

Brixton Parish Council - Annual Report for 2025 from Liz Hitchins
Chairman presented at Brixton Parish Council on the 20th of May 2026



Our most significant achievement this year is that we were successful in applying to retain our NALC Local Council Award Scheme Gold status thanks to a lot of hard work from Kirstie, our clerk. We are very proud to have achieved this level in our governance of the Parish Council

During the year Brixton Parish Council has continued to make significant progress as the new town of Sherford grows, responding to government consultation for Local Government Reorganisation, taking on board new planning regulations and monitoring and implementing specific planned projects across the parish.

Brixton Parish Council contributed to the discussion and debate on models for Local Government Reorganisation affecting our parish. We now wait for the government's decision on the 19th July on a model which will be the subject of further consultation.

Maintaining communication continues to be paramount for the parish council using a variety of methods including the Parish 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. As a parish council we were sad to see the 'Brixton Magazine' cease publication last December. It was an important link for the Parish Council as the minutes were in the main printed in full in each monthly edition. BPC has now introduced its own monthly newsletter online so that parishioners are kept up to date with what is happening with the parish council. 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 and Brixton to ensure more local access for residents.

The Parish Council agreed its precept of £50,920 in January 2025 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 The Samaritans, Citizens Advice, 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 Cllr MacLennan. The plan for Brixton is on hold pending a lead to take it forward. We are indebted to Roger Smith; our Community Road Warden and Snow Warden for the parish for his advice on these issues.

The Council's Business Continuity Plan adopted in 2020, was updated February 2026 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 and achieved the Gold Award Status 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. This year all councillors have completed Highways Safety Awareness Training, Cyber Awareness Training modules – Basic, Password Management and Phishing and Code of Conduct / Standards in Public Life

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 and SHDC to ensure that there is an acceptable annual mowing regime in the churchyard at Brixton 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, Cofflete is progressing. The bird hide has been installed with additional tree planting on the site. Thank you to the residents of Torr who helped with the tree planting. Thank you to Alex Whish for all his help in progressing Stage 2.

Improving our street scene in Brixton remained a priority throughout the year. Street sweeping through the village continued the first Saturday of each month weather permitting except for August and January. Thank you to all our volunteer street sweepers ages range from 14 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. It is good to know that in Sherford residents are volunteering to litter pick improving the street scene there too.

Thank you to Edd Arran who as a volunteer continues to ensure that the Green in Brixton looks attractive throughout the year with a spectacular display of petunias last summer.

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 Tony Carson and myself on the River Yealm Water Quality Group which leads on monitoring the water quality of the river in collaboration with the Yealm Estuary to Moor project. The RYWQG now has its own excellent website Water quality is as you are all aware a national issue. Thank you to Tony Carson who represents the Council

on the Yealm Estuary to Moor Project and to Martyn Oates for representing the Council on the Yealm Harbour Authority. Currently we have a vacancy.

The Traffic Management Group meets quarterly and is attended by the DCC Highways Officer, Nick Colton, to address the issues of traffic and road safety across the parish. Following public consultation proposals for traffic calming along Red Lion Hill are being drawn up by DCC. Monkey Lane is now closed to vehicular traffic with bollards at both ends. Approximate 40 residents walked the route from Brixton village to Sherford Country Park on the 18th April, bringing the two communities close together. Thank you to Steven Cane for clearing the lane in preparation for the walk.

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 through the village and at Stamps Hill. Parking on the Green in Brixton will be the subject of public consultation by DCC later in this year. Speedwatch - thank you to Jim Eccles, who has since retired from Speedwatch, and Roger Smith for ensuring that Speed Watch, this valuable road safety speed check, is fully operational in the village - volunteers are needed. A Speedwatch team is now working in Sherford thanks to Prem MacLennan who has recruited a team of volunteers. Parking on the pavements in Sherford is a regular agenda item, however until the roads in Sherford have been adopted this will remain an issue for the community.

The Parish Council has set up 2 liaison groups which meet by zoom regularly; one with the Sherford Consortium to improve communication on behalf of the residents of Sherford and secondly with the Police to work collaboratively in addressing issues arising from the community - in particular parking around the school.

The cost-of-living group meets regularly face to face to monitor and update our plans to support people in Brixton Village affected by the continuing cost-of-living crisis ... these are the Community Help Box in St Mary's Church Porch, 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 continued 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 which was re-opened on the 15th May following substantial repairs. DCC has undertaken remedial work at Mudbank to drain the surface water into a gully beside the road. Thank you to Cllr Neil Hawken for taking on the role of looking after our footpaths and taking on Tree Warden duties. We are now working with the Ramblers Association addressing minor repairs on our PROW's.

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 was adopted by South Hams District Council in March 2024. Currently the Neighbourhood Plan Group is considering a review of some of the policies affected by the changes nationally in the NPPF.

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 recent changes in the NPPF continue to influence planning recommendations of the Council. I would like to thank Councillors 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 in a timely way. 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 Councillor Prem MacLennan has taken the responsibility for the Parish Council for leading on all matters relating to Sherford from the Community Emergency Plan, Speedwatch, Heritage ,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 and the Sherford Community Land Trust.

Thank you to Cllr Terry Clegg for regularly checking on the defibrillators on the Green, at 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 Councillor Clegg who updates the Council on Silverbridge Way, and the Brixton Composters Group. The working group set up by Yealmpton & Brixton Parish Councils with other interested people to plan for the extension of Silver Bridge Way inside the hedge on the Yealmpton side to Ben's Farm Shop is now in the process of making a planning application to SHDC.

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 important community resources for our children, their families, and our communities. It gave an award to a child in each year group at St Mary's School and Sherford Vale School who had made the most significant progress during the previous year at the school end of year celebrations.

Thank you to our 2 District Councillors 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 thank Devon County Councillor Tony Carson for his support throughout the year.

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 particularly in these ever changing and uncertain times

E. Hitchins

May 2026