

**WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025 AT 7.00pm**

Present:	Chairman Cllr Francis Pullman (FP), Cllr ShirleyMay Saunders (SMS), Cllr Trevor Ingram (TI), Cllr Ann Cooper (AC), Cllr Ben Jewell (BJ)
In attendance:	Anne Oliver Parish Clerk, 5 members of the public, DCC/EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey
Apologies:	N/A

Item (a)	Discussion and decisions (b)
<b>25/334</b>	<p><b>Welcome and Chairman's announcements</b> The meeting started at 7.00pm. The Chairman, Cllr FP, welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chairman's announcements included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reminder of the Remembrance Events in West Hill: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November 10.15am at War Memorial. 10.45am at St Michael's Church.</li> <li>○ Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November road closure in the vicinity of the War Memorial 9.30am – 11.00am</li> <li>○ Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November Armistice Day 10.45am at the War Memorial</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A short report on the Informal Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2025 to consider responses to the Neighbourhood Plan Community Survey. (Ref Agenda Item 25/346).</li> </ul>
<b>25/335</b>	<p><b>Apologies.</b> To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence, if considered appropriate. N/A</p>
<b>25/336</b>	<p><b>Public question time (3 minutes):</b> To allow members of the public present to give their question/comments to 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>Contributions are limited to 3 minutes</i>).</p> <p>West Hill Footpath Warden, Eileen Perkins, gave a status report and informed the meeting of the maintenance issues (Footpaths 6 and 87) reported to Devon County Council Public Rights of Way team for action.</p>
<b>25/337</b>	<p><b>District and County Councillors' reports:</b> To receive reports for information (items raised for decision will appear on the agenda for the next meeting). This item was deferred until 7.46pm when Cllr JB joined the meeting.</p> <p>DCC/EDDC Cllr Bailey's report included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- During November the County, District and City authorities will decide their separate proposals for Local Government Reform in Devon prior to submission to the Government by 28<sup>th</sup> November. It was expected that the Government will hold a public consultation on the proposals during 2026.</li> <li>- East Devon District Council had refused planning application 24/1761/MFUL Higher Metcombe.</li> <li>- As Chair of the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Bailey had called for an Extraordinary Meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>25/338</b>	<p>To receive <b>Declarations of interest</b> for items on the agenda and receipt of requests for new Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) dispensations for items on the agenda.</p> <p>Cllr BJ noted his partner was a member of the PTFA committee but declared no interests in agenda 25/347 (grant application) or other agenda item as they were not directly affected by the decision.</p>

	<p>CLLrs FP, AC, SMS and TI declared no interests.</p> <p>Members are also reminded that any change to their Declaration of Interests must be notified to the Monitoring Officer at East Devon District Council within 28 days of the change.</p>								
25/339	<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. <b>Proposed: 25/357</b> Lengthsman Contract 2026 <b>Agreed</b></p>								
25/340	<p><b>Minutes:</b> To receive the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of <b>7<sup>th</sup> October 2025</b> (Minute 25/306 -25/333) and to approve the signing of the Minutes by the Chairman as a true record. <b>The minutes of the meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> October 2025 (Minute 25/306 -25/333) were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.</b></p>								
25/341	<p><b>Planning Applications received:</b> None received</p>								
25/342	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;"><b>Planning decisions received</b> for information (*denotes WHPC differed)</td><td style="text-align: right;">EDDC <u>Decision</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>25/1850/FUL Tifundle Toadpit Lane West Hill EX11 1TR Single storey extension on West elevation and replacement of existing flat roofs with new raised pitched roof.....</td><td style="text-align: right;">Approved</td></tr> <tr> <td>25/1706/VAR Mulberry House Higher Broad Oak Road West Hill EX11 1XJ Variation of Condition number 2 - Proposal to relocate the consented garage further back into the site.</td><td style="text-align: right;">Approved</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>All noted</b></td></tr> </table>	<b>Planning decisions received</b> for information (*denotes WHPC differed)	EDDC <u>Decision</u>	25/1850/FUL Tifundle Toadpit Lane West Hill EX11 1TR Single storey extension on West elevation and replacement of existing flat roofs with new raised pitched roof.....	Approved	25/1706/VAR Mulberry House Higher Broad Oak Road West Hill EX11 1XJ Variation of Condition number 2 - Proposal to relocate the consented garage further back into the site.	Approved	<b>All noted</b>	
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#### WHPC Groups + Initiatives

25/343	<p><b>Finance Working Group:</b></p> <p>a. To receive a Financial Report for 1st Half 2025-2026 and to agree actions.  <b>The Finance working group presented a financial report for April-September 2025. The meeting noted that the end of year operational expenditure was forecast to be marginally above Precept and the explanation provided. Also, as planned, during 2025 the Council had used Earmarked Reserves to fund the Village Hall Path and Neighbourhood Plan projects. The meeting accepted the report and members agreed that they would seek to manage costs within Precept.</b></p> <p><b>It was resolved</b> to publish the report on the Council's website.</p> <p>b. To consider a draft budget for 2026-27 and to agree actions/amendments.  <b>The meeting considered a paper circulated prior to the meeting. The Finance working group presented a 1<sup>st</sup> draft budget for 2026-27 and explained their key underlying assumptions. The provisional budget total for 2026-27 operational costs showed a 5% increase. Each line of the current budget had been reviewed together with an assessment of forecast reserves available at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. It was assumed all projects would be funded from reserves.</b></p> <p>No questions or concerns were raised.  <b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The Finance Working Group to present a 2nd draft budget for considerations at the next scheduled Council meeting.</li> <li>o All Councillors to provide their comments on the 1<sup>st</sup> draft budget and outline funding required for provisional 2026/7 projects.</li> </ul>
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	<p>c. To consider the WHPC CIL schedule and agree actions considered appropriate.</p> <p>The meeting reviewed the schedule of CIL monies available to West Hill and noted £10,967.46 CIL monies spent related to the Village Hall pedestrian path project since April 2025. No issues were raised and no further actions/costs were decided.</p> <p>Two members of the public left the meeting 7.24pm.</p> <p>d. To consider a business charge card for online purchases.</p> <p>The meeting considered a paper regarding Minute 25/317 circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk confirmed the Council could use a charge card with the appropriate controls in place. The meeting then considered options for the provision of a charge card, suppliers and costs. The preferred option was a Corporate Multipay card provided by Unity Bank in partnership with Lloyds's Bank. The Council noted the payment cycle and associated costs including £50 set up fee and a monthly charge of £3.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To apply for charge card provided by Unity Bank in partnership with Lloyds's Bank.</li> <li>The Council to approve a WHPC Charge Card Policy and amended Financial Regulations before an application is submitted.</li> <li>The Clerk/RFO would be the appointed cardholder for the Council.</li> <li>To approve costs of £50 set up fee and a monthly charge of £3.</li> </ul>
25/344	<p><b>Village Hall Path Working Group:</b> To receive a progress update and to decide actions and costs as considered appropriate:</p> <p>a. Devon County Council response to Stage 3 Road Safety Audit (if available) It was reported that the Parish Council had not yet received DCC Highway's response.</p> <p>Cllr SMS reported a problem with the lighting bollard nearest West Hill Road.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Clerk to report the problem to the installer.</p> <p>b. Outstanding invoices</p> <p><b>It was resolved</b> to approve payment of two outstanding invoices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Devon Tarmasters £6,918.97+vat ref Min 25/260 (works on West Hill Road, line marking, traffic management).</li> <li>Charlie Anstice Fencing £333.00+vat ref Min 25/316 (Council has previously approved a budget of £300+vat. The additional costs were approved under Delegated Powers and approved by Cllrs FP/AC)</li> </ul> <p>c. Signs/notices</p> <p>Standing Orders were suspended.</p> <p>Colin Veale, Chairman of the Village Hall Trustees was invited to give an update on the Trustees previous ruling to ban dogs from the Village Hall site. The Village Hall Trustees had reviewed the rule and in principle proposed to amend the rule to allow dogs on a lead access to the site. Discussions with West Hill Primary School were ongoing and the Trustees were awaiting a response. It was understood that a letter issued by the Primary School to parents earlier in the year set out dog-free zones near the school building.</p> <p>Standing Orders were resumed.</p> <p>The meeting noted that many people were using the new entrance onto the village hall site. Many of them were accompanied by a dog on a lead. In addition to the those going to the primary school at the start/end of the school day many residents, including dog walkers, were</p>

	<p>using the path on their regular walks around the village. Following a short discussion the Parish Council agreed, in principle, to support access for dogs on a lead.</p> <p><b>It was agreed</b> to await a decision by the Village Hall Trustees and to defer the matter to a future meeting.</p>																																																																																
25/345	<p><b>Other Working Groups:</b> To receive a progress update and decide actions/costs.</p> <p>a. Neighbourhood Plan WG</p> <p>Cllr AC gave a report on the Neighbourhood Plan Project Drop-In event on 17<sup>th</sup> October. The findings of the community survey were displayed together with the working group's analysis of the common themes. Public attendance was low but those who attended were engaged and provided helpful feedback.</p> <p>The meeting confirmed the decision to appoint Place Studios to support the development of Design Codes for West Hill (Ref Min 25/318) at a cost of £4,500+vat. The agreed programme of work included a workshop in December to focus on gathering information to support the codes.</p> <p>b. Emergency Plan WG</p> <p>Cllr FP gave a progress report on a workshop held on 1<sup>st</sup> November. The session provided induction training for the volunteers, an overview of their role as a Village Responder and an opportunity to use the radios in a practice emergency scenario.</p> <p>The meeting confirmed the decision made under delegated powers to purchase folders for use as a handbook for each volunteer, £55.80.</p> <p>One member of the public left the meeting.</p>																																																																																
25/346	<p>To decide the <b>WHPC Action Plan</b> for Nov-25 to April-27 including organisation structure, actions and costs.</p> <p>The Chairman gave a report on the informal meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> October to review the responses to the Neighbourhood Plan survey. The meeting provided allowed additional time outside the time constraints of the regular monthly meeting to discuss the wide-ranging matters raised by residents. The meeting focussed on the responses outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan and actions previously taken by the Council.</p> <p>It was resolved to agree the Council's organisation Structure for 2025:</p> <table><tr><th></th><th>Cllrs</th><th>FP</th><th>AC</th><th>SMS</th><th>TI</th><th>BJ</th><th>Clerk</th></tr><tr><td>Finance Working Group</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>HR Working Group</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td><td></td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>Neighbourhood Plan Working Group</td><td></td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>Playpark Working Group</td><td></td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Village Hall Footpath Working Group</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td><td></td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>Emergency Plan Working Group</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Remembrance</td><td></td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Road Safety Working Group</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>✓</td><td>✓</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Trees Working Group</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>✓</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p><b>Action:</b> The Clerk to circulate the Council's current action plan.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> For consideration at the next meeting:</p>		Cllrs	FP	AC	SMS	TI	BJ	Clerk	Finance Working Group		✓	✓				✓	HR Working Group		✓		✓			✓	Neighbourhood Plan Working Group			✓				✓	Playpark Working Group			✓		✓	✓		Village Hall Footpath Working Group		✓		✓			✓	Emergency Plan Working Group		✓						Remembrance		✓	✓					Road Safety Working Group					✓	✓		Trees Working Group				✓			
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Each Cllr, Working Group/Task and Finish Group was asked to review the Council's current action plan and propose amendments.</li> <li>- Each Working Group/Task and Finish Group to review their Terms of Reference and propose amendments. All working groups to provide a draft action plan for December-25 to March-27 and identify any associated costs.</li> <li>- Cllr SMS was asked to draft Terms of Reference for the Trees Working Group.</li> </ul> <p>A member of the public left the meeting.</p>
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## Other Matters

25/347	<p>To consider a <b>grant application</b>: West Hill Primary School PTFA request £2,000 towards the provision of a school library.</p> <p>The meeting considered a grant application submitted by the PTFA. The PTFA were seeking to create a dedicated library for the school at an estimated project cost of £14,000.</p> <p>Following advice from the Devon Association of Local Councils, the Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council had the Power to provide funding although the project was related to the School and curriculum.</p> <p>The Council supported the project in principle but asked for more clarity on the scope, funding and timing of the project. A decision on the grant application was deferred to a future meeting.</p> <p>EDDC/DCC Cllr JB left the meeting.</p>
25/348	<p><b>Digital and Data Compliance:</b> To receive a progress report and to agree actions/costs as appropriate.</p> <p>a. Website Accessibility</p> <p>The meeting received a report on the requirements of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 AA.</p> <p>The meeting noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council's website provider, Cosmic, had confirmed that the technical updates required to meet the guidelines had been completed.</li> <li>Recommended online tools such as WAVE had been used to test the Council's website against the guidelines. No errors were detected but some areas of the content such as PDFs could be improved.</li> </ol> <p>The meeting considered the actions required to ensure all of the website content was fully compliant. Although no compliance errors were reported the Council considered that the workload to improve all of the content was significant and a disproportionate burden on the Council.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council considered the website to be partially compliant with (WCAG) 2.2 AA but meeting the requirements established for local authorities.</li> <li>• To publish a new Website Accessibility Statement on the Council's website.</li> <li>• To agree the wording of the statement which included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Council considered the website to be partially compliant.</li> <li>○ The reasons for the assessment of partial compliance.</li> <li>○ Details on how to request the information in a different format.</li> <li>○ A point of contact.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• New documents published on the website would be checked for compliance.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An up to date Website Accessibility compliance report would be considered on a quarterly basis.</li> </ul> <p>b. Training Councillors were reminded of their individual and collective data protection obligations.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that all Councillors and Clerk must attend a Data Protection training course.</li> <li>To approve a training budget of £280 +vat.</li> </ol>
<b>25/349</b>	<p><b>Local Government Reform in Devon:</b> To receive an update on proposals for Local Government Reform in Devon.</p> <p>The meeting received a report on recent Local Government Reform briefing sessions attended by the Chairman and Clerk.</p>
<b>25/350</b>	<p>To decide arrangements for a <b>Christmas tree and lighting</b> and to agree actions/costs as appropriate.</p> <p>Following initial discussions with the Village Hall Trustees, Primary School and Pre-School the meeting considered the provision of a Christmas tree at the Village Hall on land leased by the Parish Council. Cllrs considered various options including planting a tree and decided to install a cut tree as a trial run.</p> <p><b>The meeting resolved:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To install a Christmas tree adjacent to the new pedestrian path to the village hall.</li> <li>To accept the offer of a Christmas tree donated by Otter Nurseries.</li> <li>To agree a Risk Assessment under Delegated Powers.</li> <li>To agree a project budget of £550+vnt for electrical works, ground works and materials for installation and lighting of the tree in 2025 and available for use in future years.</li> <li>Cllr BJ and Clerk would lead the project.</li> </ol>
<b>25/351</b>	<p><b>WHPC Action Tracker:</b> To receive updates on actions and matters arising from the last meeting and to agree actions/costs as considered appropriate.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Footpath Noticeboard – The meeting agreed to take no further action as the noticeboard was not an asset of the Parish Council or Ottery St Mary Town Council. The Chairman noted that Council had previously considered the installation of a community noticeboard but no suitable location has been identified.</li> <li><b>Action :</b> the Clerk was asked to check the suitability of a <b>filing cabinet</b> offered to the Parish Council.</li> <li>The Clerk presented options and costs for the provision of a <b>grit bin</b> adjacent to the new entrance to the Village Hall site. It was confirmed that the grit bin currently on site is provided by Devon County Council. <b>Action:</b> The Clerk to consult the Primary School regarding their Policy and arrangements for gritting.</li> <li>It was confirmed that the Clerk's mobile phone did not require replacement.</li> </ol>
<b>25/352</b>	<p>To consider <b>correspondence</b> received: Aircraft noise</p> <p>The meeting considered correspondence relating to aircraft noise over the village due to early morning flights from Exeter Airport.</p> <p>The Chairman advised that Exeter Airport did not have authority over aircraft outside its Air Traffic Zone which only extended 2.5 miles around the airport. West Hill was outside this area.</p>

	The Chairman on behalf of the Parish Council had written to TUI airways to ask for their pilots to change their route and turn between West Hill and Otter St Mary.										
<b>25/353</b>	<p><b>Clerk Matters:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To receive a report from the Parish Clerk and to agree actions as appropriate The Clerk advised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fees for the Council's Microsoft 365 subscription costs would be reduced to £43.47+vat per month.</li> <li>Local crime data was now published again on the Police.co.uk website. Future meetings would receive a monthly update.</li> <li>EDDC have opened a Regulation 16 consultation on the Woodbury Neighbourhood Plan. The deadline for responses is 9am 27<sup>th</sup> November.</li> <li>Invited Cllrs to attend upcoming webinars including DCC Highways/DALCC events.</li> <li>Invited Cllrs to attend the Devon Communities Together and Rural Transport meeting</li> <li>Cllrs were reminded to complete their training assessments.</li> <li>Cllrs were reminded that village hall users should not access TV channels on their mobile licences as the village Hall is not required to have a TV licence.</li> </ul> </li> <li>To note decisions made under delegated powers (if applicable). <b>N/A</b></li> <li>Urgent matters (if applicable) <b>N/A</b></li> </ol> <p>All remaining members of the public left the meeting.</p>										
<b>25/354</b>	<p><b>Financial matters:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To consider and approve, if appropriate, the Schedule of Payments. The meeting considered the Schedule of Payments and invoices circulated and published before the meeting. No questions were raised. Payments made under delegated powers were confirmed. It was resolved to approve the payments and sign the invoices.</li> <li>To consider and approve, if appropriate, any additional payments presented to the meeting. Additional payments were presented to the meeting. It was resolved to approve the payments: <table style="margin-left: 40px; width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Brightsea Print Group - NP Drop-in Event</td><td style="text-align: right;">£91.20</td></tr> <tr> <td>St Michael's Church - The Narthex room hire 24th Oct</td><td style="text-align: right;">£15.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>Voicehost - landline</td><td style="text-align: right;">£2.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>Tozers - Council Legal Advice Scheme - Renewal</td><td style="text-align: right;">£600.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>WH Village Hall Room Hire - Oct-25</td><td style="text-align: right;">£63.25</td></tr> </table> </li> <li>To receive, if available, monthly Bank Reconciliations and finance trackers. No issues or questions were raised on the papers circulated prior to the meeting.</li> </ol>	Brightsea Print Group - NP Drop-in Event	£91.20	St Michael's Church - The Narthex room hire 24th Oct	£15.00	Voicehost - landline	£2.00	Tozers - Council Legal Advice Scheme - Renewal	£600.00	WH Village Hall Room Hire - Oct-25	£63.25
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<b>25/355</b>	<p><b>Councillor 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>No matters were raised.</p>										
<b>25/356</b>	<p><b>Next meeting:</b> To confirm arrangements for the upcoming WHPC meeting on <b>Tuesday 2nd December 2025 7.00pm</b> at the Village Hall</p>										

Part A ended 9.05pm

Part B began 9.05pm

**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.

<b>25/357</b>	<p>To review responses to the advert for a <b>Village Lengthsman</b> and if considered appropriate, to appoint a contractor for 2026.</p> <p>Cllrs considered a paper circulated prior to the meeting. During October WHPC received several requests for an information pack but only two quotes were received by the deadline of midday 27th October 2025.</p> <p>The Chairman led a consideration of quotes received including a review of costs, insurance + certificates, service provision and references.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The dates for the Lengthsman contract to be 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027 to align the contract with the Council's year.</li><li>b. To appoint Pro-Lawn Garden Services as the Council's Lengthsman for the period of the contract 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027.</li></ul>
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Part B ended 9.18pm  
Meeting closed at 9.20pm

Signed .....

Date .....