# WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

## HELD ON 6th October 2026 at 7.00pm

**Present:** Chairman Cllr Francis Pullman (FP), Cllr Ann Cooper (AC), Cllr Michael Owen (MO)
**In attendance**: Anne Oliver Parish Clerk, DCC/EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey (from 7.32pm), 8 members of the public
**Apologies:** Cllr Ben Jewell (BJ)

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**Minute reference 26/**

**243** **Welcome and Chairman's announcements** (for information only)
The meeting started at 7.00pm. The Chairman, Cllr FP, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Announcements included:

- A casual vacancy had arisen following the resignation of ShirleyMay Saunders. The notice of vacancy was published on 5th October 2026. On behalf of the Council, the Chairman thanked ShirleyMay for her support for the Council and community.
- Due to work commitments Cllr BJ had limited availability and may have to miss upcoming Council meetings.

The Chairman noted the increased risk of inquoracy due to the above announcements.

**244** **Apologies**. To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence, if considered appropriate.
Cllr Jewell sent his apologies and reasons for non-attendance which were accepted by the meeting.

**245** **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. (Contributions are limited to 3 minutes).

Several residents of Windmill Lane raised concerns regarding the proposed Construction Management Plan for the Windmill Lane development site (26/1677/DOC):

a. Several residents were unable to register comments on the planning portal.
b. Road safety concerns (Windmill Lane/Bendarroch Road)

Cllr FP advised residents to contact EDDC's Planning Enforcement team if works underway were contrary to the site's planning permission or approved Construction Management Plan. The residents were advised to keep a record of incidents such as blocked roads.

Cathy Armstrong spoke on behalf of Tipton St John's Scout Group's application for a grant award towards the cost of replacing a water damaged storage shed.

Footpath Warden, Eileen Perkins, reported a problem on Footpath 6/7. The rotten stile had been reported to DCC several months ago. No repairs had been made and the stile was now out of use. Use of the path was now difficult.

The Chairman asked for agenda item 26/256 (a) to be brought forward.

Two members of public left the meeting 7.19pm

**246** **District and County Councillors' reports:** To receive reports for information (items raised for decision will appear on the agenda for the next meeting).

This item was taken later on the agenda when the Ward Member joined the meeting at 7.32pm.

County/District Councillor Jess Bailey reported:

- Devon Libraries Unlimited, the charity managing Devon's libraries, is conducting a consultation that may result in the loss of supervisor roles.
- Devon County Council is preparing an outline planning application to relocate and rebuild Tipton St John Primary School.
- East Devon District Council have not yet submitted the Emerging Local Plan as workstreams require further work. If not submitted by the end of December 2026 a higher Housing Target may apply.
- EDDC Community Buidlings grant scheme is now open.
- Changes to the planning decision process come into force on 1st November. Planning committees will now focus strictly on major, complex, or significant proposals

**247** **Declarations of Interest**: 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. 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.
Cllrs FP, AC and MO each declared no interests related to agenda items.

**248** **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.
None

**249** To receive the **Minutes** of the Parish Council meeting held on 1st September 2026 (Minute 26/217-26/242) and to approve the signing of the Minutes by the Chairman as a true record.
The minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 1st September 2026 were agreed to be a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

**250** To decide a response to **planning applications received:**

- **26/1836/TRE** Cherry Garth Elsdon Lane West Hill Ottery St Mary EX11 1TZ
  Copper Beech - fell.
  Councillors noted the findings of the arboricultural report and supported the application.

- **25/2375/MRES** Land To The North Of Eastfield West Hill
  Reserved matters application for layout, scale, appearance and landscaping for the construction of 23 dwellings with associated infrastructure and drainage and the discharge of conditions 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 15 and 17 pursuant to outline application 23/0727/MOUT
  Councillors agreed that the Council had no additional comments to make and reaffirmed its previous comments on application 23/0727/MOUT.

- **26/1869/TRE** Birch House 4 Birch Grove West Hill Ottery St Mary EX11 1XP
  T1796 - Pine - Fell. T1797 - Pine - Remove major dead wood. T1798 - Pine - Remove major dead wood. T1799 - Pine - Fell. T1799 - Birch - Fell. G1 - Mixed species on northern boundary - Crown raise any low branches to approximately 4m above ground level.
  Councillors noted the findings of the arboricultural report and supported the application.

- **26/1849/FUL** Lindridge Elsdon Lane West Hill EX11 1UB
  Erection of an additional storey above the existing bungalow, erection of single-storey rear and front extensions, erection of a side extension incorporating a double garage with ancillary studio above, together with associated external alterations. Replacement of entrance gate.
  Councillors expressed concerns regarding deliveries and access during the construction phase. As Elsdon Lane is a narrow, unpaved road, Cllrs considered additional parking and delivery activity would be likely to result in congestion and conflict between vehicles and pedestrians using the lane.

  The Council supported the application subject to a condition requiring that no construction or contractor vehicles are parked on Elsdon Lane.

- **26/1890/TRE** 18 Ashley Brake West Hill Ottery St Mary EX11 1TW
  T001: Beech - eastern aspect: selective crown thin, removing approximately 20% of the foliage density, maximum cut diameter 30mm. Limb 1 (north-eastern): reduce by approximately 4m to suitable pruning points, leaving a remaining length of approximately 16m. Limb 2 (eastern): reduce by approximately 3m to suitable pruning points, leaving a remaining length of approximately 16 m.

Limb 3 (south-eastern): reduce by approximately 4m to suitable pruning points, leaving a remaining length of approximately 9m.
Councillors noted the findings of the arboricultural report and supported the application.

- **26/1889/TRE** Land To The West Of Hilden Lower Broad Oak Road West Hill EX11 1UE
  T4 and T5: English Oak -reduce the entire crowns by approximately 1-2m radially, maintaining balanced, natural crown forms. Pruning cuts to be made back to suitable secondary growth points, avoiding excessive pruning and retaining adequate live foliage throughout each crown.
  Councillors supported the application.

To confirm consultee response submitted under Delegated Powers: All noted and confirmed

- **26/1527/TRE** 8 Heather Grange West Hill Devon EX11 1XZ: (Defer to Tree Officers)
- **26/1786/TRE** Broad Oak Lodge Ford Lane West Hill Devon EX11 1XE: (Support)
- **26/1759/FUL** Kings Gatchell Higher Metcombe EX11 (no comments)
- **26/1708/FUL** Southlea Lower Broad Oak Road West Hill EX11 1XH: (no comments)
- **26/1790/FUL**. (awaited)

**251** **Planning decisions received** for information (*denotes WHPC differed)

- **26/1562/TRE** Manana Higher Broad Oak Road West Hill EX11 1XD: T1 Beech, G5 Beech/Oak Status: Approved
- **26/1522/FUL** Rustlings Lower Broad Oak Road West Hill EX11 1UF: first floor extension Status: Approved
- **26/0639/S106A** Land North Of Eastfield West Hill Section 106 Planning Obligation Agreement Status: Decided
- **26/0212/DOC** Land South Of Windmill Lane: Discharge of Condition for 23/1143/MFUL 4, 7, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 23 Approved

All noted

**252** **Planning Matters**: To note the Council's response to application 26/1677/DOC Windmill Lane and Eastfield sites.
The Chairman reported on the actions taken by the Council regarding application 26/1677/DOC: Discharge of conditions for 23/0727/MOUT: Condition 5 (materials), Condition 11 Construction Management Plan (CMP). He explained that EDDC no longer notifies the Parish Council or neighbouring households of such applications however the application is posted on the planning portal and members of the public may respond. As the application would be of interest to residents, the Parish Council had written to residents of Windmill Lane and Eastfield and surrounding areas to make them aware of the proposed Construction Management Plan and how to submit comments to East Devon District Council.

The Parish Council had submitted a consultee response under Delegated Powers which raised concerns (including Saturday working hours) and asked for amendments to the CMP.

The actions taken by the Council were noted and the consultee comments were confirmed.

**Working Groups**

**253** **Finance Working Group:** To note the External Auditor's Interim report for the year ended 31 March 2026.

The meeting received the External Auditor's interim report for 2025/2026.

The meeting noted:
a. the Auditor's Interim Report identified 'no matters of concern'.
b. However, the External Auditor was not able to issue a Final Report/Certificate as a challenge had been submitted in relation to the Parish Council's Annual Return for 2025/26.

c. A Final Report/Certificate would be issued once the auditor had reviewed the challenge and any issues arising.
d. The Parish Council does not have the timescales for the Final Report as the Auditor has not provided any information on their national caseload.
e. The Parish Council will be charged for the Auditor's additional work to process the challenge.

The meeting confirmed decisions made under Delegated Powers:

- To set a charge of £20.00 for any person requiring a copy of the AGAR, and
- to set the time limit for the period for right of inspection to be 1 month.

**254 Playpark Working Group:**

a. To decide arrangements for a public consultation.

Ward member JB joined the meeting 7.32pm

Cllr AC presented details of a proposed public consultation on the provision of new equipment for the children's playpark. EDDC's Communication Team had kindly agreed to host an online survey on their Commonplace consultation platform. In addition, West Hill Primary School and Pre-school, had agreed to host Councillor led consultation sessions with children at the school.

Cllr FP supported the proposals and noted that the project timetable was challenging and required EDDC's approval for the use of s106 which can be a lengthy process.

**It was resolved** to:

- Approve the consultation methodology and online survey.
- The consultation to run for three weeks: 16th October to 6th November

A member of the public left the meeting 7.43pm.

b. To note actions taken by WHPC: Boundary Tree.

Cllr FP reported on the 2026 Arboricultural Report commissioned by the Village Hall Trustees. The report identified an issue: a dead birch tree amongst the neighbouring boundary trees which was considered tall enough to fall into school/playpark grounds. The Parish Council had written to the householder to inform them of the report's findings.

The meeting noted the action taken.

**255 Other Working Groups:** To receive reports (actions/costs arising to be agreed at a future meeting).

**Other Matters**

**256 Grant Applications:**

a. To consider an application submitted by Tipton St John Scout Group for a contribution towards a replacement storage shed.

This item was taken earlier on the agenda, following agenda item 26/245.

**Standing Orders were suspended.**

Cathy Armstrong answered Councillors questions on behalf of the Scout Group, including:

- More than 60% of members live in West Hill. Other members attending West Hill Primary School.
- If approved, the Parish Council's grant would be used to purchase storage equipment.

- Overall project costs were £7,500. Other sources of funding included Ottery St Mary Town Council, other grant applications and funds held by the club.

**The meeting resolved** to award a grant of £950.00 for a contribution towards storage equipment for a new replacement storage shed.

**Standing Orders were resumed**

b. To consider whether the conditions on the grant awarded to Ottery St Mary Cricket Club have been met (replacement boundary fencing).
The meeting considered additional information provided by Ottery St Mary Cricket Club.

**It was resolved** that Ottery St Mary Cricket Club had met the condition on grant award Min 26/256 and the grant payment could be made.

**257 West Hill Remembrance Service 2026**

a. To consider arrangements for the Remembrance Service on Sunday 8th November 2026 and to approve a risk assessment and costs as appropriate.

The meeting considered a paper circulated prior to the meeting.

**It was resolved**:

- Councillor FP would lead the arrangements for the 2026 Remembrance Sunday Service event.
- To approve the risk assessment for the 2026 Remembrance Sunday Service event.
- The meeting was satisfied that the necessary actions were in place to meet the terms of the Temporary Traffic Regulations Order.
- To approve the WHPC letter to be distributed to residents in the vicinity of the road closure.
- To approve costs for Lengthsman to co-ordinate the placing of the road closure/diversion signs, hire of signs, £250+vat
- Cllr FP to lay a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.

b. To confirm an order for a Remembrance Wreath and a donation to the 2026 Poppy Appeal under s137 Powers**.**

**It was resolved**:

- To order a wreath and make a £50.00 donation to the 2026 Poppy Appeal s137 Powers.

**258** To consider the re-appointment of a **Solicitor** on an annual retained basis and to approve costs if considered appropriate.

Cllr FP gave an update on the provision of legal services to the Parish Council. Since October 2024 (Min 24/304) Tozer's LLP had provided legal support to the Council under their Councils Legal Advice Service (CLAS) at a cost of £500+VAT. The current subscription would expire during October 2026.

For 2026-27 Tozer's proposed that the arrangement switched to a discounted hourly rate basis as the support provided 2024/25 and 2025/26 had exceeded the terms of the CLAS scheme.

Cllr FP proposed that the Parish Council should accept the new fee basis as Tozer's had provided excellent service for the Council and retaining their services would provide continuity for the Parish Council to be elected in May 2027.

**It was unanimously resolved** to retain Tozer's LLP on a discounted hourly rate basis.

**259** To consider arrangements for the **Christmas 2026 event**.

The Chairman deferred this item to the next meeting.

**260** To approve the October 2026 edition of the **WHPC newsletter**.

The meeting resolved to approve the publication of the October 2026 edition of the WHPC newsletter.

**261** To confirm WHPC representatives and decide WHPC voting at the **Devon Association of Local Councils AGM and Conference.**

**It was resolved**:

- Anne Oliver (Parish Clerk) and Margaret Hall (Chairman of the WHPC Neighbourhood Plan Group) would attend the event.
- to decide how WHPC would vote on items on the DALC AGM agenda.

**262** To confirm the subscription renewal for Breakthrough Communications, if considered appropriate.

The meeting discussed a paper circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr FP proposed that the subscription should be renewed as this would provide continued support and training for the Parish Council to be elected in May 2027.sav

**It was resolved** to renew the annual subscription to Breakthough Communications at a discounted cost of £595.00+vat.

**263** To consider **correspondence** received (if any) and decide actions (as appropriate):

a. Aircraft Noise

The meeting considered correspondence raising concern about aircraft noise particularly in relation to the early morning TUI flights.

Cllr FP reported that Exeter Airport received very few complaints about aircraft noise, however he was aware that it was a concern for some village residents. He explained that complaints can be submitted online via the Exeter Airport website (search for 'noise' on www.exeter-airport.co.uk) and directly from the Parish Council's website (www.westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk). He advised users to search for 'aircraft' on the Council's website for additional information on how to report aircraft noise. The complaint pro-forma asks for information such as time and date as this enables the airport to identify individual flights. Cllr FP commented that the Airport Consultative Committee reviews complaints at every meeting.

b. Freedom of Information Request

Cllr FP noted that the Freedom of Information Request would be processed according to legislation and the Council's Policies.

c. Land for Sale

The Council had received correspondence which asked the Council to consider the purchase of land currently for sale on Oak Road.

The meeting discussed the request and decided that it did not currently have the financial or Councillor resources to consider purchasing the land.

A member of the public left the meeting 8.17pm

**264** To receive the **monthly crime statistics** for West Hill (for information):

The meeting received the report and noted the recent burglary at Morrisons, West Hill Road.

**265** **Clerk Matters**:

a. To receive a report from the Parish Clerk and to agree actions/costs as appropriate, including:

- **It was resolved** to update the bank mandate for the Unity Trust Bank to remove ShirleyMay Saunders following her resignation.
  **Action:** The Council to review working groups and their membership at the next meeting.
- It was confirmed: Cllrs FP + AC to attend the Monthly WHPC Drop-In Session 20th October.
- The appointment of the Internal Auditor Penny Clapham (Min 26/227) was confirmed and letters of engagement exchanged.
- An application for a temporary road closure for the Christmas Event had not been submitted as the Clerk was awaiting details from the organisers.
- The Lengthsman would be cutting verges and cleaning village signs during October as per contract.
- DCC Highways had re-painted some of the line markings at junctions in West Hill.
- April 2027 would be the 10th anniversary of the creation of the Council.

**Action:** Cllr FP to contact the Tar Barrels Committee ahead of this year's event to discuss parking arrangements in West Hill.

b. To note decisions made under delegated powers (if applicable)
   - Transfer between WHPC bank accounts, £4,000. (approved Cllrs AC/MO)

c. Urgent matters (if applicable). None

**266 WHPC Action Tracker:** To receive updates on actions and matters arising from the last meeting and to agree actions/costs as considered appropriate.
Deferred to next meeting.

**267 Financial matters:**

a. To consider and approve, if appropriate, the Schedule of Payments and internal bank transfers.
The meeting considered the Schedule of Payments, internal transfers and invoices circulated prior to the meeting. No questions were raised.
**It was resolved** to approve the payments/transfers and sign the invoices.

b. To consider and approve, if appropriate, any additional payments presented to the meeting.
It was resolved to approve one additional payment presented to the meeting: -

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| West Hill Village Hall - Room Hire (Sep) | £27.00 |
| Pro-Lawn Garden Services VAS Transfers | £102.00 |
| Pro-Lawn Garden Services - Verge Cuttig (Oct) | £567.00 |
| Breakthough Communications | £714.00 |
| Pro-Lawn Garden Services VAS Transfers | £102.00 |

c. To receive, if available, monthly Bank Reconciliations and finance trackers.
The Bank reconciliation (Aug) and Finance Trackers were noted. No issues were raised

**268 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. No matters raised

**269 Next meeting:** To confirm arrangements for the upcoming WHPC meeting on **Tuesday 3rd November 2026 7.00pm** at the Village Hall

Ward Member JB and all remaining members of the public left the meeting.
Part A ended 8.37pm
Meeting ended 8.37pm

Signed …… Date …… ……

Signed: *Anne Oliver*, Clerk to the Council, 19th October 2026