

**WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 4th February 2025 AT 7.30pm**

Present:	Chairman Cllr Francis Pullman (FP), Cllr ShirleyMay Saunders (SMS), Cllr Trevor Ingram (TI), Cllr Ann Cooper (AC)
In attendance:	Anne Oliver Parish Clerk, 7 members of the public, DCC/EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey (from 19.55pm)
Apologies	n/a

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council

Item (a)	Discussion and decisions (b)
25/050	<p>Welcome and Chairman’s announcements</p> <p>The meeting started at 7.30pm. The Chairman, Cllr FP, welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman’s announcements included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devon County Council, Exeter City Council, Devon’s District Councils have published their initial response to the Government’s proposal to restructure County and District Councils into a single unitary authority. Their views differ and each proposes a different structure for Devon. <p>How this restructure may affect town and parish councils remains unknown and WHPC awaited further information.</p>
25/051	<p>Apologies. To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence, if considered appropriate. n/a</p>
25/052	<p>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. <i>(Contributions are limited to 3 minutes)</i></p> <p>1. Planning applications: The applicant for applications 25/0026/PDQ and 25/0027/PDQ attended the meeting and spoke in favour of the applications.</p> <p>The Chairman suspended Standing Orders for questions from members of the public to the applicant.</p> <p>Standing Orders were resumed.</p> <p>2. Planning Appeal: APP/U1105/W/24/3357250: A member of the public stated that appeal documents submitted by the applicant contained errors.</p>
25/053	<p>District and County Councillors’ reports: To receive reports for information (items raised for decision will appear on the agenda for the next meeting)</p> <p>This item was considered during item 20/57 as County/District Cllr Jess Bailey was unable to join the start of the meeting.</p> <p>County/District Cllr Jess Bailey gave a short report on the EDDC Strategic Planning Committee meeting (4th February 2025). Comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - East Devon’s Housing Land Supply (HLS) has been re-calculated based on new targets published in the new National Planning Policy Framework rules (NPPF, Dec 2024). The

	<p>revised HLS is 2.97years. As this falls below the 5 year target the Tilted Balance is engaged in favour of sustainable development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A higher target of 6 years HLS will apply from July 2026. - The Regulation 19 public consultation on the Emerging East Devon Local Plan will start during the week of 10th February 2025.
25/054	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Cllrs FP, TI, AC and SMS each declared no interests in items on the agenda.</p>
25/055	<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. Proposed items: n/a</p>
25/056	<p>Minutes: To receive the Minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting of 14th January 2025 (Minute 25/025 -25/049) and to approve the signing of the Minutes by the Chairman as a true record. The minutes of the extraordinary meeting of 14th January 2025 were unanimously confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.</p>
25/057	<p>Planning Applications received: To consider a response to:</p> <p>25/0026/PDQ Weggis Farm Higher Metcombe Ottery St Mary EX11 1SQ Prior notification (Class Q (a) and (c)) for a change of use from buildings on an agricultural unit to 5no. dwellinghouses (Use Class C3)</p> <p>Cllrs noted that PDQ applications were required to meet specific criteria. Cllrs did not support the application as the proposal included the installation of a floor to replace the current earth floor. They understood this to be contrary to the PDQ criteria.</p> <p>25/0027/PDQ Weggis Farm Higher Metcombe Ottery St Mary EX11 1SQ Prior notification (Class Q (a) and (c)) for a change of use from a building on an agricultural unit to 1no. dwellinghouses (Use Class C3)</p> <p>Cllrs noted that PDQ applications were required to meet specific criteria. Cllrs did not support the application as the barn was not currently connected to the highway and it would be necessary to build a new section of access road. They understood this to be contrary to the PDQ criteria.</p> <p>19.52hrs A member of the public left the meeting.</p> <p>24/2716/FUL South Oak Higher Metcombe Ottery St Mary EX11 1SQ Proposed single storey rear extension and enlargement of existing porch</p> <p>Cllrs supported the application subject to confirmation that no trees would be adversely affected.</p> <p>25/0023/DEM The Colonels West Hill Road, West Hill, EX11 1UZ Demolition of single storey timber frame bungalow and timber frame garage.</p> <p>Cllrs supported the application. Cllrs expressed concern that details of the method of land restoration had not been made available.</p> <p>25/0148/TRE 20 Moorlands West Hill EX11 1UL T1: Atlas Cedar - lift to clear 2m (approximately first three branches). Shorten side branches over drive by approximately 0.5m to allow better access. Remove ivy and dead wood over 50mm. T2: Beech - shorten branches over roof by 0.5. 1m to leave a more symmetric form. Reason to clear roof. T3: Scots pine - remove long tip heavy branch at approximately 14m over garden and broken</p>

	<p>stub above. Sever ivy at base. T4: Cherry - lift over road to give 5.2m clearance and shorten back from cedar by 1m.</p> <p>Cllrs noted the trees on the site made a significant contribution to the character of the area. Cllrs deferred the decision to EDDC Tree Officers as the information provided in support of the application was insufficient for them to make a decision. Cllrs again noted the application form was not fit for purpose.</p>
25/058	Planning decisions received for information (*denotes WHPC differed): None
25/059	<p>To decide a response to a Planning Appeal: APP/U1105/W/24/3357250 Land at Lower Broad Oak Road West Hill EX11 1XH (Outline planning application for the construction of 5 no. dwellings, with all matters reserved).</p> <p>Cllrs considered the appeal documents submitted by the applicant. Cllrs considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the stated walking distance and times to the centre of the village were inaccurate as they took no account of the topography and conditions of the walking route. - Section 7.2 of The Statement of Case contained errors as application 23/1143/MFUL (Windmill Lane has not been approved) - The Valued View across the site was not protected as the application was "Outline" and the layout and scales of buildings was illustrative. <p>Cllrs agreed their previous comments continued to apply and agreed to continue to strongly object to the application. Cllrs agreed their response to the Appeal.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to submit the WHPC response to the appeal.</p>
25/060	<p>Planning Matters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To receive a verbal report, if available, on the EDDC Strategic Planning Committee meeting 4th February 2025. (see Min 25/053) 2. To note the arrangements for the public consultation on the publication draft of the Emerging East Devon Local Plan. It was expected the consultation would run for six weeks from the week of 10th February 2025. Details of the consultation and how to respond will be available on the EDDC and WHPC websites. 3. To receive a report on a meeting with EDDC Tree Officers. The Chairman gave a short report on a meeting with EDDC Tree Officers. Several Cllrs met with the Tree Officers to discuss the TPO process and application for works on TPO's trees. <p>Comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cllrs considered the application form was unfit for purpose. - The majority of applications provided very little, if any, information to justify the works. - As a woodland village, Cllrs considered that all the trees contributed to the character of the village. However, they recognised that tree works were sometimes needed to maintain the health of the tree and ensure safety. <p>The Tree Officers sympathised with Cllrs views regarding the application form but stated they were unable to amend the form which is used across other Districts.</p> <p>The Tree Officers encouraged the Council and residents to submit their comments on provisional TPOs (details published on the agenda for monthly WHPC meetings). This information had been passed onto West Hill's Arboretum Group. The Chairman added that the tree officers invited respondents to express the emotional/sentimental value of the tree(s), if appropriate.</p>

WHPC Groups + Initiatives

25/061	<p>Finance Working Group:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To receive a 3rd Quarter Financial report and to agree actions, as appropriate.
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	<p>Cllrs considered a 3rd quarter financial report (circulated prior to the meeting). The Chairman gave a short summary of year to date receipts/payments and the end of 2024-25 year forecast. No questions or issues were raised.</p> <p>It was resolved to accept the report.</p> <p>2. To adopt, if appropriate, amended WHPC Financial Regulations.</p> <p>Cllrs considered amended WHPC Financial Regulations (circulated prior to the meeting). Cllr FP explained the Finance working group had reviewed NALC's new model Financial Regulations and tailored the document for WHPC's needs.</p> <p>Cllr SMS thanked the group for their work.</p> <p>It was resolved to adopt the revised WHPC Financial Regulations.</p> <p>Action: Clerk to publish the WHPC Financial Regulations on the Council's website.</p> <p>3. To receive a WHPC CIL statement and to confirm the use of CIL Monies.</p> <p>Cllrs considered the WHPC CIL statement (circulated prior to the meeting). No questions were raised.</p> <p>It was reported that EDDC had confirmed the Village Hall Pedestrian Path Project met the CIL eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Cllrs noted the CIL Statement.</p> <p>4. To receive a report on the annual inspection of the Council's assets and to decide actions, if appropriate.</p> <p>Cllrs considered the Asset Register (previously circulated) and received a report on the Council's assets. Cllr AC advised the picnic benches in Broadoak Plantation needed to be cleaned. No other issues or concerns were raised.</p> <p>It was resolved to accept the report and to publish the WHPC Asset Register on the Council's website (subject to minor amendments).</p> <p>Action: Clerk to investigate replacement of the Council's projector.</p>
25/062	<p>Neighbourhood Plan Working Group: To receive a progress report and to decide actions considered appropriate.</p> <p>Cllr AC gave a brief update on a meeting of the working group. The group met with Paul Weston, a Neighbourhood Planning consultant. Paul shared his advice on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stages of the process to develop a Neighbourhood Plan - Community engagement - Evidence gathering and working with 3rd Party specialists - Applications for Locality grant funding <p>Next, the group would focus on developing a communication strategy. This would include a workshop facilitated by a community engagement specialist, to be appointed on a one-off basis. (date/time and costs to be confirmed).</p> <p>The Chairman thanked the members of the working group for their support.</p>
25/063	<p>Village Hall Pedestrian Path Working Group: To receive a progress update and agree actions, if appropriate:</p> <p>Cllr FP reported works to thin the boundary hedge had been completed in January 2025 after consultation with an ecologist and Village Hall Trustees.</p>

	<p>1. Application for Certificate of Lawfulness of Phase 1 works and to approve confirm additional costs, £70, paid under Delegated Powers.</p> <p style="color: red;">It was reported that the application had been validated by EDDC and was now in progress.</p> <p style="color: red;">It was resolved to approve the Clerk's expense claim for £216.50: consisting of £146.50 application fee (previously approved 25/036) and a payment of £70.00 (service charge) made under Delegated Powers (approved Cllrs FP/TI).</p> <p>2. Lease on Village Hall land</p> <p style="color: red;">It was reported that registration of the lease was in progress. This required WHPC to provide a valuation of the land. A valuation of £5,000.00 was provided by the West Hill Village Hall Trustees.</p> <p>3. S278 + Traffic Regulation Order (both DCC Highways)</p> <p style="color: red;">TRO</p> <p style="color: red;">Highways have begun work on the TRO process, however WHPC had not received any further information.</p> <p style="color: red;">S278</p> <p style="color: red;">The Chairman explained that the s278 is a legal agreement and WHPC had previously appointed Tozers LLP to act on behalf of the Council and approved associated costs (Min 24/333). As WHPC would incur costs for DCC Highways legal fees a provision was included in the 2024-25 financial reports. DCC's legal team had begun work on the s278 and had advised the council of their minimum fees, £1000.00+£30 disbursements.</p> <p style="color: red;">It was resolved to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - approve payment of DCC s278 legal costs, £1,030.00. - note that DCC may charge additional fees if additional work is incurred. <p style="color: red;">20.30hrs Two members of the public left the meeting.</p>
<p>25/064</p>	<p>Road Safety Working Group: To receive a report on a meeting with DCC Highways Officers and agree actions, if appropriate.</p> <p style="color: red;">Cllr FP gave a report on a meeting between WHPC representatives and DCC Highways Officers. On behalf of residents the Council had raised concerns about vehicle speeds in the village and on the B3180. The Council's Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) data demonstrated a significant number of drivers exceeded the speed limit at each VAS site location.</p> <p style="color: red;">The meeting discussed various possible measures to reduce traffic speeds including extended speed limit areas, SCARF process and engineering solutions.</p> <p style="color: red;">The Highways Officers acknowledged the concerns, however, in their view Highways were unlikely to fund any works for West Hill and B3180. They explained that Highways had a limited budget and funding was focussed on the areas with a high number of accidents and injuries, unlike West Hill. The Officers offered to conduct speed surveys in West Hill but advised that there would be a lengthy delay before they took place.</p> <p style="color: red;">Standing Orders were suspended.</p> <p style="color: red;">DCC Cllr JB, Cllrs and members of the public discussed Highways comments and possible next steps. Cllr JB gave an update on Ottery St Mary Town Council's initiative to implement 20mph zones following a community consultation.</p> <p style="color: red;">Standing Orders were resumed</p>

	<p>Action: Clerk to arrange a meeting between WHPC, West Hill Community Speedwatch and if possible the local Police Team.</p> <p>The Chairman asked for an item on a future agenda to further discuss the matter.</p>
25/065	<p>Playpark Working Group:</p> <p>1. To receive a report on WHPC's Annual Playpark Inspection and to decides actions and costs.</p> <p>Cllrs considered a report on each item of playpark equipment circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Cllr TI gave a report to the meeting. During January the playpark working group had conducted a detailed inspection of the playpark and equipment. The equipment was found to be in good condition with the exception of the triple swing. They considered the item safe to use but considered that the swing was nearing the "end of life". The RoSPA report (summer 2024) also rated the swing as "Low Risk". The working group reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - repair work, previously approved, was due to take place in February. - Their weekly inspections would closely monitor the swing. <p>Other findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Damaged fence panel (reported to Village Hall Trustees) b. Damaged end caps on climbing frame – proposed action: monitor and replace if necessary. (Confirmed current assessment- very low risk). c. Exposed tree roots near noticeboard - proposed action: monitor and action if necessary <p>It was resolved to accept their report.</p> <p>2. To receive an update on repairs to triple swing.</p> <p>See above</p> <p>3. To receive recommendations for a Long Term Playpark Strategy and agree actions and costs, if appropriate.</p> <p>The working group apologised as they had been unable to meet during January. It was agreed to consider their recommendations at a future meeting.</p> <p>20.55hrs DCC/EDDC Cllr JB left the meeting</p>
25/066	<p>Emergency Plan Working Group: To receive a progress report and agree actions, if appropriate.</p> <p>It was reported that the working group is considering the possible scenario of a major storm and widespread power cuts. In this situation emergency services may not be able to reach the village for some time and the community may need to support each other. The working group are exploring the actions necessary for the Village Hall to become a community hub which can offer a warm space, warm drinks etc. Members of the working group have prepared a presentation to be made to village groups to spread awareness of their work and to recruit volunteers.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked the members of the working group for their ongoing support.</p>

Other Matters

25/067	<p>To receive a progress report on nominations for two Assets of Community Value (Potters Country Market (Morrisons) site + Broadoak Plantation) and to confirm payment £84, paid under Delegated Powers.</p> <p>It was reported that EDDC had validated the nominations for the two sites and have notified each landowner. It was confirmed that EDDC are the decision maker and their process does not include a public consultation.</p>
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	<p>It was resolved to approve the Clerk's expense claim (£84) for payments to the Land Registry for Title Deeds and Plans required for the nomination.</p>
25/068	<p>1. To receive a report on a meeting to discuss arrangements for a village event to mark VE Day 80.</p> <p>WHPC representatives met with members of West Hill's RBL branch to discuss arrangements for events in West Hill to commemorate and celebrate VE Day 80:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Members of the RBL will lead a service at the War Memorial at 11.00am Thursday 8th May 2025. WHPC was not asked to organise a road closure for the event. b. The RBL club will hold a community street party on Saturday 10th May. All West Hill residents were invited to attend. <p>2. To approve, if appropriate, a grant application from West Hill RBL: a contribution towards costs of a community VE-Day 80 event. Carried forward to the next meeting.</p>
25/069	<p>To consider the WHPC response, if any, to the public consultation: Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England</p> <p>It was resolved to delegate the Council's response to the Chairman and Clerk.</p>
25/070	<p>To consider arrangements for the 2025 Annual Parish Meeting Thursday 27th March 2025.</p> <p>Cllrs agreed a list of possible speakers for the event. Action: The Clerk to invite local groups, organisations and grant recipients to the meeting.</p>
25/071	<p>To consider arrangements for Sunday 9th March: National Day of Reflection of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Rev Mac Dick for agreeing to lead a short service for the community to reflect on the 5th anniversary of the pandemic. The event will take place at mid-day on Sunday 9th March at the Covid Memorial Tree (located to the rear of St Michael's Church).</p> <p>Action: Publicise the event on the WHPC website and noticeboards.</p>
25/072	<p>To consider arrangements for the next edition of the WHPC newsletter and to approve costs.</p> <p>It was resolved to publish a WHPC newsletter in March 2025 and to approve costs up to £600.</p>
25/073	<p>To consider correspondence received (if any).</p> <p>Cllrs considered a request for a first aid course to be arranged for the community. Cllrs supported the idea and asked for details and costs to be presented to a future meeting.</p>
25/074	<p>To receive a report from the Parish Clerk.</p> <p>The Clerk's report included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each year WHPC can offer a defibrillator training session for the community under The South West Ambulance Trust's Defibrillator scheme. It was hoped to organise a session in March. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Cllrs asked for the session to be held in the early evening if possible.
25/075	<p>To review WHPC's Action Tracker and agree actions as considered appropriate.</p> <p>Cllrs considered the actions not covered on the agenda:</p> <p>BT Landline Switchover: Cllr SMS gave an update on her visit to an information session and recommended the Council seeks to organise a session in West Hill. Cllrs raised concerns about loss of power and poor mobile coverage across the area.</p>
25/076	<p>Financial matters:</p> <p>1. To consider and approve, if appropriate, the Schedule of Payments.</p> <p>Cllrs considered the Schedule of Payments and invoices circulated and published before the meeting. No questions were raised.</p> <p>It was resolved to approve the payments and sign the invoices.</p> <p>2. To consider and approve, if appropriate, any additional payments presented to the meeting.</p> <p>Cllrs resolved to approve and sign one additional invoice presented to the meeting:</p>

	<p>Inv 3230 PLG Services VAS Transfers £96.00 Inv 2079 West Hill Village Hall - room hire £57.13 Inv 3252 PLG Services - Hedge thinning for VH path Min25/036, £207.00</p> <p>3. To receive, if available, monthly Bank Reconciliations and finance trackers. Bank Reconciliations and Finance Reports were reviewed by the Finance Working Group and circulated prior to the meeting. Cllrs considered the papers and no questions or issued were raised.</p>
25/077	<p>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. <i>Councillors are respectfully reminded that this is not an opportunity for debate or decision making.</i></p> <p>Cllr FP gave a report from the meeting of the Exeter Airport Consultative Committee. Comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A daily service to Amsterdam was scheduled to start shortly. - The mail flights will end in March 2025 and alternative road transfers will be in place. - Exeter Aerospace continues to do well and is recruiting engineers.
25/078	<p>Next meeting: To confirm arrangements for upcoming WHPC meeting on Tuesday 1st March 2025 7.30pm at the Village Hall</p> <p>The date of the next meeting shown on the agenda is incorrect. The next scheduled meeting of the Council will be held on Tuesday 4th March.</p>

All remaining members of the public left the meeting.

Part A ended 9.37pm

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. **None**

Meeting closed at 9.37pm

Signed

Date