

WEST HILL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, MONDAY 18th April 2024 7.30PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present	Cllr Alison Carr (AC) Chairman, Cllr Francis Pullman (FP), Cllr Andrew Gorton (AG), Cllr Trevor Ingram (TI), Cllr Shirley MaySaunders (SMS)
In attendance	Parish Clerk Anne Oliver 18 members of the public, Sgt Richard Stonecliff, PCSO Jonathan Sims Apologies: Cllr Ann Cooper

Item (a)	Discussion and decisions (b)
APM24/1	<p>Welcome and Chairman's announcements</p> <p>Chairman Cllr Alison Carr (AC) welcomed Councillors, guests and members of the public and began the meeting at 7.30pm.</p> <p>The Chairman set out the purpose of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Annual Parish Meeting is held for the electorate of this Parish of West Hill for electors to have their say on anything they consider important for the people of the Parish. • It is an opportunity for the Council to explain what it has been doing, for organisations that have received Council awards to explain what they do and any others to update us on community issues, including a report from our District/County Councillor. <p>The Chairman:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reported WHPC currently has 1 vacancy due to the resignation of Cllr Stanley Paulo. On behalf of the Parish Council, she thanked Stanley for his service to the community. The Chairman announced that she would be stepping down as Chairman after the next Council meeting on 7th May. After, 7 years with the Council she would also resign as a Councillor after the meeting. She thanked current and former Cllrs for their support and paid particular thanks to the Clerk. • the Council was working on its future plans and encouraged the community to contact the Council with feedback or suggestions. • thanked the volunteer West Hill posties who play an important role in helping the Parish Council newsletter reach all households. <p>The Council was aware of concerns regarding the introduction of a new e-consult service at the Coleridge Medical Centre. AC noted that some residents may not be aware of the changes. At short notice, Coleridge Medical Centre were invited to attend the Parish Meeting but they were unable to send a representative. WHPC is aware of how important this is to residents</p>
APM24/2	<p>To receive the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 10th March 2023</p> <p>The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 10th March 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record. Proposed: Cllr Alison Carr, Seconded: Colin Veale. Chairman AC signed the minutes.</p>
APM24/3	<p>To receive the Chairman's report</p> <p>Sgt Richard Stonecliff and PCSO Jonathan Sims were invited to give their report to the meeting on behalf of the local policing team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team works from stations at Exmouth and Ottery St Mary. • Resourcing has improved and the team now has 4 Police Officer, 1 PCSO and 1 PCSO vacancy. Following the retirement of the previous office holder, the area has a new Police Inspector, Grant Leitch.

- The team doesn't have sufficient resources to attend Town/Parish Councils on a regular basis. However, Sgt Stonecliff added that the team would contact the Parish Council if any West Hill issues were emerging, however he noted West Hill was a very low crime area.
- The team plan to publish a regular newsletter for Cranbrook, Ottery St Mary and West Hill.
- He urged the community to report issues: 999 for emergencies and crimes in progress. 101 for non-urgent matters.

There was a short Q&A and the Officers were invited to visit the West Hill Pre-School.

Sgt Richard Stonecliff and PCSO Jonathan Sims left the meeting at 7.55pm

The Chairman's report included:

1. Parish Precept & Finances: The Precept was kept the same as last year at £56,875. The precept for a Band D property in West Hill remains well below the national average – at £48.95 compared to £85.88. The average increase across Parishes in England this year was 8.5%.

Cllrs monitor the budget and spending throughout the year and at 31st March 2024 the Council's total reserves stand at £133,605. Currently the Council is waiting to learn how much the External Auditor will charge for investigating a challenge to our 2022-2023 Annual Governance & Accountability Return. The Council has no control over this.

2. At the 2023 local election we very nearly did not have a Parish Council as only three candidates put themselves forward. It is heartening that we now have five co-opted Cllrs and more community interest than ever in the work of WHPC.
3. During 2023 the Coronation took place. The Parish Council was proud to support West Hill RBL's celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III.
4. Planning - Our mission statement is: *Working with the community to maintain and enhance West Hill's special character*. One of the ways we can do this is by being a consultee on planning applications. This has kept us very busy and over the year we have commented on around 76 applications plus a few appeals and spoken at the Planning Committee.

Some of the major ones have really caught the community's interest – the Potters application had over 225 public comments.

- Potters: redevelopment of site 9 dwellings & smaller shop units
- Windmill Lane: 34 dwellings
- Land north of Eastfield: 30 dwellings (EDDC recommended for approval)
- Oak Road: a PIP application for 2-9 dwellings (refused) plus an appeal for the original 23 (appeal withdrawn)
- Lower Broad Oak Road: 5 dwellings
- Land adjoining West Hayes: a PIP application for 5 dwellings (refused)
- Elsdon Lane: a PIP application for dwellings (gone to appeal)
- Roadside services at Daisymount (approved)

The response from residents has been excellent with many taking time to write to EDDC and robust attendance at WHPC meetings. The Potters application attracted 140 residents to the Parish Council Extraordinary Meeting.

Major applications affect everyone in the village, wherever they are, due to noise, disruption, extra traffic, and strain on public services.

The National Planning Policy Framework was updated in December 2023 with amended guidelines for Planning Authorities on housing land supply and how it affects the tilted balance when applications are being decided. Because its draft Local Plan is sufficiently progressed, East Devon District Council now needs to demonstrate a 4-year land supply not 5, which it is able to meet. This is important because without the required housing land supply, the presumption is in favour of development which leaves villages like West Hill vulnerable to speculative development.

The District Council's work to develop a new Local Plan for East Devon has continued. WHPC monitors Strategic Planning Committee meetings for anything that might affect West Hill. The Parish Council has raised concerns about three recent proposals which may impact on West Hill: a reduction in Green Wedge land; enlarged settlement boundary; housing allocations. We are very grateful to our Ward Member Cllr Jess Bailey with whom we have been liaising closely as we seek to be a voice for residents.

5. WHPC Grants awarded this year £2,630:

- West Hill Women's Group £250 for Coronation cream teas
- School PTFA £430 for the band at last year's Summer Fayre
- St Michael's £50 for reprinting the West Hill Welcome Pack
- RBL £1,000 for replacing their notice boards
- West Hill Pre-School £900 for a play kitchen
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The Council is committed to supporting and strengthening the networks and community groups which help to make a positive difference to West Hill. Our grants policy is on the Parish Council website and we invite all West Hill groups to take a look.

6. Remembrance Sunday Service 12th November 2023. This was our second year of being the civic organiser of the Remembrance Sunday event. We are pleased to support our local RBL branch in this important community event. We thank the community for their co-operation during the road closure to enable the service at the War Memorial to be conducted without undue disturbance from passing cars.

7. Work continues on the Village Hall Pedestrian Path project and both VHT and WHPC are committed to seeing it completed this year. With the uncertainty around the Potters car park/possible construction site, it is more important than ever that pedestrians have an alternative safe route to the school, village hall and playpark.

8. The Parish Council is acutely aware of the lack of outdoor open space for residents to use, particularly our young residents and West Hill Wasps youth football team. We will continue to look out for land but it is difficult when every acre carries a hefty development premium.

The Chairman concluded her report and asked Cllr Francis Pullman (FP) to introduce a new project for the Parish Council: to develop an Emergency Plan for West Hill. Councillor FP explained that the Council was working with Devon Communities Together (DCT) to identify the actions required to help the West Hill community to prepare for an emergency situation. Residents were invited to join an Emergency Plan Workshop at 2pm on 14th May 2024.

APM24/4	<p>Reports from County Councillor and District Councillor Jess Bailey District/County Councillor/Jess Bailey thanked the Parish Council and commented that she and the Council worked together very effectively on behalf of the village.</p> <p>She gave a brief report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She noted that 2023-24 was a very busy year for planning matters and was concerned that two planning applications were the subject of non-determination appeals as East Devon District Council didn't reach their decision in time. • Planning application 23/1143/MFUL (Land to the south of Windmill Lane) had not yet been decided despite being submitted mid-2023. She felt that this was unfair on neighbouring households. • EDDC's work to develop a new East Devon Local Plan continued and, on behalf of West Hill, she had strongly objected to several proposals including reduced Green Wedges, increased Settlement boundaries. • Cllr JB raised concerns about the new E-Consult service at Coleridge Medical Centre. <p>Cllr Bailey then highlighted her Locality Grant Fund (DCC) and encourage local groups to contact her for further information regards possible small grant awards.</p>
APM24/5	<p>Reports from Local Organisations, groups and grant recipients and questions from Electors</p> <p>1. Rosemary Hudson gave an update on an initiative by St Michael's Church to provide a Welcome Pack to newcomers to the village. Over 100 packs have been distributed since 2021. Rosemary thanked the Parish Council for two grant awards, in total £150, towards the costs of providing the packs. She also thanked the Parish Council for a grant award towards the cost of staging a 3-day event entitled "Life!". The event was very well attended.</p> <p>The Chairman congratulated the team and commented that the Welcome Pack was much appreciated by new residents. Anyone wishing to help distribute The Messenger magazine and Welcome Packs was asked to contact Rosemary directly.</p> <p>2. On behalf of Eileen Perkins, Rosemary read two short reports:</p> <p>Trees - An increasing number of residents were contacting the West Hill Arboretum Group and West Hill's Tree Warden regarding maintenance of trees and for advice on new planting. The Arboretum had led several group walks and were looking to organise a further walk on the autumn.</p> <p>Public Footpaths - The Footpath Warden and Parish Council continued to liaise with DCC's Public Rights of Way team regarding maintenance of West Hill's public footpaths. A DCC Officer would be investigating run-off/flooding problems on Footpath 1. (Bendarroch Road/Toadpit Lane)</p> <p>3. Emily Lezzeri, CEO Ottery Help Scheme, Chairman Ottery + District Health Matters thanked Cllr Bailey and the Parish Council for their support and previous grant awards.</p> <p>Emily noted the Parish Council's initiative to develop an Emergency Plan and said that she would liaise with the Parish Council to determine how the two organisations could work together in the event of an emergency. She noted that <u>Ottery Help Scheme</u> supports 100+ West Hill residents.</p> <p><u>Ottery Health Matters</u> is a forum which brings together representatives of local local medical services organisations and community groups incl Coleridge Medical Centre, Hospital, Hospiscare. Men in Sheds etc. The groups purpose is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - give the community a voice on what's working well and what isn't, and - to bring together and work with the relevant groups who can bring about change. <p>Emily had written to Coleridge Medical Centre to raise concerns about their new e-consult service. She noted that 67% of Ottery Help Scheme clients were not digitally connected.</p>

	<p>Ottery Help Scheme continues to thrive. With over 650-700 bookings per month, the small team of volunteers is kept very busy. Their website provides further information. www.otteryhelpscheme.org.uk</p> <p>4. Sue Bonnie, of West Hill's Women's Group, gave a short report on the group's project to deliver 50 "Coronation" cream teas to residents who were unable to attend the community street party. She thanked the Parish Council for the grant award towards the costs of the project.</p> <p>The Women's Group continues to be very popular and has a waiting list for membership.</p> <p>5. Natalie Taylor thanked the Council for the grant award of £900 to the West Hill Pre-School for the purchase of new play kitchen and accessories. The new equipment was a great hit!</p>
APM 24/6	<p>Close of Meeting</p> <p>The Chairman thanked the speakers for their informative reports and invited questions. There were no further questions from the public.</p> <p>The Chairman closed the meeting and invited people to stay for refreshments.</p>
	<p>Refreshments served</p>

Meeting closed at 8.40pm

Anne Oliver, Parish Clerk

22nd April 2024

Minutes Signed:

Date 27th March 2025