WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON 3rd November 2026 at 7.00pm

Present: Chairman Cllr Francis Pullman (FP), Cllr Ann Cooper (AC), Cllr Michael Owen (MO), Cllr Fiona Peters (FJP) (Co-opted at the meeting Min 26/272)
In attendance: Anne Oliver Parish Clerk, DCC/EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey (from 7.40pm), 3 members of the public
Apologies: Cllr Ben Jewell (BJ)

Minute reference 26/

270 **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:

- A reminder of the Remembrance Events in West Hill:
  - Sunday 8th November 10.15am at War Memorial. 10.45am at St Michael's Church.
  - Sunday 8th November: road closure (West Hill Road) in the vicinity of the War Memorial 9.30am – 11.00am
  - Wednesday 11th November Armistice Day 10.45am at the War Memorial.
- a reminder of the Tar Barrels event on 5th November. West Hill Road to Ottery St Mary will be closed at the village gateway as in previous years. The Chairman had met with the organisers to confirm arrangements for West Hill including No Parking signs/ cones to maintain a clearway and emergency route.
- acknowledgement of the recent Government announcement on Local Government Reform for Devon. The Government has withdrawn the decision on the creation of Unitary Councils and will re-visit the proposals previously submitted.

271 **Apologies**. To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence, if considered appropriate.
Cllr Jewell sent his apologies and reasons for non-attendance which were accepted by the meeting.

272 To receive an update on **Councillor vacancies** and to consider applications for co-option, if available.

a. The Clerk reported on the recent vacancy arising from the resignation of a Councillor. East Devon District Council had confirmed that vacancy could be filled by co-option as the period for the receipt of a request, requiring an election to fill the vacancy, has now expired

b. The meeting considered an application to fill one of the three vacant Councillor positions.

By a show of hands, it was unanimously **resolved to** co-opt Fiona Peters (FJP) as a member of the Parish Council. Cllr FJP made/signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and signed a Consent to Electronic Service of Summons.

It was resolved to:
a. add Cllr FJP to the Council's banking mandate.
b. to order a name badge, approved costs up to £20.00+vat.
c. make arrangements for training available via DALC, approved cost £60 +vat.

The Chairman thanked Fiona for joining the Council.

273 **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).

Eileen Perkins, West Hill Footpath Warden reported:

- Three people had come forward to volunteer as Footpath Wardens (2) and Tree Warden (1) in response to the recent WHPC newsletter article.
- Devon County Council had confirmed that the stile on Footpath 6 would be repaired/replaced.

The Chairman read out a letter submitted by Catriona Murray regarding the current Valued Views survey.

Action: The Chairman to write to Catriona Murray in response to her letter.

274 **District and County Councillors' reports:** To receive reports for information (items raised for decision will appear on the agenda for the next meeting).

This item was taken later on the agenda, following item 26/282, when the Ward Member joined the meeting at 7.40pm.

County/District Councillor Jess Bailey reported:

- She had contacted DCC Highways to report a safety defect on West Hill Road near the village gateway.
- DCC public Rights of Way team had confirmed that the broken stile on Footpath 6 has been assigned to a contractor for repair/replacement.
- Devon County Council was preparing to submit an outline planning application to relocate Tipton St John Primary School.
- Her concerns regarding the proposed plan to remove 19 supervisor roles at Devon Libraries.

Cllr FP asked for contact details as he wished to write to Devon County Council to express concerns on behalf of the Parish Council.

275 **Declarations of Interest**: 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, FJP and MO each declared no interests related to agenda items.

276 **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

277 To receive the **Minutes** of the Parish Council meeting held on 6th October 2026 (Minute 26/243-26/269) and to approve the signing of the Minutes by the Chairman as a true record.

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

- **26/2068/FUL** Banjul Toadpit Lane West Hill Ottery St Mary EX11 1LQ
  Partial retrospective application to increase existing driveway entrance from x 2 pillars to 4 pillars with new electric swing opening driveway gates (that open inwards to property), along with matching pedestrian gate and new fences, namely 1 x Timber and 1 x Composite (matching all gates).
  The meeting did not object to the height of the gates but objected to the wooden screen/fencing which was considered to be out of character with the areas. The meeting asked for the screen/fencing be replaced by hedging as required by the Neighbourhood Plan policy NP26.

- **26/2118/VAR** Land South Of Lily Cottage Exeter Road Whimple
  Variation of Condition 19 (surface water drainage scheme during operation) of planning permission 21/1688/MFUL (Roadside Service Area (RSA), including a Petrol Filling Station (PFS) comprising a forecourt sales building, canopy, separate HGV and car fuel pumps and underground storage tanks, together with a Class E/Sui Generis drive-thru restaurant, associated car, coach

and HGV parking, landscaping and off-site highway works on the B3174) to amend the timing for the submission and approval of the permanent surface water drainage scheme from prior to commencement of development to prior to the installation of the permanent drainage infrastructure.
No comments as Councillors considered the application to be a technical matter.

To confirm consultee response submitted under Delegated Powers: All noted

- **26/1677/DOC** Land North Of Eastfield West Hill (no WHPC comment)
- **26/0337/DOC** Land South Of Windmill Lane West Hill (no WHPC comment)
- **26/1995/V106** Land West OF Hayes End West Hill EX11 1GG (no WHPC comment)

279 Planning decisions received for information (*denotes WHPC differed): All noted.

- **26/1759/FUL** Kings Gatchell Higher Metcombe EX11 1SL: Approved
- **26/1708/FUL** Southlea Lower Broad Oak Road EX11 1XH: Approved
- **26/1664/TRE** 21 Beech Park West Hill EX11 1UJ: Approved
- **26/1633/TRE** Lowena Lowena Lane West Hill EX11 1JU Approved
- **26/1527/TRE** 8 Heather Grange West Hill EX11 1XZ Approved
- **26/1413/FUL** 5 Pinefields Close West Hill EX11 1XL Approved
- **26/0706/S106A** Land South Of Windmill Lane West Hill Decided
- **26/0337/DOC** Land South Of Windmill Lane West Hill - Condition 11 (drainage) Discharged

Working Groups

280 Finance Working Group:

a. To receive a Financial Report for 1st Half 2026-2027 and to decide actions.
The meeting considered a financial report for April-September 2026 circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman gave a brief summary and invited comments. No concerns or questions were raised. The meeting noted that the end of year operational expenditure was forecast to be marginally below Precept. Also, as planned, during 2026, the Council had used Earmarked Reserves to fund Neighbourhood Plan projects.

The meeting accepted the report and resolved to publish the report on the Council's website.

Action: The Clerk to publish the financial report for April-September 2026 on the Council's website.

b. To consider a draft budget for 2027-28 and to decide actions/amendments.

The meeting considered a paper circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman explained that each line of the current budget had been reviewed together with an assessment of forecast reserves available at 31st March 2027. It was assumed all projects would be funded from reserves. The provisional budget total for 2027-28 operational costs showed a 9% increase on the 2025-26 budget, however the working group were working to reduce this.
Councillors were invited to comment on the 1st draft budget for 2027-28 and key underlying assumptions. No questions or concerns were raised.

Action: The Finance Working Group to present a 2nd draft budget for considerations at the next scheduled Council meeting.

281 Neighbourhood Plan Working group: To receive:

a. a verbal update on Valued Views and Local Green Spaces consultation.
b. a verbal report on initial meeting with Landowner's Agent for the Morrison's site.

Standing Orders were suspended

Margaret Hall, Chairman of the working group, was invited to give an update. Her comments included:

- The Valued Views and Local Green Spaces consultation was now open and would close on 13th November. The group had cast their net wide and the sites listed on the survey may be reduced during the evaluation process. She encouraged the community to complete the surveys as their comments would inform the evaluation.
- The Neighbourhood Plan process requires the working group to consult with Landowners. The group had written to the owners of the Morrisons site and their agent had agreed to an online meeting with members of the working group. The meeting took place on 21st October 2026 and was attended by East Devon District Council's Neighbourhood Plan Officer as an impartial observer. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the agent of progress on the new Neighbourhood Plan and for the Landowner/Agent to provide their perspective. For transparency, the agenda and minutes of meetings with Landowners or their agents will be published on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Parish Council's website.

Standing Orders were resumed.

282 **Emergency Plan Working Group:** To receive an update and to seek approval to purchase branded hi-viz vests and ID card holders/lanyards for the Emergency Response Volunteers.

The meeting supported the proposal to purchase equipment to be used by the Emergency Response Volunteers (20). The Clerk proposed the purchase of additional lanyards to be used by Councillors/Clerk. The meeting supported this.

It was resolved to approve a budget of £220.00+vat or the purchase of bespoke branded 20 hi-viz jackets and 30 lanyards.

Action: Cllr FP to submit a grant application to the Devon Resilience Forum for a contribution toward the purchase of equipment for the Emergency Response volunteers.

7.40pm Ward member JB joined the meeting

283 **Other Working Groups:** To receive reports (actions/costs arising to be agreed at a future meeting).

Cllr AC gave an update on responses to the Playpark consultation which closes on 6th November 2026. Members of the Parish Council were scheduled to meet with the Primary School School Council to seek their response to the consultation.

7.53pm Two members of the public left the meeting.

Other Matters

284 To review **WHPC's Organisation Structure**: Council working groups and their membership.

It was agreed to maintain the current working groups and membership subject to the amendments listed below.

It was resolved:

- Cllr FJP to join the HR & Policies Working Group and Christmas Event Task+Finish Group.
- To close the Trees Working Group.

285 **West Hill Remembrance Service 2026:** To receive a verbal update on arrangements for the road closure on Sunday 8th November.
Cllr FP confirmed DCC Highways had approved the road closure; households in the vicinity had been informed; the briefing for road marshalls would take place at 9.00am on Sunday.

286 To receive a report on arrangements for the **Christmas 2026 event** and to decide actions/costs as considered appropriate.

The meeting considered a paper circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr FP gave an overview of the community event and arrangements for:

- 'Illuminations and Celebrations' – a community event at the Village Hall car park on Saturday 5th December 2026 5.00-6.00pm. The event to include a Christmas lights switch-on event, musical entertainment, refreshments, lantern making, Santa's grotto. It was proposed to provide a small gift for children.
- a lantern procession to the RBL clubhouse
- refreshments and music at the RBL Clubhouse.

The Chairman thanked the RBL club for their support.

The meeting noted that this was the first such event for West Hill and encouraged residents to attend.

It was resolved:

a. To host a Christmas Illuminations and Celebrations event at the Village Hall car park on Saturday 5th December 2026 5.00-6.00pm. Followed by a lantern procession to the RBL clubhouse for refreshments.
b. This would be a free un-ticketed event.
c. The Parish Council would take responsibility for the event at the Village Hall and for the Lantern Processions. The RBL Club would be responsible for the event at their clubhouse.
d. To approve a risk assessment for the installation of a Christmas Tree at the Village Hall car park.
e. To approve a risk assessment for the Illuminations and Celebrations event including lantern procession.
f. To approve the application for a temporary road closure: School Lane Saturday 5th December 5.40pm to 6.30pm.
g. To approve a budget up to £800.00 including £235.00 to comply with requirements for the road closure.

Cllr FP noted that the organising group were working to keep costs lower than approved and a significant proportion of the costs would relate to items that the Council will re-use at future events.

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

a. An invitation to bid for Strategic CIL funding (East Devon District Council)
b. A request for Town/Parish Councils to publicise the severe drought across Devon and to encourage the public to use water wisely (East Devon District Council).

Both noted. No actions arising.

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

289 **Clerk Matters**:

a. To receive a report from the Parish Clerk and to agree actions/costs as appropriate, including:

The Clerk's report included:

- DCC Highways have begun a programme of re-painting line markings across West Hill. The work is expected to be completed by the end of November (subject to weather conditions).
- Three new Village Hall Trustees have been appointed. Also, the Trustees intend to appoint a Village Hall manager.
- The 2027 WHPC meeting dates will be submitted to the Village Hall bookings manager.
- Cllrs FP and AC will attend the next WHPC Drop-In Session on Tuesday 17th November 10.00-12.00hrs.

Action: The Clerk was asked to confirm room availability for the 2027 Parish Meeting, provisional date Tuesday 13th April.

b. To note decisions made under delegated powers (if applicable) N/A
c. Urgent matters (if applicable). N/A

290 WHPC Action Tracker: To receive updates on actions and matters arising from the last meeting and to agree actions/costs as considered appropriate.
The meeting considered the action tracker: Items were covered earlier on the agenda.

291 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 prior to the meeting. No questions were raised.

b. To consider and approve, if appropriate, any additional payments presented to the meeting.
It was resolved to approve two additional payments presented to the meeting: -

Pro-Lawn Garden Services - VAS Transfers	£102.00
West Hill Village Hall - Room Hire (Oct)	£27.00

c. To receive, if available, monthly Bank Reconciliations and finance trackers.
The Bank reconciliation (Sep), Monthly payment card reconciliation and Finance Trackers were noted. No issues were raised

8.40pm Ward Member JB left the meeting

292 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.

293 Next meeting: To confirm arrangements for the upcoming WHPC meeting on **Tuesday 1st December 2026** 7.00pm at the Village Hall

Part A ended 8.44pm
Meeting ended 8.44pm

Signed …… Date …… ……

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

DRAFT