

WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 6th 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:	Anne Oliver Parish Clerk, one member of the public attended the meeting
Apologies received from:	DCC Cllr Claire Wright (CW)

AGENDA - ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Item (a)	Discussion and decisions (b)
21/112	Welcome and Chairman's announcements The meeting started at 7.30PM. The Chair MH welcomed everyone and reminded everyone that the meeting was being sound recorded.
21/113	Apologies. To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence. Apologies were received from DCC Cllr Claire Wright.
21/114	Public question time (3 minutes per speaker) 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. No members of the public asked to speak during the public session.
21/115	District and County Councillors' reports for information (items raised for decision will appear on the agenda for the next meeting) EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey gave an update: • East Devon Local Plan Review: The timetable for the Review has been published. EDDC expect to publish the draft plan by Dec 2021. Cllr JB expressed concern regarding the initial stages of the review, in particular the assessment of the limited number of homes that could be accommodated in the urban Built Up Area Boundary. • West Hill Trees: Cllr JB reported a significant increase in the number of calls to WHPC advising of tree works in the village. Once alerted Cllr JB visits the site to ensure the relevant authorities are in place (if applicable). In addition, Cllr JB advised that she will be standing in the DCC Elections in May 2021. Cllr MH reminded Cllrs that, during the election period, purdah rules apply and the Council must be mindful of publishing documents (ref guideline issued by EDDC).
21/116	Declarations of Interest 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). Cllr JB declared an interest as a District Cllr and a member of the Planning Committee.



	West Hill Parish Council		
	Cllrs MH, ABC, AC, DC, AT, MP - no interests declared. All noted and accepted.		
21/117	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. N/A		
21/118	Minutes 1. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 2 nd March 2021. 2. To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 16 th March 2021. Noted and approved		
21/119	Planning Applications received		
	20/2589/FUL Woodview, West Hill Road West Hill EX11 1TU Applicant Mr Poole Widening of vehicular entrance and driveway (partially retrospective).		
	Cllrs disagreed with the description of the application "Widening of vehicular entrance and driveway (partially retrospective)". This was an enforcement matter referred to EDDC in 2019 as the householder had widened a pedestrian access to create a vehicle access. Cllrs unanimously objected to the application and recommended refusal:		
	 The householder has destroyed a Devon Bank and removed a section of mature hedge to create an unapproved vehicle access. If approved, the application will remove a further section of the bank and hedge. This is contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan which promotes Devon Banks and hedges in keeping with the character of the area. Cllrs noted the previous approved application 17/2042/FUL included the removal of part of existing garage to create lay-by. This would have created parking spaces and left the existing pedestrian access untouched. This part of the application has not been fully implemented. If the application is approved the property will have multiple vehicle access points onto West Hill Road near the junction with Bendarroch Road. Cllrs regard this as unsafe due to the nearby road/junction layout. Vehicles emerging from the property or passing the property have limited visibility. Multiple access points will exacerbate the problem. 		
	If the application is refused Cllrs requested that the Devon Bank is re-instated and the hedge re-planted with native species.		
	21/0400/TRE The Vicarage Bendarroch Road EX11 1U Applicant Diocese Of Exeter 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 hollys 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.		
	 Cllrs agreed that they were unable to submit a detailed Consultee response as The application did not include supporting information to inform Cllrs of the proposed works. The proposed works were situated at the rear of the property and not visible to Cllrs. A site visit was not possible due to Covid restrictions. 		
	21/0864/FUL Fern Lodge Bendarroch Road EX11 1JX Applicant Ms S Biggs Construction of two storey side extension.		
	Cllrs noted that Fern Lodge (formerly West Catalpa) was developed as a small infill plot of the adjacent property, Catalpa 15/2907/FUL. Further development would not reflect the low-density, spacious setting of surrounding properties (ref Neighbourhood Plan).		



The plot is bordered by a public footpath on the west side. This tree lined footpath is a good example of the woodland footpaths in the area. There are several mature trees along the boundary which are in close proximity to the existing building. Cllrs recognised that the application seeks to minimise impact on the trees during construction. However, the trees would overhang the extension and reduce light amenity. Cllrs believe this will give rise to future pressure to fell or reduce the trees which would be to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area.

Cllrs did not support the application and recommended refusal. They considered the application would be out of character with the area and fails to secure the future of important trees and therefore it would be contrary to Policy NP26 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

21/120

Planning decisions received for information (*denotes WHPC differed)

21/0426/FUL Creag Mhor Ford Lane EX11 1XE Approved

Construction of side extension, veranda and associated hardstanding (revised scheme to 20/0736/FUL)

21/0339/FUL 18 Moorlands West Hill EX11 1UL Approved

Construction of first floor extension over garage and new porch.

21/0255/VAR The Birches Lower Broad Oak Road EX11 1XH Approved

Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission 19/0929/FUL (Demolition of existing dwelling and construction of replacement dwelling and detached garage) to allow changes to fenestration and increase in height

21/0251/TRE 20 Eastfield EX11 1XN Approved

T1 and T2 Oak: Crown lift both trees to give 4m clearance above ground. Reason: To increase clearance over driveway

20/1480/FUL Oaks End Lower Broad Oak Road EX11 1XH Approved

Construction of two storey side and rear extensions; single and two storey front extensions.

All Noted

21/121

TPO notifications - for information

n/a

Coronavirus

21/123

To consider the impact of legislation permitting councils to hold remote meetings ending on 7th May 2021, in particular

- a. To consider arrangements for Council and Committee meetings taking into account covid guidance.
- b. To agree and adopt an Emergency Schedule of Delegation.
- c. To agree and adopt a WHPC Business Continuity Plan
- (a) The Government has advised that Coronavirus Act legislation permitting the Council to hold remote meetings will not be extended beyond 7th May 2021. DALC/NALC have advised Councils to consider how they can return to face-to-face meetings whilst adhering to Covid guidelines. Councils are advised that the "rule of six" does not apply to Council meetings. Cllrs noted that a judicial review is underway and an eleventh hour decision may overturn the Government's decision.

Cllrs considered a paper circulated by the Chairman/Clerk prior to the meeting which set out

- Changes to the Covid "rules" up to 21st June
- Implications for Councils



- The need to carry out a risk assessment of the meeting venue and to review the Village Hall Risk Assessment and it's requirements.
- DALC's recommendations to
 - Do as much business as practically possible before the 7 May. Hold meetings in late April/early May to make most of the 6-month rule for Cllr disqualification.
 - Postpone non-urgent/important business to later in the year; delay starting new projects requiring lots of decisions

Cllrs discussed the practicalities of holding in-person meetings and agreed that it may not be practical to hold meetings for a short period up to 21st June. As a result, it may be necessary to put some activities on hold and delegate some activities to the Clerk via a Scheme of Delegation. However, Cllr MH reminded Cllrs that some decisions, such as approving the Annual Governance and Accounting Return must take place at a meeting.

Cllr MH recommended that face-to-face meetings are kept to a minimum for a period and the agendas are kept as short as possible to reduce the length of the meeting. Cllrs noted that delegating activities to the Clerk is very likely to increase her workload during this period.

Recent WHPC meetings have proposed establishing new Working Groups (WGs). Cllr MH suggested that this was an opportunity to re-assess the 2021-22 plan and workload. Can it accommodate the new WGs?

Cllrs ABC/DC agreed with the approach and noted that following 21st Jun 2021 the Council will be able to resume "normal" activity. Cllr MH thanked Cllrs but noted that there may some Covid restriction in place after 21st June.

Clirs agreed to submit their comments to the Clerk prior to consideration at the next WHPC meeting on 20th April:

- Will they attend a face-to-face Council meeting before/after 21st June? Cllrs were reminded that this is their personal decision.
- Hybrid face-to-face/remote meetings?
- Activities which could be deferred?
- Council priorities for 3month period? Beyond?
- Their preference for membership of Working Groups and Open Spaces Committee.

The 20th April meeting will also review the meeting risk assessment.

The WHPC meeting on 4th May will confirm the upcoming meeting schedule, venue, WHPC plan and, if necessary, enact a scheme of delegation.

Cllrs agree to discuss the arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting at their meeting on 20th April.

- (b) Clirs unanimously agreed to adopt the Scheme of Delegation subject to the removal of Financial Matters para 3.
- (c) Cllrs unanimously agreed to adopt the WHPC Business Continuity Plan

In addition, Cllrs noted over the past year Council documents had not been signed according to Standing Orders as virtual meetings were taking place. **Cllrs agreed** that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman would sign the documents seen and approved at the meetings Mar 2020-April 2021.

21/124 To discuss the impact on WHPC plans for 2021/22:

- a. Committee and working group membership and structure in the Council year 2021/22
- b. Priorities for work programme 2021/22



c. Meeting schedule for 2021/22 including Annual Parish Meeting

See Item 21/123 above

21/125 WHP

WHPC Help Scheme:

a. To receive a Help Scheme update

The Clerk reported that Help Scheme remained very quiet with only 7 requests (prescription collections) in March.

b. To approve Volunteer Expense Claims

Clirs thanked the volunteer and approved their expense claim, £50, to cover fuel costs for 65 trips to/from Ottery St Mary for prescription collections and deliveries in West Hill.

c. To consider next steps for the scheme as lockdown restrictions are lifted.

From 31-Mar covid restrictions for shielding were lifted and people were now able to leave their property. Cllrs acknowledged that some people may be reluctant to do so. However the number of village residents using the scheme was low and the Ottery Help Scheme had the capacity to help if necessary.

Clirs agreed to close the WHPC Help Scheme and to signpost remaining users to the Ottery Help Scheme.

Cllr JB joined the meeting 7.59pm She declared her interests (included under item 21/116) She gave her District Cllrs report (included under item 21/115)

Committee & Working Groups

21/126

Finance Working Group:

For information

- a. To receive an update on the 2021/22 end of year Financials:
 - Timetable for Internal/External Audit
 - Draft Annual Governance Statement 2020-21 (AGAR Part 3)
 - Draft Annual Accounting Statements 2020-21(AGAR Part 3)
 - Draft Financial Statement
 - Proposed dates for the Exercise of Public Rights
- b. To confirm arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.

Cllr MH reported the Finance WG met on 1st Apr 2021 to discuss the End of Year Financials and the Council's Insurance renewal. The Internal Audit is underway and the report is expected for the 20th April meeting. The AGAR papers must be approved and signed at a Council meeting. In view of the uncertainty of the WHPC meeting schedule the papers will be presented for approval at the Council's meeting on 4th May.

Clirs agreed the process and timetable.

The Finance WG also reviewed the Insurance renewal papers provided by Came and Co. which included comparison quotes for a 1year/3year term. The Council's current policy, a three year term, ends on 16th May 2021.



The Finance WG a. Confirmed the proposed policy provided sufficient cover. b. Recommended a three year term to afford greater rate stability c. Recommended a three year term with Pen Underwriting Limited d. At a cost of £631.16 (incl tax) for 2021-2 Clirs agreed the Finance Group's recommendations for 2021-22 Insurance Cover, a three year term with Pen Underwriting Limited at a cost of £631.16 (incl tax) for 2021-2. Details of the WHPC Cyber Insurance renewal is not yet available. 21/127 **Open Spaces Committee To note and confirm** the minutes of the meeting of 23rd February 2021. Noted and approved. To receive recommendations and answer questions arising from the recent Committee meeting on 30th March 2021 incl: Successful grant funding applications to DCC for Lengthsman and Footpaths. i. Noted Other matters Urgent matters arising 21/128 **Slide Working Group** a. To consider and approve Terms of Reference for the Working Group b. To receive an update on research to date. Cllrs considered a paper circulated by Cllr ABC prior to the meeting. Cllr MH reminded Cllrs that the Playpark Lease should be reviewed prior to progressing any further. In particular the term of lease should be checked. Action: Clerk to circulate the lease to Cllrs. Cllr DC agreed the lease should be reviewed and expressed concern that the group were continuing to focus on the installation of a slide rather than carry out a wider review of the playpark and abstained from further participation in this item. Cllrs discussed whether the project should be paused in view of the difficulty with decision making (ref item 21/123). Several Cllrs were keen to continue with research whilst others were unclear on the methodology, information required and proposed public consultation. Cllr MH recommended pausing the project for 3 months. Cllr MP suggested the scope of the consultation could be widened and included in the proposed Community Survey. Cllr AC was concerned that this may raise resident's expectations that cannot be delivered in the limited space available in the Playpark. The matter was not resolved. Cllrs agreed to await the WHPC Plan review and associated recommendations to be discussed at the WHPC 20th April meeting. 21/129 **People & Policy Working Group** To approve WHPC policies reviewed and updated by P&P WG: WHPC Model Publication Scheme (Freedom of Information). Clirs agreed to adopt the WHPC Model Publication Scheme subject to the addition of a clause re vexatious requests (section 7 and last section).

WHPC Business Continuity – see 21/123

ii.



21/130 Traffic Study Working Group

- a. To receive an update from the Joint WHPC/Village Hall Working Group on a new pedestrian access to the Village Hall:
 - i. Amendments to Design
 - ii. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
 - iii. Planning Application supporting information

Cllr MH reported the

- i. Village Hall representatives had agreed the final design and Design and Access Statement prepared by PJA Traffic Consultants.
- ii. MOU: There are some areas of difficulty, however work is progressing and the VH representatives are meeting on the 19th April to work on a 2nd draft.
- iii. Cllrs had previously approved commissioning a Tree report and Ecology report to support the Planning Application. However, this decision had not been implemented due to the delay in approving the design. As this was now agreed Cllr MH proposed that the reports were produced. There may be a small increase in costs as the quotes for this work were received in 2020.

Clirs agreed to proceed with the Tree Report and Ecology report (each £250+Vat+inflation).

- b. To approve the Public Consultation material and costs:
 - a. Printing £250 (provisional) for leaflets and display board

Clirs agreed the printing costs, £250.

b. Survey Monkey: a monthly £99/month which can be cancelled any time, or an annual plan costing £384.

Clirs agreed a year's Survey Monkey subscription, £384+vat.

- c. To receive an update on DCC Highways matters
 - a. response to the Council's VAS data enquiry.

DCC Highways have advised that the SCARF panel is not scheduled to meet in the coming months. However they have agreed that WHPC can submit a report on initial findings from the VAS scheme. This will be put on file for future review.

Clirs agreed to submit a report focussing on the B3180.

b. Occasional congestion problems on Bendarroch road due to parking.

DCC Highways have responded to WHPC concerns regarding occasional problems on Bendarroch Road caused by vehicles parked on both sides of the road. Recently the bus was unable to pass through and was delayed for 15 minutes. DCC Highways have agreed to consider the implementation of double yellow lines on the south side of the road. Cllrs were advised that this is a lengthy process (c 18-24 months) and will involve a public consultation.

(The area adjacent to the War Memorial is also listed for review)

Clir JB agreed to contact EDDC to establish what actions can be taken regarding the junction splay at St Mary's View.



Other Matters

21/131 **Communication Engagement Strategy:** a. To consider establishing a Communication Strategy Working Group. b. To approve its Terms of Reference and membership. c. To consider progress to date. Cllrs considered a paper circulated by Cllr MP prior to the meeting. Again, Cllrs discussed whether the project should be paused in view of the difficulty with decision making (ref item 21/123). Cllr MP recommended continuing preparations for the Community Survey. Cllrs agreed to await the WHPC Plan review and associated recommendations to be discussed at the WHPC 20th April meeting. 21/132 West Hill's Trees: a. To consider establishing a Working Group focussed on West Hill's trees b. To receive an update on actions from the 2nd March 2021 meeting. a. Cllrs considered a paper circulated by Cllr JB prior to the meeting. Cllrs agreed the need to establish a group involving members of the community and actions that can be delivered "to make a difference". b. Cllrs gave an update on the actions from the previous meeting: EDDC – Cllr JB reported that the Tree Officers have a very high workload and do not have the resources available to work with Cllrs on a West Hill Trees project. They have plans in place to provide details of West Hill TPO's. Sidmouth Arboretum – Cllr ABC and the Special Trees of West Hill project has communicated with the Sidmouth groupover recent years. They recommend wider participation across the community and regarded the Treeconomics work as expensive. Cranbrook and Treeconomics – Cllr MP was awaiting a response from Treeconomics. Again, Cllrs discussed whether the project should be paused in view of the difficulty with decision making (ref item 21/123). Cllrs agreed to await the WHPC Plan review and associated recommendations to be discussed at the WHPC 20th April meeting. 21/133 **Community Grant:** To consider a grant application from the Village Hall Trustees for funding for a bike rack. Cllrs were keen to support cycling in the village and thanked the Village Hall Trustees for the grant application. In view of the loss of Village Hall bookings during 2021-21 due to Covid Lockdown Cllrs agreed exceed the maximum grant allowed under the WHPC Grant Policy (£1,000) to award the grant request in full, £1,100. 21/134 **Police Matters:** a. To receive the monthly West Hill crime stats (for information) Noted To receive an update on the OPCC review of the Community Speed Watch (CSW) scheme (for information). Cllrs thanked Cllr DC for circulating a briefing paper setting out the key messages and learning points from a meeting of CSW representative across Devon and Cornwall. Cllr DC had also liaised with West Hill's CSW group to get their feedback and pass on the findings from the session. 21/135 Parish Online: To consider a subscription to Parish Online (digital mapping tool). Cllr MH recommended a subscription to Parish Online, a digital mapping tool at a cost of £130, less 20% discount currently available via DALC. This would give access to Local

Authority data and could be used by West Hill projects.



	West Hill Parish Council	
	Free training was available via DALC.	
	Clirs agreed to purchase a subscription to Parish Online, £130, (with discount £104).	
21/136	Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) : To consider 2021/22 membership renewal, £479.94.	
	Clirs agreed to renew membership of DALC for 2021-22, £479.94.	
21/137	Community First Responders: To receive an update on the East Devon scheme for 2021/22	
	Cllr DC reported South West Ambulance Service Foundation Trust (SWASFT) will be considering their proposed projects for 2021-22. This includes a proposal to establish a Community First Responder group covering Ottery St Mary and West Hill. If funding is allocated they will liaise with the local Councils.	
21/138	EDDC Consultation: To consider the WHPC response to the proposed process for Community Asset Transfers Cllrs agreed that no comment was necessary.	
21/139	WHPC Newsletter: To consider the content for the next Parish Council newsletter (17 th April) The next edition of the WHPC newsletter was delayed due to purdah.	
21/140	0 Clerks Report: Actions and matters arising from the last meeting	
	1. Actions, incl outstanding action	
	Outstanding actions	
	Litter – Cllr JB to liaise with EDDC re items dropped by Waste Collection crews.(ongoing)	
	Litter - liaise with DCC Highways regarding their policy for collecting litter from verges. (Clerk)	
	Matters arising a. Resident communication	
	 Over recent weeks the Council had received several reports of "Tree Work" in the village. On each occasion Cllr JB had visited the site and informed EDDC Tree Officers when necessary. Cllrs ABC asked Cllr JB to check the ongoing work at Higher Metcombe. 	
	b. Any urgent matters arising.	
	Clirs agreed to renew the annual subscription to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) by Direct Debit, £35.	
21/141	Finance and Invoices Tracker Invoices received for approval:	
	 Clerk - claim for expenses (incl Microsoft subscription, postage) Additional Invoice circulated prior to the meeting West Hill Primary School PTFA – Sunflower Competition sponsorship £154.30 	
	Noted and approved To receive the 2020-21 Finance Tracker + Bank reconciliation March 2021. Noted and approved	
21/143	Councillors 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. Councillors are respectfully reminded that this is not an opportunity for debate or decision making.	



	 PTFA Sunflower Competition – Cllr AT reported that the PTFA have invited two WHPC Cllrs to join their judging panel (July). Cllrs were happy to support the PTFA. Free Cyber Security briefings – Cllr DC advised that free workshops are available via the Devon and Cornwall Police. Cllrs agreed to consider this at the next WHPC meeting.
21/144	Next meeting: To confirm the date of the next meeting (by video-conference) which is scheduled for 20 th April 2021).

Signed: Anne Oliver, Clerk to the Council, 7th April 2021