

WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON 2nd June 2026 at 7.00pm

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

In attendance: Anne Oliver Parish Clerk, DCC/EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey, 5 members of the public

Apologies: Cllr Michael Owen (MO)

Minute reference 26/

138 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 West Hill Summer Fete will take place on Saturday 27th June, 12.00 – 4.00pm on the school field.

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

Cllr Owen sent apologies for his non-attendance. His apologies and reasons for absence were accepted by the Council.

140 To receive a report from the **Ottery Valley Association.**

A representative of the Ottery Valley Association gave a presentation on the actions and findings of a community-led water quality campaign and action group (Otter River Catchment Action (ORCA)). Members test the River Otter at 12 specific locations twice a month to monitor bacteria levels, phosphates, and overall ecosystem health.

The presentation included:

- The current poor state of the River Otter: High levels of phosphates
- Sewage Treatment works: current capacity v demand
- East Devon Water Cycle Study
- Future planned housing.

The Chairman thanked the group for their work and report to the Council.

A member of the public left the meeting.

141 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).

Footpath Warden, Eileen Perkins, raised two issues:

- reported that faults on Footpath 6/7, 1 and 87 previously reported to Devon County Council some time ago had not been actioned.
- The planting scheme for planning application 25/2375/MRES should specify the planting of native trees. Also, the planned pedestrian footpath required proper signage.

Standing Orders were suspended and Item 26/158 brought forward

158 Public Footpath 1 (off Bendarroch Road): To receive a verbal report on erosion of the path and to decide actions.

Footpath Warden, Eileen Perkins, reported that surface water run off had damaged the section of path uphill from the stream. Minor repairs carried out by the Public Right of Way team were insufficient and the gully had worsened over the winter. This had been reported to DCC but a response was overdue.

County Councillor Jess Bailey advised that she would contact to the Public Rights of Way Team to request an update.

Standing Orders were resumed.

142 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 a request for Devon County Council to amend the route for the **bus service 44a** to include West Hill Road. Cllr Bailey asked the Parish Council to consider the proposal at a future meeting.
- A request for residents receiving poor broadband speeds (less than 30Mbps) to contact her.
- Following a public consultation, Devon County Council had abandoned plans to reduce library opening hours and had allocated additional funding.
- Ottery St Mary Town Council will be consulting villages in the Ottery St Mary Parish regarding their interest in new 20mph schemes.

Cllr Bailey invited applications for funding from her Locality Budget.

143 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.
- Cllr BJ declared an interest in planning application 25/1832/FUL 6 Potters Close and would leave the room for that agenda item.

b. Members to decide published personal data following the change to mandatory requirements (Section 65 of the *English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026*)

Councillors were advised that the requirement to publish their address details on their Register of Interests has been removed. However, Cllrs may opt-in if they wish.

Action: Cllrs to advise the Clerk if they wish to publish their address details on their Register of Interests.

It was resolved that WHPC would not publish Cllrs personal address and telephone number details on Parish Council documents unless a Cllr wishes to do so.

Action: Cllrs to advise the Clerk if they wish to publish their address details.

Action: The Clerk to update the Council's website and noticeboards accordingly.

144 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**

145 To receive the **Minutes** of the Parish Council meeting of 5th May 2026 (Minute 26/097-26/137) and to approve the signing of the Minutes by the Chairman as a true record. **The minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 5th May 2026 were agreed to be a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.**

146 To decide a response to **planning applications received:**

Cllr BJ left the room.

- **25/1832/FUL** 6 Potters Close West Hill EX11 1YE
Proposed two storey infill extension between the existing house and the detached garage. Proposed first floor extension above the garage. Single storey extension on the Northwest elevation. Revised window and roof window arrangements to accord with revised internal layout. (revised scheme to planning application ref. 25/0671/FUL)

The meeting noted the amended plans to but considered that their previous comments (object) still applied.

County/District Cllr Jess Bailey left the meeting.

Cllr BJ re-joined the meeting.

- **25/2375/MRES** Land of The North Of Eastfield, West Hill
Reserved matters application for layout, scale, appearance and landscaping for the construction of 23 dwellings with associated infrastructure and drainage and the discharge of conditions 3, 8, 9, 10, 15 and 17 pursuant to outline application 23/0727/MOUT
The meeting raised a number of concerns:
 - South West Water have claimed that there is adequate sewage treatment capacity, however EDDC's Water Cycle Study shows that Fluxton currently is 25% short of the required capacity.
 - The majority of the affordable homes continue to be located in one area contrary to the recommended best practice of pepper-potting them across the development.
 - The majority of the affordable homes are to be located adjacent to existing affordable homes. Councillors considered that this was unacceptable as, potentially, it could be socially divisive.

147 EDDC Planning decisions received for information (*denotes WHPC differed): Both noted.

- a. **26/0537/CPL** 17 High Bank West Hill Devon EX11 1XX Status: Approved
Certificate of lawfulness for proposed demolition of existing conservatory and construction of single storey rear extension
- b. **26/0721/TRE** 10 Warren Park West Hill Devon EX11 1TN Status: Approved
Beech: remove 3 2nd order branches on the south side, approx.. 50-70mm diameter, as indicated on the attached annotated photo
Maple : Remove approx.. 1.5m long stub of broken branch on lower main stem, remove 2nd order branch as indicated on the attached annotated photo, very minor trimming of the very ends of the branches nearest the house, maximum diameter of cuts 5mm (as shown in the annotated photographs)
Birch, fell and replace with a Hawthorn

Working Groups

Finance Working Group

148 Internal Audit Report for 2025-2026:

- a. To receive and consider the findings of the independent review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control.
- b. To authorise that this be submitted to the External Auditor.

The meeting received the Internal Audit Report for 2025-2026 and were satisfied that the Internal Audit had been carried out by an independent, competent Internal Auditor. It was noted:

- The Internal Audit report had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.
- No matters for action were raised by the Internal Auditor.

Cllrs were satisfied that the audit was a thorough review of the Councils controls and procedures.

It was unanimously resolved to:

- accept the Internal Audit Report
- submit the report to the External Auditor and to publish the report on the Council's website.

149 Financial Matters

- a. To consider and approve the bank reconciliation for the year to 31st March 2026.

It was unanimously resolved:

- to approve the bank reconciliation for the year to 31st March 2026.
- The Chairman to sign the reconciliation on behalf of the Council.

- b. To receive and approve a Financial Report, Accounts and Financial Statement for year ending 31st Mar 2026.

The meeting considered End of Year Financial reports prepared by the RFO.

It was unanimously resolved:

- to accept and approve the Financial Report, Accounts and Financial Statement.
- the Chairman to sign the Financial Statement on behalf of the Council.

Action: Clerk to publish the Financial Report and Financial Statement on the Council's website.

- c. To approve and sign WHPC's CIL statement for year ending 31st Mar 2026.

The meeting noted the Parish Council held £ 1,167.38 Community Infrastructure Levy Monies at 31st March 2026.

It was unanimously resolved:

- to accept and approve the CIL statement for year ending 31st Mar 2025.
- the Chairman to sign the Financial Statement on behalf of the Council.

Action: Clerk to publish the CIL Statement on the Council's website

Action: Clerk to submit the Annual CIL statement to EDDC.

- d. To approve the WHPC Financial Reserves Policy and allocation of reserves held at 31st March 2026.

The meeting noted the Council held £97,052.72 Reserves at 31st March 2026.

It was unanimously resolved:

- To re-adopt the WHPC Financial Reserves Policy
- To accept the recommended allocation of reserves

Action: Clerk to publish the Financial Reserves Policy and allocation of reserves on the Council's website

- e. To review and approve amendments (if appropriate) to the Council's bank mandate.

It was unanimously resolved to approve the Council's bank mandate for Unity Trust Bank. Amendments to the bank mandate for Cambridge Building Society Min 26/092 were in progress.

- f. To resolve:

- i. the Council's automated payments (direct debits) and to approve their continued use
- ii. payments by BACs or CHAPs if appropriate
- iii. supplier account details.

It was unanimously resolved to approve items i-iii listed above without amendments.

- g. To review and approve (if appropriate) a schedule of regular payments.

It was unanimously resolved to approve a schedule of regular payments presented to the meeting

- 150** To complete the **Annual Governance Statement 2025-26** of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and to authorise that this be signed on behalf of the Parish Council and submitted to the External Auditor.

Cllrs considered each of the 10 Governance Statements in turn and were satisfied of the proper effectiveness of the internal controls.

It was unanimously resolved:

- to complete the Annual Governance Statement and for the Chairman and Clerk to sign the Statement at the meeting.
- To submit the Statement to the External Auditor and to publish it on the Council's website.

- 151** To receive and consider the **Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025-26** presented by the RFO.

- a. To receive and consider the Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025-26 presented by the RFO.

Councillors considered the Accounting Statement presented by the Clerk. The Chairman reported the Finance Working Group had reviewed the Statement and confirmed its accuracy.

- b. To resolve, if considered appropriate, to approve the Annual Accounting Statements are accurate.

It was unanimously resolved to approve the Accounting Statement as a true record.

- c. To authorise that this be signed on behalf of the Parish Council and submitted to the External Auditor.

It was unanimously resolved to submit the Statement to the External Auditor and to publish it on the Council's website.

- 152** To consider and, if appropriate, to approve supporting documents in respect of the Financial Year 2025-26 and to authorise that these be submitted to the External Auditor as required within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

The Chairman reported the Finance Working Group had reviewed the supporting documents prepared by the RFO.

It was unanimously resolved to approve the supporting documents and to submit them to the External Auditor.

- 153** To approve the **Period for the Exercise of Public Rights** for the financial year 2025-26.

It was unanimously resolved:

- to accept the proposed dates, 4th June to 15th July 2026 for the Period for the Exercise of Public Rights for the financial year 2025-26.
- Inspection of the Accounts would be by appointment only. If a request to inspect the accounts is received the Clerk is to book a room for the inspection, as the Council does not have a public office.

Action: Clerk to publish the Notices and guidelines to be posted on the Council's website and noticeboard as required.

154 Playpark Working Group:

- a. To receive a proposed WHPC Playpark Strategy and Management Plan 2026-2031 (if available) and to decide actions.

Councillors considered a paper circulated prior to the meeting. Cllrs AC and BJ presented their proposals to the meeting, including:

- Playpark objectives
- Playpark management plan
- Audit of current playpark provision and recommendation.

Following discussion on the current playpark provision Councillors concluded that the under 5's were underserved and some of the equipment for 2-12's, whilst in good condition, should be replaced in due course.

Decisions made:

- The current regime of inspections was considered to be satisfactory and cost effective.
- The current schedule of maintenance and ad-hoc repairs was considered to be satisfactory and cost effective.
- The current waste collection service was considered to be satisfactory and cost effective.
- **Vision:** To provide a playpark that provides a friendly setting, is disability accepting, and useable from the age of 2 up to and including 12 years of age.
- **Strategy:** Through community consultation, including with children, we will introduce equipment for the under 5's age group and improve provision for the 5-12 years age group, subject to the financial constraints of the Parish Council whilst meeting the objectives set out in this document.

Next steps, the Playpark WG were asked to undertake a period of consultation within the Parish. Using this feedback the group to develop a long-term improvement plan to be considered by the Council. The Chairman noted that, to be eligible for the use of s106 monies allocated to West Hill, a thorough public consultation and report would be required.

- b. To review and decide a Risk Assessment for the playpark: **The meeting approved the Risk Assessment presented by the Clerk.**

155 Road Safety Working Groups: To receive an update and decide actions as appropriate: **This item was deferred to a future meeting when Cllr MO would be present**

156 Christmas 2026 Working Groups: To receive a progress report and to decide actions as appropriate.

Cllr BJ gave an update on meetings with various village groups, organisations and residents. The meetings were very positive and attendees were keen to organise an event to bring the community together. Ideas suggested included a Switch-On event (with music, food, drinks) at the village hall followed by a lantern parade to the RBL clubhouse. Cllr BJ confirmed the event will take place on Saturday 5th December 4.00-6.00pm.

2 members of the public left the meeting.8.40pm

Other Matters

157 IT Policy & Health & Safety Policy: Members to make annual declarations. **All Cllrs present completed their declarations.**

158 Public Footpath 1 (off Bendarroch Road): To receive a verbal report on erosion of the path and to decide actions. **This item was taken earlier on the agenda following Item 26/141.**

159 West Hill Summer fete:

- a. To receive an update on Parish Council involvement at the West Hill Summer Fete and to decide actions/costs as considered appropriate.

Cllrs discussed arrangements for the event and no further actions/costs were decided.

- b. To review and decide a Risk Assessment for the Council's Crazy Golf Event.

The meeting approved the Risk Assessment presented by the Clerk.

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

Deferred to next meeting.

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

a. Royal British Legion West Hill centenary 1927-2027

It was decided to use the Council's logo for the design of the Council's tile to be included on the village standard.

b. Devon County Parish Paths Partnership (P3): Update noted.

c. West Hill Footpath 6 (Bendarroch Road): Councillors noted that the footpath warden had advised that the gate could be opened despite appearing to be locked.

d. Devon Communities Together: Digital Inclusion: Cllr FP to attend the event.

e. Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner: Survey on Police Force mergers in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Noted. Cllrs to submit their personal response if they so wish.

The Clerk reported two additional items:

f. Proposed change to West Hill Bus Route 44a: Cllrs noted the concerns raised but noted that Devon County Council were the decision makers. Cllrs agreed to consider the matter at a future meeting.

g. Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests received: Cllr FP stated that the requests would be processed according to legislation and WHPC policies.

2 members of the public left the meeting.

162 To receive the **monthly crime statistics** for West Hill (for information). Noted

163 To consider Council training requirements and to decide actions and costs. The meeting approved training for Cllrs FP and AC and approved a budget up to £100.00.

164 Clerk Matters:

a. To receive a report from the Parish Clerk and to agree actions as appropriate

The Clerk's report included:

- Village Hall Room hire rates will increase in September.
- The speed sign on West Hill Road has been repaired and is now operational.

Action: The Clerk to write to Ottery St Mary Town Council to begin the asset transfer.

b. To note decisions made under delegated powers (if applicable): n/a

c. Urgent matters (if applicable). n/a

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

In addition to items considered earlier on the agenda. The meeting agreed a further action:

Action: The Clerk to arrange for the collection of a West Hill Emergency Box

166 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 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 payments presented to the meeting:

- West Hill Village Hall Room Hire (May-26), £25.50

c. To receive, if available, monthly Bank Reconciliations and finance trackers. **Deferred to the next meeting.**

167 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.

Cllr AC gave a report on the Ottery Health Forum meeting held in May. A carer's event will take place between 11.00am - 1.00pm on Saturday 13th June at The Station, Mill Street, Ottery St Mary.

168 Next meeting: To confirm arrangements for the upcoming WHPC meeting on **Tuesday 7th July 2026** 7.00pm at the Village Hall

All members of the public left the meeting.

Part A ended 21.19pm

Meeting ended 21.19pm

Signed

Date

Signed: *Anne Oliver*, Clerk to the Council, 5th June 2026