

Brixton Parish Council Annual Report for 2023 from Liz Hitchins
Chairman presented at Brixton Parish Council on the 22nd May 2024



Brixton Parish Council has completed another year of making progress across the whole parish.

Maintaining communication continues to be paramount using a variety of processes 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 continue to investigate streaming our meetings to increase the opportunities for people to engage in the Council's business. During the year the parish council meetings have alternated between Sherford, Brixton and Carrollsland to ensure more local access for residents. Last year BPC joined our 4 neighbouring parishes on a stand at Yealmpton Show promoting the work of the parish councils where Brixton was represented by Cllr Martin.

During the year we welcomed 3 new councillors Neil Hawken, Rachael Gillard and Premila MacLennan.

The Parish Council agreed its precept of £40,660 in January 2023 to meet the financial requirements of the parish, covering a wide range of activities for the benefit of the whole community.

We celebrated the Kings Coronation - planting 3 trees one on the main road, one in the Feoffee Park and the other in St. Mary's School grounds, a church service and gifts to the children at St. Marys School and Ladybirds Nursery. Thank you to everyone on the small working group who contributed to plans for these celebrations.



Annual grants have been made by the Parish Council to South Hams Citizens Advice, South Hams Community Action (formerly the SHCVS), 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. Grants were made to St. Mary's School and Sherford Vale School for the children to produce artwork to promote a plastic free environment in their schools.

Annually the Council reviews and updates its policies, procedures, and the Community Emergency Plan. The Emergency Plan is currently being updated. Roger Smith, our Community Road Warden, has taken over the role of Snow Warden and has completed the required training. I attended a county conference on Community Resilience in March.

The Council's Business Continuity Plan adopted in 2020, was updated in November 2023 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. Councillors are in the process of completing the Civility and Respect training having signed up to the Civility and Respect Pledge during the year.



The work of the parish council has continued through Working Groups which meet by zoom. These include the Environment Working Group, the Traffic Management Group, and the Kings Coronation Group. 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 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, Lorraine Lowe, and Sharon Martin (The Foxhound) for their great support and commitment to the work of this 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. In March I attended a meeting of St. Mary's PCC to discuss promoting biodiversity more widely in the churchyard.

Stage 1 of the project for the land at the Old Mill, Cofflete has been completed led by Cllr Joe Parish who has since resigned for the Parish Council. Thank you to Joe for his time and ideas in progressing this project and for ensuring that his other project Brixstix Play Space was regularly monitored to provide a safe play area for our children and for helping to raise awareness of environmental issues. Stage 2 of the Cofflete Project is now being progressed by Cllrs Neil Hawken and Rachael Gillard with Alex Whish.



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 and to Steve and Sharon at 'The Foxhound' for their hospitality after the mornings work. This regular sweeping is well received by residents and people passing through. Yealmpton PC has made inquiries about what we do so that they can plan to do something similar there.

The Royal British Legion gifted a seat to the Parish Council which is now located by the Elbridge bus stop set off by 3 colourful planters. Thank you to Fordbrook Nursery for their advice and support in choosing plants.



The recent planting by the Brixton Feoffee Trust has improved the appearance of the eastern end of the village. Thank you to the Bee Friendly Group - Shirley Deeney and Heather Compton for planting daffodils around the trees planted in the previous year making a colourful springtime display particularly when the trees blossomed. The Bee Friendly Group also ensured that the school in Brixton had a large bee and bug hotel thanks to Alex Whish. The Parish Council made a grant to the Brixton Feoffee Trust towards the replacement of the lavender hedge in the Park.



Brixton Parish Council is represented 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. This is, now, as you are all aware a national issue. Thank you to Helen Staddon and Alex Wish who represent 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. Traffic calming on Stamps Hill is being discussed with DCC Highways and is a longer-term project subject to the release of s106 from the Sherford development. The road from Brixton to Hercules Road has been closed for the period of this report to install the infrastructure for the future phases of the Sherford development. Our plans for Quiet Lanes to the east of Sherford did not progress due to a change of policy by Devon County Council. The plan to close Monkey Lane to vehicular traffic is progressing. Devon County Council is currently working on a Traffic Order to for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders only to use Monkey Lane. The very poor condition of the road surface of the A379 remains outstanding and continues to be the subject of discussion with our County Councillor, John Hart. I would like to thank Nick Colton who attends regularly and is very helpful and supportive to us in addressing road safety issues. I would also like to thank Roger Smith, our Community Road Warden, for all his help, support and ideas on traffic matters. Two new VAS signs have been purchased. Thank you to Roger Smith, with the help of Shaun Tapper for installing these signs as we work towards ensuring drivers keep within the speed limits. New volunteers have been recruited to Speedwatch thank you to Jim Eccles and Roger Smith for their persistence in making sure that this valuable road safety speed check is fully operational in the village. Parking on the Green remains an issue and will be followed up in the coming year.

The P3 group has met virtually monitoring the public rights of way in the parish. The restoration of the wall on Footpath 26 has been completed. Consultation has taken place to review the Definitive Map of PROWS across 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 the footpath at 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. The modification to the Brixton Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2034 was adopted by South Hams District Council in March 2024 ensuring that this document provides informed guidance when considering planning applications in conjunction with the Joint Local Plan and national planning policies. Thank you to Jon Capel, Ray Holland, Greg Webb and Tony Steer for their time and dedication to completing the modification.

Climate change, the reduction of carbon emissions, renewable energy, management of surface water runoff, the improvement of the environment and new regulations on biodiversity continue to influence planning recommendations of the Council. I would like to thank Councillors Ian Martin and Michael Wills 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. 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 Edd Arran who as a volunteer continues to ensure that the Green looks attractive throughout the year. The Parish Council is investigating a permanent arrangement for a Christmas tree on the Green. Thank you to Julie Eccles and Joe Parish for looking after the two phone boxes and checking the defibrillators located in them there i.e. on the Green and at Fordebrook. This has now been taken over by Cllr Terry Clegg. Defibrillator training took place in Venn Court during the year in June 2023.



Brixton is a dementia friendly parish council and as chairman I have attend the Annual Meetings of Diptford and Dittisham Parish Councils to support them as they start to move towards becoming dementia friendly.

Thank you to Councillor Clegg who regularly updates the Council on Silverbridge Way, and the Brixton Composters Group. Plans for the extension of Silver Bridge Way inside the hedge on the Yealmpton side to Ben's Farm Shop were temporarily paused during the year and will be followed up in this year.

The Parish Council has been regularly updated by on the restoration of Steer Point Quarry by Aardvark with lorry movement ceasing in October 2023. A Public Right of Way on the site will enable access to this reclaimed land.

Regular liaison between the local Police and the Chairman has been set up and has worked well dealing with urgent issues and updating when necessary. Thank you to Cllr Ian Martin who represents the Parish Council on the Police Advocate scheme.

The Parish Council continues to support St. Mary's School in Brixton 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 the school who had made the most significant progress during the previous year at the school end of year celebration.

I would like to thank our 2 District Councillors Juie 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.

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 2024