

**WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 3rd January 2024 AT 7.30PM**

Present:	Chairman Cllr Alison Carr (AC), Cllr Andrew Gorton (AG), Francis Pullman (FP),
In attendance:	Anne Oliver Parish Clerk, DCC/EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey, 13 members of the public attended the meeting.
Absent	Cllr Stanley Paulo (SP), Cllr Trevor Ingram (TI)

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council

Item (a)	Discussion and decisions (b)
24/001	<p>Welcome and Chairmans announcements: The meeting started at 7.30pm. The Chairman, Cllr AC, welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished Cllr and residents a Happy New Year. Chairman’s announcements included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vacancy Notices will be published on 4th January 2024 publicising the Councillor vacancy arising from the resignation of Cllr Neil Bromley in December 2023. - Further planning application received since the agenda was published. These will be considered at a future Council meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 21/1688/MFUL further amendments to proposals for roadside services on land at the Daisymount roundabout. The deadline for comments to EDDC is 29th January. o A developer has submitted a Permission in Principle application to EDDC for up to 5 dwellings on land off Hayes End. A PiP is a way of establishing that development is acceptable in principle and normally there is little in the way of detail provided. The application has not yet been validated by EDDC and WHPC awaits formal notification from EDDC. The developer has been made aware of the Parish Council Protocol and the Parish Council will not engage in discussions other than in a public meeting. <p>The Chairman commented “It would be no exaggeration to say that West Hill is under siege from development applications, due in no small way to the fact that EDDC can’t demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One success: The PiP application, 23/0325/PIP, for 2 dwellings on land off Toadpit Lane was dismissed at appeal as it would cause “material harm to the character and appearance of the area”. This is one of the Neighbourhood Plan policies which shows how important it is to have one and thanks to my former Council colleagues who worked hard to produce the Plan. - The Chairman reported the receipt of correspondence from a resident. She noted the associated work to process the correspondence was unsustainable particularly as the Parish Council was working hard to respond to the many planning applications that will affect the whole village community.
24/002	<p>Apologies. To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence. Cllrs TI and SP sent their apologies and their reasons for absence were accepted.</p>
24/003	<p>Public question time (3 minutes): 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 includes issues submitted to the Clerk prior to the meeting. <i>Individual contributions are limited to 3 minutes.</i></p> <p>A resident urged the West Hill community to “fight on a collective front”. West Hill applications currently in progress could result in the addition of c100 houses in the village with no additional increase in infrastructure. This view was supported by many attending the meeting.</p> <p>Many residents spoke to raise concerns about planning application 23/2612/OUT Land at Lower Broad Oak Lane. Issues raised included:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The site offers a very special and important view across the landscape. - The site is outside the BUAB - The site is not sustainable. - The site is situated near land provided by a former resident for public amenity (<i>Broadoak Plantation</i>) - The site has been used by the Air Ambulance - The removal of mature trees can't be supported - The application overlooks current serious flooding problems. Surface water run off badly affects neighbouring properties and Lower Broad Oak Road. Surface water runs off Hawkins Lane onto the site exacerbating the problem. Ditches have to be kept clear to avoid further flooding. Who will be responsible for this if the site is developed? Who will be responsible for the proposed new pond? - Badgers, rabbits, deer and many birds are resident on the site. - The site will generate additional traffic on Lower Broad Oak Road. This road is considered dangerous by the many walkers and horse riders using the road on daily basis. The road is narrow and includes blind bends. - The new householders will rely on car transport. - As this is an Outline application if approved it may be re-submitted in a revised form for more, smaller houses. - There is a covenant on the land. <p>A resident spoke on behalf of Windmill Lane residents about planning application 23/1143/MFUL. Issues included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - frustration that EDDC had not answered their questions. - concern that "Highways never seem to object to these applications" - highlight the proposed reduction in Affordable Housing. <p>8.10pm two members of the public left the meeting.</p> <p>A resident spoke to ask if there was merit in appointing a centralised Planning Solicitor that could advise on West Hill Planning applications.</p> <p>Cllr AC commented that the Parish Council and residents have to respond to applications within a very tight timescale. Any delay would be difficult. The Parish Council uses the existing Planning Policies to respond to applications. A planning solicitor is likely to provide similar references. Cllr AG noted the Council must be careful with public money.</p> <p>District Cllr JB commented that the village needs a strong Parish Council. Responding to the many applications is difficult if the Council is under-resourced. She stressed the need for wider community response to applications and attendance at EDDC Planning Committee meetings when West Hill applications are considered.</p> <p>Cllr thanked residents for their comments.</p>
<p>24/004</p>	<p>To receive District and County Councillors' reports for information (items raised for decision will appear on the agenda for the next meeting).</p> <p>DCC/EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey (JB) reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EDDC have agreed to Cllr JB's request for a meeting to discuss the proposed changes to the West Hill BUAB included in the Emerging Local Plan. The draft presented for public consultation in Nov 2022 showed an enlarged BUAB. Representatives of WHPC will be invited to the meeting. - On behalf of the Parish Council Cllr JB has contacted DCC Highways to request further details of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o a trial scheme for Parish/Town Council funded Highways works o 20mph schemes. - Successfully requested a TPO (23/0063/TRE) covering the land off Lower Broad Oak Road subject to application 23/2612/OUT.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Successfully sought EDDC Cabinet support to seek a legal challenge to “robustly” resist speculative development and resist giving too much weight to the tilted balance arising from the lack of East Devon 5 year housing supply.
24/005	<p>Declarations of Interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Under the Localism Act 2011 (sections 26-37 and Schedule 4) and in accordance with the Council’s Code of Conduct, members are required to declare any interests that are not currently entered in the Member’s register of interests including the nature and extent of such interests they may have, in items to be considered at this meeting. - 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. - Receipt of requests for dispensations for new Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Registerable Interests or Non-Registerable Interests for items on the Agenda. <p>Cllrs FP and AG declared no interests. Cllr AC declared an interest in planning application 23/2656/TRE as she knew the applicant some years ago as a member of the West Hill Residents Association however she would participate in discussion with an open mind and free from bias or pre-determination. Cllrs supported this.</p>
24/006	<p>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. To consider, if appropriate, any agenda items should be considered in Part B. N/A - No items proposed.</p>
24/007	<p>Minutes: To receive the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5th December 2023 (Minute 23/357-23/387), previously circulated - 12th December 2023 Extraordinary Meeting (Minute 23/388 - 23/396), previously circulated and to approve the signing of the Minutes by the Chairman as a true record. <p>The minutes were unanimously accepted as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.</p>
24/008	<p>Planning Applications received: To consider and agree a response to:</p> <p>a. 23/2612/OUT Land At Lower Broad Oak Road West Hill Outline planning application for the construction of 5 no. dwellings, with all matters reserved.</p> <p>Cllrs noted the comments made by residents and supported their concerns. Cllrs strongly objected to the application. Reasons included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Site is listed as a Valued View in the West Hill and Ottery St Mary Neighbourhood Plan - the site lies outside the BUAB - not sustainable - Loss of trees - The loss of agricultural land - Flood threat to neighbouring properties - Adverse impact on wildlife - Planning history <p>Cllrs unanimously agreed to write to EDDC Tree Officers in support of the TPO 23/0063/TPO.</p> <p>b. 23/1143/MFUL Land South Of Windmill Lane West Hill (Amended Plans) The erection of 34 dwellings (35% of which will be provided as affordable housing), formation of access, open space and associated infrastructure on land to the South of Windmill Lane, West Hill.</p> <p>Councillors noted that the Parish Council was notified of the application on 22nd December however the supporting documents were not made available on the planning portal until</p>

	<p>2nd January 2024. This left virtually no time for residents or Councillors to examine them in detail before the WHPC meeting. Councillors noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the number of dwellings had been reduced by two - the percentage of affordable housing had also been reduced from 50% to 35% - The density of the development, although reduced slightly, is still out of character with West Hill and contrary to NP26 of the Neighbourhood Plan <p>Cllrs agreed the amendments did not change their previous comments and unanimously voted to continue their objection to the application.</p> <p>8.40pm 1 member of the public left the meeting.</p> <p>c. 23/2020/FUL Rosedale Elsdon Lane West Hill EX11 1TZ Kitchen, porch and utility room extension</p> <p>Cllrs supported the application subject to a condition that the mitigating measures described in the bat roost assessment are implemented fully.</p> <p>8.43pm 3 members of the public left the meeting.</p> <p>d. 23/2558/FUL Mill House Bendarroch Road West Hill D EX11 1TS Replacement porch to the front of the property. Replacement garden room to the rear of the property. Alterations and recladding to the existing elevations and associated external works.</p> <p>Councillor supported the application subject to a condition that appropriate tree protection measures are implemented.</p> <p>e. 23/2656/TRE Hathersage House Higher Metcombe EX11 1SL T1, Larch: prune and reduce back all over-extended branches, reducing back to give 1m clearance from the garage roof, removing branch lengths of 2-4m and making natural target pruning cuts up to 10cm in diameter.</p> <p>Cllrs thought that the works were reasonable tree management and supported cuts to the branches overhanging the garage and neighbouring property.</p> <p>f. 23/2600/FUL Magnolia Cottage Higher Metcombe West Hill EX11 1SL Proposed construction of timber garage and widening of vehicle access.</p> <p>Cllrs considered the proposal and its impact on the streetscape. Cllrs noted the proposal will impact local views, however the timber construction of the garage should help it blend in. Cllrs considered the removal of a small section of bank to widen the vehicular access, to be regrettable, but requested that it is kept to a minimum. On that basis, Cllrs supported the application.</p> <p>g. 23/2670/FUL 3 Broadoak Close West Hill EX11 1XW Erection of a rear orangery, and replacement of the flat roof (over the existing side extension) with a tiled duo-pitched roof (re submission of 23/1204/FUL).</p> <p>The original application, 23/1204/FUL, was supported by WHPC and approved by EDDC. Cllrs noted that the amendments related to the roofline and that the applicant states that the roofline extension brings the roof in line with other properties in Broadoak Close that also have extensions. On that basis, Cllrs supported the application</p>
24/009	<p>EDDC Planning Decisions: received for information (*denotes WHPC differed)</p> <p>23/1493/FUL South Oak Higher Metcombe EX11 1SQ Status: Approved Proposed side and rear extensions, and detached single garage. Noted</p>

24/010	<p>Planning Appeal: Appeal ref: APP/U1105/W/23/3320367, Land at Toadpit Lane, West Hill (Appeal Dismissed)</p> <p>Cllrs briefly discussed the outcome of the Planning Appeal against EDDC’s decision to refuse application 23/0325/PIP for 2 dwellings on land off Toadpit Lane. Cllrs were pleased to note the Planning Inspector had assessed the application against the West Hill and Ottery St Mary Neighbourhood Plan and dismissed the appeal as development would cause “material harm to the character and appearance of the area”. Cllrs felt this highlighted the strength of a neighbourhood Plan in protecting the character of the village. On behalf of West Hill residents Cllrs thanked former Cllrs responsible for the development of the current Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
24/011	<p>Planning Matters: To receive a verbal update.</p> <p>Cllr AC highlighted details of applications received in recent days. These will be considered at the next Council meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 21/1688/MFUL further amendments to proposals for roadside services on land at the Daisymount roundabout. The deadline for comments to EDDC is 29th January. - A developer has submitted a Permission in Principle application to EDDC for up to 5 dwellings on land off Hayes End. WHPC awaits formal notification from EDDC once the application has been validated. The developer has been made aware of the Parish Council Protocol and the Parish Council will not engage in discussions other than in a public meeting. <p>Also, the next EDDC Strategic Planning Committee will be held on 9th January 2024 10.00am. The meeting will be available to view on EDDC Youtube.</p>

WHPC Groups + Initiatives

24/012	<p>Finance Working Group</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To receive an updated draft 2024-25 budget b. To recommend a 2024-2025 budget and precept demand (paper previously circulated) <p>Cllrs considered an update and recommendations from the Finance Working Group. Cllrs resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set the 2024-2025 budget at £57,417.00. • Submit a 2024-2025 Precept Demand at £56,875, unchanged from previous years. • To use existing reserves to fund the shortfall and project costs, if appropriate.
24/013	<p>To receive an update on the Village Hall Pedestrian Link project (paper previously circulated) The Village Hall Path Working Group reported that the Village Hall Trustees were still awaiting a response from the Charities Commission regarding the grant of a lease to the Parish Council.</p> <p>Until it was clear that a lease could be granted Cllrs didn’t want to incur further costs. However, they agreed to continue activities that did not incur costs.</p> <p>Cllrs noted the Working Group paper circulated for the meeting and also the outline project plan. Subject to point A. Cllrs resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. to investigate and recommend a suitable solicitor. b. The Working Group should liaise with EDDC regarding the project’s eligibility for S106 funding.
24/014	<p>To receive a verbal update, if available, on the West Hill Emergency Plan Working Group. Cllr FP outlined the importance of developing an Emergency Plan for West Hill and emphasised that the involvement of the community would play an important part in this work. During December the Working Group had met with EDDC’s Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer to initiate the project.</p> <p>Cllrs supported Cllr FP’s recommendation for the Working Group to liaise with Devon Communities Together to build on their experience of working with other Town/Parish Councils.</p>

	<p>Cllrs agreed the next edition of the WHPC newsletter should include an article on the Emergency Plan project.</p> <p>8.55pm 1 member of the public left the meeting.</p>
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Other Matters

24/015	<p>To consider a grant application by West Hill Pre-school (Play Kitchen) Cllrs considered a grant application for funding for (a) new play kitchen (toy kitchen units and equipment) and (b) additional equipment. Cllrs noted the application met the criteria set out in the Council's Grant Policy, however the sum requested £1,200 exceeded the 50% of the project costs and this level of funding was contrary to the Council's Grant Policy.</p> <p>Cllrs regarded the Pre-school as an important village facility and were keen to support the application. Cllrs resolved to award £900.00 for the purchase of toy kitchen units/equipment only.</p> <p>8.55pm 1 member of the public left the meeting.</p>
24/016	<p>To consider arrangements for a WHPC Newsletter January 2024. Cllrs discussed a list of proposed articles for the next edition of the Council's newsletter and also the process and timetable. Cllrs recognised that would require significant effort during a period when the Council was responding to many planning applications and dealing with other matters. However, they felt it was important to keep the community informed of planning matters etc that would affect the whole village. It was resolved to publish a WHPC Newsletter, with a target date of 27th January and set a budget of £500. 9.03pm 3 members of the public left the meeting.</p>
24/017	<p>a. To approve the January-June 2024 VAS Schedule. Approved b. To receive a verbal update on arrangements for production of VAS Reports In Cllr TI's absence the Clerk gave an update. Cllr TI had made good progress in the handover of the production of the reports using the proprietary software. With some additional training the reports will resume publication on the Council's website.</p>
24/018	<p>To consider arrangements for WHPC's annual inspection of the playpark. It was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr TI would carry out the WHPC Inspection and report to the next meeting. 9.05pm 1 member of the public left the meeting.</p>
24/019	<p>Clerks Report: (for information) No matters were reported.</p>
24/020	<p>To review WHPC Action Tracker The Chairman gave an update on item 23/377. The Tar Barrels Event organising committee had responded to the Chairman's email highlighting the traffic problems experienced in West Hill on the night of the event. The Committee thanked WHPC for the feedback and explained that road closure at the top of Bendarroch Road, which was put in place following feedback/advice from residents, was (unexpectedly) removed during the evening. Also, all local villages were impacted by additional traffic as the wet weather parking programme was implemented which led to closure of car parks in Ottery St Mary.</p>
24/021	<p>Financial matters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To consider and approve, if appropriate, the Schedule of Payments. Cllrs considered the Schedule of Payments and invoices circulated before the meeting. No questions were raised. It was resolved to approve the payments and sign the invoices. 2. To consider and approve, if appropriate, any additional payments presented to the meeting. The Clerk presented one additional invoice which was approved and signed: West Hill Village Hall Room Hire £40.75 3. To approve the transfer of £5,000 between WHPC deposit/current accounts. The transfer was confirmed and record signed.

	<p>4. To receive, if available, monthly Bank Reconciliations and finance trackers. <i>The bank reconciliation for November was approved and signed. Following the receipt of an interest payment (Dec-23) on the Council's Building Society account Cllrs resolved to transfer £2,500.00 from the account to the Unity Trust Account.</i></p>
24/022	<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. <i>Councillors are respectfully reminded that this is not an opportunity for debate or decision making.</i> Cllr AC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>reminded Cllrs of the scheduled meeting with the Regional Manager of Morrisons in January.</i> - <i>thanked DCC Cllr Bailey for seeking further information on the DCC Highways schemes and asked for them to be considered at a future Parish Council meeting.</i>
24/023	<p>Next meeting: To confirm arrangements for the next WHPC ordinary meeting Tuesday 6th February 2024 7.30pm at the Village Hall. <i>The Chairman noted that Cllrs would consider holding an Extraordinary Meeting on 16th January to consider planning applications, if appropriate.</i></p>

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.

*District Cllr JB and all members of the public left the meeting.
 Meeting closed 9.13pm*

Signed

Date