

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF WEST HILL PARISH
HELD ON 30 MAY 2017 AT 7.30 P.M. AT WEST HILL VILLAGE HALL**

Present:

Cllr Jessica Bailey (JB)
Cllr Alan Cook (AC)
Cllr Christopher Hall (CH)
Cllr Margaret Hall (MH)
Cllr Jo Talbot (JT)

Also present:

PCSO Maria Clapp
Eileen Perkins (Tree Warden and Parish Paths rep)
Carmel Wilkinson (Locum Parish Clerk & note taker) (CW)

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all and explained that this being the first annual parish meeting there would not be a report on the previous year's business.

2. Disclosures of Interests

None

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from:

Paul Carter (East Devon District Council)
Claire Wright (Devon County Council)
Matt Coppell (East Devon District Council) (MC)
Clarissa Place (Sidmouth Herald) (CP)
Mike Brown, Neighbourhood Highways Officer, Eastern Neighbourhood Highways

4. Chairman's Report

1.1. Progress to date:

- Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct adopted.
- Insurance taken
- Deed signed for EDDC s.106 grant funding for the play park.
- Opening a bank account is underway.
- Options for PC website are being considered.
- Agreed to commence work on the Strategic Plan.
- Ready to recruit a permanent clerk.

1.2. Co-option of two addition parish councillors:

Information has been circulated to local groups. Applicant are asked to prepare a short statement – to be sent to Margaret Hall (Chairman) - explaining why they want to be a parish councillor, and what they will bring to the role. Closing date 13th June. Applicants to attend the parish council meeting on 20th June where two new councillors will be selected by a vote.

ACTION: Clerk to draft editorial for local news media.

1.3. The Local Government Resource Centre (LGRC) will support the parish council with its Strategic Plan, including public consultation, and its financial planning.

5. Introduction by West Hill Parish Councillors

Parish Councillor introduced themselves to the public.

Jo Talbot was a councillor on Ottery St Mary Town Council for six years and helped establish West Hill as a separate entity in order to focus on locally relevant matters.

Alan Cook is an architect and has lived in WH since 1973; his children attended local schools and he was involved with the football club. Alan was a councillor on Ottery St Mary Town Council for thirteen years, and as Chairman of Governors was instrumental in building a new school. He is the regional chairman of RIBA and sits on the national society.

Alan's aims are to enhance the amenity of West Hill and to support local clubs and community organisations.

Christopher Hall has lived in West Hill for three years. Christopher was employed as a geologist in the mining industry and has been director and chairman of various exploration companies.

Previously CH was on Ilminster Town Council and Donyatt Parish Council. Christopher enjoys walking, cycling and traditional music and is interested in public rights of way and open spaces. CH will lead on finance.

Jessica Bailey has lived in West Hill since 2008, and was a councillor on Ottery St Mary Town Council for three and a half years. Prior to that she practiced as a solicitor in London.

Jessica's aims are: to improve local community facilities, especially public open spaces; to make WH a more pedestrian-friendly village; to encourage the parish council to work with local organisations; to work with residents to enhance the village.

Margaret Hall has lived in West Hill since 2009, when she retired from General Practice in Hampshire and Aberdeen.

Margaret is Chairman of the Residents' Association and Chairman of East Devon Council for the Protection of Rural England.

Margaret's aspirations include: to increase community involvement in parish matters; to address the divide between young and old in the community.

6. Public questions, comments or representations

Item 10 on the agenda was brought forward so as not to detain the PCSO from her other duties.

6.1. PCSO Maria Clapp reported that there have been four crimes in the area within the last two months.

There is one Police Constable and three PCSOs all based at OSM.

Discussed the need for a litter pick and general tidy up of the car parking area outside McColl's, which used to be looked after by a gardener employed by the business. The area is used by the community as well as McColl's customers. Volunteers to undertake this if McColl's provide refreshments?

ACTION Clerk to arrange a meeting between councillors and McColl's re this proposal.

6.2. An overgrown beech hedge is restricting access to Beech Park.

ACTION Clerk to contact Devon CC re cutting the hedge.

6.3. Member of public reported a dead tree **on the corner of Beech Park(?)**, a potential safety issue as visibility is reduced.

ACTION As above re McColl's.

6.4. Member of public commented that McColl's had previously provided space in the store for a café, but it is not currently operating. Would like to see all ages coming together and the space at McColl's would be ideal for this purpose. See action above.

7. Neighbourhood Plan Report

On 9 June at West Hill village hall the public are invited to a drop in session on the Neighbourhood Plan which covers both the parishes of Ottery St Mary and West Hill. This will be a formal part of East Devon's (statutory) development plan and will be referred to in development consultations.

The Built Up Area Boundary (BUAB) for West Hill, has not been adopted yet and the consultation is closed, however this information **will** be used as planning guidance.

For information on BUABs in East Devon see: <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/villages-plan/proposed-criteria-for-revised-built-up-area-boundaries/> or <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2049500/villages-plan-publication-version.pdf>)

8. Devon County Council Highways update

Information regarding highway maintenance provided by Mike Brown, Neighbourhood Highways Officer in the Eastern Neighbourhood Highways Team, who was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following information.

Most highway problems can be reported at <https://new.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/> using an interactive map. The options on it include potholes, flooding and blocked drains, street lights, fallen trees, overgrown vegetation, trip hazards, broken manhole covers, obstructions and defective road markings or signs.

There is also a web page which provides information for town and parish councils <https://new.devon.gov.uk/devonhighways/> . The 'Programmes' link includes information about grass cutting etc. and the 'Updates' link includes information about Self Help and Community Support (e.g.the Road Warden Scheme).

9. District & County Councillors' Reports

Apologies received, see above.

10. Police Report

See 6.1 above.

11. Tree Warden / Parish footpaths report – Eileen Perkins

Trees: Eileen carries out tree warden duties on a voluntary basis for East Devon District Council, and collaborates with local parish councils within her designated area.

Dick Beardsall, Alan Cook and Eileen Perkins are progressing a survey of trees in West Hill parish. The aim of the survey is to:

- Provide baseline data that will assist when considering planning applications.
- Give landowners information that will assist them to look after their trees.
- Identify what's 'special', and what's not. Special in this context means a good specimen of a native tree species. Note that other trees are important in other ways e.g. preserving views or opening up new views.

Question re enforcement of Tree Preservation Orders.

Answer: Tree applications will be looked at in context of the Neighbourhood Plan and Village Plan.

Comment: Need to do more than conserve what is already there e.g. a stand of Scots Pines that have approx. 30 yrs left, need to understand when trees should be replaced and with which species.

NB breach of a TPO can result in an unlimited fine and a criminal conviction.

Comment: Management of trees is as important as preservation but the impression given is that preservation is being given the highest priority, even if not always deserved.

Identifying ancient trees is project no. 14 in the Neighbourhood Plan. Aims includes to increase awareness of local tree heritage, facilitate action re the care of trees and gather information about resources available for management.

ACTION Residents are encouraged to feed comments into this consultation.

Diseases and invasive species that are a problem locally include: Sweet Chestnut blight (the Exe Estuary and Cullompton); Himalayan Balsam (riverside growth is being strimmed to prevent spread); Ragwort (needs to be pulled up by roots if you see it).

Parish Paths update:

Local public rights of way were survey in Feb 2017 and a report sent to OSMTC and DCC.

Plank bridge on FootpathNo. 47 path (Higher Metcombe) has not been repaired and is thought to be dangerous; EP contacted Richard Spurway at Devon County Council PPP, who will inspect.

Footpath No. 87 needs 3 gates to be realigned and 3 new signposts.

Ottery St Mary Town Council received a P3 grant of £1,000 for 2017/18, to cover the whole area, including West Hill.

EP is waiting to hear fromDCC refunding bids.

Ros Mills is looking into a new P3 agreement for West Hill.