

**WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 5th December 2023 AT 7.30PM**

Present:	Chairman Cllr Alison Carr (AC), Cllr Stanley Paulo (SP), Cllr Andrew Gorton (AG), Francis Pullman (FP), Cllr Trevor Ingram (TI)
In attendance:	Anne Oliver Parish Clerk, DCC/EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey, 12 members of the public attended the meeting.
Absent	n/a

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council

Item (a)	Discussion and decisions (b)
23/357	<p>Welcome and Chairmans announcements: The meeting started at 7.30pm. The Chairman, Cllr AC, welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman reported the resignation of Cllr Neil Bromley and thanked him for his service to the Parish Council and Community. Residents were encouraged to consider joining the Council to fill the two vacancies.</p> <p>The Village Hall annual village panto, Jack and the Beanstalk, takes place on Friday 15th December at 6pm. Tickets are being sold at the Primary School, the Preschool, the Post Office at Morrisons</p>
23/358	<p>To elect the Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council: To receive nominations and to carry out a vote accordingly. The Chairman asked for nominations for the Vice-Chairman role following the resignation of Cllr NB. Cllr FP nominated himself and was unanimously elected as Vice-Chairman.</p> <p>It was resolved to update the Council's bank mandate to remove Neil Bromley.</p>
23/359	<p>Apologies. To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence. n/a</p>
23/360	<p>To approve, if considered appropriate, a Protocol for Public Participation in Parish Council meetings. The Chairman explained that Parish Council meetings are governed by Standing Orders and whilst Council meetings are public meetings there are rules regarding public participation. This was to enable the meetings to be conducted properly and effectively. The agenda for the monthly Parish Council meetings always include an item for public participation as the Council wishes to hear from residents. She noted members of the public are welcome to attend the meetings as observers.</p> <p>Cllrs considered a draft Protocol for Public Participation in Parish Council meetings circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>It was resolved to adopt the protocol and to publish the protocol on the Council's website.</p>
23/361	<p>Public question time (3 minutes): 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 includes issues submitted to the Clerk prior to the meeting. <i>Individual contributions are limited to 3 minutes.</i></p> <p>1. Planning application 23/1143/MFUL Land South of Windmill Lane. Several residents spoke to raise concerns and questions, including:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to make the Parish Council aware of their objection to the development - to raise serious concerns regarding surface water flooding. In particular the Exceedance Plan submitted with the application proposed excess water will be discharged onto Windmill Lane. Residents provided photographs demonstrates that, currently, surface water on Windmill Lane enters his garden forming a large “lake”. - Further residents supported these concerns and to explain their gardens were similarly affected by flooding. - A resident asked questions regarding the Council’s response to the application and the upcoming Planning Committee meeting (19th December). The Chairman noted the Council’s previous objection to the application is available on the EDDC website. The WHPC response to the current amendments would also be published. The agenda for the EDDC Planning meeting was not yet published. - to query whether a new application should have been submitted given the number and scale of amendments to the original application. EDDC Cllr JB agreed to contact EDDC to seek an explanation. <p>2. Planning Appeal APP/U1105/W/23/3322776: Land North of Oak Road EX11 1SJ</p> <p>The Council was asked for clarification on the process and dates for members of the public to respond to the appeal. The Chairman advised the Planning Inspectorate website showed a deadline of 18th December for written responses. On 27th November the Planning Inspectorate notified EDDC the Appeal would be considered by a Hearing (timetable to be advised). EDDC then notified WHPC.</p> <p>The resident commented West Hill was the subject of the three major planning application, which if they proceed would adversely change the character of the village. The number of new homes would be a significant increase on the current population with no additional infrastructure in place. Residents were urged to work together to fight the applications.</p> <p>3. The Footpath Warden reported Public Footpath 6 was passable. She raised concerns about a number of trees near gateway on West Hill Road that may be a risk of falling.</p>
<p>23/362</p>	<p>To receive District and County Councillors’ reports for information (items raised for decision will appear on the agenda for the next meeting).</p> <p>DCC/EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey (JB) gave a short report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EDDC’s Strategic Planning Committee (5th Dec) had considered three options for the location of a new town for 8,000 homes in East Devon. Option 1 was preferred. EDDC Cllr JB had voted against the proposal and outlined her concerns regarding some of the assessments, including Transport, which she considered inadequate. - Has proposed a motion on Government Planning Policies to be considered by EDDC Cabinet - sought information from DCC regarding their 20mph schemes.
<p>23/363</p>	<p>Declarations of Interest: Under the Localism Act 2011 (sections 26-37 and Schedule 4) and in accordance with the Council’s Code of Conduct, members are required to declare any interests that are not currently entered in the Member’s register of interests including the nature and extent of such interests they may have, in items to be considered at this meeting. 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. Also, receipt of requests for dispensations for new Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Registerable Interests or Non-Registerable Interests for items on the Agenda.</p> <p>Cllrs were reminded to keep their Register on Interests up to date. Cllr SP declared an interest in planning application 23/2336/TRE as a neighbour and stated he would leave the room for that agenda item. Cllr TI queried whether to declare an interest in application 23/2431/TRE as he lived in the Eastfield area but was not acquainted with the Householder. Cllrs agreed that a Declaration was unnecessary.</p>

	<p>Cllr AC declared an interest in planning application 23/2336/TRE as an acquaintance of the householder but felt she could participate in discussion with an open mind and free from bias or pre-determination.</p> <p>Cllrs AG and FP declared no interests on items on the agenda.</p>
23/364	<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. To consider, if appropriate, any agenda items should be considered in Part B. Proposed: 23-387 Personnel Matters Cllrs agree agenda item 23/387 would be considered in confidential session.</p>
23/365	<p>Minutes: To receive the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 7th November 2023 (Minute 23/331-23/356) and to approve the signing of the Minutes by the Chairman as a true record. The minutes were unanimously accepted as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.</p>
23/366	<p>Planning Applications received: To consider and agree a response to:</p> <p>a. 23/1143/MFUL Land South of Windmill Lane Amended Plans</p> <p>The Chairman noted the Parish Council's previous objection to the application. Cllrs were reminded the Council was now asked to consider submitted amendments to the application including a revised layout, updated planting, location of a sub-station etc. Cllrs were invited to consider resident's comments expressed at the meeting and also those submitted to EDDC.</p> <p>Cllrs comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EDDC's inability to demonstrate a 5 Year Housing Supply is exceptionally frustrating. West Hill is subject to several major applications that will inevitably change the character of the village. - Inadequate infrastructure currently under strain. - Residents of the new developments will rely on travel by car to work or school as there are no jobs or school places available in the village. - Very concerned about the risk of flooding - The development is outside the BUAB - Deeply concerned about the impact on the landscape. - There's nowhere for children to play - There's likely to be future applications for tree works <p>Cllrs unanimously agreed the submitted amendments did not change their views on the application.</p> <p>It was resolved to strongly object to the application and, should the application be approved by EDDC, to request the following planning conditions: a pedestrian path to connect to the path (subject to a condition for 23/0727/MOUT Land north of Eastfield) to improve connectivity within the village.</p> <p>b. 23/2367/FUL 10 Perrys Gardens West Hill EX11 1XA Conversion of existing garage with front and rear single storey extensions Cllrs were concerned the proposed excavations may encroach on the roots of protected trees to the rear of the property. No arboricultural report had been submitted to assess the impact.</p> <p>Cllrs support the application subject to the findings of an arboricultural assessment.</p> <p>c. 23/2336/TRE 3a Ashley Brake, West Hill, EX11 1TW T3: Beech - raise the canopy on the north and west sides of the tree to 3m above ground level, making cuts up to 30mm in diameter. Cllr SP left the room</p>

	<p>Cllrs noted the photographs submitted with the application were unclear and the title of the proposed works was mis-leading as it didn't describe the extent of the proposed works.</p> <p>Cllrs supported raising the tree canopy only. They did not support the request for a long term permission to carry out tree works. Cllrs felt strongly that each application for work should be considered on it's own merit.</p> <p>d. 23/2431/TRE 20 Eastfield West Hill EX11 1XN T1-T5 Reduce height + reduce tree limbs Cllr SP re-joined the meeting. Cllrs expressed concern regarding the extent of the proposed work. No arboricultural report had been submitted to justify or assess the impact of the proposed works. Cllrs felt unable to make a decision without this information and deferred their response to the EDDC Tree Officers.</p> <p>e. 23/2357/FUL Toad Hall, Toadpit Lane EX11 1TR Proposed single storey extension on north/east elevation and French doors to existing bay window. Cllrs thanked the applicant for submitting an arboricultural report. Cllrs resolved to support the application subject to the measures set out in the arboricultural report.</p> <p>f. 23/2517/TRE Summerhill Higher Metcombe EX11 1SJ T1 and T2 - Oak trees - prune the branch tips which are growing out towards the property and roof, removing branch lengths of 1-2m, making natural target pruning cuts of up to 50mm in diameter, reducing the end weight and lever arm of all branches and removing any significant deadwood found within the crowns of both of these trees. Cllrs raised no objections and supported the application.</p> <p>g. 23/2535/PIP Land Adjacent Elsdon House Elsdon Lane West Hill Permission in principle for the demolition of an existing greenhouse and the construction of two dwellings.</p> <p>Cllrs comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As it's a PIP application no technical details are provided. - It's a small plot of land. There's insufficient space for two dwellings. - The site is outside the BUAB. - The site is part of a larger site submitted to EDDC in response to the Call for Sites in support of the Emerging East Devon Local Plan. It was not selected as a preferred site for reasons including the walking route to the school was along unlit/unpaved lanes. <p>Cllrs did not support the application as the site is outside the West Hill BUAB. If EDDC should approve the application Cllrs considered the site suitable for one dwelling only.</p>
<p>23/367</p>	<p>EDDC Planning Decisions: received for information (*denotes WHPC differed)</p> <p>23/2250/TRE Grasmere West Hill Road EX11 1UZ Status: Approved T1 Various tree works</p> <p>23/2199/FUL Fir Grove Lower Broad Oak Road EX11 1UF Status: Approved Proposed front north/east elevation single storey extension</p> <p>23/1932/TRE Burwood House 7 Brackendown EX11 1NT Status: Approved T1-T6 Various tree works</p> <p>23/1201/FUL Southernhay Lower Broad Oak Road EX11 1XH Status: Approved Remodel of existing dwelling, including partial demolition. Construction of garage, shed, and widened driveway. All decisions were noted.</p>

23/368	<p>Planning Appeal APP/U1105/W/23/3322776: Land North of Oak Road EX11 1SJ To receive a verbal update and consider arrangements for the Council's response. Cllrs noted the EDDC notification of the Planning Inspector's decision for the appeal to be considered by a Hearing and the timetable to be advised in due course.</p> <p>It was resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submit WHPC's written comments to the Planning Inspectorate by 18th Dec. - To send a WHPC representative to the Hearing (date to be confirmed). <p>Cllrs noted the notification of a new planning application for this site (ref 23/2505/PIP) received on 5th December 2023.</p> <p>It was resolved to hold an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on Tuesday 12th December 2023 to consider 23/2505/PIP and any other planning applications for consideration.</p>
23/369	<p>Planning Matters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neighbourhood Plan: To receive an update on the Council's application for the Designation of a Neighbourhood Area for West Hill. The Chairman reported WHPC's application for a new Neighbourhood Area was approved by EDDC at their cabinet meeting on 29th November. This was the first step in the development of Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for West Hill. The current joint West Hill/Ottery St Mary NP remains in force until the new plan is approved. The Chairman noted that WHPC is not obliged to begin work on the NP immediately and in view of the limited Cllr resources and the progress of the Emerging East Devon Local Plan the Council would consider the timetable next year. 2. To receive an update on Emerging East Devon Local Plan: Strategic Planning Committee meeting 5th December 2023 (if available). Cllr AG gave a short update on the Strategic Planning Committee's vote on the location of a new town for East Devon. Option 1 was preferred. 3. To agree a response to EDDC's Neighbourhood Plan Survey. All East Devon Town/Parish Councils were invited to respond to a Neighbourhood Plan Intentions Survey. Cllrs agreed WHPC's response to the survey based on 23/369 pt 1 above. 4. To note a WHPC statement on East Devon's 5year Housing Supply. Cllrs noted the statement published on WHPC's website. <p>EDDC Cllr JB and three members of the public left the meeting 8.39pm</p>

WHPC Groups + Initiatives

23/370	<p>WHPC Action Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To approve a Half Year Report for publication on the WHPC website. Cllrs resolved to approve and publish the Half Year 2023-24 Report on the WHPC website, subject to amendments regarding Cllr vacancies. b. To consider and approve, if appropriate, Terms of Reference for WHPC working groups. The Chairman set out general guidance for WHPC Working Groups including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working Groups have no decision making powers - Carry out research and make recommendation(s) to Council for consideration. <p>Terms of Reference for the following groups were unanimously approved to effect good governance and support ongoing projects: Finance, HR+Policy, Village Hall Path Project, West Hill Emergency Plan</p> <p>It was agreed to re-consider the Terms of Reference for other working groups in view of the limited resources available due to two Cllr vacancies. Cllrs were keen to implement an</p>
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	<p>achievable action plan. Revised plans, Terms of Reference and resourcing would be considered at a future meeting.</p> <p>c. To consider seeking community feedback on WHPC action plan. It was resolved to issue a Parish Council newsletter in January 2024 with a provisional £500 budget and 27th January publication date.</p>
<p>23/371</p>	<p>Finance Working Group</p> <p>a. To consider an updated draft 2024-25 budget and to provide guidance on the 2024-25 Precept Demand</p> <p>The Chairman set out a timetable for setting the 2024-25 budget and resolving the 2024-25 Precept Demand. The Council must ensure that it has sufficient funding.</p> <p>Cllrs considered a paper and recommendations presented by the Finance WG:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cllrs noted the paper - Cllrs noted revised Forecast Full Year Costs for 2023-24 - Cllrs discussed the draft budget and assumptions. No amendments were identified. - Cllrs considered WHPC reserves and monies available to WHPC and resolved 2024-25 projects would be funded by s106 monies, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies or from WHPC reserves. <p>Cllrs discussed options for the 2024-25 Precept Demand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cllrs noted the Precept had remained unchanged for three years and were keen to maintain the current level of Precept if possible. Cllrs felt householders would welcome an unchanged Precept given the recent high level of inflation. - Cllrs noted the draft 2024-25 budget £57,417 was higher than the current Precept and were satisfied that any expenditure above this could be funded from reserves. - Cllrs noted the high level of reserves and did not wish them to increase significantly. <p>Cllrs thanked the Clerk and Finance Working Group for the clarity of the briefing paper.</p> <p>4 members of the public left the meeting 9.00pm</p> <p>b. To receive a review of WHPC Internal Financial Controls.</p> <p>The Finance Working Group (FWG) presented a review of the WHPC Internal Financial Controls and recommended minor changes. It was resolved to accept the changes and to approve the Review. The FWG propose to carry out a further review before May 2024.</p>
<p>23/372</p>	<p>To receive a verbal update, if available, on the Village Hall Pedestrian Link project. The Chairman reported the Village Hall Trustees were awaiting a response from the Charities Commission regarding the grant of a lease to the Parish Council.</p> <p>4 members of the public left the meeting 9.03pm</p>
<p>23/373</p>	<p>To receive a report on the Sunday 12th November 2023 Remembrance Service and note any recommendations arising.</p> <p>Cllrs considered a paper published for the meeting which review the 2023 Remembrance Event at the War Memorial. Cllrs noted the preparations for the event had worked well and the budget was underspent. Cllrs reviewed several (minor) learning points previously discussed with West Hill RBL.</p> <p>Cllrs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - noted the report. - formally thanked West Hill RBL personnel and Martin Jelf for their assistance. - noted the WHPC Task & Finish Group was now closed.

Other Matters

23/374	<p>Clerks Report: (for information) The Clerk reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a Freedom of Information request was received and processed in November. - Morrison's Manager (South West) had agreed to meet with representatives of the Parish Council in January 2024.
23/375	<p>To review WHPC Action Tracker Cllrs reviewed outstanding actions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - West Hill RBL had agreed to consider plans to commemorate and celebrate D-Day80 - All Cllrs were reminded to complete a training self-assessment.
23/376	<p>To consider a grant application by West Hill Pre-school (Play Kitchen) It was confirmed that the application met the WHPC eligibility criteria however it requested the full purchase costs, £1,200, contrary to WHPC Grant Policy. The Clerk was asked to liaise with the Pre-school and advise that the Council would consider a revised application.</p> <p>A member of the public left the meeting 9.19pm</p>
23/377	<p>To consider resident correspondence (Tar Barrels event, Bendarroch Road Bus Stop)</p> <p>a. A resident contacted the Council to highlight problems experienced on the evening of the Tar Barrels event in Ottery St Mary due to parked cars and the road closure on/near Bendarroch Road/Toadpit Lane. The resident expressed concerns regarding little/no access for Emergency vehicles and also blocked driveways. Cllrs noted that bad weather had forced the closure of some official car parks this year and this may have exacerbated the parking problem in West Hill It was resolved to write to the Tar Barrels organising committee to report the problems experienced in West Hill.</p> <p>b. A resident proposed the re-location or creation of a bus stop on Bendarroch Road near Courtfield Close. Cllrs understood the Bus Service stopped on request. It was unclear if residents would support the proposal. Action: Identify, if possible, the relevant authorities as matter was outside the powers of the Parish Council (Cllrs FP/AG)</p>
23/378	<p>To consider arrangements for Playpark Inspections Cllrs considered their obligations to inspect the Playpark at least weekly and agreed a revised playpark rota: Week 1+5 Cllr AC, Week 2 Cllr TI, Weeks 3+4 Cllr SP. All inspections were to be reported to the Clerk and to identify actions required as appropriate. Action: Clerk to circulate a timetable for playpark inspections. Action: Clerk to circulate an updated Playpark Management Plan for consideration. Action: Clerk to investigate the availability and costs of Playpark Inspection training.</p>
23/379	<p>To note the decision taken at the 2023 Annual Meeting to renew the subscription to Breakthrough Communications. Cllrs confirmed the subscription renewal to Breakthrough Communications.</p>
23/380	<p>To consider what actions to take to replace the Twitter live feed on the WHPC website. Following consultations with Cosmic (web designers) Cllr AC presented several options for the removal of the Twitter feed shown on the home page of the website. Cllrs unanimously voted for option 1 (to widen the existing community/council news sections). It was confirmed the Council's existing support contract would cover the cost of the work.</p>
23/381	<p>To consider arrangements for production of VAS Reports. Cllr AG gave an update on the handover of the production of VAS data reports (currently produced by a former Cllr). He was unable to use the bespoke VAS software (Windows based) without incurring Council expense. Cllr TI volunteered to check if he could produce the reports.</p> <p>Cllrs discussed undertaking a review of WHPC's VAS scheme at a future meeting.</p>
23/382	<p>To consider amendments to the WHPC Risk Register Cllrs considered the WHPC Risk Register and discussed amendments, particularly in relation to inquiry of the Council.</p>

	<p>It was resolved to adopt the amended Risk Register, subject to updating the number of Cllr vacancies. Action: Cllr FP and the HR + Policy WG to revise the format of the Risk Register for consideration at a future meeting.</p>
23/383	<p>To receive a verbal update (if available) on an objection submitted to the External Auditor regarding the 2022-23 Annual Governance and Accounts Return. No communication had been received.,</p>
23/384	<p>Financial matters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To consider and approve, if appropriate, the Schedule of Payments. Cllrs considered the Schedule of Payments and invoices circulated before the meeting. No questions were raised. It was resolved to approve the payments and sign the invoices 2. To consider and approve, if appropriate, any additional payments presented to the meeting. The Clerk presented additional invoices for approval: DALC - Training Course - Cllr F Pullman , £36.00 Voicehost - monthly telephone, £16.80 West Hill Village Hall room hire, £43.50 Pro-Lawn Garden Services , VAS transfers, £96.00 It was resolved to approve the payments and sign the invoices 3. To receive, if available, monthly Bank Reconciliations and finance trackers. The bank reconciliation for October was approved and signed. <p>Cllrs unanimously resolved to continue the meeting beyond 10.00pm if required</p>
23/385	<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> No matters were raised.</p>
23/386	<p>Next meeting: To confirm arrangements for the next WHPC ordinary meeting WEDNESDAY 3rd January 2024 7.30pm at the Village Hall.</p>

Part A closed 10.00pm

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.

23/387	<p>Personnel Matters: National Pay Award Cllrs noted the national pay award for Local Government workers and its impact on the Clerk's salary effective from 1st April 2023. An addendum to the Clerk's contract was signed by the Chairman and Clerk.</p>
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Meeting closed 10.03pm

Signed

Date