

**WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD ON 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026 AT 7.00pm**

**Present:** Chairman Cllr Francis Pullman (FP), Cllr Ann Cooper (AC), Cllr Michael Owen (MO), Cllr Ben Jewell (BJ)

**In attendance:** Anne Oliver Parish Clerk, 5 members of the public, DCC/EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey

**Apologies:** Cllr Trevor Ingram (TI), Cllr ShirleyMay Saunders (SMS)

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**Minute reference 26/**

**052 Welcome and Chairman's announcements** (for information only)

The meeting started at 7.00pm. The Chairman, Cllr FP, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**053 Apologies.** To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence, if considered appropriate.

Cllr Ingram and Cllr Saunders sent their apologies for their non-attendance. Their apologies and reasons for absence were accepted by the Council.

**054 Public question time (3 minutes):** 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. (Contributions are limited to 3 minutes)

A member of the public raised concerns regarding road safety when walking on West Hill Road (west of Higher Broad Oak Road). Parents with children were choosing to drive to the primary school rather than walking. (ref agenda item 26/065).

**055 District and County Councillors' reports:** To receive reports for information (items raised for decision will appear on the agenda for the next meeting).

This item was taken later on the agenda when the Ward Member joined the meeting.

DCC/EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey comments included:

- Dog waste bins were full/over-flowing due to delayed/missed waste collections.
- Devon County Council's consultation on proposed changes to Libraries had received a high number of responses. The proposals and consultation findings would be considered at a dedicated meeting of DCC Scrutiny Committee.
- The NHS in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly is undergoing a significant re-organisation involving a move towards a "cluster" arrangement with NHS Devon, with a formal merger anticipated by April 2027.
- In May 2026, EDDC's Strategic Planning Committee will consider whether the Emerging East Devon Local Plan is ready to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. The Committee considered the East Devon Water Cycle study at the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026.

**Action:** Cllr FP to write to South West Water regarding their comments on Fluxton Sewage Treatment works submitted to EDDC in response to the East Devon Water Cycle study.

**056** To receive **Declarations of interest** for items on the agenda and receipt of requests for new Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) dispensations for items on the agenda. 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, AC, BJ, MO each declared no interests.

**057 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.

None

**058** To receive the **Minutes** of the Parish Council meeting of 3rd February 2026 (Minute 26/025 -26/051) and to approve the signing of the Minutes by the Chairman as a true record.  
The minutes of the meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026 were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

**059** To decide a response to **planning applications received:**

- **26/0193/TRE** Great Oak 2 Otter Close Perrys Gardens West Hill EX11 1XAT1: Oak - crown lift secondary branches to 4m. Remove 4 minor (50mm diameter) internal branches from just above first fork.  
The meeting did not support the proposed works as no justification or reason was provided with the application. The Council considered the tree to be an imposing tree and making a significant contribution to the landscape and character of the woodland village.
- **26/0171/FUL** Pinehayes Lower Broad Oak Road West Hill EX11 1XH: Extensions and alterations including first-floor extension, construction of dormers, demolition of existing conservatory and replacement single storey side extension, Changes to external materials.  
The meeting raised concerns regarding potential overlooking and adverse impact on the many species of bats on site. It was agreed to support subject the application subject to:
  - There being no opposing comments from the neighbouring properties.
  - The approval contains strong conditions concerning bat protection and obtaining a European Protected Species Licence
- **26/0241/VAR** The Croft Bendarroch Road West Hill Ottery St Mary EX11 1UW: Variation of Condition Numbers 2 (approved plans) and 9 (fenestration restrictions) on Planning Permission 23/1973/FUL (Replacement dwelling, including the demolition of the existing dwelling and multiple outbuildings located within the grounds) Revisions to fenestration, removal of dormer and juliet balcony.  
The meeting did not support the proposed changes to condition 9 of the planning approval (obscure glazing) and raised concerns concerning the proposed stove flue.

To note consultee comments made under delegated powers:

- **26/0109/FUL** 8 Moorlands West Hill Devon EX11 1UL: Proposed roof mounted PV solar panel array and replacement of flat roof with pitched roof over existing garage and annex (**No WHPC comments provided**)  
Councillors were reminded to submit their comments to the Clerk before the deadline for responses.

**060** **Planning decisions received** for information (\*denotes WHPC differed):

- **26/0036/TRE** Thrushes Anvil Windmill Lane West Hill EX11 1JP: T1–T3 dismantle to ground level (**Approved**)
- **25/1867/CPE** School House School Lane West Hill EX11 1UP Certificate of Existing Use for the ancillary use of a detached garage/outbuilding (**Decided**)
- **26/0088/TRE** 12 Moorlands West Hill EX11 1UL (**Split decision**)

All noted

#### Other Matters

**061** To decide arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting 14th April 2026 and to agree actions/costs.

**It was resolved:**

- to provide refreshments at the meeting and to set a budget of £100.00.
- to approve a publicity poster for the event.

**062** To approve a **WHPC newsletter** for publication (if appropriate) and decide a date for publication.

**It was resolved:**

- to defer the approval of the next Council newsletter for a month and to publish the newsletter in April 2026.

**063** To decide a response to the public consultation on **Local Government Reform in Devon**.

The meeting discussed the 5 proposals for Local Government Reform in Devon. Councillors questioned the rationale for the proposed reforms but noted that “no-change” was not an option. Also, there were no planned changes to the first tier of Local Government: Town and Parish Councils.

**Action:** Cllr FP to submit the Council’s comments to the online consultation on behalf of the Parish Council.  
One member of the public left the meeting.

**064** To review the **WHPC Asset Register** and decide actions as appropriate.

The meeting received and accepted a report on the inspection of WHPC assets. It was noted that the annual WHPC inspection of playpark equipment was overdue although weekly inspections were up to date.

It was agreed that the appropriate risk assessments were in place.

**It was resolved to:**

- Dispose of the playpark gates removed from the entrance.
- Approve the updated Asset Register and to publish on the Council’s website.

**Action:** Cllrs AC/BJ to undertake the WHPC Annual Inspection of Playpark equipment during March 2026 and submit a report to the April 2026 meeting.

**Action:** Clerk to contact Recycling in Ottery community group (playpark gates)

**065** To consider **correspondence** received (if any):

This item was considered earlier on the agenda following item 26/060.

One member of the public left the meeting.

a. Traffic Management (West Hill Road)

Councillors shared resident’s concerns about the inadequate road markings across the village. Cllr FP noted that DCC Highways had previously responded to WHPC queries to advise that the road markings were unlikely to be refreshed (unless considered to be a safety hazard) as roads within West Hill were not categorised as a principal route and low accident rate across the village.

Councillors asked to be kept informed of DCC Highways response to the resident’s enquiry.

b. Ditches (Bendarroch Road)

The Council did not support the resident’s concerns regarding ditches on Bendarroch Road and agreed to take no further action.

**Action:** Clerk to advise of the Council’s decision.

c. Broadband fibre rollout in West Hill

**Standing Orders were suspended**

The meeting considered resident’s concerns regarding broadband provision across the village and the limited rollout of fibre broadband.

**Standing Orders were resumed**

**Action:** DCC Cllr Jess Bailey agreed to request an update from Devon County Council

d. Freedom of Information Request

Processing of a Freedom of Information Request/Data Subject Access Request had been completed.

3 members of the public left the meeting.

**066** To receive the **monthly crime statistics** for West Hill (for information). **Noted**

**067 Clerk Matters:**

- a. To receive a report from the Parish Clerk and to agree actions as appropriate

The Clerk's reported included:

- WHPC Storage Unit now operational
- Construction of the new path to the playpark and installation of new gates was completed during February. Positive feedback from playpark users. Confirmed final costs including preparatory work, within budget, £5,830.53. (ref Min 26/023)
- Council application for a WHPC payment card was successful.
- Cllrs were reminded to check their training log was up to date.
- The Finance Working Group had reviewed alternative accounts packages but recommended the continued use of Scribe Software.
- Clerk attended the Government Parish Council Domains Helper Service Cyber Security Workshop: No actions for WHPC.
- The PTFA has contacted the Parish Council seeking advice on community engagement in advance of the summer fete.

**Action:** Cllrs FP/AC to represent the Parish Council at the opening of the new Primary School library.

**Action:** Clerk to circulate the GDPR Reminders Checklist.

**Action:** Clerk to write to the PTFA regarding publicity for the 2026 Summer Fete.

**Action:** Clerk to circulate cybersecurity webinar slides

**It was resolved** to renew an annual subscription for Scribe Accounts at a cost of £483.84+vat.

- b. To note decisions made under delegated powers (if applicable)

- To arrange for a drop-in session to seek community views on proposals for Local Government Reform in Devon. Costs: Room Hire + printing £36.50

- c. Urgent matters (if applicable). **None**

Ward Member left the meeting 9.10pm

**068 WHPC Action Tracker:** To receive updates on actions and matters arising from the last meeting and to agree actions/costs as considered appropriate.

Updates included:

- WHPC comments were submitted to DCC Library Consultation
- South West Ambulance Service Trust confirmed that no further defibs can added to their community schemes.

Cllr FP gave a report on a BT Landline Switchover webinar.

**Action:** Cllr FP to prepare an article on BT Landline Switchover + Telecare for the next WHPC newsletter.

**Action:** Cllr FP to arrange for the transfer of the WHPC Emergency Box to the storage unit.

**069 Financial matters:**

- a. To consider and approve, if appropriate, the Schedule of Payments and internal bank transfers.

The meeting considered the Schedule of Payments, internal transfers and invoices circulated before the meeting. No questions were raised.

**It was resolved** to approve the payments and sign the invoices.

- b. To consider and approve, if appropriate, any additional payments presented to the meeting.

**It was resolved to approve:**

- additional payments presented to the meeting:
  - a. Inv 7178 DALC - Training Cllrs MO, SMS, FP, £102.00
  - b. Inv 2453 West Hill Village Hall Room Hire (Feb-26), £45.00
  - c. Inv 519686 Blamphayne Sawmill 2xgates, £736.38
  - d. Inv 166 T Travers Landcaping Install gates + new fencing, £480.00
  
- £1,000.00 Internal Transfer between WHPC accounts
  
- c. To receive, if available, monthly Bank Reconciliations and finance trackers.  
No issues or questions were raised regarding the papers circulated prior to the meeting.

**070 Councillor questions, reports and items for future agenda:** 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. Councillors are respectfully reminded that this is not an opportunity for debate or decision making.

- Cllr BJ requested an item on a future agenda: Christmas Tree and Event 2026
- Cllr BJ asked for an update on entrance Potters Close – School Lane footpath

**071 Next meeting:** To confirm arrangements for the upcoming WHPC meeting on **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2026** 7.00pm at the Village Hall

All members of the public had previously left the meeting.

Part A ended 9.25pm  
Meeting ended 9.25pm

Signed .....

Date .....

Signed: *Anne Oliver*, Clerk to the Council, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026