

Minutes of the meeting of Bridford Parish Council held on Monday 6th January 2025 at 7pm in the Village Hall.

Present – Cllr. Topley (Chair); Cllr. Purser; Cllr. Gallagher; Cllr. Symons; Cllr. Ashenden-Pearce, 3 members of the public; Tamsin Mowat (Clerk)

Meeting opened at 7pm

Agenda item	Action	Owner
<p>1) Public Discussion: Anne Mayes, Snow Warden commented about the gritting team; a new resident has volunteered and joined the team and been out twice already to grit. The state of the road at the bottom of Pound Lane is a continuing problem and needs addressing. Pothole in the layby at the top (near the Bridford sign) needs filling. South West Water work to take place at the end of January from Plaistow Green to Windhill Gate and Birchtree. Gritter; issues with the gritter plate reported by Andy – ceased up and using WD40 to help free it up on each use. Glasdon contacted and quote for £306.38 to be serviced at the end of the winter season including transport.</p>	<p>Report to DCC Highways: pothole in layby at top of Pound Lane and surface at bottom of Pound Lane (spring plate)</p> <p>Phone SWW</p> <p>Add gritter to Feb agenda</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Anne Mayes volunteered to</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>2) Apologies For Absence: District Cllr. Swain, Cllr. Marriott (illness); absence approved and agreed by all.</p>		
<p>3) Minutes – to approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 4th November 2024 – proposed by Cllr. Purser and seconded by Cllr. Ashenden-Pearce. Minutes approved and signed.</p>		
<p>4) Declarations Of Interest: Cllr. Gallagher declared an interest in planning item DOC/0123/24 3B.</p>		
<p>5) Review action points from previous meeting a) Clerk’s action points: highways, credit card, banking, budget, funding for deer fencing for allotments, budget, Q3 expenditure and passwords – all in hand except passwords still to do as banking issues took priority in December. b) Councillors’ action points: Cllr. Topley – Free trees scheme for play park in hand and liaising with Lucy Smeardon – trees to be planted soon, Cllr. Marriott – Parish Volunteer Award Scheme; plans in hand, VE Day celebrations; carry over. Cllr. Symons – quote for work on allotment inside hedge – colleague Dave to contact Cllr. Topley (to be paid in 2025/6), signs for play park gate and Westcott lane. Cllr. Symons has put signs up, rubbish bin removed, hole filled in and play park fence mended but new fencing and posts needed. Latch on play park gate still to be fixed. Thanks to Cllr. Symons for all his hard work.</p>	<p>VE Day to be carried over to Feb agenda</p> <p>Put fencing and posts for play park on Play Park Action Plan to discuss at Parish Plan meeting and carry over to March or April agenda.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>6) District and County Councillor Reports Cllr. Purser reported on devolution to Unitary authorities with Mayors – 500 000 per authority. Devon pushing for overall</p>	<p>Email Cllr. Jerry Brook and ask when DCC’s Children’s Services</p>	<p>Clerk</p>

<p>authority with Torbay. Devon CC meeting on 9th January 2025 to submit response by 10th Jan. Huge costs would be involved. Plymouth and Exeter are Labour Councils and would like to be large unitary authorities in their own right. All up in the air at the moment. Suggestion that DCC elections be deferred as new elections may be due in 2026 if this goes ahead. Planning and housing issues – TDC told to build 1500 (rather than 700) per year. Local Plan from TDC now with inspector for approval but might not be approved and would have to be looked at again. ‘Grey’ land to be looked at. 40% of land in TDC is in Dartmoor National Park. A lot of change. Parish Councils still currently exist but long-term future uncertain. Cllr. Gallagher raised issue of DCC’s Ofsted report; it has still not been publicly released.</p>	<p>Ofsted report is due to be released.</p>	
<p>7) Chairman’s Report (for information only) – summarised here and full report available at the end of the minutes and on the website</p> <p>Happy New Year to colleagues and all Bridford residents! Thanks go in particular to the gritting team and snow warden; clothing bank liaison; village garden and Book Exchange volunteers for their work throughout the year; all these voluntary initiatives are running well. The Parish Council appreciates the work that volunteers do to deliver Teign Unity Magazine which keeps the village in touch. Thanks too to the parishioners who helped to unblock drains during the recent rainy weather.</p>		
<p>8) PLANNING Planning Applications - Dartmoor National Park has asked for observations from the Parish Council on the following planning applications:</p> <p><u>Applications</u> DOC/0123/24 3B - Two agricultural buildings, one for livestock and one for agricultural storage - Barytes, Bridford, Exeter, Devon, EX6 7JD DOC/0315/24 3 4 - Replace a flat roof with a pitched roof on an existing outbuilding - Middle Hole Farm, Bridford, Exeter, Devon, EX6 7HU DOC/0316/24 3 4 - Replace a flat roof with a pitched roof on an existing outbuilding - Middle Hole Farm, Bridford, Exeter, Devon, EX6 7HU No objections to these applications – comments previously submitted to DNPA</p> <p><u>Decisions</u> 0436/24/BC - Class BC - temporary recreational campsite 3 x tent Dates: March 29th to April 1st 2025; May 3rd to 6th 2025; May 24th to 27th 2025; June 14th to 17th 2025; June 21st to</p>	<p>Contact Nick Savin, DNPA Planning Officer with regards query over current potential residential use at Coombe Head Farm.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>

<p>23rd 2025; July 5th to 8th 2025; July 26th to 29th 2025; August 2nd to 5th 2025; August 23rd to 26th 2025; September 6th to 8th 2025; September 20th to 22nd 2025; September 27th to 29th 2025; October 4th to 7th 2025; October 18th to 20th 2025; November 1st to 3rd 2025; November 15th and 16th 2025; December 30th and 31st 2025; January 1st 2026 Coombehead Farm, Bridford, Exeter, Devon, EX6 7LQ</p> <p>Coombe Head Farm – it was noted that an application for residential planning was previously turned down by DNPA; query over potential current use for residential.</p> <p>DOC/0123/24 3B DOC/0331/24 4 - Two agricultural buildings, one for livestock and one for agricultural storage - Barytes, Bridford, Exeter, Devon, EX6 7JD - Discharged</p>		
<p>9) FINANCE</p> <p>Income</p> <p>£1100 from DCC for Locality Funding to be paid to Acorn - received 5th November</p> <p>Allotment rents received in November:</p> <p>4 x £15 BACS</p> <p>1 x £30 BACS</p> <p>Clerk’s repaid back pay of £93.94 BACS (see below for details)</p> <p>Clerk’s pension employee contributions backdated to 1st August 2024 (as paid directly to Nest Pensions from Unity Bank account) – £309.21 total (August to December) – BACS 17/12/24</p> <p>Expenditure</p> <p>£1100 Acorn – locality funding from DCC – BACS (retrospective approval as previously agreed transfer of funds)</p> <p>Village Hall room hire for Parish Council meetings £60.00 (July to November 2024) and Post Office use of lower hall (August to October 2024) £84.00 – BACS</p> <p>£40.79 signs for Westcott and Play park (£6.80 VAT) – (retrospective approval) BACS to Clerk as paid on own CC</p> <p>Defib pads for Venn Garage c.£86.34 to Andrew Deptford BACS (retrospective approval)</p> <p>Gritters drinks November £15 to Cllr. Topley - BACS</p> <p>VE Day flag via Pip Morrison by BACS - £30.60 (retrospective approval)</p> <p>£144 SLCC ILCA Clerk’s training course (retrospective approval; previously agreed as in Clerk’s contract)</p> <p>Clerk’s salary November - £629.40 SO</p> <p>Clerk’s salary December (one week less pay due to taking one week of unpaid leave as well as one week of annual leave at Christmas) - BACS payment of £472.05 made for December and regular SO for monthly salary postponed until January</p> <p>Clerk’s homeworking expenses - £6 per week SO</p> <p>Clerk’s SIM and data plan - £3.99 DD per month</p>	<p>Set up payments in Unity Bank</p> <p>Check and authorise payments</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>PM and SP</p>

<p>HP Instant Ink £3.99 by SO per month to Clerk as paid on Clerk's own CC</p> <p>Clerk's back pay from April-October 2024 - £93.94 BACS (due to issues with HMRC PAYE reporting Clerk repaid this in November and it was paid back to the Clerk on 30th December to ensure banking and PAYE details matched).</p> <p>Clerk's employer's contribution pension payments to Nest Pensions (backdated payments from 1st August when Clerk became eligible for a pension): all by DD - August and September combined £36.66 (£18.33 per month), October £18.33, November £18.88 (due to salary increase), December £14.16 (adjusted for lower salary this month due to unpaid leave and updated in Nest) and £47.21 employee so Clerk owed £15.73 as overpaid contributions to Unity Trust Bank for December – BACS (to be authorised in Unity Bank) From January: £18.88 per month by DD for employer's contributions Clerk's Salary SO updated to take off Clerk's pension contribution of £62.94 each month from January 2025, as will be paid directly to Nest Pensions, so salary will be £566.46 per month (to be authorised in Unity Bank)</p> <p>Bank Reconciliations and Statements for November and December 2024.</p> <p>Council to resolve to accept the accounts – proposed by Cllr. Ashenden Pearce and Cllr. Symons and agreed by all</p>		
<p>10) Budget – budget of £15 253 for 2025/6 - resolve to agree – proposed by Cllr. Purser and seconded by Cllr. Symons and agreed by all</p>		
<p>11) Precept – resolve to agree and notify TDC by end of January – proposed 10% increase to £13442 but recognising that some parishioners may struggle with the rising cost of everything. Voted for 10% increase and agreed by majority.</p>	<p>Submit Precept request to TDC</p> <p>Signpost parishioners to TDC hardship fund, Citizens advice, schemes for people in need of financial assistance and to apply for pension credit and advertise on website and noticeboards and Unity.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>12) Travel expenses policy – consider and agree to adopt if approved (draft shared prior to the meeting); proposed by Cllr. Purser and seconded by Cllr. Symons - all agreed and adopted.</p>	<p>Annotate policy with date adopted</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>13) Parish Plan - agree date for February meeting at pub to discuss (not formal meeting); Wednesday 12th February 2025 Parish Plan meeting to be held</p>		

<p>14) Village WhatsApp for culvert clearing – Cllr. Topley to lead. Set up village WhatsApp like for the Snow Team; set up one for the drains and culvert cleaning for volunteers to help. Cllr. Topley to report to Clerk for any issues that need raising with DCC Highways.</p>	Set up WhatsApp group	JT
<p>15) Clerk’s report (for information only) Banking update; signatory and CC application approved Pension and HMRC update; pension set up and HMRC informed Lighting update; issues reported to DCC and all in hand Update on Highways: Neaddon Lane, grit bins, drains and diverter ILCA – Clerk has enrolled and started the course Internal audit plan – for Feb agenda Facebook – new page created to share news and items of interest</p>	Put Audit on Feb agenda to approve Hania and make contact	Clerk
<p>16) Councillors’ reports and meetings attended (for information only) Cllr. Symons – rocks up at Westcott on the lane verge – issue with access for bin lorries or machinery</p> <p>Annual Parish Meeting – discussion held between Cllr. Topley and Cllr. Marriott: celebratory evening event to be organised for all volunteers and parishioners; opportunity to publicise and celebrate what is on offer in the parish and potentially recruit new volunteers. Budget of c.£200 needed for food, drink, entertainment (consider applying to Locality fund as about community building). Article to go in Unity and personalised invitations to be prepared.</p>	<p>Report to DCC Highways again and check whether road is adopted by DCC.</p> <p>Clerk to change date of APM on website if necessary</p> <p>Prepare piece for Unity and personalised invitations</p> <p>APM to go on Feb agenda for agreement of date and budget</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>PM</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>Email information DALC bulletins - up to #58 NALC bulletins DNPA Planning applications DCC Highways updates DCC Lighting updates Revised budget information for review Q3 expenditure report and Q4 predictions</p>		
<p>Meeting closed at 20.49 Items for Information - The next council meeting will be on Monday 3rd February 2025 at 7pm in the Village Hall.</p>		

Signed:

Date:

Chair of Bridford Parish Council

CHAIR'S REPORT – JANUARY 2025

Happy New Year to colleagues and all Bridford residents!

Thanks have gone in particular to the gritting team and snow warden; clothing bank liaison; village garden and Book Exchange volunteers for their work throughout the year; all these voluntary initiatives are running well. The Parish Council appreciates the work that volunteers do to deliver Teign Unity Magazine which keeps the village in touch

December was the month when we said goodbye to Ann Lord in a packed church and had time to remember the valuable contributions she made to the village in particular in her role as Parish Councillor.

In December there was Carol singing, planned for the village garden but in the event due to poor weather held in the Bridford Inn. A beautiful Carol Service was held in the church on Christmas Eve, standing room only

At the end of November/beginning of December there was colossal rain around the time of Storm Bert and there were concerns about flooding. Various people volunteered to dig out the culverts and big thanks to Seven Acres as Nick Tucker did a temporary repair to the diverter. The diverter is in need of repair and Tamsin has contacted highways about this. It was clear that the lack of a parish lengthsman to keep the area clear of leaves and debris had caused a build up which prevented run off from going anywhere but along the road, down School Lane, down the church steps and on. More on this in agenda item 14. This situation will be added to the list of risks outlined in our almost ready for feedback Emergency Plan.

One of our wildlife wardens, Lucy Smerdon, has sourced trees for the Playpark and a date is due to be set for a few of us to plant them in the area we have identified. With regard to the Playpark, thanks to Cllr Symons for taking responsibility for much some needed maintenance work. Fingers crossed we will have a Playpark working party soon to take care of the trees and other areas, but in the meantime a tree care and watering rota will be arranged, guided by Lucy.

Report from District Councillor Andy Swain

Devolution

You may be aware that on 16 December the Government published its English Devolution White Paper setting out plans for devolution, and reform of local government.

The White Paper includes proposals for new combined strategic authorities headed by elected mayors and plans to push for the creation of unitary authorities in the 21 remaining 'two tier' areas.

Devon County Council seem to be moving toward suggesting a single devon unitary council, including cancelling the county elections due in May this year, allowing the existing Devon County administration to continue and oversee the transition.

This is a huge change to the governance of the entire county, and I have strong concerns.

Devon is a large area with relatively poor connections, especially between north and south devon. I do not see that removing the localisation of districts will benefit the varied, and geographically remote communities we serve.

In the current climate I would expect these elections to bring significant changes to the political make up of Devon County Council. If this major overhaul of our local governance is to happen then it should be overseen by recently elected councillors with the best possible democratic mandate.

The Devon District council leaders are working together as we speak to try to put forward an alternative to the Devon County proposal. If unitary status is inevitable then there might be better representation with two unitaries rather than one. The district leaders do not favour cancelling the democratic elections that are now due.

All these details are still being decided, and things are changing fast. I am sorry I cannot offer firmer details but watch this space. The changes are sweeping.