

**WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 AT 7.30pm**

Present:	Chairman Cllr Francis Pullman (FP), Cllr ShirleyMay Saunders (SMS), Cllr Ann Cooper (AC), Cllr Trevor Ingram (TI)
In attendance:	Anne Oliver Parish Clerk, DCC/EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey (JB), 10 members of the public.
Absent	N/A

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council**

Item (a)	Discussion and decisions (b)
<b>24/292</b>	<p><b>Welcome and Chairmans announcements:</b> The meeting started at 7.30pm. The Chairman, Cllr FP, welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman explained that the 3<sup>rd</sup> September meeting of the Council was cancelled as it did not have a quorum. He encouraged members of the community to come forward to fill the three Councillor vacancies. He highlighted the risk that future meetings may also be inquorate/cancelled as the Council has only 4 active members and a minimum of three Councillors must be present for a Council meeting to take place.</p> <p>The Chairman was very sad to report that former WHPC Chairman Margaret Piper had passed away in August. Councillors sent their condolences to her husband and family.</p> <p>The Chairman's announcements included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WHPC had finally received the External Auditor's Final Report for 2022/23</li> <li>• During September EDDC's Strategic Planning Committee allocated residential and employment sites in the Emerging local Plan.</li> </ul> <p>The Council considered both items later on the agenda.</p> <p>A half year report was not available for the meeting due to the heavy workload during September. The report will be presented to the November meeting of the Council.</p>
<b>24/293</b>	<p><b>Apologies.</b> To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence. <b>All Cllrs present.</b></p>
<b>24/294</b>	<p><b>Public question time (3 minutes):</b> 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>1. Several members of the public spoke on planning application 24/1761/MFUL Land at Meadow Mead, Higher Metcombe. Comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is an exceptionally wet site.</li> <li>- The site is outside the BUAB</li> <li>- Applications for development on other similar greenfield sites on the edge of the village have been refused.</li> <li>- The ecology study reported lots of wildlife on site</li> <li>- Concerns about drainage</li> <li>- It is a sensitive landscape</li> <li>- Poor pedestrian access to the centre of the village</li> </ul>

	<p>2. Former Chairman, Alison Carr, gave a brief update on changes to the BT landline network. BT will be retiring their old analogue phone network at the end of 2025. By then everyone in the UK will need to have moved to a Digital Phone Line.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked contributors for their comments.</p>
24/295	<p><b>District and County Councillors' reports</b> (if available): To receive reports for information (items raised for decision will appear on the agenda for the next meeting)</p> <p>County/District Cllr JB gave a short report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Devon County Council have launched a new public consultation on <a href="#">Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans</a>. Comments are invited on 10 routes, including The Otter Trail.</li> <li>- East Devon District Council's Strategic Planning Committee have completed the first round of site allocations to the Emerging Local Plan. The number of new dwellings allocated falls short of the Housing Target by approximately 1,000. Further site allocations will be made during October when the Committee will re-consider unallocated sites.</li> <li>- Cllr JB will be submitting an objection on 24/1761/MFUL Land at Meadow Mead, Higher Metcombe.</li> <li>- EDDC have contacted the owner of the West Hill Road quarry site to submit a retrospective planning application for newly installed gates.</li> </ul>
24/296	<p>To receive <b>Declarations of interest</b> 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. Cllrs FP, TI, SMS and AC each declared no interests in items on the agenda.</p>
24/297	<p><b>Confidential/exempt items. In consideration of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960</b> (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. Proposed items: 24/320 if required (Lengthsman Contract) It was unanimously agreed to complete consideration of the Lengthsman contract for 2025 in confidential session, 24/230, if required.</p>
24/298	<p><b>Minutes:</b> To receive the Minutes of the Parish Council meetings of <b>2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024</b> (Minute 24/185 - 24/212) and <b>5<sup>th</sup> August 2024</b> (Minute 24/267–24/291) and to approve the signing of the Minutes by the Chairman as a true record. <b>The minutes of the meetings of 2<sup>nd</sup> July and 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024 were unanimously accepted as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.</b></p>
24/299	<p><b>Planning Applications received:</b> To consider a response to:</p> <p><b>24/1579/VAR</b> Little Glade West Hill Road EX11 1TU Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) on planning permission 21/2989/FUL (erection of a single replacement two-storey dwelling) to allow alterations to the fenestration, driveway, and infilling of covered parking area to create a home gym.</p> <p>Councillors noted that the applicant proposes to infill the covered parking area and to create a new parking area. However, in EDDC Tree Officers view it did not adversely impact nearby trees. Councillors supported the variation to the approved application.</p> <p><b>24/1494/FUL</b> Merrow Cottage Hawkins Lane, West Hill, EX11 1XG Proposed construction of single storey front extension</p> <p>The Council supported the application.</p> <p><b>24/1716/MOUT</b> Land Abutting Strawberry Lane Strawberry Lane Salston Ottery St Mary Outline application for up to 65 dwellings and associated infrastructure and works, with details of access layout and landscaping provided.</p> <p>The Council did not support the application. Cllrs' comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The site is considered to be in an unsustainable location.</li> </ul>

- Strawberry Lane is dangerous for vehicles and unsuitable for pedestrians.
- A serious accident (February 2021) involving a child highlights the road safety risk
- The alternative route to Ottery St Mary or B1374 is also via a narrow lane, where cars pass each other with care and larger vehicles struggle to pass
- The proposed development will generate additional traffic volumes through West Hill. West Hill's unlit narrow lanes with very few pavements/verges are unsuitable for traffic passing through the village.
- The proposed development will have an adverse impact on the landscape.
- Provision for surface water drainage should respect the sensitive natural environment of the river Otter.
- EDDC has a demonstrable four year housing supply meaning that the 'tilted balance' within the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' is not engaged.

**24/1864/TRE** Hawkins Cottage Hawkins Lane West Hill Ottery St Mary EX11 1XG  
T1, T2 & T3 (English Oaks): reduce via thinning western aspects of trees crown by removing approximately 2m branch sections to reduce lateral crown spread by approximately 1-1.5m making pruning cuts up to approximately 50mm in diameter.

The Council did not support the application as no justification was provided for the proposed works. Cllrs considered that the trees contribute to the woodland character of the area and were concerned that the proposed works could be detrimental to the trees.

**24/1913/TRE** Woodlands 2 Birch Grove West Hill EX11 1XP  
T1, Silver Birch Tree: Fell.

The Council supported the application and asked for a replacement silver birch tree to be re-planted on site.

**24/1761/MFUL** Land At Meadow Mead Higher Metcombe EX11 1SL  
Proposed erection of 3no detached dwellings, stable block and paddock with associated hard and soft landscaping/access

The Council did not support the application. It was considered that the application is in an unsustainable location and is likely to result in unacceptable landscape/environmental harm.

Cllr comments included:

- The site is situated a significant distance outside the Built Up Area Boundary (BUAB) and is also outside the West Hill Settlement Boundary shown in the Draft Emerging East Devon Local Plan.
- The site was not put forward to the Call for Sites (Emerging East Devon Local Plan). However, other similar sites proposed nearby were not recommended for allocation in the Local Plan.
- This site is not in a sustainable location. The site is more than a mile from any village facilities. The householders will be car dependent.
- The Planning Statement and Transport Assessment are mis-leading. They don't mention the topography of West Hill and that access to the village centre is via steep, narrow, unlit lanes without pavements and often without a verge.
- The field itself is marshy and there is standing water in the adjacent woodland. This provides a valuable habitat for the plants and wildlife species present on site.
- The surface water drainage statement proposes an attenuation basin and surcharge into nearby water courses. This could add to the flooding problems experienced downstream.
- The attenuation basin isn't shown on the proposed site plan.
- Is there a need for a stable block for four horses given the limited grazing land available?
- EDDC has a demonstrable four year housing supply meaning that the 'tilted balance' within the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' is not engaged.

**24/2001/TRE** 24 Moorlands West Hill EX11 1UL  
T1, Oak - reduce height by approximately 2m. Shorten back branches over neighbouring roof to a suitable pruning position to clear 2m. Re-shape remainder of crown by 1-2m to leave a natural form. Remove dead wood over 75mm.

	<p>The Council did not support the application. Cllr comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the mature oak tree is a significant feature in the character of Moorlands.</li> <li>- trees sometimes require management for safety however no justification has been provided.</li> <li>- No arboricultural report was provided</li> <li>- The reasons given for the works are insufficient to warrant the proposed works.</li> </ul> <p>To confirm responses made under Delegated Powers:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 80%;"></th> <th style="text-align: right;">WHPC response</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>24/1361/ADV</b> Hidden Oak Equine And Country EX5 2JP Signage to advertise</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Support</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>24/1555/FUL</b> Mulberry House Higher Broad Oak Road EX11 1XJ Construction of a first floor side extension and detached garage with alterations to fenestrations.</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Support</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>24/1793/TRE</b> Birchbank Cottages Lower Broad Oak Road EX11 1XH Various tree works (T2 to G12)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Support</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>All noted</p>		WHPC response	<b>24/1361/ADV</b> Hidden Oak Equine And Country EX5 2JP Signage to advertise	Support	<b>24/1555/FUL</b> Mulberry House Higher Broad Oak Road EX11 1XJ Construction of a first floor side extension and detached garage with alterations to fenestrations.	Support	<b>24/1793/TRE</b> Birchbank Cottages Lower Broad Oak Road EX11 1XH Various tree works (T2 to G12)	Support
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<p><b>24/300</b></p>	<p><b>Planning decisions received</b> for information (*denotes WHPC differed)</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 80%;"></th> <th style="text-align: right;">EDDC Decision</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>24/1435/PDQ</b> Weggis Farm Higher Metcombe EX11 1SQ Prior notification (Class Q(a) and (c)) for a change of use from a building on an agricultural unit to 1no. dwellinghouse (Use Class C3)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Refused</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>24/1436/PDQ</b> Weggis Farm Higher Metcombe n EX11 1SQ Prior notification (Class Q(a) and (c)) for a change of use from buildings on an agricultural unit to 5no. dwellinghouses (Use Class C3)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Refused</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>24/1562/TRE</b> Stuckeys House West Hill Road EX11 1TU Oak: T1 + Oak T2 various works</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Refused</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>All noted</p>		EDDC Decision	<b>24/1435/PDQ</b> Weggis Farm Higher Metcombe EX11 1SQ Prior notification (Class Q(a) and (c)) for a change of use from a building on an agricultural unit to 1no. dwellinghouse (Use Class C3)	Refused	<b>24/1436/PDQ</b> Weggis Farm Higher Metcombe n EX11 1SQ Prior notification (Class Q(a) and (c)) for a change of use from buildings on an agricultural unit to 5no. dwellinghouses (Use Class C3)	Refused	<b>24/1562/TRE</b> Stuckeys House West Hill Road EX11 1TU Oak: T1 + Oak T2 various works	Refused
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<p><b>24/301</b></p>	<p><b>Tree Protection Order Notifications:</b> To consider:</p> <p><b>24/0039/TPO</b> Land at Birchbank Cottages, Lower Broad Oak Road, West Hill (provisional) <b>It was resolved to write to EDDC in support of the TPO.</b></p>								
<p><b>24/302</b></p>	<p><b>Emerging East Devon Local Plan:</b> To receive a report on EDDC's Strategic Planning Committee Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September to consider site allocations for Ottery St Mary, West Hill and surrounding areas.</p> <p>Cllr FP represented WHPC at the EDDC's Strategic Planning Committee Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September which considered residential development sites to be allocated to the Emerging Local Plan. He spoke on the proposed West Hill sites, the Green Wedge (between West Hill and Ottery St Mary) which included several proposed development sites.</p> <p>Cllr FP gave a report on the meeting, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 of the 17 West Hill sites were allocated to the Emerging Local Plan</li> <li>- Both sites are subject to current planning applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Land off Windmill Lane is yet to be decided</li> <li>o An outline application for land off Eastfield has been approved subject to a s106 agreement however a full (detailed) application must be submitted before construction begins.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- The overall East Devon Housing Target is very challenging. There will be a significant shortfall, currently about 1,000, and the Committee will review unallocated sites to close the gap.</li> <li>- Surprisingly, Ottery St Mary Town Council spoke in favour of a large site for 469 homes situated in the Green Wedge alongside the B3174, Exeter Road.</li> </ul>								

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EDDC Officers confirmed that the proposed site at the West Hill quarry had not passed their initial assessment and was not put forward for consideration by the Strategic Planning Committee.</li> </ul> <p>5 members of the public left the meeting at 8.13pm</p>
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**WHPC Groups + Initiatives**

24/303	<p><b>Finance Working Group:</b></p> <p>a. <b>Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2022-23:</b> To consider the findings of the External Auditor (if available) regarding a challenge to the Council’s AGAR for 2022-23</p> <p>The meeting received the External Auditor’s Final Report and Certificate for the year ended 31 March 2023. The Chairman noted the Auditor’s apology for the delay in concluding the audit caused by their heavy workload. Councillors considered the paper prepared for the meeting and available on the Council’s website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Auditor had completed their interim audit in September 2023 and found no matters of concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met. However, they were unable to complete their audit as Objections to the Council’s Annual Return for 2022-23 had been submitted.</li> <li>- In 2023, the External Auditor assessed the 10 objections submitted and found 6 to be ineligible. WHPC was requested to provide a formal response in respect of the 4 remaining objections.</li> <li>- The External Auditor’s Final Report states: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.”.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- No actions were required of the Parish Council.</li> <li>- The Council’s Annual Return for 2022-23 (S1, S2 and S3), the Auditor’s Interim and Final reports together with the Notice of Conclusion of Audit are published on the Council’s website.</li> </ul> <p>The Chairman noted the responses of the Internal and External Auditors demonstrated how the Parish Clerk and Council is maintaining good control of its procedures and also maintaining good governance of the Parish Council.</p> <p>Cllrs then considered the Auditor’s suggestion that WHPC could publish its Risk Register on the Council’s website. The Clerk noted that many Local Councils publish their Risk Management documents.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> HR + Policy Working Group to review the current Risk Register and to prepare a proposal for consideration at a future meeting.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To note the Completion of the External Auditor’s Review for the year ended 31 March 2023 and the outcome.</li> <li>ii. To approve payment of the External Auditor’s annual fee of £315 plus VAT.</li> <li>iii. To approve payment of the Auditor’s additional fee of £2,130 plus VAT for their work in processing the challenge to the Parish Council’s Annual Return for 2022-23.</li> <li>iv. To confirm the decisions made under Delegated Powers regarding the Notice of Conclusion of Audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o To set a charge of £20.00 for any person requiring a copy of the AGAR and:</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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- o to set the time limit for the period for right of inspection to be 1 month
- v. To confirm that the Council will consider the publication of its Risk Register at a future meeting.
- vi. To confirm the decision not to publish WHPC response due to the work required to redact the extensive material.
- vii. To note the meeting paper.

- b. **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023-24:** To consider the findings of the External Auditor (if available) regarding the eligibility of a challenge to the Council's AGAR for 2023-24.

The meeting considered a paper prepared for the meeting and available on the Council's website.  
The Chairman reported:

- the Parish Council had received the External Auditor's Interim Report and Certificate for the year ended 31 March 2024.
- The report states:

“On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.”

- However, they were unable to complete their audit as Objections to the Council's Annual Return for 2023-24 had been submitted.
- The Parish Council is awaiting the External Auditor's eligibility decisions on the 5 objections made by an Objector against the Council's Annual Return for 2023-24.
- The Auditor's Report and Notice of the Right to Inspect are published on the Council's website.

**It was resolved:**

- i. To note the External Auditor's Interim Certificate for the year ended 31 March 2024 and the outcome.
- ii. To confirm the decisions made under Delegated Powers:
  - a. To set a charge of £20.00 for any person requiring a copy of the AGAR and
  - b. to set the time limit for the period for right of inspection to be a minimum of 1 month.

- c. To consider the appointment of an **Internal Auditor for 2024-2025.**

Cllrs considered a paper prepared for the meeting which included best practice guidelines for the appointment of an Internal Auditor. It was noted that Penny Clapham had carried out two annual audits 2022/23 and 2023/24. Cllrs considered whether to re-appoint her for a third year or to seek an alternative.

Cllrs unanimously considered Penny Clapham to be competent and independent of the Parish Council. They discussed whether appointing her for a third audit was contrary to best practice and considered that it was not.

**It was resolved:**

- to appoint Penny Clapham to carry out the Internal Audit for 2024-25.
- to make available all documentation or explanation requested by the Internal Auditor.
- to approve costs of up to £200.

**Action:** Issue a Letter of Engagement to appoint the Internal Auditor for 2024/25.

	<p>d. To consider arrangements for setting the 2025-6 Budget and Precept Demand</p> <p>Cllr FP set out the proposed timetable for consideration of the Council's budget and Precept Demand for 2025-26.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> The Finance Working will prepare a 1<sup>st</sup> half 2024/5 Financial Report and draft budget for consideration at the next meeting.</p> <p>He noted that the ongoing number of vacancies would require the Council to be pragmatic when considering its future projects and initiatives.</p>
<p>24/304</p>	<p><b>HR+ Policy Working Group:</b></p> <p>a. To consider the appointment of a Solicitor on an annual retained basis and to approve funding if considered appropriate.</p> <p>The meeting considered details of Solicitor services as requested at the 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024 WHPC meeting. Councillors discussed the Councils Legal Advice Service (CLAS) provided by Tozers LLP. Tozer's brochure and draft contract were circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Cllrs noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The brochure and contract set out the scope of the service and those that were not included.</li> <li>- The service offered unlimited advice for a fixed fee for a year.</li> <li>- Quick access to a named solicitor.</li> <li>- The scheme offers preferential rates on services/transactions outside the LCAS scheme.</li> <li>- It was anticipated that the Council would require the support of a Solicitor on matters such as the Village Hall Pedestrian Path project.</li> </ul> <p>Cllrs considered the LCAS scheme offered cost effective legal support. It was also noted that costs of Retained Solicitor Services were not provided in the 2024-25 WHPC budget however contingency funds were available.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To appoint Tozer's LLP as the Council's retained Solicitor for a period of one year by subscribing to Tozer's Councils Legal Advice Service (CLAS).</li> <li>- To approve costs of £500+VAT.</li> </ul> <p>b. To adopt, if considered appropriate, a Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p>Cllrs considered a draft Scheme of Delegation circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman noted the document was based on a National Association of Local Councils model document which had been adopted by other Parish Councils. He commented that the scheme clearly set out those decisions which cannot be delegated and identifies those the Council proposed to delegate to the Clerk. Other than minor matters, decisions taken under Delegated Powers will be reported to the next Council meeting.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adopt the Scheme of Delegation and to review it at the Council's Annual Meeting.</li> <li>- To publish the Scheme of Delegation on the Council's website.</li> </ul>
<p>24/305</p>	<p><b>Village Hall Pedestrian Path Working Group:</b></p> <p>a. To receive an update on progress of the project and matters to be considered at future meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lease on land at the Village Hall</li> <li>• A Section 278 legal agreement allowing works to the public highway.</li> <li>• Application for a Traffic Regulation Order</li> </ul>

	<p>b. To consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. a revised contractors quote (if available)</li> <li>ii. the establishment of a Section 278 bond.</li> <li>iii. The appointment of a Solicitor with regards to the s278 legal agreement.</li> </ul> <p>The meeting received a report from the Village Hall Path working group, including:</p> <p><b>Lease</b></p> <p>The lease on land at the Village Hall for the purposes of the pedestrian path had been completed and was now in place.</p> <p><b>Section 278</b></p> <p>Recommendations identified in the Stage 2 Road Safety Audit have been discussed and the following agreed with DCC Highways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. the flashing school sign currently located to the east of the new entrance point will be relocated to replace an existing sign to the west of the new entrance point.</li> <li>ii. Installation of double yellow lines at the junction of Ashley Brake and West Hill Road The parking restrictions arising from the installation of double yellow lines and “School Clear” road marking will be the subject of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) public consultation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> Request an updated contractor quote to include the re-located sign and double yellow line road markings.</p> <p>Devon County Council’s s278 process requires a refundable bond to be established equivalent to the cost of the works on the Highway. 85% of which is refundable on completion of the works and 15% to be refunded after 12 months have elapsed. The cost of any remedial works undertaken by DCC Highways will be deducted from the refund.</p> <p>The Chairman explained that work on the s278 legal agreement requires the bond to be in place.</p> <p><b>It was resolved</b> to establish a bond equivalent to the revised contractor’s quote for works on the highway, up to £10,000.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To appoint a Solicitor to act on behalf of the Council with regards to the s278 legal agreement.</li> <li>ii. To approve costs up of £1,000+vat.</li> </ul> <p><b>Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)</b></p> <p>WHPC had submitted an application to Devon County Highways for a Traffic Regulations Order for the proposed parking restrictions and paid a fee of £3,000, reflecting a £2,000 reduction secured by DCC Cllr Bailey. Cllrs noted that Highways had reserved the right to request a further £2,000 subject to the volume of work generated by the public consultation.</p> <p>The Council thanked DCC Cllr Bailey for her support.</p> <p>2 members of the public left the meeting.</p>
24/306	<p><b>Emergency Plan Working Group:</b></p> <p><b>Grant application</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To approve a grant application to Devon Communities Together for the publication of an Emergency Plan brochure to all West Hill households.</li> </ul>



	<p><b>Action:</b> To submit a grant application to Devon Communities Together to request £250 towards cost of publication of a Emergency Plan brochure</p> <p>2. To approve the publication and costs of a brochure prepared by the Working Group, if considered appropriate.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To approve the final wording of the brochure under Delegated Powers.</li> <li>- To approve printing costs up to £300+vat.</li> </ul> <p>1 member of the public left the meeting.</p>
24/307	<p><b>Remembrance Service Working Group:</b></p> <p>a. To consider arrangements for the Remembrance Service on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2024.</p> <p>b. To confirm an order for a Remembrance Wreath and a donation to the 2024 Poppy Appeal under s137 Powers.</p> <p>The meeting received an update from the Remembrance Service Working Group. The RBL had requested the Council's support for a wreath laying service to take place at the War Memorial at 10.15am. This will be followed at 11.00am by a Remembrance Service at St Michael's. For safety purposes WHPC had applied for the closure of School Lane and West Hill Road (between the junctions with Elsdon Lane and Bendarroch Road) between 9.30am and 11.00am on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2024. WHPC had received DCC Highways approval for the road closure.</p> <p>The meeting considered a draft risk assessment for the event.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To confirm the decision made under Delegated Powers to order a remembrance wreath.</li> <li>ii. To make a donation of £50 under s137 Powers, payable by cheque, to the 2024 Poppy Appeal in lieu of the WHPC Poppy wreath.</li> <li>iii. WHPC to take responsibility for the for the 2024 West Hill Remembrance Sunday event at the War Memorial.</li> <li>iv. To approve a risk assessment for the Remembrance Sunday Service event at the War Memorial on 10th November 2024</li> <li>v. To approve the WHPC letter to be distributed to residents in the vicinity of the road closure</li> <li>vi. Cllr FP represent the Council at the event will lay the wreath on behalf of the Parish Council</li> </ul> <p>DCC/EDDC Cllr JB and all remaining members of the public left the meeting.</p>

**Other Matters**

24/308	<p>To approve the publication of a Parish Council Newsletter and associated costs.</p> <p>Councillors considered a draft newsletter circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To approve the final wording of the brochure under Delegated Powers.</li> <li>b. To approve printing costs up to £300+vat</li> </ul>
24/309	<p>To consider arrangements for appointing a <b>Lengthsman</b> for 2025, if considered appropriate.</p> <p>Cllrs considered a paper circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman led a consideration of Lengthsman services for 2025 as the current contract ends on 31st Dec 2024.</p> <p>Cllrs comments included:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WHPC has a responsibility to maintain the playpark.</li> <li>- The Lengthsman provides a very useful service. Verge cutting, in particular, is appreciated by residents.</li> <li>- The Lengthsman has the required Chapter 8 training for roadside working such as a road closure.</li> </ul> <p>Cllrs discussed whether to appoint a Lengthsman for 2025 by advertising/Tender or to further extend the current contract. WHPC last advertised the contract in 2022 and the contract had been extended for 2023 and 2024.</p> <p>Cllrs considered the Lengthsman's proposed rates for 2025 to be fair value as the quoted hourly rate for specified work had remained unchanged for several years and was considered to be fair value and competitive. The proposed rate for ad-hoc work had increased slightly but was considered to be fair value and competitive. Councillors also noted the service provision had been reliable and responsive. The Council also consider the limited resources currently available.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To extend the current Lengthsman contract for 1 year, for 2025, subject to the provision of current insurance and certificates.</li> <li>b. To amend the specified contracted works to include maintenance of the wildflower verge at the junction of School Lane and West Hill Road (opposite the War Memorial) subject to approval by DCC Highways.</li> </ul>
<p><b>24/310</b></p>	<p>To confirm decisions made under Delegated Powers:</p> <p>Following the cancellation of the (inquorate) 3<sup>rd</sup> September WHPC Meeting Cllrs FP/TI gave authority for the Clerk to take the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To make payments as listed on the published payment schedule for the 3<sup>rd</sup> September WHPC Meeting.</li> <li>b. To register attendance of 4 WHPC representatives at the Devon Association of Local Councils AGM and Conference 2024 (£200)</li> <li>c. To submit an application for a Traffic Regulation Order and to pay the associated reduced fee £3,000 (Village Hall Path Project Min 24/253).</li> <li>d. To order a Poppy Wreath for the 2024 West Hill Remembrance Service</li> </ul> <p>In addition,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. To arrange for the removal of old tree trunk from the Playpark (Health + Safety), £140+vat.</li> </ul> <p>All noted and confirmed.</p>
<p><b>24/311</b></p>	<p>To consider the WHPC vote on items on the agenda for the DALC AGM.</p> <p>The Clerk reminded those Cllrs attending the DALC AGM that only one could vote on behalf of the Council. Councillors considered the agenda and agreed the WHPC vote on issues such as the appointment of Directors.</p>
<p><b>24/312</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To receive the annual <b>RoSPA playpark inspection report</b> and consider remedial actions, if required.</li> <li>b. To approve a budget for remedial actions, if appropriate.</li> <li>c. To approve inspection costs of up to £150.00+vat (awaiting confirmation)</li> </ul> <p>The meeting received the RoSPA report on their playpark inspection conducted on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2024. Cllrs noted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No matters of serious concern were identified.</li> <li>- The natural play log and basket swing were considered a MEDIUM risk.</li> <li>- All other equipment given a risk rating of LOW/VERY LOW</li> </ul> <p>The Playpark Working Group led a discussion on the inspector's assessment of each item of playpark equipment and the recommended actions.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b></p>

	<p>a. To approve inspection costs of up to £150.00+vat (awaiting confirmation)</p> <p>b. To take the following actions:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="395 315 1396 826"> <thead> <tr> <th>Item</th> <th>Risk Rating</th> <th>WHPC Action</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Balance Trail log</td> <td>Low</td> <td>To monitor timber decay.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pedestrian Entrance Gate Rotator</td> <td>Low</td> <td>To escalate possible finger trap to Village Hall Manager.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wooden seating</td> <td>Low</td> <td>Lengthsman to oil bearings</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Basket swing</td> <td>Low</td> <td>None – wooden seating was replaced in September 2024 due to timber decay.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Triple swing</td> <td>Medium</td> <td>None – inherent risk of this type of equipment.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Natural Play Log</td> <td>Low</td> <td>To regularly monitor timber + chain decay. Working Group to consider replacement when developing a playpark strategy.</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Medium</td> <td>None – the log (tree trunk) was removed during September 2024.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Item	Risk Rating	WHPC Action	Balance Trail log	Low	To monitor timber decay.	Pedestrian Entrance Gate Rotator	Low	To escalate possible finger trap to Village Hall Manager.	Wooden seating	Low	Lengthsman to oil bearings	Basket swing	Low	None – wooden seating was replaced in September 2024 due to timber decay.	Triple swing	Medium	None – inherent risk of this type of equipment.	Natural Play Log	Low	To regularly monitor timber + chain decay. Working Group to consider replacement when developing a playpark strategy.		Medium	None – the log (tree trunk) was removed during September 2024.
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24/313	<p><b>To consider correspondence received:</b></p> <p>a. Works at the entrance to the quarry, West Hill Road: See agenda item 24/295 above.</p> <p>b. Road markings at junction of Ash Hill Road/Higher Broad Oak Road: Cllrs considered a report of drivers ignoring the road markings and driving across the crossroads. It was noted that the road marking are worn. The Parish Council had reported this to DCC Highways. Cllrs also noted that the Parish Council cuts the verges at the junction several times a year to improve visibility. Councillors encouraged residents to report incidents of dangerous driving to the Police.</p> <p>c. Community Warm Spaces: Cllrs noted the correspondence with interest.</p>																								
24/314	<p>To record the Council's response to recent <b>Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests and Subject Access Requests (SAR)</b>.</p> <p>The Chairman reported that WHPC had received 4 FOI/SAR requests on 5th August 2024. They were processed under the Council's Policies and relevant legislation. WHPC acknowledged receipt of the requests on 12th August and responded to the requests on 30th August 2024.</p>																								
24/315	<p>To receive a report from the Clerk</p> <p>The Clerk's report included:</p> <p>a. The Lengthsmans schedule for October/November</p> <p>b. DCC Highways were considering WHPC's request regarding maintenance of the wildflower verge near the War Memorial. In the interim they had agreed that WHPC could cut the verge during October. The Clerk had requested the Lengthsman to cut the verge and to remove the clippings as required under a wildflower management programme.</p> <p>c. EDDC had confirmed they were the authority responsible for the bus shelter on Bendarroch Road. The EDDC Engineers team have been requested to carry out a safety inspection.</p> <p>d. The Clerk and Footpath Warden had met with a DCC Public Rights of Way (PROW) Officer to investigate a problem on Public Footpath No.1 (off Bendarroch Road). DCC's PROW team had agreed to undertake works to prevent surface water run off entering the stream. They will also replace a gatepost.</p> <p>e. DCC Highways have launched a public consultation on their proposed Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. They are seeking feedback on ten proposed routes including the Otter Trail from Feniton to Sidmouth. Details are available on the WHPC and DCC websites.</p>																								
24/316	<p>To review WHPC's <b>Action Tracker</b></p> <p>The Chairman noted that most items had been completed as reported during the meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that an article on artwork for a new banner for WHPC could not be included in the next WHPC newsletter due to limitations on space.</p>																								

<b>24/317</b>	<p><b>Financial matters:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To consider and approve, if appropriate, the Schedule of Payments. <i>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.</i></li> <li>2. To consider and approve, if appropriate, any additional payments presented to the meeting. <i>No additional payments were presented.</i></li> <li>3. To receive, if available, monthly Bank Reconciliations and finance trackers. <i>All noted and signed.</i></li> </ol>
<b>24/318</b>	<p><b>Councillor questions, reports and items for future agenda</b></p> <p>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></p>
<b>24/319</b>	<p><b>Next meeting:</b> To confirm arrangements for upcoming WHPC meeting on <b>Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024</b> 7.30pm at the Village Hall</p>

*Part A ended 9.55pm*

**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.

<b>24/320</b>	<p>To consider arrangements for appointing a <b>Lengthsman</b> for 2025, if considered appropriate. <i>No agenda items were discussed in Part B.</i></p>
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*Meeting closed at 9.55pm.*

Signed .....

Date .....