

A Parish Plan for Brixton 2012 - Review and update July 2024

(This review needs to be read in conjunction with the document 'A Parish Plan for Brixton 2012')

Introduction

Much has happened in Brixton since the Parish Plan was published in 2012. The most significant contribution to planning has been the Brixton Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2034 'made' by South Hams District Council in January 2020. The plan was the outcome of the work and time of a small, dedicated group of residents over a period of 5 years which included a regulated consultation process with parishioners. In many ways the Brixton Parish Neighbourhood Plan has encompassed issues raised in the Parish Plan of 2012. A modification to the Neighbourhood Plan was made by South Hams District Council in March 2024 following a further regulated consultation process.

This review provides the opportunity to update and record the progress made over the past 11 years and to make formal links with the Neighbourhood Plan for the future.

Environment

In 2012 the concern from the public consultation on the environment centred around the location of Brixton on the urban fringe of a large conurbation - Plymouth - together with the impact of the new town of Sherford and potential new housing development within the village. The Brixton Parish Neighbourhood Plan addresses these issues particularly the natural beauty of the countryside, maintaining the identity of the village and protecting the South Devon National Landscape (formerly the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The new town of Sherford was not included in the Brixton Parish Neighbourhood Plan. However, its impact is addressed recognising the importance of connectivity between Brixton village with Sherford through the Country Park for both communities. The Parish Plan identified substantial concern from residents on the importance of maintaining the visual character of the village and its surroundings which has been taken forward in the Brixton Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

Brixton village as a welcoming gateway to the South Hams was seen as significant. This has been addressed by regular street sweeping in the village by enthusiastic volunteers cleaning gutters and pavements and encouraging householders undertake these tasks outside their own homes, a long-term contract for regular grass cutting of the verges including 'No Mow May' and leaving the rear of the verges uncut to promote biodiversity through wildflower verges for insects and butterflies. Two granite stones have been placed along the A379 marking the entrance to Brixton village.

Silver birch trees were planted at the junction of Elliots Hill with Steer Point Road in 2012 as part of the Silver Jubilee celebrations, at the same time the 'owl' seat and stepping stones were installed making the area a pleasant place to sit and for children to play as part of the Brixton Play Trail. In 2022 bee friendly trees were planted along the A379, at Woodland Drive, Steer Point Road and Chittleburn Hill as part of the Queen's Canopy celebrating the Platinum Jubilee and to mark the Kings Coronation in 2023. The Bee Friendly group has also been responsible for planting daffodils along the A379 and in the green space at Carrollsland.

The number of community seats has increased with a seat donated by the former footpath volunteers on Footpath 4 Mill Lane, 2 seats in the village:- one remembering Tony Davis (Dolly), the other a gift from the Royal British Legion in remembrance of the fallen in WWI and II. This seat with planters has also made a safe space by the bus stop at the entrance to Elbridge House. A log seat has been installed in the first copse on Silverbridge Way, the permissive footpath to Yealmpton. The existing seats have been maintained by volunteers on behalf of the Parish Council.

The provision of a bottle bank was considered but is no longer needed with the new recycling arrangements made by South Hams District Council. The Community Composting Scheme has been a valuable and important asset to the parish over the past 10 years.

In 2020 Brixton Parish Council purchased land on the old mill site at Cofflete from South Hams District Council to provide an amenity space for the community and to protect the site for its nature and wildlife. The project plan for this site is in 2 phases - phase one - the lower site has been completed. Plans are currently being progressed by the Parish Council to complete phase 2 - the upper part of the site.

Litter along the A379 remains a problem. However, volunteer litter pickers regularly 'pick up' along the road edges. Litter picking was part of a young resident's Duke of Edinburgh Award (Bronze) when the litter was sorted and recycled. Dog fouling also remains a problem.

The Parish Council was instrumental in setting up the River Yealm Water Quality Group of the 7 riparian parishes and other interested bodies to work together to address the issue of water quality of the river Yealm

Fair for Everyone

Since the Parish Plan was published in 2012 the demographics for the parish have increased currently the total population is 2594 (2021 Census). This increase is due to the residential development of Canes Orchard/Venn Farm in Brixton village, the increasing number of houses being built in Sherford which are in Brixton Parish in addition to new build on one-off sites e.g. Hareston Barns, Chittleburn Close, Arbour Close.

Play facilities at Steer Point Road (Brixstix) and at Woodland Drive in Kitley View were completed in 2012 as part of Brixton Play Trail. In the intervening years Brixstix has been updated and modernised. The Parish Council has promoted the need for suitable play spaces in the new housing developments. However, these have not in the main met the needs of children and families in the parish.

The Parish Council worked with Active Devon to provide exercise classes for older people initially based at Venn Court. These classes have continued over the past 10 years. They are now managed by Dementia Friendly Parishes around the Yealm and are based in Yealmpton where more easily managed space is available.

A 'Welcome Pack' for all new residents was developed as a paper document with increased digitalisation over the period of the Plan a 'Welcome Letter' is now available on the Parish Council website.

Brixton Parish Council was the key contributor to the inception and development of Dementia Friendly Parishes around the Yealm creating dementia friendly communities for people living with dementia and their families. Dementia Friendly Parishes is now a registered charity promoting health and well being through its inclusive programme of activities and groups. The Parish Council has adopted an action plan to be a sustainable dementia friendly community.

The Parish Council acquired the 2 obsolete red BT telephone boxes – one on the Green the other at Fordbrook - which now house defibrillators provided in collaboration with the South Devon Ambulance Service. Training for parishioners on how to use a defibrillator in an emergency has been provided. The telephone boxes maintain their original identity.

The parish council no longer has formal links with Yealmpton Medical Centre. Financial support has been given over the years to Yealmpton and Brixton Community Volunteers, South Hams Citizens Advice and South Hams Community Action who provide support to individual residents and volunteer groups.

A book swap has recently been set up in the Church in response to the closing down of the mobile library service in 2024.

Economy

10 years Brixton village has lost its shop. The Post Office works with reduced hours and a restaurant has closed. The pub and the fish and chip shop are key to the village economy.

Governance The Brixton Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2034 identifies employment land at Chittleburn Business Park. The Parish Council continues to support small businesses. However, the impact of COVID has contributed to significant changes in the local economy. Over the past

Brixton Parish Council continues to work closely with other local organizations for the benefit of residents. Since the Parish Plan was produced the Parish Council has raised its profile through consultation with residents for the Neighbourhood Plan, parking on the Green and for the review of the Definitive Map of the Public Rights of Way by Devon County Council.

Working groups involving residents have been set up and meet regularly. These include the Traffic Management Group, the Environment Group and the more recently the cost-of-living group.

Minutes of council meetings are published on community notice boards, on the Parish Council website and via Facebook

The Brixton village website is refreshed and kept up to date by a website manager.

The Parish Council is proactively developing links with Sherford and Carrollsland by holding regular council meetings in these communities. In attracting parishioners to fill vacancies the needs of the whole community are considered when appointing new councillors.

The Parish Council is directly involved with the governance of the Sherford New Community through the representation of the Parish Council by an appointed director onto the Sherford Community Land Trust Board.

Over the past 10 years the Parish Council successfully applied to the Local Council Award Scheme set up by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) to celebrate the successes of the best local councils and to provide framework for councils to meet their full potential. The parish Council now holds the Gold Award for its high-quality governance and administration.

Brixton Parish Council has introduced a Business Plan in the last 10 years outlining and adopting the councils aims, objectives and plans annually

The Built Environment

The issues identified in the Parish Plan concerning the built environment have been addressed by the Brixton Neighbourhood Plan 2014- 2034

Transport and Connectivity

Many of the concerns identified in the Parish Plan continue today. However, in the intervening period regular quarterly meetings have been held between the Parish Council and Devon County Council Highways Manager addressing issues of traffic management identified by residents. Parking in the village and increasingly at Sherford continues to be problematic. The Parish Council has purchased 2 VAS to reduce the speed of traffic through the village and data shows that generally the speed limit is not exceeded. The Parish Council now has a Road Warden to address issues relating to speed, parking etc Speed Watch has also been

introduced in collaboration with Devon and Cornwall Police and supported by a team of volunteers. An additional zebra crossing has been considered during this time but was not supported by Devon County Council. Traffic calming on Red Lion Hill and improved cycle links to Plymouth are being considered as part of the outcome of the Sherford development.

Services

Since this plan was written there has been a reduction in bus services to the village, the availability of a village shop and a regular service from the Post Office.

The impact of COVID has resulted in the growth of home deliveries, digital banking and increase in the use of email and social media. Brixton has 2 Facebook sites.

Well Connected - Access to the Countryside

The Public Rights of Way (PROWs) and Erme Plym Trail have been regularly maintained as part of the 3P's scheme with Devon County Council. Volunteers regularly walk the paths and report any changes to the Clerk of the Parish Council. The wall on Footpath 26 has been restored.

Silverbridge Way a permissive path linking Brixton with Yealmpton was opened in 2013. The two parish councils collaborate to fund its regular maintenance. Plans have been started to extend the path at the Yealmpton end the hedge to Ben's Farm Shop. A new permissive path links Canes Orchard to the network of PROWs and a PROW has been included in the restoration of Steer Point Quarry. Plans are in place to close Monkey Lane to vehicular traffic and limit it to pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders. This will provide access to the Sherford Country Park and improve links between Brixton village and Sherford for walkers and cyclists.

Access to Elburton and Plymouth for pedestrians and cyclists via Dawes Lane which is in Plymouth remains unresolved but is part of S106 arrangements for the Sherford development and is active on the Parish Councils agenda.

Active, Inclusive and Safe – Youth Activities

Services to meet the need of young people have deteriorated since the writing of the plan in 2012. In 2023 the Yealmpton/Brixton Scouts folded. There are opportunities for dance in the Community run by a private dance company. All other activities have to be accessed outside the village

Conclusion

The Parish Plan was an important document setting the direction for Brixton Parish Council in 2012. Many of the objectives of the plan have been met or have been included in the Brixton Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2034, the Council's Business Plan, project plans i.e. land at Cofflete and by regular updating at Parish Council meetings e.g. Emergency Planning etc. The Parish Council will need to consider whether this review of the objectives of the Councils work identified in 2012 is still relevant and that it is satisfied that the Council's objectives are now met through existing plans as described above.