preparation for the planning application the Ecology site survey had been completed and the report is awaited.</li> </ol> <p><b>Noted.</b></p>

**Other Matters**

<b>21/159</b>	To consider requesting a Devon and Cornwall Police <b>Cyber Security briefing</b> . <b>Noted and agreed.</b>
<b>21/160</b>	To consider membership of the <b>Community Safety Group</b> (CSG) for East Devon (formerly the Local Area Group). <b>Cllrs agreed</b> to join the Community Safety Group and Cllr DC kindly agreed to represent WHPC in the Cranbrook and Ottery St Mary Group.



<b>21/161</b>	To consider the <b>UK Community Renewal Fund 2021-2022</b> Cllrs considered the fund and did not identify an appropriate WHPC scheme.
<b>21/162</b>	<b>Street Trading Licence Application:</b> To consider an application for the renewal of the street trading licence for The Wandering Pig. Cllrs were not aware of any complaints regarding The Wandering Pig and supported renewal of the licence.
<b>21/163</b>	<p><b>Clerks Report: Actions and matters arising from the last meeting</b></p> <p>1. <b>Actions, incl outstanding action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outstanding actions will be reported at WHPC 4<sup>th</sup> May.</li> </ul> <p>2. <b>Matters arising</b></p> <p>a. Resident communication</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">i. Playpark Cllrs noted a resident communication reporting anti-social behaviour on the Village Hall site including the Playpark. As the matter had been referred to the Police no further action would be taken.</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">ii. Complaint to EDDC Monitoring Officer (ref Minute 21/090) Cllrs noted a resident communication requesting information. As this was an EDDC matter the resident was referred to EDDC.</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">iii. Home Instead (Exeter) Cllrs considered a request from an organisation to be a Parish Community link. Cllrs declined the request as it would be inappropriate to establish this link with a commercial company.</p> <p>b. Any urgent matters arising.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To approved WHPC website Annual Fees £395+vat <b>Noted and approved</b></li> </ul>
<b>21/164</b>	<p><b>Finance and Invoices Tracker</b></p> <p>Invoices received for approval:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PGL Services – VAS transfers (March) £76++vat</li> <li>2. PGL Services – Grass Cutting £57+vat</li> <li>3. Cosmic – WHPC annual fee £395+vat</li> </ol> <p>Plus, (ref 21/157 and 21/163)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Came and Co – Cyber Insurance Renewal 2021-2022 £319.20</li> </ol> <p><b>Noted and approved</b></p>
<b>21/165</b>	<p><b>Councillors questions, reports and items for future agenda</b></p> <p>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 AT advised that she had prepared a briefing paper on Remembrance 2021 Events for consideration at WHPC 4<sup>th</sup> May.</p> <p>Cllr JB advised she had completed various action points and would update Cllrs at the WHPC 4<sup>th</sup> May meeting.</p>
<b>21/166</b>	<b>Next meeting:</b> To confirm the date of the next meeting (by video-conference) which is scheduled for Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 for the Annual Meeting, followed by an Ordinary Meeting.

Signed: *Anne Oliver*, Clerk to the Council, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021