

WEST HILL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, MONDAY 9th May 2022 7.30PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present	Cllr Della Cannings (DC) – Chairman, Cllr Alan Cook (ABC), Cllr Alison Carr (AC), Cllr Amanda Townsend (AT), Cllr Margaret Piper (MP), Cllr Stephen Owen (SO)
In attendance	Parish Clerk Anne Oliver DCC/EDDC Cllr Jessica Bailey, PCSO Jonathan Sims, Approx 20 members of the public Apologies: Cllr Peter Bennett

Item (a)	Discussion and decisions (b)
APM22/1	Welcome and Chairman's announcements Chairman DC welcomed Councillors, guests and members of the public and started the meeting at 7.30pm.
APM22/2	To receive the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 16th April 2019 The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 16 th April 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate record. Proposed: Alan Cook, Seconded: Alison Carr. Chairman DC signed the minutes.
APM22/3	Chairman's report Chairman DC reported on the Parish Council's achievements in its second year of operation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chairman noted that the Parish Council (WHPC) was celebrating its 5th birthday. 2. Annual Parish Meeting had not been held in 2020 nor in 2021 due to covid restrictions. Consequently it was a challenge to report on three years of Council activity and it wasn't possible to mention everything the Council has achieved in the last three years, but noted that much progress has been made. 3. Changes to Council membership: In 2019, Cllrs Christopher Hall, Jill Ingle and Jo Talbot stood down at the 2019 election. They were replaced by Cllrs Tailford, Townsend and Piper. Cllr Tailford re-located in 2020 and was replaced by Cllr Cannings. During 2021, Cllrs Jess Bailey and Margaret Hall stood down to be replaced by Cllr Bennett through an election and Cllr Owen through Co-option. Cllr DC thanked those councillors who have left the Council for their contribution to the village life. Cllr Margaret Hall had been Chairman of the council since it's inception leading the creation of the new Council, Cllr Piper took on the Chairmanship last May, but stood down in March-22 with Cllr DC being elected as Chairman. 4. Cllr DC drew attention to May 2023 when there will be an election for all the Councillor positions on the Council. During this year the Council will work to highlight the role of the Council and encourage residents to put themselves forward to become Councillors – a worthwhile and rewarding volunteer role. The Chairman looked to achieve diversity of membership to bring a wide range of views. 5. The Council strap line is, "Working with the Community to maintain and enhance West Hill's special character". The Council stepped up when the country moved to Lock Down in 2019, by establishing the WHPC Help Scheme supported by volunteers across West Hill to support those needing help with prescriptions, shopping and much more. At the hub of the Scheme was Parish Clerk, Anne Oliver, providing signposting to people with queries and providing the link to the volunteers. In addition, stepping up the provision of newsletters to every household, supported by our volunteer 'posties' kept everyone informed at a difficult and somewhat isolating time. A review highlighted how valuable the Scheme had been. The Chairman expressed A BIG THANK YOU to all who helped.

The 2019 Wildflower competition where seeds were distributed to the community was well supported, but also provided colour and food for insects.

The Council also supported the Scarecrow Competition by judging entries and providing the prizes.

The Council consists of 7 Councillors, who are volunteers, and a part time Clerk. Therefore we have to be realistic as to what can be achieved, this emphasises the need to **work with others in the community**.

6. The Chairman noted her wish to emphasise the positives of the Council's work however she reported the **major distraction** caused by a resident who in December 2021 the Council eventually deemed a 'vexatious complainant'. Cllr DC reported the quantity, content and tone of communications from the resident had been unacceptable and had continued. The resident had also submitted numerous Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests which were very time consuming. A Complaint by the resident made to the Information Commissioner's Office was not upheld with the Commissioner stating, "... your organisation has complied with your data protection obligation. This is because you have properly responded to the subject access request." Our internal auditor has also commented on the 'unreasonable amount of time' the Council is having to spend on this matter.
7. The Chairman highlighted a wide range of activities undertaken by the Council, including:
 - Providing, maintaining and enhancing the Playpark.
 - Provision of 2 dog bins and waste/recycling bins at the playpark @ £900 per year
 - Provision of 2 Vehicle Activated Signs with 6 sites for use – partly funded by a grant from DCC Councillor Bailey
 - As a statutory Consultee, responding to all planning and treework applications submitted to East Devon District Council: 224 considered since April 2019
 - Providing Grant funding to local organisations and charities, including to TRIP community transport association, WH Parent Teachers Friends Association, Royal British Legion Club, St Michaels Church. Some £10,000 over the last 3 years. Details are available on the Council's website.
 - Liaising with the Woodland Trust contractors regarding Broadoak Plantation and maintenance, and provision of two picnic tables in a glade.
 - Providing Hi-Viz tabards to all the youngsters at the WH Primary School.
 - Caring for footpaths, cutting verges not done by DCC, cleaning of road signs
 - Provided two public access defibrillators
 - Regular newsletters to every household and maintaining a website
 - Surveys – traffic, wider community issues, Playpark.
 - And much much more.
8. In the last 3 years the Council held 52 meetings, 20 via zoom during Covid Lockdown. The Chairman thanked those members of the public who attended meetings and encouraged others to join a meeting to see how the Council operated..
9. The Council sets the Parish Council Tax Precept each year, and it was decided not to increase that for 2022/23. The Parish Council receives just under £57,000pa from the precept and usage of the monies is considered at every Council meeting. The reserves of just under £115,889 will enable the Council to take projects forward.
10. The Council's **current priorities** are:
 - The EDDC Local Plan implications for West Hill in terms of new developments.
 - Last year the Council received planning permission to put a new pedestrian access from West Hill Road to the Village Hall. The commissioning phase for the work is being undertaken jointly with the Village Hall Trustees.
 - Community engagement – to improve communication, identification of issues and look to joint working.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Safety – continuing work on VAS, to continue trying to influence Highways for needed improvements, local education. • Trees – these define our Woodland Village and it is important to raise awareness of their value, conservation and need for new planting etc. • Recreational open space – the search goes on to find suitable land. • McColls Keep abreast of the implications of it going into Administration. We had already written to CEO of McColls highlighting the shop and post office being a community asset, and now we have written to PWC, the Administrators. • We are looking forward to the Queen’s Jubilee weekend ... Following a community meeting (in 2021) with representatives of village groups and members of the public the Council have supported local groups through grant funding. <p>11. The Council encouraged village groups with their plans to celebrate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. The Council itself has</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planted a Jubilee Tree at Courtfield Close. The tree was kindly donated by EDDC. • funded a Queen’s Jubilee bench and Covid memorial tree for the community garden at St Michael’s. • worked with the PTFA to award grant funding for commemorative Queen’s Jubilee medals for each child at West Hill Primary School • awarded grant funding towards the costs of a commemorative flagpole at the RBL. <p>12. The Parish Council supported Southwest Ambulance Service Trust to create a First Responder team for West Hill and Ottery St Mary. Three people (including two Councillors) are completing their training and hope to launch the team which will support the Ambulance Service.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked attendees for their support and encouraged them to discuss the Council’s activities or their ideas with Cllrs at the meeting or in future.</p>
<p>APM22/4</p>	<p>Reports from County Councillor and District Councillor Jess Bailey Devon County Councillor Jess Bailey reported her current priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Devon Local Plan Review: Cllr Bailey expressed her concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the housing target for East Devon which is set by the Government. EDDC wrote to the Government to challenge this. ○ Much of East Devon is designated as AONB and other areas have environment constraints, both of which limits development. Consequently, development must be focussed on the non-AONB area of East Devon. ○ A disproportionate number of potential development sites have been put forward in/around West Hill. EDDC have made a further call for sites with a focus on brownfield sites. ○ Pressure on infrastructure and facilities which are already under strain. • Straitgate Quarry: DCC have refused the planning application • Ambulance Service performance in East Devon: A Devon County Council Spotlight Review is underway <p>Cllr Bailey then highlighted various grant funding available from DCC, including small grant funding opportunities.</p>
<p>APM22/5</p>	<p>Reports from Local Organisations, groups and grant recipients</p> <p>West Hill Royal British Legion Dave Underwood reported the RBL have undertaken a programme of major improvement works on the clubhouse and thanked the Parish Council for their support through grant awards. He advised that the clubhouse is open to all and encouraged village residents to visit and to discover what’s on offer. The RBL are organising a street party on Friday 3rd June to celebrate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. This is open to all residents.</p>

PCSO Jonathan Sims

Jonathan is a member of the Ottery based neighbourhood team. This currently consists of 2 constables and 1 PCSO and cover 130 sq miles of East Devon. Police response teams are based in Exmouth and Honiton.

He noted that crime figures for West Hill remain very low and the village is a very safe place to live. Crime statistics for West Hill (and any area) are available on www.police.co.uk

Following recent incidents of anti-social behaviour at the children’s playpark he is regularly visiting and has spoken with groups present at the playpark.

Jonathan reminded the meeting that “scams” are increasing nationally and can affect any member of society. He reminded everyone “don’t give your personal information away”.

Ottery Help Scheme

Emily Lezzeri, Chief Officer, reported that Ottery Help Scheme was celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2022. A wide range of services were on offer to the West Hill and Ottery St Mary communities. Emily noted the charity had experienced an increased level of requests for help during and post Covid. “Covid” had been a difficult period as some volunteers had to withdraw due to covid precautions, however many others had come forward as volunteers during the period. Emily felt “Covid” also had many positives. Relationships with other local groups, including the Parish Council, have been strengthened. Emily thanked the Parish Council, particularly Anne (Parish Clerk) for their support during Covid Lockdowns. The Council’s grant awards helped to fund services and build resilience within the Scheme. Moving forward, the Ottery Help Scheme, will be looking to focus on well-being and social isolation.

TRIP Community Transport Association

Sam Williams, Volunteer Co-ordinator gave an introduction to the “Volunteer 4 All” initiative which offers volunteering opportunities for all ages, skills and interests. He encouraged individuals and organisations to contact the Volunteer 4 All helpline 01404 46529 or email V4A@tripcta.org.

West Hill Arboretum Group

Alan Cook encouraged village residents to join the group to increase awareness and understanding of West Hill Trees. Please contact alan.cook@westhillpraishcouncil.gov.uk for more information.

St Michael’s Church

Fiona, Churchwarden, advised that the village church now has a vicar in residence for the first time in 15 years. The many church groups and events were open to all. In particular, there will be a Service of Thanksgiving on 5th June for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. This will be followed by “Bubbles and Cake” in the Church garden.

Community Speedwatch

Amanda Townsend appealed for volunteers to join the group. The minimum commitment was one hour per month. The purpose of the group is to educate and inform the community. They run speedwatch checks at various locations across the village each month. Anyone caught speeding will receive a reminder letter from the Police.

West Hill Village Hall

Colin Veale reported that the Village Hall was very busy following covid with 28 groups regularly using the hall each week. The pre-school is the main user and the Primary School uses the kitchens and main hall to provide school lunches. The hall can also be hired for occasional uses such as for birthday parties, weddings, concerts. Details can be found on Facebook or on their website.

	Colin thanked the Parish Council for their support and grant awards. Representatives of the Viillage Hall Trustees are working closely with the Parish Council to commission the new public footpath from West Hill Road into the Village Hall grounds.
APM 22/6	<p>Close of Meeting</p> <p>The Chairman thanked the speakers for their informative reports and invited questions. There were no questions from the public.</p> <p>The Chairman closed the meeting and invited people to stay for refreshments.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 8.38pm</p>
	Refreshments served

Anne Oliver, Parish Clerk

10th May 2022