

# **A PARISH PLAN FOR BRIXTON**



# **2012**

## INTRODUCTION

This Parish Plan for Brixton has been produced by using the information gained from the questionnaires completed by local people in 2010. All parts of the plan refer to the information received in the questionnaires.

It provides a foundation for the community of Brixton's future based on the views and aspirations of local residents. The Plan anticipates changes which have been on the agenda for the last 2 years including Carrollsland (now developed), the Sherford New Community, and additional housing within Brixton as a result of implementation of the Local Development Framework 2010 by South Hams District Council. The format of the questionnaire and plan is based upon 'Egans Wheel for Sustainable Communities' which is recognised as a good model to draw out local people views. See Appendix 1

The information provided in the questionnaires identifies the issues which are important to the people of Brixton in times of significant change. These issues will be addressed locally to ensure that the identity, integrity and sustainability of the community as a rural village with small hamlets and a beautiful estuary on the urban fringe of Plymouth, are paramount as change is introduced. Nationally the Coalition Government is introducing new legislation i.e. the Localism Act, which will give Parish Councils new powers including the production of 'Neighbourhood Plans'. It is anticipated that this Parish Plan will form the basis for future neighbourhood plans and be a guiding document as changes in the community are considered and unfold. The Government is also freeing up current planning regulations and this plan forms a blue print from which local people and the Parish Council can voice their views to South Hams District Council and Devon County Council on any changes which could potentially threaten the sustainability, integrity and identity of the Parish.

Brixton Parish Council would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete a questionnaire to provide us with a rich source of information and ideas for this plan. The Parish Council would also like to thank those people, who have helped to set up the questionnaires, consult with local people and write this plan. The Parish Plan is a 'living' document that, while setting the way forward for the Parish, will ensure local people are also ready for, and can influence, any changes in the Parish into the future. It reflects how the Parish is seen at a certain time. To ensure that the Parish Council keeps ahead of changes the plan will be reviewed annually and will include any new or ongoing debates and challenges for the Parish.

# **BRIXTON PARISH PLAN**

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## **ENVIRONMENT**

Brixton Parish is on the urban fringe of Plymouth. The land use is mainly agricultural with historic links to the manors of Hareston, East and West Sherford, Woolaton, Winston, Wiverton and Spriddleston. The area to the south of the A379 is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty reaching down to the River Yealm at Steer Point. The new community of Sherford is likely to impact on the current environment of the Parish.

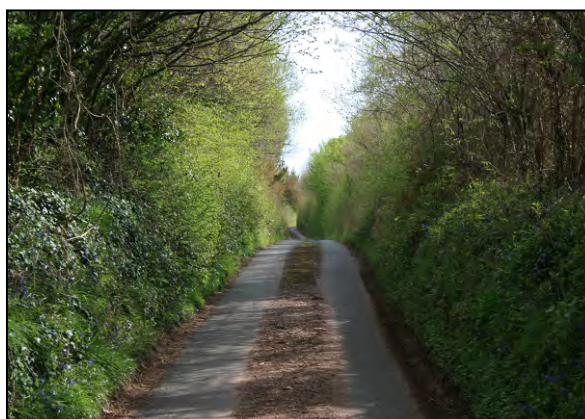
The results from the questionnaires recognised the importance of preserving the natural beauty of the countryside and maintaining the identity of the village of Brixton during a period of considerable change for the local environment. The impact of the volume, speed and noise of traffic and a safe route between Brixton and Yealmpton needs to be addressed. The impact of the Sherford New Community development needs to be carefully monitored.

Particular areas of concern were the importance of the visual character of the village and its surroundings

- Improvement of overall appearance of the village by encouraging hanging baskets/window boxes, clearance of weeds from gutters and pavements, trimming hedges and foliage on high walls in the village. Creating a welcoming gateway to Brixton on the A379 at either end of the village
- Proactive tree management and new planting particularly at each end of the village and along the main road
- Improving wildlife habitats with bi-annual hedge cutting, wild flower verges, swift boxes on the Church
- Community seating for the whole area to be enjoyed at a variety of locations across the parish e.g. The Park, football field, along the estuary, on the footpaths and at bus stops.
- Reduction of litter

Other areas of concern

- Provision of a bottle bank locally
- The need for a Community Composting Scheme
- Toy library/swap
- Traffic control see page 9 in Parish Plan
- Safe route between Brixton and Yealmpton see page 12 in Parish Plan



## **The Way Forward**

Brixton Parish Council:



- to continue to actively promote and develop a Community Composting Scheme for Brixton Village with a local farmer (Initial negotiations started in 2011)
  - to re examine the current arrangements for street cleaning and weed control
  - to explore the possibility and suitable location for a bottle bank in the village
  - to set up a group of interested residents to examine the findings of the questionnaires and report back to the Parish Council on
    - i) Improving the visual appearance of the village including street cleaning and the management of dog fouling
    - ii) Location and maintenance of public benches across the Parish
    - iii) Defining 'Gateway entrances to the village on the A379 \*
    - iv) New tree planting \*
    - v) Location and management of additional notice boards
    - vi) Improving the wildlife habitats in collaboration with the Feoffee Trust, St. Mary's School, St. Marys Church and Friends of Brixton Play Spaces (as part of the Brixton Play Trail )
    - vii) Establishing a toy library/swap
- \*to be linked to the Jubilee celebrations 2012

## FAIR FOR EVERYONE

The population of Brixton has a wide age range – for example: 4 people over 90 and 15 between the ages of 11-16 completed the questionnaire, with the majority in the 40-59 age range. Meeting the needs of the diverse community in Brixton is reflected by the wide range of services and local opportunities which currently exist in the Parish. Brixton Parish Council is sensitive to the needs of the local population and works to ensure that people of all ages and backgrounds can access services locally. Current examples include:

- the development of a play trail by a group of volunteers – Friends of Brixton Play Spaces - around Brixton for children and young people improving existing play spaces and providing places where parents/ grandparents and carers can socialise while children play.



locally for all ages and abilities

- a Welcome Pack is being introduced in 2012 so that new residents can immediately know what is happening locally and engage in the life of the Parish
- the promotion of health and wellbeing for all residents. Currently Brixton Parish Council is working in collaboration with other Parishes around the Yealm to create a dementia friendly environment for people with dementia and their carers
- Brixton is represented on the Yealm Medical Centre Patients Participation Group where issues of general and specific health which affect people living in Brixton can be addressed.

## **The Way Ahead**

Brixton Parish Council will continue to work with all organisations in the Parish including St. Mary's Primary School, St. Mary's Parochial Church Council, the Brixton Community Association, Tor Homes and the Brixton Feoffee Trust. It will also work in the wider community to ensure that local people can access services easily and safely, and that new services/activities are planned in response to the changing needs and aspirations.

## **ECONOMY**

The importance and diversity of small businesses across the Parish of Brixton which provide shopping and other services are highly valued by local people. Their significance to the vibrancy and sustainability of community life across Brixton is seen as essential for the lives of people living in a rural setting so close to Plymouth.

Local employment and support to local enterprise were seen as important.

Areas for improvement were identified as:

- More local employment
- Greater numbers of small businesses
- Increased support for local enterprise
- Ensuring the future of local businesses in the Parish in the current economic and political climate.



## **The Way Forward**

Brixton Parish Council to ensure, in collaboration with South Hams District Council, that where appropriate opportunities exist to increase local

employment, small businesses and local enterprise, they will be pursued to assure the long term sustainability and viability of the community.

## **GOVERNANCE**

Across Brixton Parish there are a range of organisations which work closely together for the benefit of all local residents. e.g. Brixton Parish Council, Brixton Community Association, St. Mary's School, St. Mary's Church, Tor Homes, South Hams District Council and Devon County Council.

The questionnaires identified that Brixton Parish Council is the group that best represents the majority of views across the community.

However, particular concerns were raised about communication and the Parish Council. These could be addressed by:

- Improving communication between local organisations and the people living in the community, which can be best achieved by the 'Brixton Magazine'.
- The Parish Council to improve its engagement with the wider community by increasing opportunities for communication e.g. informal meetings with Parish Councillors, inviting local people to join time limited working groups and raising the profile of the Parish Council generally

Particular priorities for Brixton Parish Council to address included:

- i) the appearance of Brixton Village
- ii) Provision of Affordable Housing
- iii) Provision of safe pedestrian walks/footpaths
- iv) Ensuring value for money
- v) Ensuring a sustainable community

Brixton Parish Council has adopted a 'Community Engagement Policy' outlining its intention to be 'open and transparent in its business and relationship with local people'. The Parish Council meetings are well attended, with good representation from local residents and other interested people. Full Minutes are published on the Parish Council notice board and on the Brixton website. Minutes are also published in the 'Brixton Magazine'.

## **The Way Forward**

Brixton Parish Council to consider:

- Regular informal meetings where local residents can meet Parish Councillors
- Drawing on the skills, knowledge and experience of residents to join time limited working/task groups
- Publishing the minutes on other community notice boards or creating additional notice boards in strategic locations e.g. by the Venn Estate; entrance to Kitley View, and at Carrollsland
- Consideration with the Editorial Board for extending the delivery of the 'Brixton Magazine' to all households in the Parish

- Ensuring with the web site manager that the Brixton village website, sponsored jointly by the Brixton Feoffee Trust and Brixton Parish Council, is up-to-date and its appearance and format is refreshed as and when appropriate
- Proactively linking with the residents of Carroll Island
- Involvement in the development of the governance of the Sherford New Community

## THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

There are 770 houses in the Parish. Historically, housing across Brixton has developed on a basis of need, from small cottages to large houses, and reflects the local demography, employment and economy. Houses in the village are varied in size and appearance, adding to its distinctiveness, charm and unique identity. 170 new houses were built at Carroll Island in 2010.



Brixton has been allocated up to 50 new homes on a site on land north of Venn Farm, within the South Hams District Council's Local Development Framework (2010). Sites south of the A379 were not considered as they are in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The results of the questionnaires did not identify additional housing need as a priority. However, those residents who did identify housing need indicated that housing should be affordable, and support local services and the school. 5% felt that they lived in accommodation unsuitable for their needs in Brixton and were therefore looking for alternative accommodation, ideally in the parish.

Brixton Parish Council is involved in planning for the new community at Sherford – where 5,500 homes will be built with 20% affordable housing. The planning application and Section 106 Agreement by the developers have been approved by South Hams District Council (December 2011). The next steps include Plymouth City Council to consider the application and agreement by all parties will be signed over a 6 month period from February 2012.

Over the past 10 years Brixton Parish Council has vigorously resisted the Sherford New Community Development, but it will continue to ensure that high quality of design and building for the development are paramount in considering planning applications for the development.



The questionnaires showed that opportunities would arise from Sherford New Community, including:

- More people coming to the village with the potential to increase users of the shop, pub, Church etc.
- Additional public open space
- More facilities e.g. footpaths and cycle paths
- Better public transport into Plymouth
- Affordable housing
- New facilities that Brixton and its residents could share/use
- Potential increase in numbers on school roll

Some of the concerns for the development at Sherford included:

- Increased traffic through the village
- Increase in crime
- Increase in litter /fly tipping
- Increase in anti social behaviour
- Increased carbon emissions
- Reduced numbers for the school

### **The Way Forward**

It will be important for Brixton Parish Council

- to ensure that a balance between the impact of new developments coming on line and the long term needs and sustainability of Brixton as a village/parish is consistently and constantly addressed
- All planning applications for local housing are consistently considered against a criteria for high quality design, layout and planning

## **TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY**

The village of Brixton straddles the A379, a busy route from Plymouth into the South Hams, with an average of 6387 vehicles per 24 hour period in 2010 (Devon County Council Data Team). It is served by bus routes to and from Dartmouth, Kingsbridge and Newton Ferrers. Other services available include the Ring & Ride Services, Feoffee Car Scheme and local taxi services.



Concerns were expressed about:

- Lack of allocated parking space in the village for cars and bicycles
- Speed, noise and volume of traffic through the village
- Need for a 'pelican crossing' in the village
- Hazards caused by parking on the pavements

- Dangerous spots across the Parish e.g. Stamps Hill, Red Lion Hill, Fordebrooke Lane, Winston Lane at the A379, narrow road linking to Plympton
- Speed of traffic through the lanes
- Accessing the mini roundabout safely from Steer Point Road.
- Blind bend on the bridge by Rogers Garage
- Pedestrians walking down Chittleburn Hill
- Large vehicles using Fordebrooke Lane ( as directed by Sat Nav)
- Frequency and reliability of bus services and links to other areas particularly Derriford Hospital
- Pedestrian and cycle access to Elburton
- Disabled access at bus stops

### **The Way Forward**

With the development for housing and employment at Sherford and Venn Farm, Brixton Parish Council needs to work closely with the Highway Agency to develop a comprehensive strategic traffic management plan. This plan needs to include provision of suitable and adequate parking, traffic calming, improved crossing and roundabout arrangements for the whole length of the main road as it traverses Brixton. This should also include those areas which lead onto the A379 at Red Lion Hill, Fordebrooke Lane etc.

Brixton Parish Council will:

- in collaboration with the Highways Agency, set up a small working group of interested people to establish a traffic management plan for the A379 and across the Parish
- pursue the completion of the path for walkers and cyclists into Elburton
- approach local bus companies to see if the current services and their links to other parts of Plymouth/Devon can be improved



### **SERVICES**

Brixton has a variety of services and activities for all ages which can be easily accessed and are valued by local people. These services and activities help to improve and maintain the well being of people living in Brixton, they also increase the sense of community. Services currently include refurbished play

spaces, mobile bank, mobile library, gentle exercise classes, messy play at St Marys Church (monthly), Stay and Play (Mondays at the Community Room in term time), book group and Livewires Community café. Activities including badminton, yoga, tai chi, dance (adults and children) aerobics, short mat bowls are held weekly in term time in the Community Centre at St. Marys School.



The questionnaires identified that the grounds at St. Marys School should be made available out of hours for use by the whole community; the majority would be prepared to pay for these facilities. There was great support, with suggested activities, for a public recreation playing field. A range of suggestions were made for St. Marys Church, with some now implemented including a toilet and servery.

Other findings have been forwarded to the Head Teacher and Governing body at St. Mary's School and St. Marys Parochial Church Council respectively for information.

Generally, local services were seen as helpful, friendly and welcoming and a good place to catch up on the news.

Poor mobile phone reception and slow broadband were identified as areas which needed improvement. The irregular and unreliable bus service was also identified as an area for improvement

## **The Way Forward**

Brixton Parish Council will

- ensure that the poor mobile phone reception, slow Broadband and improving the bus service will be addressed in partnership with the relevant strategies adopted by Devon County Council
- approach the School Governors to consider the possibility of the school grounds of St. Marys School
- ensure that opportunities to develop new services in the community are pursued e.g. child minding, support to older people to continue to live in Brixton

## **WELL CONNECTED - Access to the countryside**



Across the Parish a comprehensive network of permissive footpaths access countryside and the River Yealm, it also links to the 'Erme-Plym Trail'. These paths are a legacy for the Parish from a committed group of volunteers dedicated to the establishment and regular upkeep of the network.

Access to the countryside and keeping footpaths open for public use were seen as important and valued for walking and exercising. A short, easily accessible walking and cycling route to Yealmpton was also considered to be an important development for the residents of Brixton (ballot results 2009).



## **The Way Forward**

Brixton Parish Council will:

- continue to ensure that the permissive paths and the Erme Plym Trail remain as important assets for local people. The paths will be regularly maintained and repaired where necessary to ensure that people have safe and easy access to the countryside
- continue to work closely with Yealmpton Parish Council, the land owners and Devon County Council on the Silver Bridge Way Project to develop a shared multi use community path between the two villages
- consider opportunities to increase the network of footpaths and Rights of Way in the Parish
- consider opportunities for bridleways in the Parish where appropriate
- work towards the completion of the access to Elburton and Plymouth for pedestrians and cyclists

## **ACTIVE, INCLUSIVE AND SAFE - Youth Activities**

Young people in Brixton have limited opportunities for activities in the Parish. Currently the Yealmpton/Brixton Scouts meet in Brixton and there are limited sporting activities in the Community Hall but there is no specific resource available solely for the use of young people. In late 2009 a Youth Café was successfully set up as a trial at Tuscany's; this ended following serious water damage to the property and it has not been possible to find an alternative



since. Meeting the needs of the young people in the Parish continues to be of concern to the Parish Council.

### **The Way Forward**

Brixton Parish Council will continue to look for ways to provide additional opportunities for young people in the Parish.



### **Just a few of the comments received:**

Better bus service

Improved footpaths to Yealmpton & Elburton

Gutters and pavements not weeded and cleaned enough

Dog fouling – people not clearing up after their dogs

Seats – dispersed around the village in consultation with local residents

More flower tubs

Brixton could be a trail blazer village if it moved to wild flower verges and once a year mowing

Pub & Post Office are fantastic

Brixton needs to retain a rural atmosphere

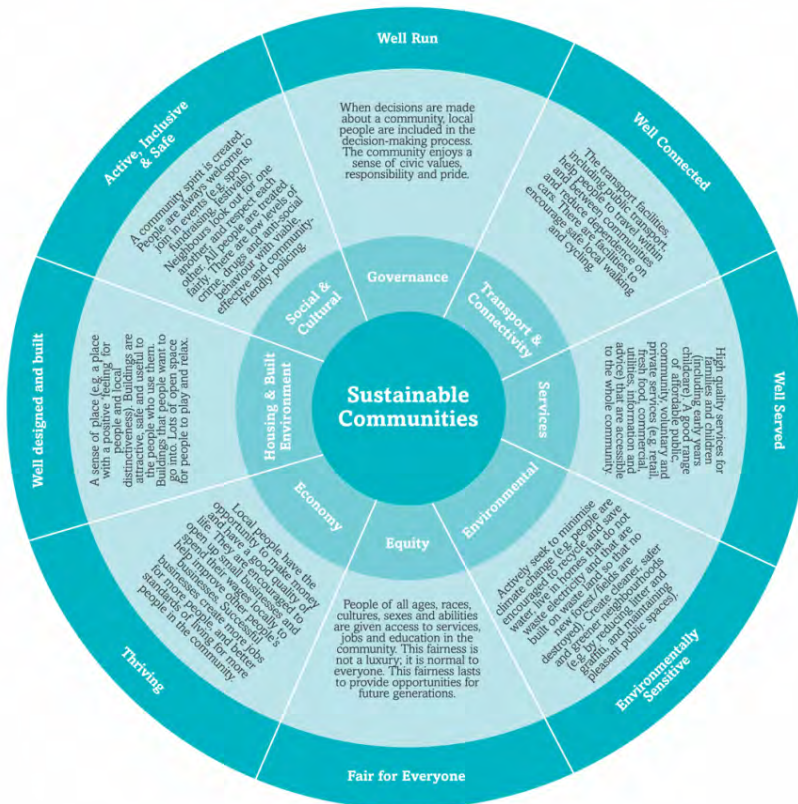
Brixton Magazine does not go to all households.

Reduce traffic speeds

Thank you for taking the time to set up and send out the questionnaire to give residents 'a voice'

Facilities to park bikes in the village needed

Appendix 1 – Egans Wheel



The preparation of this Plan was supported by grants from Devon County Council, The Brixton Feoffee Trust, South Hams District Council and Brixton Parish Council

