WEST DEAN
Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on
Monday 16th November 2026 at 19:00 at King George's Hall, West Dean.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

	In Attendance	Apologies	Absent
Councillor Higgins	✓		
Councillor J Camilleri	✓		
Councillor Seabrooke	✓		
Councillor M Camilleri	✓		
Councillor M Lee	✓		
Councillor B Livesey	✓		
Vacancy	-	-	-

Also, in attendance:
Amanda Owen – Clerk, Wiltshire Councillor Gregory Cooper and one member of the public.

169/26	**To receive Chair's opening remarks.** Councillor Higgins welcomed everyone to the meeting.
170/26	**To receive and accept apologies for absence.** None.
171/26	**To receive declarations of interest relating to items on this agenda.** No declarations of interest were received.
172/26	**To approve the minutes of the full council meeting held on Monday 16th November.** The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 19th October were **AGREED** as a correct record of the meeting. This motion was passed on a vote of 4 **FOR** and 1 **ABSTENTION**.
173/26	**Public Forum.** None.
174/26	**To receive reports from Wiltshire Council & Wiltshire Police.** Wiltshire Councillor Cooper provided updates with regards to the following: - Local plan. Work is ongoing, with the list of proposed sites now publicly available. - A36. Traffic lights and the proposed changes to the College Roundabout are attracting interest. The consultation closes on 5 December. - A meeting took place two weeks ago re S106 and CIL at Alderbury. - Community Governance scheme now finished. - Wiltshire Council finances. Half year results presented last Thursday with a predicted shortfall of £4.8 million which is a £2 million improvement on quarter one. - A £5.5 million unplanned spend has affected the budget, spending includes: - Policies - Legal increases - Adult social care - Children's funding - Blue badge parking installation - Funds in to household recycling centres No report was received from Wiltshire Police.
175/26	**To receive updates with regards to:** **- Neighbourhood Development Plan** Councillor Higgins welcomed Alan Bannister to the meeting who provided the following update:

	- A positive meeting took place with Sarah Hughes from Test Valley Borough Council. - Agreed that there is no need to set up a working group currently, a meeting in the New Year with Sarah Hughes and representatives from West Dean and West Tytherley to discuss progress. - West Tytherley Parish Council have budgeted £5000.00 for the review of the NDP. - It is advised that a site, or two, is highlighted for up to ten dwellings. - A housing needs survey can also be considered. Sarah Hughes considers a survey a good idea. Mr Bannister confirmed that he is happy to remain as nonexecutive help. Councillors thanked Mr Bannister for his help and commitment to the NDP. **- River Group** Councillor Higgins addressed the meeting and advised that a quote had been received from SSEN after the issuance of the November agenda. Due to the urgency of the application, and the time frame supplied by Wessex River Trust it was agreed to accept the quotation from SSEN at a cost of £2715.28 including VAT. Proposed by Councillor Livesey, seconded by Councillor J Camilleri. All members voted unanimously to accept this resolution. **- Footpaths** Councillor Lee advised the footpath bridge had been repaired at the back of the village hall.
176/26	**To note the Brooke, Evelyn and Thistlethwaite Trust report.** The Brooke, Evelyn and Thistlethwaite Trust report was noted and can be found at **APPENDIX A**. Councillor Higgins asked Councillor Livesey to pass the thanks of the Parish Council to Ruth for the report.
177/26	**To receive feedback with regards to the West Dean resilience plan.** Following discussion, Councillor Higgins advised that she would update the resilience plan to include the suggestions made by Councillor Lee ready for review in January for final decision in February. Councillor Higgins asked Councillors present to submit any further suggestions.
178/26	**To note the upcoming availability of the discount market units and the marketing of the self build plots at Glebe Farm.** Councillor Higgins and the Clerk attended a meeting on Friday 13th November with Jonny Ribbans and representatives from Test Valley Borough Council. Key points of the meeting are: - Planning to launch the discount market units 2027 with the aim of them being completed by July 2027. - Onyx are required to submit valuation forms to TVBC. S106 requires sale notice. - After launch, a period of 3 months will be reserved for local (as defined by the NDP) residents to express interest to purchase. After 3 months, properties can be advertised to the wider TVBC area and then open market.
179/26	**To agree to add two picnic benches from the Fete Committee to the asset register.** It was **AGREED** to add two benches from the Fete Committee to the asset register. Proposed by Councillor Livesey, seconded by Councillor Higgins. All members voted unanimously to accept this resolution.
180/26	**To receive an update from Councillor Livesey with regards to the recent play area refurbishment.** Councillor Livesey provided the following update: - Conditions are now satisfactory, allowing payment of the invoice to proceed. - Issues were originally identified with the ground levels around the three swings and new cradle swing. The levels were initially too high. - Contractors have returned three times to rectify the issues & were provided with a deadline of 16th November to complete the remedial work, otherwise payment would be withheld. - Councillor Livesey wanted to ensure all Councillors were aware of the work carried out and the process followed.

	Councillor Livesey advised he met with the contractor to receive an additional quote to make the play house more user friendly, or / and to replace the little house with an item of role play equipment and a more permanent solution to the surrounding areas. Councillor Livesey will circulate to Councillors with an overview of his considerations. Councillor Higgins thanked Councillor Livesey for his efforts and thanked the clerk for obtaining the finances to complete the works.
181/26	**To note the RoSPA report.** The RoSPA report was **NOTED**.
182/26	**To discuss the viability of CCTV at the play area.** After discussion it was noted that the implementation of CCTV at the play area was not appropriate at this time. Councillor Livesey thanked Councillor J Camilleri for investigating.
183/26	**To agree the purchase of wheelie bin stickers from 20's Plenty.** It was **AGREED** to purchase 100 wheelie bin stickers from 20's Plenty at a cost of £150.00. Proposed by Councillor Livesey, seconded by Councillor M Camilleri. All members voted unanimously to accept this resolution.
184/26	**To note there will be no increase to the current fees for grass and hedge cutting services provided by Clive Francis for the upcoming financial year.** Councillors noted there will be no increase to current grass and hedge cutting fees and thanked Clive for his work.
185/26	**To agree the set up of a direct debit for street lighting costs.** It was **AGREED** to set up a direct debit to Conrad Energy for street lighting costs. Proposed by Councillor Seabrooke, seconded by Councillor J Camilleri. All members voted unanimously to accept this resolution.
186/26	**To note the financial situation and receive suggestions for the 2027/2028 budget.** The current financial situation and the reconciliation of the bank balance were **NOTED** with the bank balance at 31st October 2026 being £47,106.37. The bank reconciliation can be found at **APPENDIX B**. Suggestions were received for the 2027 / 2028 budget. The Clerk will update the budget and circulate to Councillors.
187/26	**To approve the requests for payments for November.** The payments as listed in the table below were **APPROVED** for payment. Proposed by Councillor Higgins, seconded by Councillor Lee. All members voted unanimously to accept this resolution.

November Payment Requests			
From	**Item**	**Invoice Number**	**Amount**
Staff	Salary	November	£952.59
Lloyds	Bank Charges		£4.25
Clive Francis	Grass Cutting	Inv 011026	£564.00
DM Payroll	Payroll Administration	Inv 5718	£79.20
RoSPA Play Safety	Play Area Annual Inspection 2026	Inv 103485	118.8
Infinity Playgrounds	Installation of new basket swing & safety surfacing	Inv -02285	£15,795.49
		Total	£17,514.33

	To retrospectively approve the following planning application(s):
188/26	**25/02148/OUTS** **Erection of up to 52 dwellings with access via East Dean Road.** **Land West Of Holbury Lane Holbury Lane Lockerley Hampshire.** West Dean Parish Council **OBJECT** to this application. The full objection can be found at **APPENDIX C**. Proposed by Councillor Higgins, seconded by Councillor J Camilleri. All members voted unanimously to accept this resolution.
189/26	**PL/2026/06652** **The Orchard, West Dean, Salisbury SP5 1JA** **T1 Conifer tree - Fell.** West Dean Parish Council have no objection to this application. Proposed by Councillor Livesey, seconded by Councillor Higgins.

	All members voted unanimously to accept this resolution.
	To consider the following planning application(s):
190/26	**PL/2026/06954** **T1 Walnut - Overall crown reduction of up to 3m back to previously reduced points.** **Lintrathen, Rectory Hill, West Dean, Salisbury SP5 1JL.** West Dean Parish Council have no objection to this application. Proposed by Councillor Higgins, seconded by Councillor M Camilleri. All members voted unanimously to accept this resolution.
191/26	**To agree the date of the next meeting.** The date of the next meeting was agreed as Monday 21st December.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 21:03.

APPENDIX A

Brooke, Evelyn and Thistlethwaite Charity
Registered charity 249087
Annual report for the year ended 31st December 2025

The Brooke, Evelyn and Thistlethwaite Charity was created to apply income from its investments (after defraying expenses) to relieve either generally or individually persons who are resident in the ancient parish of West Dean and the ancient chapelry of East Grimstead who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress by making grants of money or providing or paying for items, services or facilities calculated to reduce the need, hardship or distress of such persons. Publicity is given to the activities of the trust through word of mouth and notices on village notice boards and halls.

The trust has 7 trustees, comprising:
1 ex officio trustee appointed by, in summary, the Clarendon Ministry
2 appointed by West Dean Parish Council
2 appointed by West Dean with East Grimstead Parochial Church Council
2 appointed by Grimstead Parish Council

In 2025, our previous Chairman, Michael Marx, resigned from the trust after 8 years' service and the trustees would like to thank him for his advice and guidance and wish him and his family well for the future. The trustees also welcomed to the trust Barbara McKay as an additional trustee and we look forward to working with her.

The trust provides funds, directly or indirectly, to families who require financial assistance for daily living expenses, senior citizens who need repairs or maintenance of their accommodation, village events which provide social occasions for residents who may be isolated: for the year 2025 this amounted to £1,305. There was also a donation of £1,000 to the Salisbury Hospice towards the purchase of a "cuddle bed" in response to their request for funds from the community. In addition, the trust gave token presents to deserving/vulnerable members of the community at Christmas and Easter. The Trustees anticipate continuing to provide such assistance to individuals, events and charities in the coming years.

The trust is financed by investments with Black Rock and M&G and rent for a field in East Grimstead. In 2025 the trust generated income of £4,026 and expenses of £2,491 yielding a profit of £1,535. Funds have been kept in reserve to meet maintenance costs of the field in East Grimstead which requires hedge maintenance and ditch clearance every so often. I am pleased to say that the trust is in a healthy financial position with funds sufficient for anticipated ongoing needs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the trustees who are all volunteers and offer their time and effort free of charge. We encourage anybody who is, or knows someone who is, in need to bring them to our attention.

James King
Chairman

Trustees

Sue Addey and Barbara McKay, nominated by Grimstead Parish Council
Julie Rowe and James King, nominated by West Dean Parish Council
Glynis Newman and Christine Warry, nominated by West Dean with East Grimstead Parochial Church Council
Ruth Livesey, nominated as Ex Officio trustee representing the Rector of the Clarendon Team Ministry

APPENDIX B

WEST DEAN PARISH COUNCIL			
Bank Reconciliation for the Year 2026 / 2027			
Opening Balance Community Account at 01/04/2026	**£2,475.40**	**Opening Balance Instant Access Account at 01/04/2026**	**£24,348.74**
Receipts 2026/27	19,963.00	Receipts 2026/27	22,417.32
Payments 2026/27	15,600.27	Payments 2026/27	6,500.00
Unpresented Cheques 2026/27			
Closing Balance Community Account 31/10/2026	**£2,377.31**	**Closing Balance Business Bank Instant 31/10/2026**	**£44,729.06**
TOTAL BANK BALANCES	**£47,106.37**		

APPENDIX C

WEST DEAN
Parish Council

From: Amanda Owen: Clerk to West Dean Parish Council
To: TVBC Planning
Cc: WDPC Councillors Higgins, Livesey, Seabrooke, Lee, J Camilleri, and M Camilleri
Cc: Cllr Stewart MacDonald, TVBC (Mid Test Ward)
Cc: Cllr Gregory Cooper, Wiltshire Council (Alderbury & Whiteparish Ward)
Date: 21 October 2026

25/02148/OUTS: Outline - Erection of up to 52 dwellings with access via East Dean Road (revised plans)

West Dean Parish Council **OBJECTS** to this application on the grounds set out below.

TVBC Draft Local Plan 2025

The June 2025 draft Local Plan's foreword expressly links the selection of additional housing sites to the increased housing requirement. It states that compromises have to be made, while assuring readers that the proposals have been carefully considered.

In July 2026 TVBC stopped progressing the draft Local Plan through the previous system, moving to the new plan-making system, and expressly stated that the draft policies carry very limited weight, while decisions continue to use the adopted plan alongside national policy.

Irrespective of the weight the draft Local Plan now carries, Policy SA25 presented this site as suitable for housing, stating that development "will be permitted subject to" specified requirements.

The question is therefore whether TVBC had sufficient evidence, when first proposing the site and subsequently retaining it in the June 2025 draft, to conclude that effective mitigation was realistically achievable. It may equally identify a fundamental obstacle to development.

Request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004

West Dean Parish Council requests the recorded information underpinning the site's initial selection for proposed housing allocation and its subsequent retention in the June 2025 draft Local Plan. This request covers:

- Site assessment and selection records identifying the environmental, infrastructure and access constraints considered.
- Specialist advice and relevant consultee responses relied upon in assessing those constraints.
- Records identifying outstanding uncertainties, evidence gaps and the feasibility of mitigation.
- Officer recommendations and decision records explaining how those matters were addressed in deciding to propose or retain the site.

The request concerns existing recorded information, rather than the creation of a new assessment or retrospective justification. Where information is already published, please provide precise

document links and page references. Where requested information is not held, please confirm this. Please register and respond to this information request separately from the consultation response. To the extent that any requested information falls outside of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, please consider that information as a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

If TVBC considers that any part of this request would impose a manifestly unreasonable burden, please identify the specific information concerned, explain the estimated work involved and provide advice and assistance on refining that part of the request. Our priority is the site assessment, specialist advice and recorded reasons supporting the site's initial selection and its retention in the June 2025 draft Local Plan. Please notify us of any proposed charge and its basis before incurring chargeable costs.

Evidence required before TVBC Officer determination

Before granting outline permission, TVBC's officer report should expressly address each material concern and inconsistency identified in this objection, setting out the evidence and reasoning supporting any conclusion that the development is acceptable. Where mitigation is essential to establish acceptability, its effectiveness and deliverability must be demonstrated, with appropriate arrangements secured for implementation, long-term funding, management, monitoring and enforcement.

Assessments necessary to establish acceptability in principle must not be deferred until after permission. Reliance on applicant assurances, future investigations or qualified consultee responses does not relieve TVBC of its responsibility to reach a lawful and adequately evidenced decision.

Failure to resolve these matters could have significant consequences:

1. Legal challenge and administrative consequences
   An unlawful decision may be challenged and permission potentially quashed, exposing TVBC to litigation costs and the expense of reconsidering the application. Procedural failures causing injustice may also result in findings of maladministration and recommended remedies. These consequences arise from defects in the decision-making process; subsequent harm would not, by itself, establish that the original decision was unlawful.
2. Harm that cannot readily be reversed
   If development causes harm while complying with its permission and conditions, ordinary planning enforcement may offer no effective remedy. Revocation or modification of permission can carry compensation implications, while damage to protected habitats, trees or the water environment may be irreversible. Risks expressly raised before determination therefore require a clear, evidenced response, rather than an assumption that any resulting harm can be addressed later.

West Dean Parish Council asks TVBC to resolve the substantive uncertainties necessary to establish acceptability before determining this application, and to refuse permission where the applicable legal and policy requirements cannot be satisfied.

Grounds for Objection

1.	**Housing: countryside development not justified by an unadopted draft allocation**
	The application has not adequately demonstrated that up to 52 dwellings can be accommodated in this countryside location without unacceptable harm to its rural character and environmental interests. The site lies outside the defined settlement boundary, and the applicant acknowledges that the proposal would introduce a different and denser form of development.
	Commentary TVBC has stopped progressing the draft Local Plan through the previous system. On 22 July 2026, it decided to move to the new plan-making system. TVBC expressly states that the draft policies carry very limited weight, while decisions continue to use the adopted plan alongside national policy. The site's inclusion in the former draft Local Plan does not establish the acceptability of development or override the adopted planning policies. Following TVBC's decision to cease progressing that draft through the previous plan-making system, the proposed allocation must not be treated as an adopted commitment to housing. The application must be assessed on its own merits against the adopted development plan, including COM2, E1 and E2, with appropriate regard to current national policy and other material considerations. West Dean Parish Council recognises the need for additional housing and the benefits of the proposed affordable homes. However, those benefits do not remove the requirement to demonstrate that the scale of development is acceptable and that its landscape and environmental constraints can be satisfactorily addressed. The evidence underpinning this objection is: • The draft allocation carries very limited weight: TVBC's published explanation of the change in plan-making approach expressly confirms this. Proposed allocation SA25 therefore cannot be relied upon as establishing the principle or capacity of the site for approximately 50 homes. Its supporting evidence may remain relevant but must be assessed on its merits. • The adopted plan remains relevant: the Revised Local Plan 2011–2029 has not been withdrawn. TVBC's 2026 review recognises the need to update the spatial strategy but does not conclude that all adopted policies are obsolete. Their weight must be assessed against current national policy. • Countryside location and character effects are acknowledged: the Planning Statement confirms that the site is outside the settlement boundary and that the proposal would introduce a different, denser built form. Those effects require substantive assessment against COM2, E1 and E2, rather than reliance on the draft allocation.

2.	**Drainage and the River Dun: failure to demonstrate an acceptable long-term wastewater solution**
	Before granting outline permission, TVBC must have sufficient evidence that the final drainage scheme can meet the relevant ecological and conservation requirements throughout the development's lifetime, with effective safeguards and management secured. If an acceptable solution cannot be demonstrated, permission should be refused. Relevant planning policies: TVBC E5, E7, E8 and NPPF N2, N6, P3
	<u>Commentary</u> The application has not adequately demonstrated that wastewater from the proposed development can be treated and discharged without unacceptable effects on the receiving watercourse and the River Dun's chalk-stream ecology, including its compensatory habitat function associated with the River Itchen SAC. The applicant's assessment predicts a material increase in phosphorus in the receiving canal, while important questions remain about low-flow conditions, existing water quality and the treatment performance on which its conclusions depend. This concerns whether the site can accommodate the proposed development with an environmentally acceptable drainage solution. Small, predicted changes after downstream dilution do not, by themselves, demonstrate that the receiving habitats will be protected. The evidence underpinning this objection is: • A material nutrient increase before downstream dilution: the September 2026 Five Rivers assessment models phosphorus increasing from 0.039 mg/l to approximately 0.058–0.085 mg/l, depending on receiving flows. These increases require an ecological assessment against the applicable habitat targets; they do not, by themselves, establish a formal water-quality classification breach. • Uncertainty about the receiving watercourse: the assessment uses an August walkover to estimate canal flows, with a lower-flow sensitivity scenario, and uses River Dun chemistry as a proxy for the canal despite existing sewage inputs. It must demonstrate that these assumptions adequately represent adverse low-flow conditions and the canal's existing water quality. • Protection must address the canal as well as the Dun: the report identifies gravel habitat and ponded, silty sections along the receiving channel. The assessment must adequately address repeated nutrient loading, potential retention and local ecological effects before the effluent reaches the Dun. • The predicted outcome depends on verified treatment performance: differing population, loading and treatment specifications across the submissions require reconciliation against the final design. The applicant must substantiate the effluent concentrations assumed in the assessment and demonstrate how acceptable performance will be maintained, monitored and restored if the plant underperforms. • Natural England's advice is conditional: its March response requires assessment of water-quality, hydrological and ecological effects. Its August advice identifies relevant conservation targets and additional treatment or equivalent safeguards against

unexpected pollution or poor performance. That advice does not itself establish that the subsequent scheme satisfies those requirements.

- Drainage feasibility and alternatives require a coherent explanation: shallow groundwater recorded in the April applicant response raises questions about the suitability of any infiltration-dependent components. The final submission must clearly distinguish infiltration, filtration and conveyance arrangements, substantiate the rejection of sewer connection, and demonstrate a deliverable treatment and discharge solution. The April document is the applicant's response to EA concerns, not an EA approval.

3. Bats: failure to demonstrate protection of barbastelle foraging and commuting habitat from access works and artificial lighting

Before granting outline permission, TVBC must be satisfied through an adequate appropriate assessment that the proposal will not adversely affect SAC integrity, with the necessary mitigation demonstrated and secured. If that conclusion cannot be reached, permission should be refused unless the exceptional derogation requirements are satisfied.

Relevant planning policies: TVBC E5, E6, NPPF N2, N6, P3, alongside the applicable protected-species requirements.

Commentary

It has not been demonstrated that the access required to serve the development can operate safely while preserving the habitat connectivity potentially supporting the protected barbastelle population of Mottisfont Bats SAC. The applicant's own evidence confirms regular barbastelle activity near the southern boundary, where the proposal would remove hedgerow and introduce an illuminated opening.

This concerns the acceptability of the development's access in principle. Retaining dark boundaries elsewhere and planting up the existing entrance do not, without adequate evidence, establish that the new opening will preserve the ecological function of the affected habitat.

The evidence underpinning this objection is:

- Confirmed use of the affected boundary: the September 2026 ecological assessment records regular barbastelle activity at both monitoring locations. During comparable monitoring periods, activity was greater at the southern detector, close to the proposed access.
- An acknowledged interruption: the report identifies hedgerow removal and illumination of approximately 3 lux at the new access, compared with predominantly 0–0.1 lux along retained boundaries. It acknowledges that this could reduce the boundary's suitability and permeability for light-sensitive bats.
- Mitigation effectiveness remains the central question: the report accepts that complete darkness cannot be maintained across the access. It must demonstrate why the remaining illumination and habitat gap would not compromise connectivity, including while replacement planting establishes.

- The supporting assessment requires completion or justification: the report describes outstanding seasonal results and failed monitoring periods yet later refers to a completed programme. These limitations must be reconciled with the confidence placed in its conclusions.
- Highway acceptance does not resolve ecological effects: HCC's January response accepts the highway arrangements but predates the September ecological assessment. The final visibility clearance, access lighting and habitat proposals must be shown to work together.

4. Dormice: failure to establish the effects of removing potentially occupied habitat

This is an unresolved protected-species constraint on the proposed access. Before granting outline permission, TVBC needs sufficient evidence to establish the likely effects and whether an effective mitigation approach is deliverable, including the feasibility of any necessary protected-species licence. A general commitment to precautionary clearance or stopping work if dormice are discovered would not, by itself, resolve those questions. Until they are satisfactorily addressed, compliance with planning policy and the applicable protected-species requirements has not been demonstrated

Relevant planning policies: TVBC E5, E6, and NPPF N2, alongside the applicable protected-species requirements.

Commentary

The application has not adequately demonstrated that the hedgerow removal required for the proposed access can proceed without harming dormice or disrupting their habitat. The applicant's ecological assessment identifies moderately suitable, connected dormouse habitat along the site boundaries, yet the material reviewed does not sufficiently assess the consequences of removing part of that habitat.

The evidence underpinning this objection is:

- Suitable, connected habitat is identified: section 9 of the September 2026 ecological assessment describes the southern and eastern hedgerows and scrub as moderately suitable for dormice, with suitable woody species and connections to surrounding hedgerows and woodland.
- The access would affect that habitat: the report identifies hedgerow removal for the new southern access. This requires reconciliation with the broader statement in section 14.3 that only modified grassland would be directly affected.
- The likely effects remain insufficiently established: the supplied material does not establish dormouse presence or absence or provide a complete assessment of the access works' implications for breeding or resting places and habitat connectivity. Habitat suitability does not prove occupation, but it requires a proportionate, evidenced assessment.
- Replacement planting must be assessed for its effectiveness: planting up the existing access does not immediately replace an established hedgerow. Where mitigation is necessary, the applicant must demonstrate how habitat function would be

maintained during clearance, construction and establishment, and secure its subsequent management.

5. Great crested newts: failure to assess the effects on potentially suitable habitat

Before granting permission, TVBC needs sufficient evidence that the actual works—including access construction and hedgerow removal—have been assessed and that any necessary mitigation is appropriate and deliverable. Precautionary construction measures do not, by themselves, resolve an assessment based on an incorrect assumption about habitat retention.

Relevant planning policies: TVBC E5, E6 and NPPF N2, alongside the applicable protected-species requirements.

Commentary

The application has not adequately reconciled its assessment of great crested newts with the habitat removal required for the proposed access. The ecological report identifies hedgerows and scrub as potentially suitable habitat, but its assessment relies partly on those features remaining unaffected.

The evidence underpinning this objection is:

- Potential habitat is identified: section 12 of the September 2026 ecological assessment recognises that hedgerows and mixed scrub offer potential habitat for great crested newts, although the grazed grassland provides limited shelter.
- The assessment requires reconciliation with the access works: the report states that potentially suitable habitat would not be directly affected, while elsewhere identifying hedgerow removal for the southern access. It must explain whether this changes its assessment of likely effects.
- Nearby waterbody suitability is inferred: the report identifies five waterbodies within 500 metres and, from aerial imagery, considers them to be fishery waters unlikely to support breeding newts because of predatory fish. The basis for applying that conclusion to all five waterbodies should be substantiated.
- Precautions must follow an adequate assessment: section 16.6 recommends habitat management, trench safeguards and stopping work if newts are found or suspected. The applicant should demonstrate that these measures are sufficient for the actual development footprint or provide further investigation and mitigation where necessary.

6.	**Transport and access: inadequate sustainable travel provision and unequal access to essential services**
	West Dean Parish Council acknowledges HCC's January 2026 response. However, TVBC should obtain a reassessment addressing the actual public-transport provision, cross-boundary impacts and accessibility constraints before determining the application. Relevant planning policies: TVBC T1 and NPPF TR3, TR4, TR6, alongside TVBC's public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

Commentary

The application has not demonstrated that future residents would have realistic, reliable and accessible alternatives to private-car travel. The Transport Statement overstates the available bus provision and relies on access to Dean railway station without adequately addressing the journey to the station, its limited parking arrangements or the implications for West Dean village.

A safe vehicular access does not establish that the development provides an accessible or sustainable place to live. This is particularly important for households without a car, including those for whom vehicle ownership or frequent taxi use would be unaffordable, and people whose disability or age limits their ability to drive, walk or cycle. The proposed affordable housing benefits must be considered alongside whether residents can practically reach employment, education, healthcare and shops.

The evidence underpinning this objection is:

- The bus service is materially more limited than described: section 2.5.4 of the Transport Statement describes a two-hourly weekday service. West Dean Parish Council understands that the actual Route 37 provision as three daily weekday services, with no services at weekends or on bank holidays. The assessment must establish the journeys available from the relevant stops in each direction, including workable return trips. Such limited provision cannot simply be presented as a regular alternative to car travel for everyday needs.
- The bus operator's concerns require a substantive response: West Dean Parish Council understands that Bluestar has urged TVBC to reject the proposal because of car dependency. That representation should be expressly addressed when assessing the development's transport credentials, including whether any additional service is commercially viable, funded and secured. Prospective improvements should not be assumed without an operator-supported delivery arrangement.
- Rail access creates cross-boundary issues: Dean station is in West Dean, Wiltshire, approximately 3.4 km from the development. West Dean Parish Council understands that Wiltshire Council Highways has not been consulted. TVBC should seek its assessment of the Wiltshire approaches, pedestrian accessibility and potential parking impacts. HCC's acceptance of the development access does not, by itself, resolve those matters.
- The village-hall parking is neither guaranteed nor demonstrated to have capacity: parking used by rail passengers belongs to the village hall and is available through its

goodwill. West Dean Parish Council identifies only a couple of available spaces and no practical on-street alternative. The village hall has not been consulted, and no agreement securing additional capacity has been demonstrated. The assessment must not assume that this community facility can accommodate development-generated rail parking without affecting its own users.

- Walking accessibility must be demonstrated for complete journeys: the statement claims a continuous pavement connection towards Lockerley, whereas West Dean Parish Council identifies deficiencies in established footway connections to surrounding village centres. These differing accounts require a route-specific assessment. A short distance, a public right of way or a cycle-route designation does not establish a safe, convenient and accessible journey for all users.
- Affordability and tenure make practical transport choice particularly important: residents of affordable and social-rented homes should not be assumed either to own a car or to be able to absorb the cost of additional vehicle ownership or regular taxis. The assessment should demonstrate how households without cars would reach essential services throughout the week. This concerns the suitability of the location for the proposed housing mix, rather than an assumption that all affordable-housing residents have identical needs.
- Equality implications must inform the decision: TVBC must have due regard to the relevant equality considerations, including disadvantages experienced by disabled people and needs associated with age. The assessment should address residents who cannot use the assumed walking or cycling routes and cannot drive. Affordable-housing tenure is not itself a protected characteristic, but the accessibility effects on protected groups require informed consideration before determination. This is a requirement for proper assessment, not an assertion that the proposal automatically breaches the Equality Act.

7. Trees: failure to demonstrate that important boundary trees can be retained without deterioration

Before granting outline permission, TVBC should require sufficient evidence to establish their status and demonstrate that the proposed housing, drainage, services and open-space arrangements can accommodate the necessary safeguards.

Relevant planning policies: TVBC E2, E5, E6, and NPPF N2, N3, N6 where ancient or veteran trees are affected.

The application has not adequately demonstrated that the proposed development can be constructed and occupied without damaging important boundary trees or creating foreseeable pressure for their pruning or removal.

The Tree survey identifies seven Category A oaks and recognises the particular importance of the older northern boundary specimens but does not expressly establish whether any qualify as ancient or veteran trees.

The status and protection requirements of these trees must inform the development's capacity and layout. If ancient or veteran trees are present, their protection cannot be assessed solely through conventional root-protection areas or promises of replacement planting.

The evidence underpinning this objection is:

- Important older trees are confirmed: the September 2025 survey identifies T11–T17 as fully mature Category A oaks and describes northern specimens as pre-dating the surrounding woodland.
- Ancient/veteran status requires clarification: no individual tree is expressly assessed against those characteristics, although their presence would materially affect the applicable protection.
- TVBC itself identifies future conflict: its response warns that the relationship between mature trees and small gardens may lead to pressure for pruning or removal.
- Infrastructure compatibility remains unresolved: the officer requires services, drainage and lighting works to be demonstrated outside root-protection areas, while the survey provides only a general caution about SuDS excavation near woodland.
- Protection must extend beyond construction: the layout and management arrangements must preserve tree health through landscaping, occupation and use of the open space.

Author of Report: Cllr Melanie Camilleri, on behalf of West Dean Parish Council
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