

**WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON 7<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2018 AT 7.30PM  
AT WEST HILL VILLAGE HALL**

Present:	Chairman Cllr Margaret Hall (MH) Cllr Jo Talbot (JT) Cllr Jill Ingle (JI) Cllr Alan Cook (AC) Cllr Christopher Hall (CH) Cllr Jessica Bailey (JB)
In attendance:	Alison Carr, Parish Clerk; applicant for co-opted Councillor vacancy, 3 members of the public
Absent:	District Cllr Paul Carter, County Cllr Claire Wright

Item (a)	Discussion and decisions (b)	Action (c)
18/257	<b>Welcome and Chairman's announcements</b> MH welcomed everyone, reminded everyone that the meeting was being recorded and started the meeting at 7.30pm.	
18/258	<b>Apologies</b> Apologies were received from District Cllr Paul Carter due to holidays.	
18/259	<b>Public question time (3 minutes)</b> A member of the public expressed their concern about the large number of trees being felled throughout West Hill. Developers often remove trees on a site before submitting a planning application. The character of West Hill as a woodland village will be lost. Councillors agreed that the current systems are inadequate. EDDC does not have enough Tree Officers. Although the parish council contacts them if they hear of trees being felled, lack of resources often means the Tree Officers are unable to issue TPOs quickly enough to prevent felling in some cases. MH explained that the parish council would have liked to obtain a blanket TPO covering the whole village but EDDC would not permit that, due to insufficient staff to "police" it. She said that the parish council was in a constant battle with developers to prevent trees being felled and urged residents to contact the parish council or Tree Officers if they are concerned about unauthorised or large-scale tree felling.  Another concern was that West Hill was experiencing a high volume of new properties being built and that some of them did not fit in with the woodland village theme. MH said that the parish council tries to apply design principles when commenting on planning applications but that planners do not always listen. The village has an eclectic mix of property styles. Now that the Villages Plan has been adopted, the built-up area boundary is tighter and the new Neighbourhood Plan for Ottery St Mary and West Hill provides more guidelines on design styles.  The final comment was about the wide bank at the top of West Hill Road which it was suggested could be used for a pavement. MH said that Councillors are looking at road safety throughout the village and will be commissioning a study by a traffic consultant to identify priority projects.	

	Next, Quentin Tailford spoke briefly about his application for the councillor vacancy. He has prior experience as a town councillor and Mayor in Fairford, Gloucestershire and is keen to become involved in West Hill life.	
18/260	<b>Co-opting Councillor vacancy – to consider the application received and vote on the co-option</b> One application for the vacancy had been received from West Hill resident Quentin Tailford and circulated to councillors in advance of the meeting. A paper ballot was conducted by the Clerk, who counted the votes. The result was unanimous, and Quentin Tailford was duly elected by co-option as Councillor to West Hill Parish Council. He signed an Acceptance of Office form, witnessed by the Clerk and joined the meeting.	
18/261	<b>To receive the monthly crime stats</b> for information Noted.	
18/262	<b>District and County Councillors' reports</b> for information (items raised for decision will appear on the agenda for the next meeting). There were no reports from District or County Councillors.	
18/263	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> MH declared a DPI for the 18/1064/FUL Potters Country Market planning application and said she would leave the room for that discussion. JB declared personal interests in planning applications 18/1481/FUL Parsonage House and 18/1713/FUL Oak Lodge and said she would not participate in those discussions. There were no other declarations of interest.	
18/264	<b>Minutes</b> a. The minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2018 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record b. The minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2018 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record	
18/265	<b>Updates on actions and matters arising from the last meeting</b> (action tracker)  The snow warden has declined his honorarium and requested that it be put to a good cause. After a short discussion, it was agreed that the money would be put into the general grants fund.  Play park press photos - a new date has been set for a press photo call with the Ottery Herald, councillors from EDDC and West Hill and hopefully some children using the new equipment on 28 <sup>th</sup> August at 10.30am. Councillors queried which developers were being invited but MH said she would have to find out from EDDC as they would be sending the invitations, not WHPC.  CH said he had received some positive feedback from the Woodland Trust about the woodland but the details still need to be worked out. It was not clear whether the Trust would take on some or any of the work through their own contractors. Discussions are ongoing.  The Playpark signs have been updated to reflect the change of responsibility from Ottery Town Council to West Hill Parish Council, and to acknowledge the financial contribution from EDDC via the S106 grant for the new equipment.  The Clerk has purchased an official stamp for endorsing documents for residents.  The primary school playing field is being registered as an Asset of Community Value. JB has completed the form. Clerk will circulate to councillors before sending to EDDC.	<b>Clerk</b>   <b>MH</b>   <b>CH</b>      <b>JB Clerk</b>

<b>18/266</b>	<p><b>Planning applications received</b>  <b>18/1606/FUL</b> 4 Courtfield Close          Proposal: Construction of hip-to-gable extension and rear dormer window</p> <p>Councillors were concerned that the proposed dormer is too big and would detract from the aesthetic appearance of the property. Councillors voted to support the application but requested that the dormer should be reduced in size.</p> <p><b>18/1600/RES</b> Land at The Gap          Proposal: Construction of 1 no single storey dwelling (application for reserved matters seeking approval of layout, scale, appearance and landscape pursuant to application 17/0523/OUT).</p> <p>Councillors thought that the size of the proposed bungalow was quite modest and were concerned that there might be a future application to increase its size based on permitted development. They also commented that a large section of mature hedgerow would be removed to facilitate the access.          Councillors voted to support the application with two conditions – permitted development rights should be removed; and the hedge should be replanted with indigenous species.</p> <p><b>18/1481/FUL</b> Parsonage House, Bendarroch Road          Proposal: Retention of glazed balustrade to first floor</p> <p>Councillors commented that the first-floor balustrade has already been built, so this should be a retrospective application. They were aware of objections from neighbours that it overlooks their property. Councillors objected to the application on the grounds that it overlooks the next-door neighbours' property and affects their amenity.</p> <p><b>18/1064/FUL</b> Potters Country Market – amended plans</p> <p>MH left the room and JT took the Chair.          Councillors commented that the proposed amendments are very minor and do not substantially alter the overall development. However, they welcomed the addition of the ramp on the access path and agreed that it was an improvement over the previous design, which had steps, as it would facilitate use by parents with pushchairs.          Councillors voted to not support the application in its present form and referred back to their comments on the original plans. They welcome the addition of the ramp but have nothing to add to their previous comments.</p> <p>MH returned and took the Chair.</p> <p><b>18/1713/FUL</b> Oak Lodge, Higher Broad Oak Road          Proposal: Construction of single storey front extension and wall to create courtyard</p> <p>Councillors did not think there were any particular issues as no trees are affected and the development is shielded behind a hedge. Councillors voted to support the application and requested a condition that the front boundary hedge is retained.</p>	
<b>18/267</b>	<p><b>Planning decisions received</b> for information (*denotes WHPC differed)</p> <p><b>18/1048/OUT</b> The Reddings, Higher Broad Oak Road – withdrawn  <b>18/1387/FUL</b> 2A Hillside, Bendarroch Road – approved*          Both noted.</p>	

18/268	<b>TPO notifications</b> for information None	
18/269	<p><b>To consider correspondence from a resident concerning imposition of TPOs</b> (correspondence circulated)</p> <p>Councillors discussed correspondence received from a resident concerning the felling of a fine mature chestnut tree that had not been included by the Tree Officer in a TPO covering other trees in the same group. The resident felt that it should have been included due to its maturity and amenity value. This is the subject of an ongoing dispute between the resident and EDDC, so it would not be appropriate for the parish council to comment further. However, it illustrates the potential fate of trees in the village that are not covered by Tree Preservation Orders. The trees in question had been logged in the Special Trees of West Hill study as being important, but this does not offer any legal protection to trees identified in the study. EDDC had previously dismissed a request to issue a blanket TPO for the whole village, due to a lack of manpower.</p> <p>Councillors agreed that they would look into what action could be taken to protect trees in the village not covered by TPOs as the character of the woodland village is in danger of being eroded. This might include the creation of a bylaw requiring work on any trees to be notified to the parish council well in advance to allow someone to identify whether a TPO needs to be issued, or looking into the protection of trees afforded by existing conservation area legislation.</p>	<b>All</b>
18/270	<p><b>Notification of application for certificate of lawfulness</b> <b>18/1536/CPE</b> Merrybrook, Toadpit Lane</p> <p>Proposal: Certificate of lawfulness to establish a material start has commenced on application 18/0603/VAR for the construction of dwelling house within the time limit specified in Condition 1 of that permission.</p> <p>NOTED with no further comment.</p>	
18/271	<p><b>To consider responding to Consultation on EDDC Statement of Community Involvement (paper circulated)</b></p> <p>There was a discussion about EDDC's consultation on the Statement of Community Involvement. Generally, councillors wished to encourage planners to consult more people, rather than fewer, for example when consulting on planning applications they should broaden the consultation to include neighbours outside the usual immediate location.</p> <p>They also thought that planners should try to display planning notices in places where people will be more likely to see them especially near the application site. Where planners currently encourage presubmission consultation for major applications, councillors thought that they should, at their discretion, encourage presubmission consultation for smaller applications that, although small in scale, could have a big impact on the community. The redevelopment of the Potters shop building was cited as an example of one such scheme, and councillors welcomed the fact that planners had encouraged the developers to conduct a presubmission consultation with the community.</p> <p>It was agreed that MH will draft comments on behalf of the parish council for submission to EDDC.</p>	<b>MH</b>
18/272	<p><b>P3 – to discuss projects for the grant as identified by Eileen Perkins</b></p> <p>A small grant of £350 has been received from DCC Parish Paths Partnership (P3). Most of this will be spent on tasks already identified by tree warden Eileen Perkins. Councillors noted that a hedge bounding the public footpath behind the Westhayes development requires cutting back. Eileen recommended reducing the height to allow more light on the path.</p> <p>ACTION: Clerk to write to Strongvox to ask them to cut the hedge.</p>	<b>Clerk</b>

	<p>Also, can the Clerk ask Eileen to discuss with Richard Spurway how to deal with developers with hedges lining one of the village's few paths.</p> <p><b>Related to this: to discuss action on verges and hedges identified as problematic by survey done by Councillors Ingle and Talbot</b></p> <p>Cllrs JI and JT conducted a visual survey of hedges and banks around the village. Home owners are responsible for cutting back hedges that encroach on the public highway or footpaths. Councillors discussed ways to remind residents of their responsibilities.</p> <p>It was agreed that the first task would be to write and respectfully remind owners to cut hedges and identify and remove Himalayan Balsam.</p> <p>ACTION: JI to draft a diplomatic letter for the Clerk to send to householders</p> <p>Regarding verges, councillors discussed whether the parish council should commission someone to cut back overgrown verges. Householders should trim their own verges, but if there is a visibility issue affecting safety, particularly at junctions, the parish council will ask DCC Highways to cut them and request that they be part of the County Council's annual programme moving forward.</p> <p>ACTION: MH and the Clerk to make a list of problem verges to send to DCC</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p> <p><b>JI</b></p> <p><b>Clerk, MH</b></p>
<p><b>18/273</b></p>	<p><b>To consider and approve the quotation from the traffic consultant</b></p> <p>The traffic consultant, Jonathan Tricker at Phil Jones Associates, produced a 3-page fee proposal for transport and highways advice, which councillors discussed. Councillors agreed that the consultant's experience working with DCC Highways and other councils throughout the UK would help the parish council to make progress on road safety projects which will require considerable support from Highways and key stakeholders.</p> <p>Regarding the parish council's financial regulations, it was thought that in accordance with financial regulation 11.1, the usual requirement to seek quotations from 3 different companies did not apply due to the specialist nature of the services provided making it difficult to find 3 comparable companies. PJA was also highly recommended to the parish council by the company that produced the public realm study.</p> <p><b>It was resolved</b> to approve the quotation from PJA, subject to confirmation from the Clerk that the parish council has adhered to its obligations under its financial regulations. <b>Proposed by: MH    Seconded by: CH    6 in favour, 1 abstained</b></p> <p>ACTION: Clerk to confirm acceptance of the quotation with PJA</p> <p>Councillors asked the Clerk to ensure the final report, when complete, can be provided by PJA as a hard copy, one for each councillor.</p> <p>The Clerk asked councillors to clarify from which part of the budget the expenditure would be met. <b>It was agreed</b> that the expenditure for PJA's services would be met from the budget category "Projects Identified in the Strategic Plan"</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p> <p><b>Clerk</b></p> <p><b>Clerk</b></p> <p><b>Clerk</b></p>
<p><b>18/274</b></p>	<p><b>To receive an update on the proposed footpath from Blue Cedar land to the school/village hall</b></p>	

	<p>MH and the Clerk inspected the land between the Blue Cedar development and the school/village hall where the proposed footpath would go. It was apparent that there is a substantial Devon bank containing mature trees, the topography of the land was also unsuitable, and there was very limited useful space on the school land. These factors combined make it a much more complicated project than was first envisaged.</p> <p>It was decided to put this project on hold until it can be established whether a path can be created from Eastfield through to Bendarroch Road, which might be a more useful endeavour.</p>	
18/275	<p><b>Play park - to consider urgent play park maintenance and quotes for</b></p> <p>a. Groundworks £1220 Councillors asked the Clerk to obtain a more detailed breakdown of this proposal to show labour and materials and circulate to councillors. However, given the amount of work involved in replacing the wooden edging, weeding the path and laying bark chippings, it was thought a not unreasonable cost. <b>It was resolved</b> to approve the work, subject to a satisfactory breakdown of labour and materials.</p> <p>b. Application of wood preserver to the “tree house” structure <b>It was resolved</b> to approve the quote, subject to a cap of 24 man-hours to complete the task.</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p> <p><b>Clerk</b></p> <p><b>Clerk</b></p>
18/276	<p><b>Play park - to discuss replacement of the wooden ramp (now removed) on the “tree house”</b></p> <p>The Clerk explained that parents had requested a slide be installed to replace the wooden ramp that was removed. For safety and insurance purposes, it needs to be purchased from and installed by a playground equipment company, rather than a domestic garden toy. Some companies the Clerk approached for a quote were not interested as they had not supplied the original piece of equipment. Wicksteed, who supplied the new equipment recently, said they might be able to offer a solution but because of holidays, the Clerk had not yet pursued this. MH suggested speaking to Alastair Guy who built the tree house originally. The Clerk will continue her investigations.</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p>
18/277	<p><b>To discuss the requirement for a handyman to carry out odd jobs</b></p> <p>Councillors agreed that there was an increasing number of small-scale jobs where it would be useful to be able to call on the services of a handyman with a wide range of skills.</p> <p>It was agreed that councillors should draw up a list of tasks, which would inform a potential job description.</p> <p>JT said that Ottery had recently appointed a handyman and suggested that the Clerk should speak to the Ottery Clerk about what they did.</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p>
18/278	<p><b>To discuss a proposal for a community landing site for the Devon Air Ambulance</b></p> <p>MH reported that she proposed to the School governors that the field behind the school might be suitable as a landing site for the air ambulance. The governors were to discuss it at their meeting in July but had not reported back to the parish council. A landing site has recently been created in Ottery, so the Clerk was requested to ask the Clerk in Ottery how they did this and who paid for the floodlights.</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p>
18/279	<p><b>To discuss action regarding the WHPC lease for the play park</b></p> <p>MH said that Land Registry documents currently still show the play park as being owned by Ottery St Mary Town Council. This record needs to be updated.</p>	

	It was agreed that Cllr JB should look into how to this – what form needs to be sent to Land Registry and how much it will cost to effect the transfer.	<b>JB</b>
<b>18/280</b>	<p><b>To consider a proposal from Ottery Health &amp; Care Forum to support work to establish a Health &amp; Wellbeing Hub at Ottery St Mary Community Hospital and to support retention of the hospital premises (paper circulated)</b></p> <p>MH had attended a meeting of Ottery Health &amp; Care Forum. The Forum is looking at establishing a health and wellbeing hub at Ottery Community Hospital in an effort to make sure the hospital building is retained in the community and not sold off. There is an established model for a health and wellbeing hub at Budleigh Salterton Hospital (The Hub). There are 2 caveats – it needs to be commercially viable, and an experienced organisation would be needed to run it.</p> <p>It was agreed to respond to Ottery Health &amp; Care Forum that West Hill Parish Council was generally supportive of the concept.</p>	<b>MH</b>
<b>18/281</b>	<p><b>To approve excluding the general public for discussion of confidential and commercially sensitive items</b></p> <p><b>It was resolved</b> that item 18/282 was not confidential and could be discussed in public.</p> <p><b>It was resolved</b> that item 18/283 was confidential and therefore the public would be excluded from this item.</p>	
<b>18/282</b>	<p><b>To receive an update on the meeting with primary school Governors about the school playing field and identify actions to move forward</b></p> <p>The meeting between the parish council and school governors was quite positive and there was a sense that there was goodwill and determination from both the school and parish council to find a solution to the issue of public access to the school field outside school hours. The gates were installed as a result of recommendations following a safeguarding inspection, although this relates to the school's responsibilities during school hours. There had been an informal agreement since 1988 between the school and village hall whereby the school had access to village hall land for use of a playground and in return, the public had access to the school playing field. The school has concerns about its public liability and more specific concerns about the security of the school buildings bordering the field. However, the large gates are not really a deterrent, since the field can be accessed at various other points around the perimeter. Other schools have fields which are accessed by the public, so the governors said they would look into how this is dealt with. They also agreed to discuss use of the field at their July governors' meeting and report back to the parish council, but nothing had been heard.</p> <p>Councillors felt that another meeting was needed involving councillors, school governors, the head teacher, and Ian Heard from the village hall committee, to share all the information and try to come up with a solution for the community.</p> <p>It was agreed that MH would write to the Chair of Governors asking for feedback from their July meeting and indicating that another meeting would be set up for September.</p>	<b>MH</b>
<b>18/283</b>	<p><b>Confidential item – to receive an update on possible playing field land</b></p> <p>The response from a land owner about a possible plot suitable for a playing field was investigated and it was discovered that the land was subject to a number of restrictive covenants. For this reason, that plot has been ruled out.</p> <p>It was agreed that MH would write to the owner to inform them that the parish council will be unable to proceed further with their land.</p>	<b>MH</b>

	<p>It was further agreed that MH would write to Doug Ferguson, Manager of West Hill Wasps Junior FC, updating him on the land search.</p> <p>There are no further suitable plots within the parish at the moment.</p> <p>It was agreed that councillors would widen the search area and look at land outside the parish boundary and consult EDDC about help to identify suitable land.</p>	<p><b>MH</b></p>   <p><b>All</b></p>
<b>18/284</b>	<p><b>Finance and invoice tracker</b></p> <p>Invoices received – for approval:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clerk’s claim for reimbursed expenses during June – <b>Noted and approved</b></li> </ol> <p>Paid invoices – for information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. West Hill Village Hall – grass cutting at play park JUNE</li> <li>b. West Hill Village Hall – room hire JUNE</li> <li>c. Stamps Direct Ltd – self-inking WHPC stamp</li> </ol> <p><b>All noted</b></p> <p>To receive the bank reconciliation for July – for information - <b>Noted and signed</b></p>	
<b>18/285</b>	<p><b>Councillors questions, reports and items for future agenda</b></p> <p>There was a brief discussion about street lighting, and why West Hill had not been upgraded to LED street lights which would reduce light pollution. This will be raised with County Cllr Claire Wright.</p> <p>JT mentioned the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, which councillors had agreed should have 2 representatives each from West Hill and Ottery St Mary as there will need to be updates and discussions as to the progress of projects. Ottery Town Council had resolved that their representatives would be Cllr Glyn Dobson and Cllr Elli Pang. They will be joined by Cllr Margaret Hall and Cllr Jo Talbot representing West Hill Parish Council. The Working Group will meet biannually or annually as needed to keep the Neighbourhood Plan under review.</p> <p>AC informed councillors that Himalayan Balsam has become a big problem in the village. Householders need reminding that they have responsibility to remove it from their gardens and he also said it would be good if volunteers could go around removing it from public verges.</p>	
<b>18/286</b>	<p><b>Next meeting</b></p> <p>Due to several councillors and the Clerk being on holiday, it was agreed that there would not be a meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> August and the next meeting would be on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> September. The Clerk will request extensions on consultee comments for the most urgent planning applications.</p> <p>There being no further business, MH thanked everyone and closed the meeting at 10pm</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p>

Signed:

Date:

Signed:

Date: