

**WEST HILL PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 22nd OCTOBER 2018 AT 7.30PM
AT WEST HILL VILLAGE HALL**

Present:	Chairman Cllr Margaret Hall (MH) Cllr Jill Ingle (JI) Cllr Alan Cook (AC) Cllr Jessica Bailey (JB) Cllr Christopher Hall (CH) Cllr Quentin Tailford (QT)
In attendance:	Alison Carr Parish Clerk, 2 members of the public – Hon Alderman Tony Wilkinson and Mr Tony Howard
Absent:	Cllr Jo Talbot, District Cllr Geoff Pratt

Item (a)	Discussion and decisions (b)	Action (c)
18/369	Welcome and Chairman’s announcements The Chairman welcomed everyone, reminded everyone that the meeting was being recorded and started the meeting at 7.30pm.	
18/370	Apologies Apologies were received and approved from Cllr Jo Talbot and District Cllr Geoff Pratt	
18/371	<p>Public question time (3 minutes) Resident Hon Alderman Tony Wilkinson addressed Councillors on behalf of the group of residents who had written to the Parish Council in July about setting up an air ambulance landing site in the village. He thanked Councillors for their support of this important and worthwhile project.</p> <p>Chairman MH asked if either Mr Wilkinson or Mr Howard had had any indication from the school Governors about how the project was progressing. Councillors were aware that the Devon Air Ambulance Trust (DAAT) had visited the school playing field to assess its suitability as a potential landing site. They were aware that the DAAT thought it would be suitable and had sent information to the Governors about how to progress the project to the next stage. Mr Howard said he thought the Governors were quite supportive, although he had heard nothing official. Councillors had previously been given the impression that the Governors were not particularly supportive of the project, but if they had had a change of heart that would be very positive.</p> <p>Chairman MH mentioned financing the project – although DAAT provides some funding, the rest would be raised by the community. The Parish Council would be able to contribute as there is grant money for community projects. She said the Parish Council has written to the Head Teacher expressing its strong support for the project.</p> <p>On a separate issue, Mr Howard mentioned neighbours’ concerns about development at Meadowgate. Chairman MH said that Councillors had objected to the most recent planning application and indeed were highly critical of the way the building works have destroyed the street scene by cutting into the front garden to create parking spaces. She said Councillors had written to Ed Freeman, Service Lead – Planning, at EDDC expressing their disappointment with the perceived lack of support from planners in keeping the character of West Hill. This is further discussed at item 18/372 below.</p>	

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<p>18/372</p>	<p>To consider correspondence received from Ed Freeman, Service Lead – Planning, EDDC, and agree further actions</p> <p>Chairman MH said that the Parish Council wrote to Mr Freeman in September regarding three sites – Meadowgate, Babbling Brook and Birchanger, with particular reference to planning decisions that Councillors had disagreed with and thought that planning regulations had been applied incorrectly. His response, received on 15th October, did not address their concerns sufficiently.</p> <p>Meadowgate – Councillors noted that since the Parish Council's letter, the owners have dug further into the bank to create more space. This breaches planning permission and there is a danger that the bank will become unstable and collapse. The original planning application was for a small additional building behind the old barn, which would have been hidden from the road, but since the barn was removed, it is very visible from the road and creates more visual impact than was originally envisaged. Councillors thought that Mr Freeman did not sufficiently appreciate the unique character of West Hill and had not given sufficient weight to their comments. There was also some discussion of the close-boarded fence, which Mr Freeman said did not breach height restrictions. However, Councillors pointed out that the height restriction on the boundary of a highway is 1 metre and they thought that the fence is taller than that.</p> <p>It was agreed unanimously that Cllr AC will draft a letter to Mr Freeman about Meadowgate, to be circulated to Councillors for approval before sending.</p> <p>Birchanger – Councillors regretted that the streetscene had been adversely affected by permitting development in front of the established building line and that Mr Freeman had missed the point that the development had necessitated the removal of a large number of mature Scots Pines, which were of high amenity value. However, whilst disagreeing with Mr Freeman's points on this, they thought that there was nothing to gain from pursuing this.</p> <p>Babbling Brook – Councillors strongly disagreed with Mr Freeman's comments, which they thought incorrectly interpreted the regulations governing Class Q permitted development and subsequent planning applications. Councillors said that the rules are clear: a building developed under Class Q permitted development must be built and occupied before any application for further alterations can be considered. It is illogical to allow alterations to an application that has not been implemented, which would be in breach of Class Q requirements. Councillors believed that in allowing the subsequent planning applications immediately following the Class Q permitted development application, without the intervening occupation, EDDC planners have not followed the rules.</p> <p>It was agreed unanimously that Councillors will write back to Mr Freeman refuting each of his points in turn. This will be copied to the Chair of the Planning Committee. ACTION: Cllr AC to draft a letter and circulate to Councillors for agreement.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AC</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AC</p>
<p>18/373</p>	<p>To approve excluding the general public for discussion of a confidential item</p> <p>Councillors discussed excluding the public from item 18/374.</p> <p>Chairman MH explained that Councillors would be discussing community access to the school playing field. She summarised the background history of meetings and correspondence between the Parish Council and the school Governors and Smile Learning Trust. The purpose of the discussion will be to discuss steps and further actions. Although there is a public interest aspect to the discussion, some of the information is confidential and Councillors should have the opportunity to discuss fully and frankly all the material and the need to respect the confidentiality of third parties.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To discuss item 18/374 in a confidential session.</p>	

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18/374	<p>Confidential item - to consider the response from the Smile Learning Trust regarding community access to the school field, and agree further actions.</p> <p>At this point, members of the public left the meeting and Councillors went into confidential session. The Chairman requested that the Clerk keep recording so that if necessary Councillors can refer back to the discussion, as the public Minutes will omit some detail.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the Smile Learning Trust's response to the Parish Council's attempts to reinstate community access to the school field out of hours. This was a long-standing arrangement for nearly 30 years before the Learning Trust took over the school from Devon County Council, and was of benefit to the community. Parish Councillors had two previous meetings with school Governors and thought they were making progress in overcoming some of the concerns about e.g. antisocial behaviour, including the Parish Council considering contributing to the cost of CCTV and other security measures. However, the latest correspondence from the Learning Trust indicated that it was unwilling to continue discussions any further as community access to the field would not benefit the school. Councillors were disappointed by this, particularly given the Trust's remit to work with the community and thought they should persevere with trying to reach an agreement for the benefit of the whole community. Several members of the public have spoken to Councillors about it. The Clerk will put this matter on the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting as a non-confidential item so that residents can comment on it if they wish. In the meantime, Councillors will write back to the Learning Trust and consult other bodies.</p> <p>It was agreed unanimously to pursue relevant information with other bodies It was agreed unanimously to release the letter from the Smile Learning Trust and the response from the Parish Council into the public domain</p> <p>There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone and closed the meeting at 9.05pm</p>	Clerk
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