

**WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 31st May 2022 AT 7.30PM**

Present:	Chairman Cllr Della Cannings (DC), Cllr Margaret Piper (MP), Cllr Alison Carr (AC), Cllr Amanda Townsend (AT)
In attendance:	Anne Oliver Parish Clerk, 2 members of the public attended the meeting
Apologies received from:	Cllr Stephen Owen (SO), Cllr Alan Cook (ABC), Cllr Peter Bennett (PB)

AGENDA – ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Item (a)	Discussion and decisions (b)
22/157	<p>Welcome and Chairman’s announcements The meeting started at 7.30pm. Chairman DC welcomed everyone and reminded everyone that the meeting was being sound recorded.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chairman explained that the Extraordinary Meeting had been called due to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the receipt of a resident’s letter making a complaint against the Council • the receipt of a resident’s request for a review of the Council’s response to two recent Subject Access Requests both of which refer to taking legal action against the Council. The meeting was called to enable the Council to process both within required timescales. 2. The Chairman reported the receipt of correspondence from a Cllr challenging the legitimacy of calling the Extraordinary Meeting. Cllrs unanimously <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agreed that the meeting was properly convened, with appropriate agenda items, according to the Council’s policies. • expressed their confidence in the Chairman. 3. The Chairman thanked the Clerk for her professionalism in dealing with these matters and for ensuring the business of the Council continued
22/158	<p>Apologies. To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence. Apologies from Cllrs ABC and PB were received and approved.</p>
22/159	<p>Public question time (3 minutes) From 7.30pm residents are invited to give their views and question 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. This item included issues submitted to the Clerk prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Two members of the public attended the meeting. One wished to speak and identified himself as Paul Hayward, the Internal Auditor who had recently completed the internal audit of WHPC.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He noted that the report had been properly received and minuted by the Council. 2. He stated that he was wholly independent of the Council and had completed the audit according to the national guidelines. 3. He advised that he had received correspondence from a member of the public seeking to (a) object to, scrutinise, or query his report and (b) question his independence and objectivity. He had replied that the only bodies able to query the report, if they wished, were WHPC or the External Auditor.

	<p>4. He recognised the work of the RFO/Clerk but noted the disproportionate amount of time spent on matters raised by one resident during the year, still ongoing, which “served no useful purpose to the Parish”.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked the Internal Auditor for advising the Council of the correspondence and for his frank comments. She noted that the Internal Audit report had been circulated, received and accepted by the Council with no questions raised by Cllrs.</p> <p>She noted that the Council was in a difficult position as the Council was required to respond to the resident’s correspondence, however the Council’s replies elicited further correspondence.</p> <p>The Internal Auditor noted the Council’s duty to protect its staff and Cllrs from harm through abuse, bullying and harassment.</p> <p>Two members of the public left the meeting at 19.46pm</p>
21/160	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Register of Interests: Councillors are reminded of the need to update their register of interests. b. To declare any personal interests in items on the agenda and their nature. To declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in items on the agenda and their nature (Councillors with DPIs must leave the room for the relevant items). <p>Cllr DC proposed a dispensation for all Cllrs regards item 22/168 and 22/169 on the basis that without the dispensation so great a proportion of the council would be prohibited from being present/participating in that business as to impede the transaction of that item. Cllrs unanimously agreed.</p> <p>Cllrs DC, MP, AC and AT each declared no further interests.</p>
22/161	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed confidential items 22/168 and 22/169 Cllrs Unanimously agreed
22/162	<p>Clerks Report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any urgent matters arising: The Clerk reported that a bench had been removed from the Playpark as it had decayed beyond economic repair. The next Council meeting on 7th June 2022 will consider its replacement and other playpark issues.
22/163	<p>To record the receipt of a complaint against West Hill Parish Council. Cllrs recorded the receipt of a complaint against West Hill Parish Council.</p>
22/164	<p>To record the receipt of a request for a Subject Access Request Review Cllrs recorded the receipt of a request for a review of two Subject Access Requests.</p>
22/165	<p>Councillors 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. <i>Councillors are respectfully reminded that this is not an opportunity for debate or decision making.</i> N/A</p>
22/167	<p>Next meeting: To confirm arrangements for the next WHPC ordinary meeting Tuesday 7th June 2022 7.30pm at the Village Hall.</p>

Part A of the meeting closed at 19.50pm

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.

Part B of the meeting began at 19.50pm

22/168	To consider a complaint against West Hill Parish Council and to agree arrangements for the actions to be taken according to the Council's Complaints Policy. In confidential session, Cllrs considered the implications of the complaint made against the Council and potential reputational and other consequences. Cllrs unanimously <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Noted the actions taken to date.2. Resolved to engage suitable legal advice. Such costs will be funded from the Council's contingency and will be reported to Council.3. Approve to notify the Council's Insurers of potential litigation.4. Approved up to 50 hours overtime for the Clerk.
22/169	To consider the request for a SAR review and arrangements for the review. In confidential session, Cllrs resolved to <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note the actions taken to date.2. To notify WHPC Insurers of potential litigation.

Part B of the meeting closed at 20.29pm

The meeting resumed at 20.29pm and closed at 20.31pm

Signed: *Anne Oliver*, Clerk to the Council 1st June 2022