

Brixton Parish Council - Annual Report for 2024/2025
from Liz Hitchins, Chairman
presented at Brixton Parish Council on the 21st May 2025



Brixton Parish Council has completed another year of making progress across the whole parish and during the year we have seen significant changes as the new town of Sherford grows and as the Government progresses with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) together with the introduction of changes in national and local planning policies.

Maintaining communication continues to be paramount using a variety of methods including the Council website, regular newsletters, Facebook (2 sites) and community notice boards located in Sherford, Carrollsland and Brixton Village. Thank you to Greg Webb and Ian Calvert for keeping Facebook updated for the Parish Council. This is an important link with the community. We are investigating streaming our meetings to increase the opportunities for people to engage in the Council's business. The location of the parish council meetings has alternated between Sherford, Brixton and Carrollsland to ensure more local access for residents.

During the year we welcomed Tony Carson as a new councillor.

The Parish Council agreed its precept of £45,238.00 in January 2024 to meet the financial requirements of the parish, covering a wide range of activities for the benefit of the whole community.

Annual grants have been made by the Parish Council to South Hams Citizens Advice, South Hams Community Action (formerly the South Hams CVS) and now closed, The Samaritans, Ivybridge Ring and Ride, Yealm Brownies/Rainbows, 1st Elburton Brownies/ Guides, Dementia Friendly Parishes around the Yealm, Yealmpton & Brixton Caring, Brixton Scouts and to St. Marys Church towards the lighting. Thank you to Roger Wakeham who represents the Council on the Hele Trust.

Annually the Council reviews and updates its policies, procedures, and the Community Emergency Plan. The Community Emergency Plan for Sherford is being led by Grahame MacLennan and the plan for Brixton on hold pending a lead to take it forward. We are indebted to Roger Smith; our Community Road Warden and Snow Warden Councillor Prem McLennan attended a county conference on Community Resilience in March.

The Council's Business Continuity Plan adopted in 2020, was updated February 2025 along with a Scheme of Delegation in line with changing national and public health policies. Cllr Stuart Nix provides independent scrutiny of the financial accounts on a regular basis. The annual performance appraisal of the clerk's work took place in September. I am personally, and as a council we are, indebted to Kirstie, our clerk, for all her work in ensuring the Council operates effectively and efficiently as well as being an excellent ambassador for us. Training is a priority for the Council. Skills audits and development plans have been introduced for the clerk and councillors. All councillors have completed the Civility and Respect training. and are in the process of completing cyber security awareness training.

The work of the parish council has continued through working groups the Environment Working Group and the Traffic Management have met by zoom.

Through the Environment Working Group the Parish Council has adopted a policy of 'No Mow May' to encourage insect life on our verges. On some verges wildflowers are being left to grow for the whole season. The Parish Council has worked in collaboration with St. Marys PCC to ensure that there is an acceptable annual mowing regime promoting biodiversity and enabling families to access graves. The Parish Council has allocated funding towards the cost of this cutting regime

Stage 2 of the project for the land at the Old Mill, Cofflette is underway consultation took place in November 2024. Plans are proceeding for a bird hide and additional tree planting on the site thank you to Cllrs Rachael Gillard and Neil Hawken and Alex Whish for all their help in progressing Stage Two.

Improving our street scene remained a priority throughout the year. Street sweeping through the village continued on the first Saturday of each month except for August and January. Thank you to all our volunteer street sweepers ages range from 13 to over 80 and to Steve and Sharon at 'The Foxhound' for their hospitality after the mornings work. This regular sweeping and litter picking is well received by residents and people passing through.

Thank you to Edd Arran who as a volunteer continues to ensure that the Green looks attractive throughout the year. A planter has been located by the bus stop next to Winstone Lane. Thank you to Cllr Neil Hawken for setting it up, to Jack at Fordbrook Nurseries who donated the plants and Imogen aged 7 who regularly waters it. New notice boards were installed in Brixton village this year.

The Parish Council made a grant to the Brixton Feoffee Trust towards the cost of maintenance of 'amenity areas'

Brixton Parish Council is represented by Cllrs Liz Hitchins and Tony Carson on the River Yealm Water Quality Group leading on the monitoring the water quality of the river in collaboration with the Yealm Estuary to Moor project. A report on the water quality of the Yealm following the sampling by the 'Yealm Dippers' has been produced and is available to the public. The RYWQG now has its own excellent website - water quality is as you are all aware a national issue. Thank you Alex Whish and Cllr Tony Carson who represents the Council on the Yealm Estuary to Moor Project and to Martyn Oates who represents the Council on the Yealm Harbour Authority.

The Traffic Management Group meets quarterly and is attended by the DCC Highways Officer, Nick Colton, to address the issues of road and traffic safety across the parish. Indicative proposals for traffic calming on Stamps Hill Red Lion Hill have been drawn up by DCC Highways and currently are the subject of public consultation. Plans to close Monkey Lane to vehicular traffic have progressed. The lane is now closed to vehicular traffic, and we await the installation of bollards which needed further consultation re access for emergency services. The A379 has been resurfaced I would like to thank Nick Colton and Roger Smith, Community Road Warden for their help and support in addressing local traffic matters and road safety issues. Two VAS signs help to control the speed of traffic though the village. Thank you to Jim Eccles and Roger Smith for ensuring that Speed Watch, this valuable road safety speed check, is fully operational in the village - volunteers are needed. Parking on the Green is the subject of consultation currently.

The cost-of-living group meets regularly face to face to monitor and update our plans to support people in the community affected by the continuing cost-of-living crisis. These are the Community Help Box, the warm Hub at 'The Foxhound' and individual financial assistance from the Brixton Feoffee Trust. Thank you to Trevor and Rosemary Filtness, Annie Kay, Sally Axell, Greg Webb, Robin Johns and Sharon Martin (The Foxhound) for their great support and commitment to the work of this group.

The P3 group has met virtually monitoring the public rights of way in the parish. Thank you to those volunteers who monitor the condition of the footpaths and report any issues to the Council so that immediate action can be taken. The Council continues to be closely involved with Plymouth City Council (PCC), Sherford Consortium and others drawing attention to our concerns to PCC about the condition of Dawes Lane, Elburton. Thank you to Cllr Neil Hawken for taking on the role of looking after our footpaths and taking on Tree Warden duties.

Planning continues to be a major item on our Council agendas, and it is a critical issue for the community on the urban fringe of Plymouth. A modification to The Brixton Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2034 adopted by South Hams District Council in March 2024 currently provides informed guidance when considering planning applications in conjunction with the Joint Local Plan and national planning policies.

Climate change, the reduction of carbon emissions, renewable energy, management of surface water runoff, the improvement of the environment and new regulations on biodiversity, and changes in the NPPF continue to influence planning recommendations of the Council. I would like to thank Cllrs Ian Martin, Michael Wills and Terry Clegg for coordinating the arrangements for the Parish Council to respond to planning applications to South Hams District Council. Thank you also to all councillors, who sometimes at very short notice, have attended site meetings.

Planning applications for Sherford, because of their complexity, are usually the subject of a separate meeting of the Council with input from the relevant Planning Officers. The Parish Council is represented on the Sherford Community Land Trust by our nominated director, a Sherford resident, Steven Williams. Thank you to Steven for his regular detailed updates to the Council on the progress of the Trust and the wider development of Sherford as a town and community. Thank you to Cllr Prem MacLennan has taken the responsibility for the Parish Council for leading on all matters relating to Sherford from the Community Emergency Plan, Speedwatch, supporting the development of the Country Park, naming Green Spaces and as well as day to day issues of traffic and responding to the issues of a new community coming together in collaboration with our District Councillors. I would also like to thank Cllr Stuart Nix who takes an active interest in the development of Sherford. He brings his detailed knowledge, interest, and involvement in all aspects of the progress of Sherford which has been particularly helpful in street naming, responding to planning applications and supporting the parish council's involvement with the establishment of the country park adjacent to Brixton village.

Thank you to Cllr Terry Clegg for regularly checking on the defibrillators on the Green, Fordebrook and Venn Court. Brixton is a Dementia Friendly parish council. Councillors and the clerk have completed the Dementia Friends training provided by the Alzheimer's Society as part of the Dementia Friendly Action Plan which is regularly monitored

Thank you to Cllr Terry Clegg who regularly updates the Council on Silverbridge Way, and the Brixton Composters Group. Plans for the extension of Silverbridge Way, inside the hedge on the Yealmpton side to Ben's Farm Shop, were temporarily paused during the previous year are currently being followed up.

Thank you to Cllr Ian Martin who represents the Parish Council on the Police Advocate scheme.

The Parish Council continues to support the primary schools in the parish as an important community resource for our children, their families and for the community. It gave an award to a child in each year group at St Mary's School and Sherford Primary School who had made the most significant progress during the previous year at the school end of year celebrations.

I would like to thank our two District Cllrs Julie Carson and Alison Nix for their attendance at our Council meetings and following up issues on behalf of the parish and individual parishioners. I would also like to thank Devon County Councillor John Hart for his support throughout the year. Councillor Hart retired this year having represented Brixton since 1989.

Finally, 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 living in 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 all our volunteers and those residents who support the Parish Council throughout the year. Your continued support is very welcome and important to us.

E. Hitchins

May 2025