

**WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON 20<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2018 AT 7.30 P.M.  
AT WEST HILL VILLAGE HALL**

Present:	Cllr Margaret Hall (MH), Chairman Cllr Jo Talbot (JT), Vice Chairman Cllr Jill Ingle (JI) Cllr Alan Cook (AC) Cllr Christopher Hall (CH) Cllr Jessica Bailey (JB)
In attendance:	Alison Carr, Parish Clerk

Item (a)	Discussion and decisions (b)	Action (c)
18/062	<p><b>Welcome and Chairman's announcements</b> The Chairman welcomed Parish Councillors and members of the public, reminded everyone that the meeting was being recorded and started the meeting at 7.30pm</p>	
18/063	<p><b>Public question time (3 minutes)</b> For the benefit of members of the public, MH introduced each Councillor and the Clerk. MH explained the background of the Parish Council's involvement with the McColls site. There had long been speculation in West Hill about the owner's plans for the site's future. Residents were concerned because the shop, post office and car park are important amenities. This became pressing in the autumn of 2017 when surveyors were observed at the site. So the Parish Council made enquiries to find out who the owner of the site was but could only trace it to a company registered in Guernsey. In October 2017, a letter was sent via McColls Estates Manager, who agreed to pass it on to the owner's agent for forwarding to the site's owner. The letter contained an introduction to the Parish Council and an offer to work with the owner to seek a mutually beneficial solution for the site's development. Since then, there had been no contact from the owner or their representatives until 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018, when the Parish Council was informed about the plans and public consultation at the same time as residents were. The owner has expressed a desire for the site to flourish. The proposed development includes adding a third storey plus a pitched roof, to accommodate 8 flats, a refurbished shop, a new café and retaining the estate agent's office.</p> <p>Resident Mat Helm spoke about his concerns about road safety. He walks his children to school and has observed a road safety issue on West Hill Road where the pavement narrows and ends just past Ashley Brake. He described seeing many near misses between vehicles and children at that point. The problem arises from vehicles mounting the speed bump to the far left, bringing them close to the pavement at its narrowest part. Also, children walking on the road in the gap between the two sections of pavement – the visibility is very poor, especially walking back up the hill when pedestrians have to step into the road without being able to see oncoming vehicles and drivers unable to see pedestrians until they actually step into the road. He commented that a chicane would have been a better way to make vehicles slow down. If that would not be possible, he asked whether the Parish Council could create an entrance from West Hill Road into the village hall grounds. This would divert school pedestrians away from the dangerous footpath section. He felt there would be support from other residents for this solution.</p> <p>Chairman MH thanked Mr Helm for reporting this problem and explained the history of the speed bumps and that residents originally requested a chicane but the only option offered by the County Council was the speed bumps. MH said that the Parish Council had commissioned a public realm study and that one of the things examined in the study was the</p>	

	<p>feasibility of opening an entrance off West Hill Road into the village hall grounds. The Parish Council would be keen to pursue this as well. She encouraged Mr Helm to attend the presentation of the public realm study results at the village hall on 27<sup>th</sup> February at 8pm.</p> <p>Resident Roy Stuart spoke about the decision by the Planning Inspector to allow the appeal and grant planning permission for the construction of up to two dwellings with associated access at The Gap, Lower Broad Oak Road. He said the Parish Council was out of touch with planning policy and planning law, citing as evidence the fact that the Inspector quickly overruled the objections. He said the Parish Council did not support the first application which included some affordable housing, which he said was needed in the village. He said the Parish Council should support a balanced community as the village needs young people and he did not understand why his first application was not supported.</p> <p>Some comments were made about the proposed McColls redevelopment. Ian Heard the Chairman of the village hall trustees, pointed out that more restrictions on parking will create problems for parents and school children. He said the Parish Council and Village Hall trustees should work together. MH said there was no indication yet as to future plans for the car park. There was a comment about what happened to the “walking school bus” where children walked to school in a group. MH said everyone should try to encourage more walking to school.</p>	
<b>18/064</b>	<p><b>Apologies</b> Apologies were received from Cllr Kilian Hall</p>	
<b>18/065</b>	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Register of Interests: Councillors are reminded of the need to update their register of interests.</li> <li>To declare any personal interests in items on the agenda and their nature.</li> <li>To declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in items on the agenda and their nature (Councillors with DPIs must leave the room for the relevant items).</li> </ol> <p>AC declared a personal interest in item 18/070 Land at Birchleigh, but the item is for information only and no decision is required. MH declared a personal interest in the McColls redevelopment as she lives opposite, so she said she would not take part in the discussion but would remain in the Chair.</p>	
<b>18/066</b>	<p><b>Planning applications received</b> (previously notified to Councillors)</p> <p><b>18/0279/FUL</b> 4 Eastfield Proposal: Construction of single storey front extension and two storey rear extension <b>It was resolved</b> to support the application.</p> <p><b>18/0318/FUL</b> Lowena, Lowena Lane Proposal: Single storey side extension and two storey front extension.</p> <p>It was reported that a resident commented on the encroachment to the hedge and trees. This was refuted by AC who had visited the site. <b>It was resolved</b> by a majority vote to support the application.</p> <p><b>17/2952/TRE</b> Babbling Brook This item was on the agenda for the 6/2/18 meeting. Councillors were unable to consider it as they did not know what was discussed between the applicant and the Tree Officer. In light of the Tree Officer’s response, Councillors reconsidered the application. <b>It was resolved</b> to not support the application for two reasons. Firstly because Councillors felt there was insufficient justification made in the application for the works. And secondly because the application to undertake the tree work was connected to a separate planning application 18/0015/PDQ prior approval for proposed change of use of agricultural building to form a dwelling and granny annexe. PDQB prior approval was refused, so Councillors concluded that there is now no necessity to undertake works to the trees.</p>	

18/067	<p><b>5-day notices received</b> for information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Notification of Tree works considered an exception to TPO 18/0013 Birchleigh, Elsdon Lane. Proposal: fell silver birch due to decay and leaning over house (expired)</li> <li>b. Notification of Tree works considered an exception to TPO 18/0001 Needles, Hawkins Lane. Proposal: works to remove a broken branch from a Pine overhanging power lines.</li> </ul> <p><b>Both noted.</b></p>	
18/068	<p><b>Planning decisions received</b> for information (*denotes WHPC differed) 17/2670/TRE 16 Warren Park – split decision*</p> <p><b>Noted.</b></p>	
18/069	<p><b>McColls refurbishment proposal</b> To consider the Parish Council's stance on the proposed improvement works at McColls. Developer will hold a public consultation on 26th Feb 4-7pm in the village hall. Formal planning application will be put forward in due course.</p> <p><b>The Chairman moved this item up the agenda and it was discussed after item 18/065</b></p> <p><b>Declarations of Interest.</b> Some Councillors were concerned that the consultation will not present detailed information such as plans for the car park. It was suggested that it would be helpful to meet the site owner so that the Parish Council can have an open and meaningful discussion. Councillors hoped that the village could work together as a community and present a united front. The developer has put forward a partial approach, focussing on the building. A whole site solution needs to be considered including the impact on the car park. There is potential for the community to benefit greatly, especially from a good shop. Councillors welcomed the fact that the site will be improved. Last year's residents' consultation showed support for the site to be tidied up and that the McColls building is seen as the village centre. The redeveloped site should not detract from the benefit to the community. Councillors were unconvinced for the need for flats and did not know who was the target market. The primary school is oversubscribed and young families would want outside space. The absence of a lift could be off-putting to older buyers. There was concern about the additional height of the building from the third storey plus the pitched roof. Councillors agreed that more detail was required as to the developer's intentions for the whole site, not just the building. It was hoped that the consultation would be a genuine exercise in listening to residents and that the developer would be open-minded about adapting the proposals if necessary to reflect the outcome of the consultation.</p> <p><b>It was resolved</b> that the Clerk would write to the developer summarising the Parish Council's discussions and requesting that more detailed information be made available at the public consultation event.</p> <p><b>The meeting was suspended at 7.50pm for additional input from the public.</b></p> <p>Residents wondered whether having 8 flats would mean 16 parking spaces removed from public use. They echoed earlier comments from Councillors about the target market for the flats as the school is oversubscribed. Another resident questioned whether the first floor could be used for something other than flats – other amenities for the village, like a hairdresser.</p> <p>It was agreed that there should be a coordinated approach, with the Parish Council leading the initiative, representing key interests in the village and all residents.</p> <p>Residents also said that it would be better to negotiate with the owner in person.</p>	

	<p>Another concern was whether the right of way will be preserved across the car park. It has been used for a long time.</p> <p>The Chairman encouraged residents to go to the public consultation on 26<sup>th</sup> February to put forward their comments.</p> <p><b>The Chairman resumed the meeting at 8.03pm</b></p>	
18/070	<p><b>TPO received</b> for information  <b>18/0013/TPO</b> Land at Birchleigh, Elsdon Lane          AC was unable to comment as he declared a personal interest. No other comments were made.</p>	
18/071	<p><b>Planning appeal decision received</b> for information          Construction of up to 2 dwellings on land at The Gap, Lower Broad Oak Road – appeal allowed (WHPC resolved to not support)</p> <p>Councillors noted their disappointment with the Inspector’s decision. See also comments made in item 18/063 Public Question Time.</p>	
18/072	<p><b>Councillors questions, reports and items for future agenda</b>          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>MH updated Councillors on the Clerk’s pension. The Parish Council is registered as an employer now with the Local Government Pension Scheme administered by Peninsula. The Clerk has opted out. The Clerk has completed the statutory declaration to the Pensions Regulator on behalf of the Parish Council. No further action is required for the time being.</p> <p>MH said that the Clerk is due to have an appraisal. MH suggested that the Parish Council could set up a Personnel Committee or a Working Group to deal with personnel matters. This will be put on the agenda for Councillors to discuss at the next meeting.</p> <p>MH informed Councillors that the new website is up and running – <a href="http://www.westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk">www.westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk</a> – and asked everyone to look at it. She will put on the agenda for the next meeting to establish a website Working Group to look after it.</p> <p>The internal auditor recommended producing two documents – a Review of Internal Financial Controls and a Risk Assessment for the Parish Council. These have been drafted by the Clerk and will be on the agenda for the next meeting.  <b>ACTION:</b> All Councillors to look through both documents and come prepared to discuss them at the next meeting.</p> <p>Wicksteeds have finished installing the new equipment in the playpark and the site is very muddy. The Clerk tried to contact Craig Williams about laying bark chippings but so far has had no reply.          JB had a query about the basket swing as she thought it seemed much smaller than Wicksteeds implied it would be.  <b>ACTION:</b> JB will email Lynne Egginton at Wicksteeds about the size of the basket swing</p> <p>JB also said the Council will need the guarantees/warranties for every item of equipment</p> <p>There was a query about insurance cover for personal injury at the playpark and MH said the insurers were told about the playpark.  <b>ACTION:</b> MH and the Clerk to look at signage to replace the old one</p> <p>JB suggested doing a press release when the playpark is all finished and looking nice.</p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><b>JB</b></p> <p><b>MH/CLERK</b></p>

	<p>CH received a reply from PCC Alison Hernandez to his enquiry about crime statistics for the parish, and this will be on the agenda for the next meeting.</p> <p>JT informed Councillors that the Neighbourhood Plan inspector submitted another NP4 question and the working group has submitted a reply in the form of a more detailed map.</p> <p>JB updated Councillors about the idea of obtaining the land where the planter is for putting up a community notice board. She talked to DCC Cllr Claire Wright about it but it is part of the adopted highway so DCC will not transfer it. However they will look favourably on the idea of putting up a notice board. A standalone notice board would be good as community groups around the village need somewhere to post information.  <b>ACTION:</b> JB will talk to Sidmouth Council about where they got their notice boards.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> JB also agreed to write a short piece for The Messenger about the Parish Council's ideas to tidy up the Woodland Trust land.</p> <p>CH is still trying to find a tree person to consult about the preparation of a clearing. AC said he could suggest some names.</p> <p>The new notice boards are still at the Clerk's house – CH will collect them for installation.</p> <p>AC asked if Sophie Thompson from LDA Design has been given the information about the development of McColls in case it has implications for the public realm study. The Clerk confirmed that she had told her.        The Clerk confirmed that she had asked Sophie for her presentation in advance of next week's presentation to allow Councillors to read it in preparation.</p>	<p><b>JB</b></p> <p><b>JB</b></p> <p><b>CH/AC</b></p> <p><b>CH</b></p>
<p><b>18/073</b></p>	<p><b>Next meeting</b>  <b>It was resolved that</b> the Parish Council will meet on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March.        There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone and closed the meeting at 8.27pm</p>	

**MINUTES SIGNED BY:**

**DATE:**

**Signed & dated:**

 @WestHillPC