

WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 7th July 2026 at 7.00pm

Present: Chairman Cllr Francis Pullman (FP), Cllr ShirleyMay Saunders (SMS), Cllr Ann Cooper (AC),

In attendance: Anne Oliver Parish Clerk, DCC/EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey, 4 members of the public

Apologies: Cllr Michael Owen (MO), Cllr Ben Jewell (BJ)

Minute reference 26/

178 Welcome and Chairman's announcements (for information only)

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

Announcements included:

- The Parish Council's Crazy Golf event at the West Hill Summer Fete raised £128. These monies were presented to a member of the West Hill Primary School PTFA at the meeting. The Chairman congratulated the PTFA on another successful, well-attended event.
- National Grid and DCC Highways will be carrying out separate works on West Hill Road during the week of 20th July. Details of the works, road closures and bus services were available on the Council's website/noticeboard. National Grid works to improve the power supply to West Hill will continue through to November.

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

Cllrs Owen and Jewell sent apologies for his non-attendance. Their apologies and reasons for absence were accepted by the Council.

180 Local Crime Matters:

- a. To receive the **monthly crime statistics** for West Hill (for information).
- b. To receive a report from **Devon & Cornwall Police** (if available)

Deferred to a future meeting as members of the Local Police were unable to attend due to operational matters.

181 To elect the Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council:

- a. to receive nominations and to carry out a vote accordingly.
- b. To receive the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of the Vice-Chairman

Deferred to a future meeting as two members were absent.

182 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 requested an update on their request for an amended route for the 44/44a Bus route to serve West Hill Road.

Standing Orders were suspended.

Ward Member Jess Bailey gave an update. Her comments included:

- the bus operator had advised that the additional time for the proposed route would impact on the timetable and may require the full timetable to be recast.

- Unfortunately, the proposed change was not straightforward.
- DCC Devonbus team and the bus operator will consider the request before the next scheduled timetable review.
- The Parish Council would consider it's response later on the agenda.

Standing Orders were resumed.

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

County/District Councillor Jess Bailey gave a report to the meeting. Her comments included:

- An update on West Hill Road roadworks scheduled for July.
- EDDC's Strategic Committee meets on 14th July and is expected to submit the Emerging East Devon Local Plan later this year.
- An invitation for applications for funding from her Locality Budget.

She congratulated the Council on its successful Crazy Golf event at the village fete.

- 184 Declarations of Interest:**

- a. 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 and SMS each declared no interests for items on the agenda.

- 185 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. **It was resolved to consider agenda item 26/190 in confidential session.**

- 186** To receive the **Minutes** of the Parish Council meetings and to approve the signing of the Minutes by the Chairman as a true record.
- a. Ordinary meeting 2nd June 2026 (Minute 26/138-26/168)
 - b. Extraordinary meeting 24th June 2026 (Min 26/169 -26/177) subject to amended minute references.

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 2nd June 2026 were agreed to be a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

The minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting the Parish Council of 24th June 2026 were agreed to be a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

It was resolved to amend the minute references for the meeting to be Min 26/169 - 26/177.

4 members of the public left the meeting.

- 187** To decide a response to **planning applications received:**

- **26/1180/TRE** The Gap Lower Broad Oak Road West Hill EX11 1UD
T1: Beech - remove and dismantle as exhibiting multiple Ganoderma fruiting bodies the base of the stem. Fungal decay is considered likely to be affecting the structural integrity of the tree. Tree to be dismantled in sections and all arisings retained on site. T2: Fir - remove and dismantle to ground level. All timber to be retained on site and all brash to be chipped. T3: Fir - remove and dismantle to ground level. All timber to be retained on site and all brash to be chipped. T4: English Oak - remove three identified lower limbs to provide increased clearance. T5: English Oak - remove selected lower branch(es) to provide increased clearance.
The meeting supported the application and asked for re-planting of native species.
- **26/0737/FUL** Tatry West Hill Ottery St Mary EX11 1UX
Erection of a single-storey timber outbuilding to support the agricultural and horticultural use of the land.

The meeting supported the application and asked for a condition such that the building is not used for residential purposes if the application was granted.

- **26/1249/VAR** Kings Gatchell Higher Metcombe EX11 1SL
Variation of Condition 2 (approved plans) of Planning Permission number 14/3008/FUL (Two storey side extension with rear terrace, enlarged dormer on front elevation and additional dormer on rear elevation) Revised front dormer to south and west elevations
The meeting supported the application.

To confirm consultee response submitted under Delegated Powers:

- **26/1119/TRE** 5 Heather Grange West Hill Devon EX11 1XZ (SUPPORT) **Noted**
Various works: T1, Pine: T2, Beech: T3, Birch

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

- a. **26/0773/FUL** Hunters Lodge Windmill Lane West Hill EX11 1JP: Retrospective planning application for decking and steps to existing dwelling (C3 use)
Status: Approved*
- b. **26/1176/DOC** Hunters Lodge Windmill Lane West Hill EX11 1JP: Discharge of condition for 26/0773/FUL: Condition 2 (Sceening)
Status: Approved
- c. **26/0770/TRE** Oasis Toadpit Lane West Hill EX11 1TR: Various treeworks.
Status: Approved
- d. **26/0740/TRE** Timbercroft Lower Broad Oak Road EX11 1XQ: Oak - prune the limbs that overhang the driveway at approximately 8m from the trunk creating 5m clearance above ground level.
Status: Approved
- e. **26/0193/TRE** Great Oak 2 Otter Close Perrys Gardens EX11 1XA: T1: Oak - crown lift secondary branches to 4m. Remove 4 minor (50mm diameter) internal branches from just above first fork.
Status: Approved*
- f. Planning Appeal Ref: 6006098 - **25/2209/FUL** Land Adjoining White Farm Lane, West Hill, EX11 1GF
Appeal Dismissed.

All noted.

189 Planning Matters: To receive a report on the new **National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions** coming into force on 31st October 2026.

The meeting noted the report circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr FP noted that under the new rules far fewer applications would be referred to the Local Planning Authority's Planning Committee for decision. He commented that the Parish Council's consultee responses needed to be thorough.

Action: Clerk to investigate arrangements for a training session on responding to planning applications. Costs to be approved at a future meeting.

Working Groups

190 Finance Working Group: To confirm arrangements made under delegated powers in response to a request to inspect the accounts for 2025-2026 during the Period for Exercise of Public Rights.

This item was considered in confidential session Part B following agenda item 26/205.

191 Playpark Working Group: To receive a report of an accident in the playpark, actions taken to date and to decide further actions and costs.

The meeting noted:

- the incident report circulated prior to the meeting.
- The actions taken by the Council including to immediately tape off the bridge on the climbing frame.
- Communication with the child's parents, EDDC Playpark Inspectors and the manufacturer of the climbing frame.

It was resolved to:

- bring the accident to the attention of the RoSPA inspector prior to the annual inspection.
- share their response with the manufacturer.
- Keep the climbing frame bridge taped off until the annual RoSPA report is received.

192 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group:

- a. To receive a progress report and approve payments.

The meeting noted the financial report and approved payment of the Place Studios invoice (£354.00)

- b. To consider a request for a WHPC newsletter to be issued during September 2026.

It was resolved to publish a WHPC newsletter in September 2026 and to approve costs up to £600.00.

193 Other Working Groups: To receive reports (actions/costs arising to be agreed at a future meeting).

No reports were received.

Other Matters

194 Grant Application: To consider an application submitted by St Michael's PCC for £50 funding for the distribution of Village Welcome Packs to new village residents.

The meeting considered that the West Hill Welcome Pack continued to be a valuable community initiative and thanked everyone involved in distributing packs to new residents.

It was resolved to approve a grant award of £50.00 to St Michael's PCC to support the production and distribution of the West Hill Welcome Packs.

195 West Hill Summer Fete: To receive a report on the Parish Council attendance at the PTFA Summer Fete and to consider recommendations.

Councillor's comments included:

- The Council's crazy golf event was well received and £128.00 raised for the PTFA
- The Council's branded flags and bunting were well received. Good feedback and improved awareness of the Council's presence at the fete. The WHPC branded items were considered to be cost effective and available for use at future events.

The meeting noted the financial report :

Crazy golf course materials	£139.12	(Re-useable in future years)
Consumables	£45.57	(approx. 50% remaining for use in future years)
Total	£184.69	Budget £300.00 Min 26/128.

196 To consider approval of new/amended policies: **Members Allowance Policy.**

It was resolved to adopt the amended Members Allowance Policy.

197 To decide arrangements for the **2026 West Hill Annual Remembrance Event.**

It was resolved that the Council would be responsible for the 2026 event:

Action: Clerk to apply for temporary road closure for the 2026 West Hill Annual Remembrance Event.

198 To consider proposals for **Community Engagement:** monthly drop-in session and pre-election 2027.

It was resolved to:

- arrange for a Council 'surgery' drop-in session to be held monthly for a six-month trial period from September 2026.
- A schedule and council protocol to be presented to the September Council meeting for approval.

199 Bus Service 44a West Hill:

- a. To decide a response to request for changes to the route through West Hill.

The meeting discussed:

- the community views received regarding the request to the bus operator for the route of the 44/44a bus service to be amended to serve West Hill Road and the road safety concerns raised.
- Details of the process to investigate the possible amended route provided by DCC Devonbus, including the safety assessment to be carried out by the bus operator.

It was resolved to write to DCC Devonbus to support the request for the route of the 44/44a bus service to be amended to serve West Hill Road.

- b. To receive an update (if available) on service provision during the temporary closure of West Hill Road (between West Hill and Ottery St Mary) for National Grid works between 14th September - 10th October (incl)

Devon County Council's Devonbus team confirmed they would provide details for alternative arrangements for the bus service during the period of the road closure. The meeting agreed to publish details on the Council's website and noticeboard when available.

200 To consider **correspondence** received (if any) and decide actions (as appropriate)

The meeting noted correspondence received regarding Openreach and broadband provision. It was understood that Openreach planned to provide fibre broadband to the village within 6-9 months.

201 Clerk Matters:

- a. To receive a report from the Parish Clerk and to agree actions/costs as appropriate, including:

- o West Hill Road Speed Sign

Further to Min 26/164 the Clerk confirmed the transfer of the West Hill Road Sign from OSMTC to the Parish Council.

- o Annual temporary closure of permissive path onto Village Hall site.

The Council's Permissive Policy requires the path from West Hill Road onto the Village Hall site to be closed once a year on 1st September.

Action: The Clerk to make arrangements for the path to be closed on 1st September 2026.

- o Suggestion for the provision of community 'cool spaces' during periods of extreme heat.

Action: Cllr FP to explore the possible provision of 'cool spaces' with the Village Hall Trustees and RBL Clubhouse.

It was resolved that the Clerk and a Councillor would attend the DALC annual conference, and approved costs, £100.

Action: Include an agenda item (September) to consider the requirements of Martyn's Law.

- b. To note decisions made under delegated powers (if applicable) **None**

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

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

The meeting received an update on outstanding actions.

203 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/transfers and sign the invoices.
- b. To consider and approve, if appropriate, any additional payments presented to the meeting.
It was resolved to approve one additional payment presented to the meeting: -
Devon Association of Local Councils £42.00
- c. To receive, if available, monthly Bank Reconciliations and finance trackers.
The Bank reconciliations (April, May, Jun) and Finance Trackers were noted. No issues were raised.

204 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.

- o Devon Communities Together: Digital Inclusion
The meeting received a report on the event attended by Cllr FP
Action: Cllr FP to invite a member of Devon Digital Cafes to give a short presentation at a future Council meeting.

205 Next meeting: To confirm arrangements for the upcoming WHPC meeting on **Tuesday 1st September 2026** 7.00pm at the Village Hall

Ward Member JB left the meeting.
Part A ended 20.45pm

Part B started 20.45pm

190 Finance Working Group: To confirm arrangements made under delegated powers in response to a request to inspect the accounts for 2025-2026 during the Period for Exercise of Public Rights.
The meeting reviewed and confirmed arrangements for the Inspection of Accounts for 2025-26.

It was resolved to approve:

- To approve room hire costs, £19.50.
- A charge of £7.50 per document for requested copies of documents (Inspection of Accounts).

Part B ended 9.04pm
Meeting ended 9.05pm

Signed

Date

Signed: *Anne Oliver*, Clerk to the Council, 13th July 2026