

**WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020 AT 1.00pm  
The meeting was held by video conferencing**

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| Present:                                  | Chairman Cllr Alan Cook (ABC), Cllr Amanda Townsend (AT), Cllr Margaret Piper (MP), Cllr Della Cannings (DC), Cllr Alison Carr (AC). |
| Apologies received from:<br>In attendance | Parish Clerk Anne Oliver. No members of the public attended the meeting.   |

| Item (a) | Discussion and decisions (b)   |
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| 20/129   | <p><b>Welcome and Chairman's announcements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The meeting started at 1.00pm. The Chairman welcomed everyone and reminded everyone that the meeting was being recorded.</li> </ul>  |
| 20/130   | <p><b>Apologies.</b> To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence.<br/><b>None</b></p>   |
| 20/131   | <p><b>Public question time (3 minutes)</b><br/>From 1.00pm residents are invited to give their views and question the Open Spaces Committee on issues on this agenda, or raise issues for further consideration at the discretion of the Chairman, before the start of the Open Spaces Committee meeting. Members of the public may not take part in the Committee meeting itself.<br/>This item will include issues submitted by residents unable to attend the meeting.<br/><br/><b>No members of the public attended the meeting.</b></p> |
| 20/132   | <p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>a. Register of Interests: Councillors are reminded of the need to update their register of interests.</p> <p>b. To declare any personal interests in items on the agenda and their nature.<br/>To declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in items on the agenda and their nature (Councillors with DPIs must leave the meeting for the relevant items).<br/><b>None declared</b></p>  |
| 20/133   | <p><b>Confidential/exempt items. In consideration of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960</b> (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.<br/><b>N/A</b></p>   |
| 20/134   | <p><b>Minutes</b></p> <p>1. To approve the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> Aug 2020<br/><b>Noted and approved</b></p>   |
| 20/135   | <p><b>To receive a Clerk's Report on actions and matters arising from the last meeting</b></p> <p>a. Actions from OS Committee 29<sup>th</sup> Sep 2020</p> <p>b. Other matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Rights of Way – Definitive Map Review</li> </ul>   |

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|        | <p>Cllr agreed to begin the next meeting with a presentation from DCC Highways. This will outline the process for a review of the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way in West Hill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sandbags<br/>The Clerk has c150 sandbags available for residents. These are the sandbag casings only and residents will need to fill them with sand. Residents requiring sandbags should contact the Parish Clerk Tel 01404 232 100 or email clerk@westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk.</li> <li>• Date for December meeting (last Tuesday of Dec is 28<sup>th</sup> December)<br/>Cllrs agreed to cancel the OSC meeting scheduled for Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> December. Cllrs will review the need for a December or early January meeting at the next OSC meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> November.<br/>Any urgent matters arising<br/>None</li> </ul> |
| 20/136 | <p><b>Footpaths (Cllr ABC)</b><br/>For information</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Footpath 5: installation of handrail completed</li> <li>Letter issued to landowner regarding Japanese Knotweed</li> <li>Missing Public Footpath sign on Footpath 6 sign reported to DCC.</li> </ol> <p>The West Hill Footpath Warden had previously submitted a report to the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Public Footpath sign on Footpath 6 sign has been replaced</li> <li>• DCC Public Right Of Way team have advised that the Japanese Knotweed on Footpath 6 is not a DCC issue and suggested WHPC referred the matter to the Police Wildlife Liaison Officer.</li> </ul> <p>For decision – n/a</p>  |
| 20/137 | <p><b>Village Lengthsman (Cllr ABC)</b></p> <p>For information</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verge cutting and sign cleaning completed in October.</li> <li>Playpark playboat and path repairs completed in September.</li> </ol> <p>For decision</p> <p><b>To consider</b> a Lengthsman contract for 2021.</p> <p>Cllrs reviewed the work completed by the Lengthsman in 2020 and noted the positive response from residents. The Lengthsman had confirmed that he was willing to continue the contract at the current rates.<br/>Cllr ABC recommended that the existing contract was renewed. Unanimously agreed.</p> <p><b>The Clerk will update</b> the contract and circulate for signatures.</p>   |
| 20/138 | <p><b>Himalayan Balsam Clearance project (Cllr MP)</b></p> <p><b>1. To receive an update.</b></p> <p><b>Cllrs agreed</b> not to seek further grant funding and Himalayan Balsam Clearance will be carried out in 2021.</p>  |
| 20/139 | <p><b>Broadoak Plantation (Cllr AT)</b><br/>For information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised manhole cover reported to Highways (Sep)</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that the raised manhole cover now had green paint marks indicating that one of the authorities were investigating its safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllrs continue to monitor the Glade area and will contact Woodland Trust when further maintenance work is required. (Cllrs ABC/AT)</li> </ul>  |

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|                      | <p>For decision – n/a</p> <p>Cllr ABC reported the extent of Ash Die Back in the woodland had increased significantly. <b>Cllrs agreed</b> to notify The Woodland Trust and to ask for details of their plans/Ash Die Back Strategy. (Cllr ABC)</p> <p>Cllrs also discussed the recent Facebook messages regarding the WHPC notices at the entrances to Broadoak Plantation. The notices had been erected to ask users not to leave litter following the installation of the picnic tables earlier this year. The Council had previously discussed the notices with The Woodland Trust.</p> <p>Residents had queried the “no horses” section of the notice. <b>Cllrs agreed</b> to ask The Woodland Trust to clarify their policy regarding horses accessing the woodland. (Cllr ABC)</p>   |
| <p><b>20/140</b></p> | <p><b>Playpark (Cllr AT)</b><br/>For information</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Idverde Ground Maintenance work ongoing and due to complete in October.</li> <li>b. Councillors continue to monitor the Playpark weekly (for a trial period)</li> <li>c. No anti-social behaviour reported to WHPC in the past month.</li> <li>d. The safety matting repairs/replacement were completed in October.</li> <li>e. Awaiting installation of the new recyclables bin in the playpark.</li> <li>f. EDDC have been commissioned to take over the playpark waste collection service.</li> </ol> <p>For decision</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>To review</b> the latest Government Covid-19 Guidance, if any, and consider a risk assessment to identify any required actions.</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cllrs agreed</b> no amendments were required at this time.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. <b>To consider</b> a Grounds Maintenance Contract for 2021.</li> </ol> <p>Cllr ABC reported the current contract expires on 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2020. Idverde had confirmed that they were happy to renew the current contract subject to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• securing the Ottery St Mary Town Council grounds maintenance contract</li> <li>• a 10% price increase</li> </ul> <p>Cllrs agreed to advertise the contract (Clerk)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. <b>To receive</b> an update on the strategy for the Playpark Equipment.</li> </ol> <p>Cllr AT reported on a meeting with EDDC’s playpark contractor to assess the playpark equipment. The equipment was considered to have approximately 5+yrs use except the Playboat which required additional maintenance. A quote for this work will be supplied.</p> <p>Cllr AT had also received further quotes for the installation of a slide.</p> <p><b>Cllrs agreed</b> to develop a 5yr Playpark Equipment Strategy<br/>Cllrs AT/AC agreed to circulate a draft paper in Jan 2021 proposing a 5year strategy, equipment timescales, maintenance programme, grants available and community consultation.</p> |
| <p><b>20/141</b></p> | <p><b>Highways (Cllr ABC)</b><br/>For information – n/a</p> <p>For decision</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>To receive</b> an update on Village Gateway signs.<br/>The Clerk reported no update had been received.</li> </ol>  |

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| <p>20/142</p> | <p><b>Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS )</b></p> <p>1. <b>To receive</b> an update on the West Hill VAS scheme (Cllr MP)</p> <p>Highways have advised that the VAS unit will be collected before 9<sup>th</sup> November and the correct model will then be delivered to the Council.</p> <p>The post have been installed in four locations. Cllr MP noted that the VAS unit at the junction of Bendarroch Road and West Hill Road may be partly obscured by an overhanging branch.</p> <p><b>It was agreed</b> to write to the householder asking for the overhanging branch to be trimmed back. (Clerk)</p> <p><b>It was agreed</b> that Cllr MP will circulate details of Smart Water identification material and registration costs for approval at the next meeting. Registration of the material would enable recovered stolen goods to be returned to the Council.</p> <p><b>It was agreed</b> to monitor the VAS system for a few months before seeking any other positions. Previously the Council had agreed to a position on West Hill Road near Needlewood Close. This was was put on hold subject to a review of West Hill Road as locations of existing signs may be affected by proposed footpath to the Village Hall.</p> <p>2. <b>To consider</b> a request for a further VAS location on West Hill Road between McColls and the War Memorial (Cllr JB)</p> <p>It was noted that Cllr JB was in discussion with Highways regarding an additional VAS location on West Hill Road.</p> |
| <p>20/143</p> | <p><b>Other Matters</b></p> <p>a. Litter/Dog Waste bins</p> <p>It was noted that waste collections had been missed over recent weeks and on occasion the bins had overflowed.</p> <p>Cllrs expressed their frustration with the ongoing problems.</p> <p><b>It was agreed</b> to monitor the bins for a couple of weeks to establish if the collections were taking place on schedule. (Cllr AC)</p> <p>b. Bus Shelter<br/> c. Air Ambulance Lighting Column<br/> d. Landmark Tree<br/> e. Snow Warden – see next item 20/124</p> <p>For information <b>n/a</b><br/> For Decision <b>n/a</b></p>   |
| <p>20/144</p> | <p><b>Snow Warden</b></p> <p><b>To consider</b> whether any actions are required regarding the village grit bins following the resignation of the unofficial Snow Warden.</p> <p>Cllr ABC suggested that it was impractical to have a gritting machine taking into account the costs and frequent equipment failures. He noted that many Councils do not have a Snow Warden. Cllrs discussed the difficulty in finding a volunteer Snow Warden and finding a suitable site to store salt/grit.</p> <p><b>It was agreed</b> that WHPC would not replace the snow gritter or seek a new Snow Warden.</p> <p>There are 4 grit bins in the village</p>   |

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|        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beech Park nr the Village Hall, Perry's Gardens, Bendarroch Road near the junction with West Hill Road and Higher Broad Oak Road (near West Hill Road)<br/>Cllr ABC had checked the bins and advised they were currently well stocked.</li> </ul> <p>Cllrs discussed whether additional bins were required. Cllr DC advised the village Emergency Plan would consider severe weather events and associated actions.</p> <p><b>Cllrs agreed</b> the Emergency Plan would consider actions required in the event of severe snow.</p> <p><b>Cllrs agreed</b> to contact households neighbouring each bin to seek a volunteer to monitor the bin.</p>   |
| 20/145 | <p><b>Open Spaces : To receive an update.</b></p> <p>No matters to report</p>  |
| 20/146 | <p><b>To consider</b> requirements for the 2021/2 budget and OSC recommendations for WHPC meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> November.</p> <p>Cllrs discussed the budget review and draft budget previously circulated.<br/><b>Cllrs agreed</b> budget recommendations for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Playpark inspections, grounds maintenance, repairs and maintenance</li> <li>Litter/Dog waste collections</li> <li>Village planter</li> <li>Footpaths</li> <li>Lengthsman</li> <li>Air Ambulance landing Site Lighting Column – annual maintenance check</li> </ul> <p>In addition, Cllrs recommended</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a £700 contingency for the OSC 2021-22 budget.</li> <li>Annual picnic bench maintenance (not required in 2021).</li> </ol> |
| 20/147 | <p><b>To consider</b> options for re-wilding verges in West Hill.</p> <p>Cllrs discussed a suggestion to promote wildflower verges in West Hill. They supported the overall aim but had some concerns including the possibility of introducing non-local plants. Cllr MP advised that residents could encourage native species by careful scheduling of verge cutting.</p> <p><b>It was agreed</b> that Cllr DC would circulate a paper for discussion at the next meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that Cllr Jess Bailey intended to consult DCC Highways regarding publicly owned verges.</p>  |
| 20/148 | <p><b>Resident Communication</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower Broadoak Road: a group of residents seeking permission for Wildflower/tree planting.<br/>The Parish Council does not have the power to approve such works. In this instance Cllr ABC reported that the landowner had agreed for planting on the verge.</li> <li>Land nr Higher Metcombe</li> </ol> <p>As agreed at the OSC meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September WHPC had written to the landowner advising this land was designated as a Country Wildlife site in the West Hill and Ottery St Mary Neighbourhood Plan. The Clerk reported that the landowner had contacted the Council and outlined his plans for the site.</p>  |

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|               | <p>Cllr AC reported that the EDDC Tree Officers had checked the site and had not identified any concerns.</p> <p>Cllrs noted the response from the landowner.</p>   |
| <b>20/149</b> | <p><b>Finance and invoice tracker</b><br/>Invoices received</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Garden &amp; Countryside maintenance – 2<sup>nd</sup> cut footpaths £228.00</li> <li>2. PLG Services – verge cutting £540.00</li> <li>3. Idverde – grass cutting (Oct)</li> </ol> <p><i>Additional items previously circulated</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. SJ Surfacing - playpark safety matting repairs £225.00</li> <li>5. PLG Services – sign cleaning £482.40</li> <li>6. West Hill Gardening Club - Village Planters £18.00</li> </ol> <p>All noted and approved<br/>Finance Tracker 2020/2021 (Oct)<br/>Noted and approved</p> |
| <b>20/150</b> | <p><b>Councillors questions, reports and items for future agenda</b><br/>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>No matters arising</p>  |
| <b>20/151</b> | <p><b>Next meeting:</b><br/>To confirm the date of the next meeting which is scheduled for 1.00pm Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020.</p>  |

The meeting closed at 2.43pm

Signed *Anne Oliver* Clerk to West Hill Parish Council  
27<sup>th</sup> October 2020