

Brixton Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report



For 2017-2018



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2017 -18 has been another busy year for Brixton Parish Council.

The new town of Sherford and Planning remains a major item on our agendas. Representatives from the Parish Council - Michael Wills, Helen Williams, Brenda Huxtable, the clerk and myself attend regular Sherford Liaison Meetings which include Plymouth City Councillors, District Councillors, County Councillors and representatives from the Sherford Consortium. The Parish Council is part of the consultation arrangement by South Hams District Council for reserved matters for planning applications for Sherford and in particular the variation to the original planning consent to take into account new technical approaches to design and building, managing the drainage for the new town effectively and using the topography to the benefit of the new houses. The Parish Council has objected to the revised proposal particularly in relation to the protection of the hamlet of Wiverton, the risk of flooding and the failure to address the connectivity from Sherford to and from Brixton by car, cyclist and pedestrians, 220 houses have been completed and 104 occupied. The school will open in September.

Cllr Helen Williams has been nominated by Brixton Parish Council to the Sherford Community Land Trust. It is fair to say that little progress has been made with the Community Trust but Helen has been tenacious in ensuring that the Trust as it starts is legal and fully represented. This is an important role being part of the setting up of the Trust which will eventually be handed over to the residents of the new town. I would like to thank Helen for taking on this important role and for her tenacity in ensuring that the legal documents are fit for purpose now and in the future.

During the year the parish of Brixton has continued to be under considerable pressure from planning applications for small and large developments. An application for 64 houses at Stamps Hill went to Appeal and has been withdrawn by the applicant; the application for 25 older people's bungalows went straight to Appeal and has also been dismissed by the Planning Inspector. The Parish Council is currently considering the reserved matters application for Phase 3 of Canes Orchard with an increase from 29 to 31 houses. In addition to this and throughout the year the Parish Council has been consulted by South Hams District Council on up to 40 planning applications most of which require a site visit of a minimum of 3 councillors. The Parish Council has revised its policy and procedure for the management of the consultation for planning applications. I would like to thank Councillors Ian Martin and Michael Wills for coordinating the arrangements for the Parish Council to respond to planning applications as part of the consultation process with South Hams District Council with informed recommendations and to thank those councillors who sometimes at very short notice attend site meetings.

Planning for the future is a critical issue for this parish on the urban fringe of Plymouth. The Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Group set up in 2015 has met weekly throughout the year. This has been and continues to be a considerable time commitment for the group members in ensuring that all the required consultations have taken place and have reached a point where the plan is now in its final draft to be sent to the District Council and the Planning Inspectorate by mid June. I would like to thank Ray Holland, Jon Capel, Greg Webb, Tony Steer, and Shirley Deeney for their time, commitment and enthusiasm to the process of producing Brixton's Neighbourhood Plan.

The Traffic Plan Management Group representing local people and Parish Councillors has met quarterly with Nick Colton, the local Devon County Highways Manager and Andy Potter PCSO to address issues affecting the safety of pedestrians, road users and environmental matters relating to traffic and the roads. I would like to thank Nick Colton and Andy Potter and the local residents for their time and positive contributions to the discussion on the main agenda items which include the condition of the roads, drainage, signage and speed in the village and through the lanes. It is good to get together to work out how to resolve issues constructively and collectively, although some take a long time. Thank you to Roger Wakeham, Ian Calvert, Brenda Huxtable, Michael Wills and Kirstie for their support to this group.

Brixton Composters continues to be successful in the collection of green waste and creating an income for the community. Applications for funding are welcome. Councillor Richard du Pont represents the Parish Council on this group.

I would also like to thank Councillors Brenda Huxtable and Roger Wakeham who closely monitor our footpaths. We are grateful to local residents who walk the paths and have agreed to provide the P3 group (Parish Paths Partnership) with quarterly feedback on the condition of the paths so that repairs can be done promptly and the paths remain safe and accessible. Fly tipping continues to be a problem for the parish... through good liaison with Tim Pollard, South Hams Locality Officer fly tipping is dealt with promptly.

In Brixton village the Green and shrubbery at Brixton Lodge Gardens continues to look fresh and eye catching under the care of Mr Tony Davis and Mr Jack Gilbery. I would like to thank Mr Davis and Mr Gilbery for their time and interest in looking after the appearance of the village. The damaged bus shelter has taken over a year to resolve due to additional requirements for its safe restoration due to the expense the Parish Council has now decide to replace the bus shelter. The new entrance signs for Brixton promoting the village as in the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are now in place

The Parish Council is part of the Dementia Friendly Parishes around the Yealm linking Brixton with the parishes of Wembury, Yealmpton, Newton & Noss and Holbeton which is in now in its 6th year and linked to over 80 people with dementia and their families across the 5 parishes. Maxine Kennedy, coordinator for the project was recently invited to speak by video link to a conference in Osaka Japan about the project and the 5 Parish Councils are highlighted in a national document produced by the Prime Ministers Rural dementia task & Finish Group which this project contributes to on Rural Dementia. This group, chaired by Ian Sherriff, will continue to 2020.

Councillor Roger Wakeham has represented the Parish Council at the Hele Trust and we have been represented at the Ivybridge and District Association of Local Councils by Cllrs Michael Wills and Helen Williams. Annual grants have been made by the Parish Council to South Hams CAB, South Hams CVS, The Samaritans, Ivybridge Ring and Ride, Yealm Brownies, DFPY, Yealmpton & Brixton Caring and Brixton Scouts and to St. Marys Church towards the lighting.

The Parish Council continues to support St.Mary's School as an important community resource for our children, their families and for the community. Councillor Calvert and Williams are progressing plans for the Parish and community to become 'bee friendly 'with a wild flower bed at Chittleburn Cross. Thank you to Helen & Trog Williams and to Ian Sherriff for clearing the space for the planting last Saturday and also to Otter Garden Centre for all their advice and support.

The Parish Council has adopted 2 phone boxes in the parish – one in the village and the other at Brixton Torr. Plans for their renovation and future use are currently underway. The Parish Council has started negotiations for the purchase of the land at the former site of the Old Mill at Cofflete.

The village website, funded by the Parish Council and the Feoffee Trust, continues to be an excellent resource and source of information about what is happening in the Parish. I would like to thank Graham Searle for keeping the website up to date and relevant. The Parish Council posts notices on the 'I love Brixton' Face Book page so that we have as wide an audience as possible. I would also like to thank Councillor Ian Calvert for helping to promote the work of the Council on the Face book page. The Parish Councils own websites contains all the work of the parish council ensuring that information is easily accessible and transparent. BPC continue to fund its own Brixton Parish Council App. I would like to thank Kirstie for all her hard work in maintaining the website and App modernising our communications. A Parish Newsletter was produced this year. The Welcome Pack is being updated. New data protection regulations have just become law and so the Parish Council will be clarifying the information it holds.

The Community Emergency Plan has been completed by Councillor Helen Williams who leads the Community Emergency Team of councillors and local people. Helen has represented the Parish Council at County meetings about planning for emergencies and developing resilience in the parish. Good working arrangements have been set up with the Emergency Planning Councillor for Yealmpton PC with joint meetings and joint training so that the 2 parishes can work effectively together in an emergency. I would like to thank Helen for her diligent and enthusiastic approach to this important part of the life of our community.

In our Parish Plan 2012 we emphasised the importance of improving links for Carrollsland with the Parish Council. The Parish Council notice board at Carrollsland provides a link to the wider parish.

The Parish Council continues to have a good working relationship with the Police PCSO Andy Potter. We welcome his attendance at our meetings and thank him for the efficient handling of issues we have brought to his attention... particularly where he has made personal contact with local people about their concerns. However it is clear that the Police are under considerable pressure and cannot provide the service we expect particularly in an emergency.

The Brixstix Play space has been modernised with thanks to Councillor Joe Parish who has taken on the responsibility for planning and fund raising for some new equipment in the play space and bringing some of the issues for the residents of Brixton Torr to our attention. During the year Councillor Gay Murch resigned from the Council and following interviews Richard du Pont joined the Parish Council in January.

Councillors Dan Brown and Basil Cane represent Brixton at South Hams District Council. They continue to keep us informed about the considerable changes for District Council. We are grateful for their interest and their attendance at our monthly meetings.

I would also like to thank Devon County Councillor John Hart for continuing to take the time to attend meetings and his interest in the parish particularly the roads and the developing new town of Sherford.

Our Clerk, Kirstie Aldridge, has continued to grasp the work of the Parish Council with enthusiasm, confidence and clarity including the changes required in Data Protection. During the year she obtained the Certificate in Local Council Administration and is now a qualified clerk. The Parish Council will now start to look at how to become a Quality Parish Council. Peter Vasello, our auditor, continues to congratulate Kirstie on the high quality of her financial record keeping. So thank you Kirstie for all you have continued to do in the past year modernising the governance and financial controls for the Council.

I would like to thank all the Parish Councillors for their hard work, time and commitment to the work of the Parish Council acting always in the best interests of the people of Brixton Parish. It is important to remember that we are all volunteers. I would particularly like to thank Councillor Michael Wills, our Vice Chairman, for his support and advice and his great support to me as Chairman and Kirstie Aldridge our clerk for continuing to move the Parish Council on so effectively.

In conclusion I would like to thank those residents who regularly attend the Parish Council meetings throughout the year. Your continued support is very welcome and important to us and we hope that you will continue to attend our meetings and bring your friends we will particularly miss Rosemary Deeley a very regular attendee and contributor.

Finally as a Parish Council we have continued to make good progress in a time of change and uncertainty. This is down to the Parish Councillors and local people working together in best interests of the Parish now and for the future which I think will continue to be challenging complicated and uncertain.

Thank you

Liz Hitchins 28th May 2018