

WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON 7th April 2026 AT 7.00pm

Present: Chairman Cllr Francis Pullman (FP), Cllr Michael Owen (MO), Cllr ShirleyMay Saunders (SMS)

In attendance: Anne Oliver Parish Clerk, 4 members of the public

Apologies: Cllr Ann Cooper (AC), Cllr Ben Jewell (BJ),

Minute reference 26/

072 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 casual vacancy had arisen following the resignation of Trevor Ingram. The notice of vacancy was publicised on 1st April 2026.
- Due to the possibilities of national fuel shortages, the Emergency Plan Working Group will look into ways to help the community and present these ideas to the Council at a future meeting as appropriate.

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman thanked Trevor Ingram for his support for the Council.

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

Cllr Cooper and Cllr Jewell sent their apologies for their non-attendance. Their apologies and reasons for absence were accepted by the Council.

074 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)

- A member of the public expressed his dissatisfaction with DCC Highways' response (no action) to his concerns about pedestrian safety on the western section of West Hill Road. Councillors acknowledged the frustration, having previously received similar replies from DCC Highways when other issues had been reported. The Council had established a Road Safety working group to consider possible actions.
- A member of the public asked the Council to consider East Devon District Council's response to a report of overflowing waste bins and dog waste. The Chairman acknowledged the problem and signposted an article in the next Council newsletter.

Action: The Chairman agreed to respond to the query.

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

DCC/EDDC Cllr Jess Bailey sent her apologies and submitted a written report which included updates on matters raised at the previous meeting:

- **Request for bus stop on West Hill Road:** DCC advised that the current timetable does not allow sufficient time to enable the longer route through West Hill to be operated without costing an additional vehicle. Options to integrate the longer route into the service will be explored at the next service review. Cllr Bailey asked for more details of the review process.

- **Poor broadband in areas of West Hill:** DCC Corporate and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee had recently received a report, (Community Voucher Scheme Opportunity) on the re-launched national scheme.

Action: The Council asked Cllr Bailey to arrange a meeting with DCC for further information.

- **Library Opening Hours:** A special DCC scrutiny meeting will be taking place to consider the findings of the recent public consultation.

076 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, MO, SMS each declared no interests.**

077 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**

078 To receive the **Minutes** of the Parish Council meeting of 3rd February 2026 (Minute 26/025 -26/051) and to approve the signing of the Minutes by the Chairman as a true record. **Deferred to the next meeting as only two of the three members present had attended the meeting.**

079 To decide a response to **planning applications received:** **None received**

To note consultee comments made under delegated powers: **All noted**

- **26/0393/TRE** The Vicarage Bendarroch Road West Hill EX11 1UW (SUPPORT)
O3 Oak - removal of dead wood. G26 : Beech - removal as risk limbs will fall onto the highway. Beech badly bark stripped
- **26/0452/TRE** Wrenswood Lower Broad Oak Road West Hill EX11 1UF (NOT SUPPORT)
T1, Beech : reduce height by 2.5m, Maximum Diameter of Cuts (MDC) 50mm; reduce crown spread of western stem where overhanging garden to 2m off base of hedge, MDC 50mm; remove one or two extended lower branches back to source on eastern stem, reduce remaining canopy on eastern aspect back to 2m from base of hedge, MDC 50mm T2, Beech : reduce height by approximately 1.5m to match finished height of T1.

080 EDDC Planning decisions received for information (*denotes WHPC differed): **All noted**

- 26/0109/FUL** 8 Moorlands West Hill Devon EX11 1UL Status: Approved
Proposed roof mounted PV solar panel array and replacement of flat roof with pitched roof over existing garage and annex
- 25/2209/FUL** Land Adjoining White Farm Lane West Hill Ottery St Mary Status: Refused
Construction of 1no. dwelling
- 25/2205/TRE** 2 Heather Grange West Hill Devon EX11 1XZ Status: Approved
T1, Magnolia : crown lift to 2.2m above ground level. T2, Birch : remove south western stem leaning over neighbours' property.
- 26/0171/FUL** Pinehayes Lower Broad Oak Road West Hill EX11 1XH Status: Approved
Extensions and alterations including first-floor extension, construction of dormers, demolition of existing conservatory and replacement single storey side extension, Changes to external materials.
- 25/1651/FUL** Samguri Bendarroch Road West Hill Devon EX11 1TS Status: Approved
Proposed single storey extension on the South West Elevation.

081 To decide a response to **planning appeals:**

- Appeal Ref 6006098 Land Adjoining White Farm Lane: Construction of 1no. dwelling (planning application 25/2209/FUL)

- b. Appeal Ref 6005405 Land At Higher Metcombe Higher Mecombe EX11 1SL: Proposed erection of 3no detached dwellings, stable block and paddock with associated hard and soft landscaping/access (planning application 24/1761/MFUL)

The meeting noted the submission of both appeals. It was decided that the Councils previously consulted comments still applied and no further comments would be added.

Working Groups

082 Emergency Plan:

- a. To approve a Community Emergency Plan for West Hill

The draft Community Emergency Plan had previously been reviewed by the Parish Council and Devon Communities Together. The Chairman invited comments on the latest draft Community Emergency Plan (previously circulated). No matters were raised.

It was resolved to adopt the Community Emergency Plan for West Hill and to publish a redacted version on the Council's website.

The Council's Emergency Plan working group and volunteers would test the plan and regularly review and develop the plan.

- b. To resolve to accept a Devon Community Resilience Forum grant agreement (£660.63) for the purchase of handheld radios to support the West Hill Emergency Plan.

The meeting noted a decision to accept a grant award of £660.63 from Devon Community Resilience Forum for the purchase of two-way radios. The decision was approved and the grant agreement signed by Councillors under Delegated Powers due to DCRF deadlines. The radios would enable communication between the West Hill Emergency responders/Community Hub in the event of loss of power or loss of mobile phone signals. The radios would be held centrally.

It was resolved to purchase two-way radios for use by the West Hill Emergency responders.

083 Village Hall Path: To receive a report on the completion of the s278 agreement for works on West Hill Road and the transfer of assets to Devon County Council.

Following their final inspection on 9th March 2026, DCC Highways confirmed that works on West Hill Road were satisfactory and could be adopted by Devon County Council. The DCC Legal team had been instructed to issue the final s278 certificate and return the remaining deposit to the Parish Council.

084 Playpark: To receive a report on WHPC's annual playpark inspection and to agree actions/costs as appropriate.

The meeting considered a report, circulated prior to the meeting, which presented the findings of the inspection of the playpark carried out by the Playpark working group on 5th March 2026. No concerns were raised and all of the equipment was considered to be in good condition. It was noted that the Council's weekly inspections were thorough and any issues reported were promptly dealt with.

It was resolved to commission the Council's Lengthsman to trim overhanging branches and to approve costs up to £150.00.

Other Matters

085 To consider a request for a grant award for funding towards the cost of the Summer Fayre (West Hill PTFA request, £475.00)

It was confirmed that the application complied with the Council's grant policy. Councillors were keen to support the community event.

Cllr SMS proposed the grant should be awarded, seconded by Cllr MO.

It was resolved to award the grant in full, £475.00. The grant award pro-forma was signed by Cllrs MO and SMS.

A member of the public joined the meeting.

086 To decide arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting 14th April 2026 and to agree actions/costs.
The meeting noted the poor response to the Council's invitation for local groups and organisation to showcase their activities at the Parish Meeting.

087 To approve a **WHPC newsletter** for publication (if appropriate) and to decide a date for publication.
The meeting considered a draft newsletter circulated prior to the meeting.
It was resolved to approve the Parish Council newsletter publication during April 2026.

088 To consider an invitation to join the **EDDC East Devon Community Safety Group**.
It was noted that East Devon District Council planned to re-introduce the East Devon Community Safety Group to enable local District/town/parish councils, local organisations and police to work together with a focus on reducing anti-social behaviour. Councillors considered the Terms of Reference for the group (circulated prior to the meeting). Cllr SMS queried whether the Parish Council should attend as anti-social behaviour was of greater concern for other areas.

Action: Cllr FP to represent the Parish Council on the East Devon Community Safety Group.

089 To consider Parish Council involvement at the West Hill Summer Fete and to decide actions/costs as considered appropriate.
It was resolved that the Parish Council would attend the 2026 Summer Fete on Saturday 27th June 2026. Councillors planned to run a crazy golf event and to use the materials purchased for the event in 2025. Members discussed possible measures to raise the profile of the Council at the event.

Action: The Clerk was asked to investigate WHPC branded materials and costs for consideration at a future meeting.

090 To consider **correspondence** received (if any):

a. Road Safety - junction of West Hill Road/Lower Broad Oak Road

The meeting considered correspondence which raised concerns about the safety of the junction due to poor visibility/parked cars.

The meeting noted:

- that WHPC had previously raised these concerns with DCC Highways. DCC Highways considered that vehicle speeds were reduced due to cars parked near the junction and did not propose any actions. They did not approve the use of mirrors placed on the roadside.
- Cars parked dangerously should be reported to the relevant authority, the Police.

Action: The Clerk was asked to arrange a meeting with DCC Highways to discuss safety at the junction.

b. DCC Highways response to a resident - road safety concerns (West Hill Road) (see Min 26/074)

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

092 Clerk Matters:

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

The Clerk's report included:

- VAT re-claim received £2,842.65
- WHPC had received the 1st half 2026-27 Precept, £28,437.50.
- DCC Highways signposted other town/parish councils for advice on self-funded traffic schemes.
- The Council's website has been updated to enable enhanced security monitoring

- Bank charges for the Council's Unity Trust accounts have increased by £1.00 to £7.00 monthly.
- g. To note decisions made under delegated powers (if applicable)
 - mobile phone contract for the Parish Council/Clerk's phone was renewed on a 2year contract for a reduce fee, £9.60 monthly.
- h. Urgent matters (if applicable).

It was resolved to renew membership of DALC and NALC and to approve payment of the 2026-2027 affiliation fees and service charge, £749.67 in total incl VAT.

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

Updates included:

- All Councillors attended training sessions on playpark inspections led by Cllr AC.
- Following the Council meeting on 3rd March 2026 Cllr FP submitted a response to the consultation on Local Government Reform in Devon.
- Cllrs FP/AC attended the opening of the new School Library

Three members of the public left the meeting, 8.23pm.

094 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.

It was resolved to transfer £20,000.00 to the Council's deposit account.

- b. To consider and approve, if appropriate, any additional payments presented to the meeting.

It was resolved to approve additional payments presented to the meeting:

a	Inv2491 West Hill Village Hall - Room Hire	£25.50
b	Inv7593 DALC - DALC/NALC Affiliation Fees	£749.67
c	Inv 3750 Pro-Lawn Garden Services Playpark	£120.00
d	Inv 3749 Pro-Lawn Garden Services VAS Transfers	£102.00

- c. To receive, if available, monthly Bank Reconciliations and finance trackers.

No issues or questions were raised regarding the papers circulated prior to the meeting.

095 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.

096 Next meeting: To confirm arrangements for the upcoming WHPC meeting on **Tuesday 5th May 2026** 7.00pm at the Village Hall

All members of the public left the meeting.

Part A ended 8.35pm

Meeting ended 8.35pm

Signed

Date

Signed: *Anne Oliver*, Clerk to the Council, 10th April 2026