

## West Hill Parish Council (WHPC) – 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022 Agenda Item: 22/113

Plan for 2022/23 and with structure for delivery and associated budget.

### Background

West Hill Parish Council (WHPC) on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022 considered a draft Plan for 2022/23, with a proposed structure for delivery through Working Groups and Task and Finish Groups. Membership of those Groups was discussed and proposed membership established.

The WHPC strap line is, **“Working with the Community to maintain and enhance West Hill’s special character”** and this is our steer as to what the Councils does and how it does it. One of the key words is ‘with’ and this Plan will start by putting greater emphasis on this aspect – engaging with and working with residents to meet community needs now and into the future.

There are numerous activities that the WHPC undertakes that could be described as ‘business as usual’ including such as:

- Providing, maintaining and enhancing the Play Park,
- Provision of ‘dog bins’,
- Operating two Vehicle Activated Signs to remind drivers of the relevant speed limits in an effort to encourage greater road safety,
- Being a statutory Consultee on all Planning Applications to the East Devon District Council,
- Providing input to various consultations from other agencies, and raising matters pertinent to the community with relevant agencies,
- Representation on other bodies, eg Exeter Airport Consultative Group,
- Providing Grant funding to local organisations and charities in their work in the community
- Signposting residents to the correct agency or organisation to discuss and help with their issues
- Publication of a regular informative newsletter to every household in West Hill
- And much much more.

Recent examples of WHPC actions include the operation of the Help Scheme during the pandemic lockdowns, providing Hi-Viz jackets to all put piles at the Primary School, installing of two community public access defibrillators, contracting for new equipment in the Play Park, undertaking a community survey and funding support to the British Legion Club, Parent Teachers Association, St Michael’s Church for their Welcome Packs.

The Council consists of 7 Councillors, who are volunteers, and a part time Clerk. The Council has to be mindful of the realistic capacity it has to directly ‘do’. Thus the Council needs to work with others to ensure the delivery of benefits for the community. There will be elections for all the seats on the Parish Council in May 2023 and the then newly formed Council will no doubt want to set out their own Plan. It is important that the current Council work to put in place the building blocks to enable the transition required.

### Moving Forward

In accord with WHPC Governance arrangements no Working Group, Task and Finish Group, or any sub group will have any decision or spending ability – they are each to make recommendations based on their research, collation of facts etc to the full Council for decisions and budget provisions to be agreed. Communication with other agencies eg Devon County Council, East Devon District Council etc will be in accord with the WHPC Communications Policy and thus coordinated through the Parish Clerk.

The below Groups are proposed as the delivery structure for the key issues the WHPC will do during this coming year. The proposed Terms of Reference for each Group are attached for approval along with the table indicating the membership of each Group.

1. **Strategic Planning Group** - the East Devon District Council (EDDC) is currently developing a new plan to set out how it will meet the governmental targets required for increased housing. In a district where some 80% of the land is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that restricts the areas where development could be achieved.

This work is vital to West Hill to ensure we work to influence the East Devon District Council to ensure the Local Plan does not damage the nature of our very special environment, eg. Developments that merge West Hill and Ottery St Mary, housing numbers incompatible with key provisions such as schooling, medical facilities, etc., and protect what green corridors exist, etc.

2. **New Pedestrian Access to Village Hall Group** - the provision of a pedestrian footway from West Hill Road into the Village Hall and also the Primary School was initially raised some years before WHPC existed, the idea being raised through a survey of the community. This is an example of working with others within the Community, and there is an established Joint **WHPC/Village Hall Trustees Working Group**. The Group is currently taking forward the Commissioning Phase, the Terms of Reference for which already exist. Currently, WHPC are represented by the Chairman and Clerk.

3. The functioning of the WHPC has to ensure good governance and in order to support that there will be three Standing Groups:

- a) **Finance Group** – this group is essential in ensuring good fiscal governance by WHPC.

- b) **Policy Group** – this group will identify and draft additional policies required, as well as, ensuring the review and updating of current policies. This Group is important in ensuring good governance.

- c) **HR Group** – this group will focus on matters the Council should manage with regards to employee (The Clerk), secondly to manage matters that arise with regards to a Councillor and the Code of Conduct requirements and thirdly, in respect of ensuring complaints made against the Council or Councillors are handled as required. Further, due to demands being made of WHPC in respect of Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests, this Group will support the Clerk as required.

4. **Community Engagement Group** – this group will have a multi-faceted role that is aimed at improving the interface between the WHPC and the community to ensure a two way dialogue, to ensure residents are kept informed and in enabling the identification of concerns, issues and potential initiatives.

One key area for the coming year will be to set in train actions that would encourage residents to consider putting themselves forward to be elected councillors in 2023, in an effort to increase the diversity of the Council and bring on board 'new blood' as we know some Councillors will not be standing for re-election.

Other tasks will be with regards to the drafting of the regular newsletters, the WHPC website (updating the current one but setting in train a review to improve it further), maximising use of the media and social media, arranging public meetings additional to the monthly formal Council meetings including the Annual Parish Meeting. The Group will need to consider how the WHPC can interact with all age groups and the diversity of West Hill.

5. **West Hill Tree Group** – continuing the themes of working with the Community and West Hill being a 'Woodland Village' this Group will engage with interested residents. Key will be the Group identifying where there are trees (or groups or hedges etc) that should be protected by Tree Preservation Orders, look at ways of encouraging residents to take a greater interest in the trees of the village, as well as, other flora and fauna interests.

6. **Road Safety Group** – This group will need to manage the Vehicle Activated Sign scheme, ensure regular updates on the impact of the Scheme and liaise closely with the Community Speed Watch.

Initially the Group would need to review road safety issues for West Hill, being cognisant of those recently addressed and known outstanding issues, and prioritise them and propose plans as to how best they can be addressed by the appropriate authority for consideration by WHPC.

7. **Remembrance Day Task and Finish Group** – WHPC would only be committed to this year as organiser and so once delivered the Task and Finish Group would cease. This work is in conjunction with The Royal British Legion.

8. **Other projects**

**To close**

- Play park Task and Finish Group on installation of the new equipment
- Queen's Jubilee Group – once all initiatives and support completed

**Smaller initiatives**

- Provision of benches in suitable locations in the village – as and when locations identified, to be worked up by a Councillor.

**On our minds, but not currently actionable**

- Provision of open space/ recreation areas.

9. **Outside Body representation.**

WHPC wishes to maintain links through Councillor representation on some other bodies:

- Exeter Airport Consultative Group
- Cranbrook and Ottery St Mary Community Safety Group (if continues to exist)
- Police and Crime Commissioner's Councillor Advocate
- OStM hospital – to be confirmed
- Leisure in East Devon Group – to be confirmed

**Decisions:**

- Councillors to agree this Plan,
- Councillors to agree the Groups, the Terms of Reference and the membership of each.
- Councillors to agree representation on outside bodies.
- Councillors to agree the 2022-23 budget – revised to accommodate Groups provisional costings.

Della Cannings, Chairman West Hill Parish Council  
3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022