

**WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 6th May 2025 AT 7.30pm**

Present:	Chairman Cllr Francis Pullman (FP), Cllr ShirleyMay Saunders (SMS), Cllr Trevor Ingram (TI), Cllr Ann Cooper (AC)
In attendance:	Anne Oliver Parish Clerk, 2 members of the public, DCC/EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey (from 8.20pm)
Apologies	N/A

Minutes of the Annual & Ordinary Meeting Of the Parish Council

Item (a)	Discussion and decisions (b)
25/167	<p>Welcome and Chairman's announcements</p> <p>The meeting started at 7.30pm. The Chairman, Cllr FP, welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman's announcements included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At 11.00am on Thursday 8th May a short service will be held at the War Memorial to commemorate VE-Day 80. This will be followed by a garden party from 1.30pm on Saturday 10th May at the RBL Clubhouse, School Lane. The events are open to all West Hill residents.
25/168	<p>To elect the Chairman of the Parish Council: To receive nominations and to carry out a vote accordingly.</p> <p>Cllr Saunders nominated Cllr Pullman to be chairman, seconded by Cllr TI. Cllr Francis Pullman was unanimously elected to the office of Chairman.</p>
25/169	<p>Declaration of Acceptance of Office: Once elected the Chairman will sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.</p> <p>Cllr FP made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and signed the form</p>
25/170	<p>To elect the Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council: to receive nominations and to carry out a vote accordingly.</p> <p>Cllr Pullman nominated Cllr Ingram to be vice-chairman, seconded by Cllr SMS. Cllr Trevor Ingram was unanimously elected to the office of Chairman.</p>
25/171	<p>Declaration of Acceptance of Office: Once elected the Vice-Chairman will sign the Declaration of Acceptance</p> <p>Cllr TI made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and signed the form</p>
25/172	<p>Apologies. To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence, if considered appropriate. N/A</p>
25/173	<p>To receive Declarations of interest for items on the Agenda and receipt of requests for new Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) dispensations for items on the Agenda.</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> <p>Cllrs FP, SMS, TI, AC each declared no interests on items on the agenda.</p>
25/174	<p>Public question time (3 minutes): 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>No members of the public wished to speak.</p>
25/175	<p>District and County Councillors' reports:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To receive notification of the result of the Devon County election for the Otter Valley Division. <p>Jess Bailey (JB) was elected as the ward member for the Otter Valley division.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To receive reports for information (items raised for decision will appear on the agenda for the next meeting)

	This item was deferred to 8.20pm when DCC/EDDC joined the meeting. DCC/EDDC Cllr JB gave an update on results of the Devon County Council election.
25/176	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
25/177	Minutes: To receive the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 1st April 2025 (Minute 25/129 - 25/154) and Extraordinary meeting 14th April 2025 (Minute 25/155-25/166) to approve the signing of the Minutes by the Chairman as a true record. The minutes of the meeting of 1st April 2025 and Extraordinary meeting 14th April 2025 were unanimously confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.
25/178	To receive an update on Councillor vacancies . The Council continued to carry three vacancies which could be filled by co-option.
25/179	To consider the WHPC Plan and Organisation Structure for 2025/26: a. to approve Working / Task + Finish Groups , their membership and Terms of Reference. b. To consider membership of outside bodies and committees and arrangements for reporting back. The meeting discussed the work schedule for 2025-26 and considered available resources. It was resolved to formally close the following Working Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Planning • Road Safety • Infrastructure • Communication It was resolved to maintain Working Groups and membership for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance (Cllrs FP, AC + Clerk) • HR + Policy (Cllrs FP, SMS + Clerk) • Neighbourhood Plan (Cllr AC + Clerk) • VH Pedestrian Path (Cllrs FP, SMS + Clerk) • Playpark (Cllrs AC/TI) • Emergency Plan (Cllr FP, TI) • Remembrance Service (Cllrs FP,AC) It was resolved the Parish Council would be represented on the following outside bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exeter Airport Consultative Committee (Cllr FP) • Ottery Health Matters (Cllr AC)
25/180	To review and adopt (if appropriate) WHPC Standing Orders It was resolved to adopt the Standing Orders .
25/181	To review and adopt (if appropriate) WHPC Financial Regulations It was resolved to adopt the WHPC Financial Regulations.
25/182	To review and adopt if considered appropriate, the WHPC Code of Conduct : Each Councillor must undertake to abide by the Councils Code of Conduct. It was resolved to adopt the WHPC Code of Conduct.
25/183	To consider and adopt, if appropriate, amended/new policies : a. Health & Safety b. Internal Control Policy The meeting considered the policies. It was resolved to adopt and publish: a. WHPC Health & Safety b. WHPC Internal Control Policy

25/184	To consider the current policy for Chairman's and Member Allowances and whether it should be continued. If continued, to review and accept (if appropriate) Members Allowances Policy : It was resolved to adopt the WHPC Members Allowances Policy. The meeting noted the Members Allowance is available to elected Members only. Cllr FP declined to claim the Chairman's allowance.								
25/185	To review and adopt (if appropriate) all other Council's Policies and Protocols . It was resolved to adopt all other Council's Policies and Protocols.								
25/186	To consider and accept (if appropriate) the WHPC Review of Internal Financial Controls . The considered the review and no issues were raised. It was resolved to accept the review was accepted. It was agreed the Finance WG would review the controls in 6 months time or earlier if appropriate.								
25/187	To consider and review the inventory of WHPC assets and equipment (Asset register) . The Asset Register was confirmed as up to date. It was resolved to accept the Asset Register and to publish it on the Council's website.								
25/188	To review and approve, if appropriate, the Council's Risk Assessment . No issues were raised and the meeting resolved to approve the WHPC Risk Management Policy and Risk Assessment.								
25/189	To consider and approve (if appropriate) Councillor's training requirements. It was resolved to accept the WHPC Training Policy and to confirm the training record was up to date. Action: Each Councillor to complete a knowledge and skills audit.								
25/190	To review subscriptions/memberships to other bodies: <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">1. DALC/NALC</td><td style="width: 50%;">5. Parish Online</td></tr> <tr> <td>2. SLCC</td><td>6. Scribe Accounts Software</td></tr> <tr> <td>3. Information Commissioners Office</td><td>7. SMART Pensions</td></tr> <tr> <td>4. Devon Communities Together</td><td>8. Zoom remote meetings</td></tr> </table> <p>It was resolved to continue subscriptions 1-7 listed above. The meeting resolved not to renew the Zoom subscription.</p>	1. DALC/NALC	5. Parish Online	2. SLCC	6. Scribe Accounts Software	3. Information Commissioners Office	7. SMART Pensions	4. Devon Communities Together	8. Zoom remote meetings
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25/191	To confirm arrangements for telephone contracts (landline/Clerk's mobile phone). It was resolved to continue the contracts for the Council's landline (Voicehost) and Clerk's mobile (Three UK), both paid by Direct Debit.								
25/192	To consent to receive electronic Agenda & Summons . Each Councillor signed their consent.								
25/193	To determine the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full council up to and including the next Annual Meeting of full council. The Chairman noted that many Parish/Town Councils do not hold a Council meeting in August as attendance is often very low due to holidays and family commitments. It was resolved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to continue to meet on the 1st Tuesday each month with the exception of the 5th August 2025 meeting. An Extraordinary Meeting would be held if required. • to change the start time to 7.00pm • the venue for the meetings would continue to be the Village Hall (Acorn Room). 								
25/194	To consider a response to Planning Applications received : 24/1761/MFUL Land At Higher Metcombe Higher Mecombe EX11 1SL Proposed erection of 3no detached dwellings, stable block and paddock with associated hard and soft landscaping/access. The meeting considered the amended application. The Council continued to object as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it was decided the Council's previous consultee comments continued to apply. - Cllrs identified inaccuracies in the supporting documents - The site was located outside the BUAB and was considered to be unsustainable. 								

	<p>25/0867/TRE Bendarroch House Bendarroch Road West Hill Devon EX11 1JY T1, Beech : reduce by 15-20% removing branch of approx. 3-4m in length, making cuts approx. 40-60mm. T2, Oak : fell tree - reason for this is due to it growing upon a listed WWII bomb shelter. T3, Cyprus L fell tree - in poor condition.</p> <p>Cllrs felt the trees made a significant contribution to the character of the area and wider West Hill landscape. However, the Council was unable to make an informed decision on the application as an Arboricultural Report was not submitted to provide a professional assessment of the health of the trees and associated risks. It was decided to defer to the decision of the EDDC Tree Officers. Cllrs requested replanting of a native species tree if T2 Oak tree is felled.</p> <p>25/0879/TRE 1 Heather Grange West Hill Devon EX11 1XZ T1, willow : fell. Reason - damaging wall as surveyors report 020425 attached. T2, whitebeam : reduce by approximately 1m. T3, birdcherry : fell. Reason - suppressed, and allow room for neighbouring trees. T4, birdcherry : formative prune. T5, birdcherry : fell. Reason - to allow room for neighbouring trees. T6, birdcherry : formative prune.</p> <p>Cllrs considered the damage to the boundary wall was a risk to pedestrians and supported the application to fell T1. Cllrs considered T2-T6 trees made a significant contribution to the character of Heather Grange. The Council was unable to make an informed decision on the application as an Arboricultural Report was not submitted to provide a professional assessment of the health of the trees and associated risks. It was decided to defer to the decision of the EDDC Tree Officers regarding trees T2-6. Cllrs requested replanting of a native species tree for each felled tree.</p>
25/195	<p>Planning decisions received for information (*denotes WHPC differed)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">EDDC Decision</p> <p>25/0173/PIP Elsdon House Elsdon West Hill Permission in principle for the demolition of an existing greenhouse and the construction of two dwellings Noted</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Decided*</p>

WHPC Groups + Initiatives

25/196	<p>Finance Working Group:</p> <p>a. To decide arrangements for 2025-2026 insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.</p> <p>The Chairman reported the Finance Working group had assessed the renewal quote and policy documents for 2025-2026 cover. The meeting considered the working group's recommendations.</p> <p>It was resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Accept the renewal quote, £930.25 incl tax/fees for the Local Council's Policy, the third year of a three of a Long-Term Agreement, as it was considered to provide adequate cover for the Council's needs. b. To note the Council's duty of fair representation and to make the Statement of Fact. c. At the end of the three year long-term agreement to test the market for a competitive quote suitable for the Parish Council. <p>Action: the Finance WG to investigate Cyber Insurance cover and report back to a future meeting.</p> <p>b. To note the receipt of £5,592.85 CIL Monies. Noted.</p> <p>DCC/EDDC Cllr JB joined the meeting 8.20pm</p>
25/197	<p>Playpark Working Group:</p> <p>a. To confirm arrangements for playpark inspections.</p>

	<p>The meeting reviewed the use of the new inspection checklist (Min 25/114) and considered it met the needs of the Council, subject to the addition of one item (entrance gate). Cllrs were reminded the checklist should be sent to the Clerk after each inspection.</p> <p>b. To receive an update on the development of a playpark strategy and to agree next steps and costs.</p> <p>The Council considered a paper circulated prior to the meeting. Cllrs requested further information.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to arrange Playpark Working Group workshop.</p> <p>A member of the public left the meeting 20.29hrs.</p>
25/198	<p>Village Hall Pedestrian Path Working Group: To receive a progress update and to agree actions and costs, as considered appropriate.</p> <p>As the Devon County Council elections took place on 1st May 2025, it was expected that DCC Highways would resume processing of the Parish Council's application for a Traffic Regulation Order.</p>
25/199	<p>Emergency Plan Working Group: To receive a progress update and to agree actions and costs, as considered appropriate.</p> <p>It was reported that the trial of walkie-talkie radios to be used by responders in an emergency situation was successful.</p> <p>Action: Emergency Plan WG to investigate the possibility of a grant from Devon Communities Together to fund the purchase of walkie-talkie radios.</p>

Other Matters

25/200	To consider a Grant Application from West Hill PTFA request for £450 funding towards the cost of the Summer Fayre. Application Form not yet received.
25/201	<p>To consider arrangements for WHPC stall at the PTFA Summer Fayre (28th June 2025 12.00-4.00pm) and to approve costs as considered appropriate.</p> <p>The meeting felt the Summer Fayre provided an opportunity to engage with the Community. Councillors discussed options for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. promoting the Council's activities and b. raising funds for the PTFA. <p>It was resolved to approve a budget up to £200+vat for printing and equipment (which could be used in future years).</p>
25/202	<p>To consider arrangements for the next Parish Council newsletter and to agree costs.</p> <p>The meeting decided the next WHPC newsletter would focus on the development of West Hill Neighbourhood Plan and encourage residents to share their views via a survey. The online survey would open on Saturday 7th June until 19th July. Paper copies of the survey would also be available on request. The meeting discussed options for a subscription to Survey Monkey (online survey) and decided an annual subscription was cost effective as the Survey Monkey could be used by several Parish Council working groups during 2025-26.</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Council would distribute a newsletter in June - the newsletter would launch a West Hill Neighbourhood Plan Survey - to approve printing costs up to £600 - to approve a subscription for Survey Monkey, £396.
25/203	<p>To confirm arrangement for WHPC attendance at the VE-Day 80 Memorial Service at the War Memorial 8th May 2025.</p> <p>It was decided Cllrs FP and TI would represent the Parish Council at the service.</p>
25/204	To consider correspondence received: n/a
25/205	<p>To review WHPC's Action Tracker and agree actions as considered appropriate.</p> <p>Cllrs considered progress and no issues were raised.</p>
25/206	<p>To receive a report from the Parish Clerk.</p> <p>The Clerk:</p>

	<p>a. gave an update on BT's plans to transfer telephone landlines (analogue) to Digital Voice. BT will begin work in the SouthWest region in Autumn 2025 with a completion deadline of January 2027. They have dedicated plans in place to support vulnerable and Telecare customers. BT will be seeking the support of local authorities to signpost change and help available to customers.</p> <p>b. reported Village Hall room hire rates will increase in September 2025.</p>
25/207	<p>Financial matters:</p> <p>1. To consider and approve, if appropriate, the Schedule of Payments. Cllrs considered the Schedule of Payments and invoices circulated and published before the meeting. No questions were raised. It was resolved to approve the payments and sign the invoices.</p> <p>2. To consider and approve, if appropriate, any additional payments presented to the meeting. It was resolved to approve and sign additional invoices presented to the meeting:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">a Inv2173 West Hill Village Hall Room Hire (April), £55.94 b Inv3343 Pro-Lawn Garden Services - Repairs to swings, £216.00 c Inv3351 Pro-Lawn Garden Services - VAS Transfers, £96.00 d Voicehost - Landline (Direct Debit), £2.10 e Parish Online - annual subscription, £124.80</p> <p>3. To note Bank Reconciliations and finance reports will be presented to the June WHPC Meeting. Noted</p>
25/208	<p>Councillor questions, reports and items for future agenda Each Councillor is requested to use this opportunity to report minor matters of information not included elsewhere on the agenda and to raise items for future agendas. Councillors are respectfully reminded that this is not an opportunity for debate or decision making.</p> <p>Cllrs FP gave a short report on a meeting of the Exeter Airport Consultative Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Daily flights to Amsterdam have been popular and the schedule may be increased. o Mail flights have ended o TUI may base a 2nd plane at Exeter. o Cllr FP was elected Chairman of the Committee.
25/209	<p>Next meeting: To confirm arrangements for upcoming WHPC meeting on Tuesday 3rd June 2025 at the Village Hall. (Start time to be confirmed) It was decided the meeting will start at 7.00pm</p>

All remaining members of the public left the meeting.
Part A ended 9.04pm
Meeting closed at 9.04pm

Signed

Date