

**WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 3RD OCTOBER 2017 AT 7.30 P.M.
AT WEST HILL VILLAGE HALL**

Present:

Chairman Parish Councillor Margaret Hall (MH)
Vice Chairman Parish Councillor Jo Talbot (JT)
Parish Councillor Jill Ingle (JI)
Parish Councillor Kilian Hall (KH)
Parish Councillor Christopher Hall (CH)
Parish Councillor Jessica Bailey (JB)
Parish Councillor Alan Cook (AC)
Clerk Alison Carr (Clerk)

WELCOME AND CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

MH welcomed EDDC Cllr Paul Carter (PC), and DCC Cllr Claire Wright (CW).
MH welcomed 2 members of the public and Parish Councillors and opened the meeting at 7.30pm.
MH reminded everyone that the meeting was being recorded.

Public Questions:

Mr Simon Pedrazzini, resident at Needlewood Close, updated Councillors on the drainage situation that causes flooding in his garage. His previous contact with DCC Highways had not resulted in any help. MH asked Cllr CW if she could contact Highways again. Ideally Mr Pedrazzini wanted a site meeting to show Highways the problem drain. Councillors remarked that the pending development on the land between The Star and Shenne might make the drainage situation worse, and thought it could be an important point to raise when the Reserved Matters planning application is received.

Mr Pedrazzini also mentioned a hedge within his curtilage which he is worried might be cut down by the developer of the neighbouring site. JT reported the site has a blanket TPO for another six months but this possibly would not help as the hedge has no protected trees, just Leylandii. MH remarked that what happens to the hedge is a civil matter between the Pedrazzinis and the builder/owner of the plot and not a matter for the Parish Council, however he could contact Jacqui Webster the Enforcement Officer at EDDC Planning if he is concerned that the developer is doing anything out of order on site. There is a serious infestation of Japanese Knotweed that needs to be removed.

MH asked Mr Pedrazzini to keep the Parish Council informed.

District and County Councillors' reports: for information.

PC updated Councillors on the newly completed sewage works at Fluxton which cost £5m, and on the new EDDC HQ at Heathpark in Honiton, which has a target moving-in date of December 2018.

PC reminded Councillors about the DMC's extraordinary meeting week commencing 9th October regarding the Knowle in which new evidence will be discussed regarding the "loss of light" reason for refusing the Pegasus Life planning application for redevelopment of the Knowle. There is planned a 5-day public enquiry starting on 28th November.

CW updated Councillors on the DCC Adult Care Scrutiny Committee. She is very concerned about stringent cuts, including beds and staff and a plan to centralise services. The CCG gave a presentation that, although long, did not contain hard facts. She raised a number of questions that were not answered and indicated her concern about the lack of transparency, but this was not recorded.

CW attended DCC's full Council meeting where she seconded a motion to mitigate the impact of cutting hospital beds in the area.

Regarding schools, CW reminded Parish Councillors about the proposed government review of the national funding formula, which would have meant a decrease in funding for a third of Devon schools, including West Hill Primary School and Kings School in Ottery. However, this has been shelved for the time being and it seems that both schools may receive a small increase in funding, but still insufficient.

Police Report for information.

The Clerk informed Councillors that no police report had been received.

1. Apologies

- None received

2. Declarations of Interest

- MH has relinquished CPRE responsibilities and updated her Register of Interests
- JB declared a personal interest regarding item 7a: Grant application by West Hill Wasps and said she would leave the room for that discussion
- JB also declared a personal interest regarding any discussions about the PTFA as her children attend West Hill Primary School
- JB made the same declaration about any discussions about purchasing high-visibility gear for the children
- KH declared a personal interest regarding discussions about the PTFA and the play park as his children attend West Hill Primary School and use the play park

3. Minutes: To consider the approval of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council.

- The minutes of the last meeting (19th September 2017) were approved, with a note that AC had given his apologies but this was not recorded.

Proposed by: JI

Seconded by: KH

Passed: unanimous

4. Matters arising and actions from previous meeting:

- MH commented on the error at the last meeting in which the Parish Council's comments on the Minerals Safeguarding SPD should have been discussed but in fact Councillors replayed a previous discussion on Straitgate. As MH had said there was probably no need for WHPC to comment on the SPD, it was thought that no harm had resulted from this error.
 - a. Update on play park (Clerk)
 - The Clerk reported that she had received a certified copy of the S106 Grant Funding Agreement from EDDC and that copies had been emailed to Councillors for information
 - Councillors expressed surprise that there appeared to be no signatures on the document

ACTION: Clerk to check with EDDC that the original has been signed and stamped.

ACTION: JB to give the Clerk information about the order placed with Wicksteeds.

ACTION: Clerk to find out from Wicksteeds about the lead-time

- A member of the public reported damage on the wooden plank/access platform which could be a finger trap, which JB reported to David Cook at EDDC. This will be filled/repaired by EDDC. David Cook has provided the RoSPA annual report which said the life expectancy of that equipment ends in 2019. Councillors debated whether the timber should be treated to extend its life, but concluded that this was not necessary as the equipment is designed for outdoor use.
- The equipment is inspected once a month.

ACTION: CW to check out the life expectancy

ACTION: Clerk to email Ian Heard about asking the gardener to be careful not to damage play park equipment with the strimmer

b. Update on Parishes Together (Clerk)

- The clerk reported meeting the Head Teacher at WH Primary School to discuss a project that West Hill could apply for jointly with Aylesbeare, possibly an internet safety course for the children and/or parents. However the Head pointed out that the school had just run one of these in the summer and would not be keen to run another one until 2019. So WHPC needs to think of other alternative projects with Aylesbeare or other parishes, like Whimple or Rockbeare.
- MH added that it had proved difficult to find a project that could benefit both West Hill and Aylesbeare.
- KH said he knows a parent at West Hill Primary School who is an Aylesbeare Parish Councillor.

ACTION: KH to informally talk to his contact to see if she can think of a possible project.

- Councillors were reminded that the grant amounts to £1.11 per elector and the last deadline for applying is in February 2018.

c. Update on WHPC logo design (Cllr K Hall)

- KH reported that the logo chosen by Councillors at the last meeting is being amended to reflect the changes requested.

ACTION: KH to forward the updated logo to Councillors as soon as possible.

- The website is progressing, and the email format was agreed at the last meeting. Councillors asked if it could be speeded up.

ACTION: KH to drop in at Cosmic to see how much progress has been made.

d. Clerk's updates on Actions

- KH has collected the sandbags and as they take up very little space, the Clerk has agreed they can be stored in her garage.
- CH has done some research at the Woodland Trust regarding the woodland area between Higher and Lower Broad Oak Road, but has yet to finalise the letter he said he would write to the WT.

- CW is happy to help all she can.
- The pot hole on Higher Broad Oak Road reported by KH at the last meeting has been photographed and reported to DCC Highways by the Clerk

5. Planning applications to be considered:

17/2167/FUL Greendale Farm Shop Sidmouth Road, Farringdon, Exeter EX5 2JU
Proposal: Extension to the existing farm shop, additional car parking area, outdoor seating area and children's play area (Retrospective Application)
Applicant: Mr Mat Carter

- WHPC was consulted as an adjacent parish.
- Councillors remarked that the shop does not seem to be operating within the relevant sales thresholds as outlined in East Devon Local Plan policy E15
- Councillors expressed disappointment that the application was retrospective
- Councillors wanted to request a landscaping scheme as a condition of planning permission

Council supports the application, with the following conditions: Concern that the application is retrospective; sales thresholds not fully compliant with EDDC policy E15; and condition for a landscaping scheme.

Proposed by: MH Seconded by: CH Passed: 6 to 1 in favour

17/2218/TRE 2 Warren Park, West Hill EX11 1TN
Proposal: T1, Oak: Reduce limbs to gain 2 metre clearance of property, to suitable pruning points, cuts no larger than 60mm.
Applicant: Mr J Tyrrell

- Councillors were concerned about a lack of information, particularly regarding the tree's location
- Several Councillors remarked that the cuts were not big

Council supports the application.

Proposed by: MH Seconded by: JT Passed: 5 to 1 in favour, 1 abstention

17/2150/TRE Hideaway, Bendarroch Road, West Hill EX11 1JY
Proposal: 237 Beech. Reduce height by 4m, maximum diameter of cuts 100mm. Reshape, maximum diameter of cuts 25mm.
238 Cherry. Fell to ground level.
Applicant: Mrs T Northcott

- Councillors commended the detailed information provided
- Councillors would like the cherry tree to be replaced with suitable replanting.

Council supports the application, with the condition that the cherry tree should be replaced with suitable replanting.

Proposed by: AC Seconded by: JT Passed: unanimous

6. Neighbourhood Plan: For information.

Councillors were referred to the email from Claire Rodway at EDDC and the response from WHPC (Appendix 1 & 2).

The Plan was originally approved by West Hill and Ottery St Mary. Claire Rodway requested a letter from West Hill Parish Council giving permission for Ottery Town Council to take the lead and for the Inspector to communicate via Ottery Town Council.

MH proposed that Councillors support the letter sent to Claire Rodway giving the permission she sought.

Proposed by: MH Seconded by: JT Passed: unanimous

7. Grants to village groups:

- a. To consider approving the grant application put forward by West Hill Wasps which already had a long-standing agreement in principle but needs formal Parish Council approval (Appendix 3)

MH proposed that Councillors support the application for £750 to purchase a set of children's football goals. The children had been playing with adult-sized goals. The grant represents 50% of the cost, with the balance being raised from donations by parents.

Although the Parish Council set a ceiling of £500 per grant application, it was agreed that this is an exceptional case, being the first grant awarded by the Parish Council, and because West Hill Wasps had originally approached the Parish Council before the Grants Policy was set up.

Proposed by: MH Seconded by: AC Passed: unanimous

- b. To consider extending the application deadline to 23rd October to give groups more time to respond

Councillors agreed to extend the grant application deadline to 23rd October and it was decided to email groups which have not yet applied to let them know.

Proposed by: MH Seconded by: JT Passed: unanimous

ACTION: MH to email groups to inform them of the new deadline

- c. To consider deciding all applications (except WH Wasps) at the PC meeting on 7th November

Councillors agreed to decide all applications on 7th November.

Proposed by: MH Seconded by: JT Passed: unanimous

ACTION: Clerk and CH to screen applications against eligibility criteria as they come in

- d. To consider whether Councillors need to look again at the grants policy and eligibility criteria so that applicants are properly informed about what projects can be funded

Councillors agreed on the need and desire to support local groups. However, some groups do not have a bank account and therefore would not meet the Parish Council's current grants policy. There was concern that groups would not

understand what can/cannot be funded and whether the Policy is clear enough. In the end, it was decided that it is too early to tell if these issues will come up and that the Parish Council needs to go through its first round of grant awards in order to see how things work out. Councillors were mindful of their responsibility to spend public money wisely, whilst still supporting local groups. If the grants policy needs to be changed, the time to do that would be in April/May at the annual meeting.

MH proposed that the Parish Council should use the current round as a learning process and review at the annual meeting if any changes are necessary.

Proposed by: MH

Seconded by: AC

Passed: unanimous

- e. To consider whether grants approved in this financial year should be distributed in this financial year, rather than waiting until 1st April 2018

There was a lot of debate about this. Some Councillors felt that having told applicants that the grants would be distributed in April 2018, it would be too confusing to change at this point. Other Councillors felt it was a shame that the grants could not be given out before 1st April and that it would make more sense to pay the money out when the grant applications are approved, especially since the Parish Council is in a sound financial position. This is the Council's first year of operation, which means no liabilities have been brought forward, but the Council will not be in the same position next year, so some caution is warranted. Councillors agreed that the Council has not yet established a routine and cannot foresee all expenses through to April 2018. But Councillors were concerned that residents would think the Council was unreasonably withholding expenditure and that it might look as if the Council did not want to help village groups.

In the end it was decided not to distribute grants before 1st April 2018.

- f. To consider Cllr J Bailey's email about the PTFA (Appendix 4).

This item was covered in para 7.d above.

8. Dates to be agreed: To consider dates for the following meetings:

- a. The Annual Parish Meeting in April
 - o Councillors agreed on Monday 23rd April 2018 for the annual parish meeting
- b. The AGM of the Parish Council (which could be on the same night as a regular PC meeting – extra room not required)
 - o Councillors agreed on Tuesday 1st May for the AGM

9. Odd-job person: To consider whether WHPC should engage the services of someone who could be called upon to do odd jobs around the village.

This item was deferred until after the strategic planning workshop on 9th October

10. Training: To consider a request by the Clerk to attend a DALC training course “New Clerks” on 13th November at a cost of £25 + VAT.

- Agreed, based on a place being available.

Proposed by: MH

Seconded by: JB

Passed: unanimous

11. Reference book: To consider a request by the Clerk to purchase “Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration” at a cost of £92.

- Agreed to purchase this book.

Proposed by: MH

Seconded by: JT

Passed: unanimous

12. High-visibility gear for children: To consider whether WHPC should fund high visibility tabards or similar for parish children walking to/from school, and if so, how this could be achieved.

This item was deferred until after the strategic planning workshop on 9th October

13. Finance:

13.1 Budget planning: To consider the process of preparing the budget, specifically the following:

- a. Which members of WHPC should be involved, e.g. whether there needs to be established a formal finance sub-committee, or a less formal finance working group, to prepare the budget.
 - Councillors were informed that the budget needs to be submitted to EDDC in January 2018. Therefore work needs to begin soon.
 - It was decided to convene a working group consisting of the Clerk, CH and JB. The working group will report back to full council with a proposed budget

Proposed by: MH

Seconded by: KH

Passed: unanimous

- b. WHPC's policies on reserves and how the Parish Council should budget for longer-term projects

This item was deferred until after the strategic planning workshop on 9th October

13.2 Employer's pension scheme: To consider joining East Devon's Local Government Pension Scheme to meet current workplace pension rules (see PDF of email, Appendix 5)

- Councillors were reminded that the Parish Council, as an employer, is required to provide a workplace pension for its employees (currently only the Clerk), and that it is in the Clerk's employment contract that a pension is offered.
- Peninsula Pensions provides a Local Government Pension Scheme on behalf of all relevant employers in Devon & Somerset. If the Parish Council wanted to join this as an eligible employer in the scheme, a minuted agreement is required.

MH proposed that the sole employee, the Clerk, will be permitted to join Peninsula Pensions' Local Government Pension Scheme.

Proposed by: MH

Seconded by: AC

Passed: unanimous

13.3 Reimbursing Clerk for use of home: To consider reimbursing the Clerk in the amount of £18 per month for the use of her home amenities.

- Councillors were reminded about the clause in the Clerk's employment contract, para 10.4. which states that "For employees working at home, expenses may include...telephone...broadband...space, lighting, heating, electricity..."
- Councillors agreed to reimburse the Clerk £18 per month ongoing for the use of her home amenities.

Proposed by: MH

Seconded by: JI

Passed: unanimous

13.4 Invoices for payment: To consider passing invoices for payment as shown in the updated invoice tracker.

All were passed for payment.

Proposed by: MH

Seconded by: CH

Passed: unanimous

The Clerk reported that the bank balance on 30/09/2017 statement was £44,819.91
Minus payments due of £3,296.55 gives a cashbook balance of £41,523.36
(payments due = new invoices + payments not left bank account)

14. Councillors' 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.*

- JB reported that the WH Primary School governors want to meet members of the Parish Council for an informal chat
ACTION: KH, JB and MH will meet the school governors
- CH reported on the DALC budgets and precepts training. He said it was useful and very good.
- Councillors asked about their allowance.
ACTION: Clerk to contact EDDC to find out how much the Councillors' allowance is and how they can claim it
- KH reported that only one Councillor had turned up to have their photo taken for the new website. He encouraged the others to do so.
ACTION: All Councillors to report to KH to get their photos taken
- JI reported that the grit bin on Higher Broad Oak Road near the Clerk's house is full of rubbish.
- JI reported trees being cut down in Hawkins Lane – unfortunately the work was finished by the time she saw it.
- AC reported that a Mr Keith spoke to him about "The Triangle" junction (West Hill Road and B3180). He had also spoken to JT previously who had told him it is the responsibility of DCC Highways. In the past, the WH Residents' Association had proposed solutions to Highways but all were dismissed. Councillors were disappointed that such an important safety issue is not a higher priority with DCC.

- JB reported that she was so far unable to obtain a map showing all the verges in the village but was in communication with Tom Vaughan of DCC Highways about this.
- MH said Councillors will probably have to have a meeting with DCC Highways about several safety issues, and will need to involve Claire Wright.
- JT reported that a resident complained about the state of the churchyard. JT told him it is the church's responsibility.
- KH asked if there is any formal training for Councillors regarding tree planning matters. D Lomas previously declined an invitation to talk to the Parish Council. There appears to be no formal training for Councillors in how to deal with tree planning matters.
- CH asked if the Parish Council's Standing Orders could be changed to allow the Chairman and the Clerk to respond to minor planning issues, and was informed that this would require a resolution.

15. Date of next meeting: To confirm the date of the next meeting which is scheduled for 17th October 2017.

- It was decided that there would be no meeting on 17th October 2017 unless significant planning matters or other matters of urgency are put forward.

Proposed by: MH

Seconded by: KH

Passed: unanimous

There being no other business, the Chairman thanked Councillors and formally closed the meeting at 9.57pm

Signed: _____ (Chairman)