

WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2017  
AT 19:30 AT WEST HILL VILLAGE HALL

Present:

Chairman Cllr Margaret Hall,  
Vice Chairman Cllr Jo Talbot,

Parish Councillor Alan Cook  
Parish Councillor Jill Ingle  
Parish Councillor Christopher Hall  
Parish Councillor Jessica Bailey

Locum Clerk Carmel Wilkinson  
Permanent Clerk Alison Carr

Apologies:

District Councillor Paul Carter  
Councillor Kilian Hall

1. WELCOME AND CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed councillors and public, and opening the meeting at 7.30 p.m.

2. PUBLIC QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR REPRESENTATIONS

No members of the public present

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from EDDC Councillor Paul Carter and Councillor Kilian Hall.

4. TO CONSIDER ADOPTION OF REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT

JB presented her revisions to the Code of Conduct for the parish council to consider. This included provisions to restrict councillors' entitlement to participate in a vote. JB clarified the meaning of 'disadvantage a person' in this context, and explained that to disadvantage a person is as great a wrong as to treat a person more favourably.

JT proposed that WHPC accept the revisions to the Code of Conduct, CH seconded the motion which was agreed unanimously.

Proposed	Seconded	Passed
JT	CH	Unanimous

5. TO IDENTIFY MATTERS OF URGENCY

None identified

6. TO RECEIVE DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS FROM  
COUNCILLORS ON MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE MEETING.

MH declared an interest in item 10 – Straitgate Farm 17/1842/CM.

MH has previously commented on this application on behalf of the CPRE and WH Residents' Association. MH announced that she would leave the room before this item was discussed, and the Vice Chairman, JT, would chair the meeting in her absence.

## 7. TO CONSIDER CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Deferred to the end of the meeting

## 8. TO AGREE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Item 8 to be amended to reflect that JB had declared a pecuniary interest as well as a personal and prejudicial interest.

ACTION: Minutes to be amended by clerk and signed at 5<sup>th</sup> Sept meeting.

## 9. MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING:

i) To agree publicity regarding householder's responsibilities for hedges fronting the highway, and letter to be sent to householders.

Councillors discussed the most appropriate support to offer West Hill residents in managing local hedges and verges. Councillors felt that the County Council's warning letter was too formal, and to single out some residents for criticism is not the way they wanted to go because it would be counter-productive. The parish council aims to inform and support, and to help those prepared to look after their verges.

It was resolved to put an article in the Messenger.

Management of invasive Himalayan Balsam was also discussed.

ii) Update on McColl's situation

There was a general discussion about the value to the community of McColl's, which is the hub of the village and an important asset to the community of West Hill. The parish council is concerned about possible development proposals.

iii) To consider transferring funds into new bank account

Discussion was deferred to the confidential part of the meeting

## 10. PLANNING

Planning decisions received were noted.

Planning applications to be considered, see responses below.

Ref	Applicant	Address	Details of application	West Hill Parish Council response to consultation	Reasons
17/1822/ FUL	Mr Paul Cole	Stones House Lower Broad Oak Road West Hill Ottery St Mary EX11 1XH	Extension and alterations.	No objection	N/A
17/1842/ FUL	Aggregate Industries UK Ltd	Exeter Road Ottery St Mary EX11 1LG	Extraction of up to 1.5 million tonnes of as raised sand and gravel, restoration to agricultural land together with temporary change of use of a residential dwelling to a quarry office/welfare facility (submission of further environmental information)	West Hill Parish Council believes this application should be refused	See below

There was a discussion about both positive and negative aspect of quarrying, and it was proposed that AC would write a strongly worded letter of objection to the Straitgate Farm application.

Proposed	Seconded	Passed
JT	JB	Passed with one abstention

West Hill's response to 17/1842/FUL Aggregate Industries UK Ltd at Straitgate Farm is as follows:

Previous consultations were with OSMTC but since April 2017 West Hill has been a separate Parish Council. This application is on the boundary of the two parishes and vehicles serving this proposal would have to travel along a road partially in West Hill.

The council has

- grave concerns about the loss of amenity due to the removal of trees and hedgerows, these are very old with a diverse range of species, although remedial planting would ultimately repair the damage this would take tens of years
- grave concerns about the visual impact upon a rural and beautiful part of our village especially as it will be very visible from the A30 and Barrack Road. It would seriously affect the first impressions of visitors and potential residents
- grave concerns over safety of 44 tonne lorries in Birdcage Lane and turning into Barrack Road, the latter has fast moving traffic and we feel that there would be real danger of accidents. A quiet rural part of our village will be industrialised. Massive lorries will damage the lane, hedges and verges will be destroyed, people and wildlife will be under threat from the constant flow of heavy vehicles. The topography of Barrack Road means that cars and bicycles may be invisible to turning lorries. These will be slow moving in an area where there is no speed limit.
- concerns about the sustainability of taking the minerals 23 miles to be processed and that vehicles might use minor roads which would cause considerable nuisance and road safety issues.

We assume that the Environment Assessment will attempt to mitigate the wildlife issues but feel that the impact upon the diverse wildlife will be catastrophic.

This council considers that the proposal should be refused for the reasons stated above.

Tree Preservation Order 17/0111/TPO PROPOSAL: Land at Watersmeet was noted.

**ACTION: CW to forward responses to planning at EDDC**

## 11. TO CONSIDER ADOPTION OF GRANTS POLICY APPENDIX 1 & 2 Grants Policy & Grant Application Form

Councillors discussed the relative merits of having one or more opportunities annually to accept applications for grant funding, or whether it would be better to accept applications throughout the year. It was decided that a single window would be more manageable but there should be some flexibility, particularly in the first year.

WHPC will be proactive in providing grants to support local good causes, clubs and groups.

The budget for the next financial year (2018/19) is set at the beginning of October (2017); the precept is also agreed at this time. Applications will be accepted for consideration in October because the PC will know what funds it can afford to commit.

The aim will be to assess applications and award funds to successful bids within one month of receipt.

### **ACTION: Clerk to make proposed changes to the order of the form**

MH proposed councillors accept the policy and application form with agreed changes.

Proposed	Seconded	Passed
MH	AC	Unanimous

## 12. TO CONSIDER ADOPTION OF DISCIPLINARY & GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES APPENDIX 3 & 4

Councillors resolved to adopt both policies after minor amendments for clarification had been made.

## 13. REPORT ON PERMANENT CLERK RECRUITMENT

The Chairman informed the council that after interviewing four candidates Alison Carr had been offered the post of Clerk to West Hill Parish Council. Alison's contract will commence on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

**ACTION: Alison to provide a specification to MH for office equipment required, including: laptop, external hard drive, mobile phone, laser printer, scanner and stationary.**

**ACTION: Alison to investigate opening an account with Ottery Computers, and possibly sourcing office equipment from them.**

Arising from the above Councillors discussed the following:

- Format of West Hill PC email address; it was agreed to opt for westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk
- WHPC will hold the contract for the Clerk's mobile phone. Giffgaff was suggested as a good provider because it uses the O2 network, which has good local coverage.
- Software: Windows/Office 365
- Accounting software: RBS provide accounting software is designed for town and parish councils - <http://www.rbssoftware.co.uk/>.
- Payroll: Register WHPC as an employer on HMRC website to run payroll.  
<https://www.gov.uk/payroll-software/overview>. **NB Wendy at LGRC will show Alison how to set up an account and run payroll using HMRC software.**

## 14. STRATEGIC PLANNING

Results of the community survey will be available from 18<sup>th</sup> August.

MH opened a discussion with councillors regarding next steps once the results of the survey are known, which includes a workshop for councillors to be facilitated by Nick Randle of LGRC. The outcome of the workshop will be written up as a plan for West Hill. Once the draft plan has undergone a final (limited) consultation it can be adopted.

LRGC's charge for the whole process will be £2975.

MH proposed that if the outcome of the survey merits it, LGRC should be commissioned to work with WHPC through the rest of the process.

Proposed	Seconded	Passed
MH	JB	Unanimous

Councillors agreed to find a date to meet and discuss the survey results – to be confirmed.

A date in early October is preferred for the workshop for councillors and the clerk – to be confirmed.

## 15. FINANCE – REVIEW & APPROVE ITEMS OF EXPENDITURE (INVOICE TRACKER)

Councillors agreed that the updated invoice tracker was an accurate record of expenditure to date.

## 16. CORRESPONDENCE (TABLED)

- EDDC's invitation to apply for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds is not relevant to West Hill because it is targeted at large infrastructure projects that support new development in the area, as set out on the 'Regulation 123' list.
- A letter from a local resident was circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. It was agreed that the parish council does not have powers to deal with most of the issues raised, and that the most appropriate response would be to signpost the gentleman to those with authority to act.

**ACTION: MH will reply to the correspondent and AC will call on the gentleman to discuss the issues raised.**

- Email received from Chris Berrett of Streetscene Operations at EDDC regarding provision of (empty) sandbags to protect property from flooding during the coming autumn/winter. There was a discussion about how many sandbags were required, and where they could be stored. It was noted that residents will have to get their own sand to fill the bags if bad weather is forecast.

**ACTION: MH to explore storage at the village hall, or alternative location, from where residents can easily collect sandbags as and when the need arises.**

**ACTION: CW to reply to email and request one hundred sandbags for West Hill that will to be collected from Sidmouth.**

## 17. COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

- DALC training for new councillors – 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

JB proposed that all councillors attend this training, as a refresher for experienced councillors, and an introduction for new councillors. Two newly co-opted councillors and the Chairman are book on the 5<sup>th</sup> September session. Two councillors have previously attended this training, and those that have not will consider attending at a later date.

**ACTION: CW to book JB on 5<sup>th</sup> Sept session – it was later confirmed that JB cannot make that date.**

- CH requested that the second meeting in the month is reserved primarily for planning and only urgent business that cannot wait until the first meeting in the month. All agreed.

The Chairman formally closed the meeting at 21.27 and the council went into confidential session.

**END OF MINUTES  
DO NOT PRINT OR CIRCULATE PAST THIS POINT**