

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

Present: Cllr. Topley (Chair), Cllr. Purser (Vice Chair), Cllr. Marriott, Cllr. Symons, Tamsin Mowat (Clerk), 0 members of the Public

Meeting opened at 19.00

Agenda item	Action	Owner
1) Public Discussion: An opportunity for members of the public to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business on the agenda, or any matter of interest to the parish. The period of time designated for public participation shall not exceed 30 minutes. (Standing Orders 3e and 3f). Reminder that members of the public are not allowed to raise issues when Council is in committee. None.		
2) Apologies For Absence: to vote and agree on apologies received: apologies from Cllr. Gallagher (work commitments): apologies accepted by all. District Councillor Andy Swain and County Councillor Richard Keeling.		
3) Declarations Of Interest: Cllr. Topley with regards allotment judging – Cllr. Topley declared she has an allotment.		
4) Minutes – to approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on the 2 nd June 2025 and the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting. Both approved by all and signed.	Post June’s minutes and APM minutes and July’s news to website	Clerk
5) Review action points from previous meeting a) Clerk’s: post minutes to website, contact Teign housing re. parking, defib sign (all agreed to buy), add piece to Unity about defib locations, check with Dave Wood about defib monitoring, set up bank payments, publish AGAR, public rights and asset register to website, set up Amazon business account, article about Brilliant Bridford in Unity, put Churchyard closure and Gov.uk domain on July’s agenda Cllr. Symons arrived 19.08 b) Councillors’: Cllr. Topley – let Trudy Cronin and Friends of Church know about potential funding, investigate whose sheep are kept in the field alongside the play park, ask Matt Balkall to admin on Community WhatsApp, Cllr. Gallagher – set up new community WhatsApp group	Buy defib sign for Venn Garage and super glue and add to Sept agenda finances Community WhatsApp to be set up in September Put Friends of the Church and Twinning group in touch with Andy Swain re. interest in community fund Keep an eye on the livestock next to the play park as currently nothing in the field	Clerk Cllr. Gallagher Clerk Cllr Topley
6) District and County Councillors’ Reports: District Cllr. Purser commented on Devolution which is due to take place by 2027 – all being debated and yet to see what will happen		

<p>County Cllr. Keeling sent a report ahead of the meeting covering finance, highways, new residential homes for children and young people in care, cost of living funding and adult learning. Full report available at the end of these minutes and on the website.</p>		
<p>7) Chair's Report (for information only) The Chair covered Clerk's training, Butts Close Verge, book exchange notice, telecare users, bio solids spreading and dark skies. See the full report at the end of the minutes and on the website.</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> None this month</p> <p><u>Decisions</u> 0138/25 - To erect two apex roofs over the existing farmyard, Seven Acre Farm, Bridford, Exeter, EX6 7AR – granted conditionally 0070/25 - Conversion of redundant agricultural building to form ancillary accommodation, Lower Lowton Farm, Lowton Lane, Bridford, Exeter, Devon, EX6 7EN - Refused</p>		
<p>9) FINANCE</p> <p><u>Income</u> None this month</p> <p><u>Expenditure</u> Clerk's Salary July £645.60 per month before Pension, so after Pension £581.04 (minus tax for July) by BACS Clerk's employee contribution pension payment to Nest Pensions (taken off salary) DD £64.56 Employer's contribution to Clerk's pension payment to Nest Pensions DD £3.77 National Insurance and income tax to HMRC – £35.29 for June BACS Clerk's homeworking expenses - £6 per week SO Clerk's SIM and data plan - £3.99 DD per month to Clerk as paid on Clerk's personal CC HP Instant Ink £4.49 per month by SO to Clerk as paid on Clerk's personal CC CC monthly fee £3 by DD to Lloyds Bank (for Unity Trust) Unity Trust Bank service charge £6 per month by DD</p>	<p>Set up payments in Unity Trust Bank</p>	<p>Clerk</p>

<p>Village Hall hire for Parish Council meetings April-June £45, Post Office service 1st April to 30th June £72, Brilliant Bridford hall hire charge £85 and £10 for VE day crockery hire. Total: £212 BACS Biscuits for Annual Parish Meeting from Sainsbury's to Clerk £2.90 BACS</p> <p>Padlock for park gate – Amazon – see emails £15.98 (incl. £2.66 VAT) (retrospective approval as old one broken so a replacement) – CC</p> <p>Post it notes and biros – Amazon – see emails £7.58 (incl £1.26 VAT) and £3.25 (incl. £0.54 VAT) (retrospective approval as office supplies for Clerk) – CC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First quarter financial report for information – all agreed fine • Bank reconciliation and Unity Trust Bank statement <p>Council to resolve to accept the accounts – all agreed and signed</p>		
<p>10) Code of conduct (circulated before the meeting) – resolve to adopt the updated version – resolved to agree and adopt. All agreed that all Councillors should receive, agree to it and sign including current Councillors. New Councillors to also receive Code of Conduct and sign up to it.</p>	<p>Provide printed copy of Code of Conduct to Councillors to all sign together at September meeting and for any new Councillors in the future</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>11) Gov.uk domain (options circulated before the meeting) – consider options and resolve to agree which one to go with – all agreed to go with Parish Online free service to meet compliance requirements and review at a later stage if regulations change.</p>	<p>Contact Parish Online to set up free Gov.uk domain name and Clerk email address</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>12) Diverter near Seven Acre Farm – to discuss and resolve to agree on course of action. Concern from parishioners over implications of flooding in the village when the diverter isn't working properly. Historic issue with flooding from the bridge on Church Lane. Excess water rather than flooding. Flooding WhatsApp to be set up to deal with any issues that arise for emergency clearing of gulleys and drains. According to local knowledge, apparently DCC Highways had previously looked after the diverter. Depending on finances, potentially look into some lengthsman work in the Autumn when we set the new budget. Discussed at length and agreed next steps will be decided following site visit.</p>	<p>Look at the diverter to see what's needed and make a plan from there</p>	<p>Cllr. Symons and Cllr. Topley (and Cllr. Purser if available)</p>
<p>13) Speeding issue – discuss and resolve to agree next steps. Discussed. Update on speed monitoring for a week. Parishioners putting together a petition to reduce speed limit to 20mph – Parish Council agreed to support the petition (wording to be agreed). We need an exact limit of where 30mph zone is – distance of lampposts? Look at what the results are of the speed check and the petition then consider next steps such as 20's plenty signs.</p>	<p>Add Cllr. Marriott and Veda Hodder to the WhatsApp group.</p> <p>Ask Ines Scillitoe, DCC Highways about 30 zone and request results of speed check.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>

	<p>Liaise with Christow Parish Council</p> <p>Continue to liaise with Ines Scillitoe, DCC Highways and share with Speed Watch WhatsApp group.</p> <p>Compose BPC 20mph support letter</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Cllr. Topley</p>
14) Allotment judging – agree on who to ask to judge the allotments – suggestions discussed and all agreed	Contact David Price to ask to judge allotments	Clerk
15) Fete stall ideas – to agree content and roles – stall for Parish Council, banner, photos of events from the past year, consultation board, focus around speeding, post its for suggestions from public.	Put together poster and items for Fete stall	Cllr. Topley
Clerk's report (for information only) Updates on church closure, power lines and Village Hall registration		
<p>Councillor's reports (for information only) and Out and About in the Community</p> <p>Cllr. Marriott reported that a parishioner is keen to become a Councillor.</p> <p>Phone box in the village was decommissioned; is it needed anymore? Discussion around improved mobile phone emergency call services and supporting neighbours.</p> <p>Cllr. Purser reported on the briefing note from the DNPA forum meeting that was cancelled. Next meeting in November.</p> <p>Cllr. Purser reported some tarmac has been put down at the bottom of Pound Lane.</p> <p>Update on gritter which is with Glasdon for servicing by Cllr. Topley – Andy has contacted Glasdon on 7/7/25 but couldn't get hold of them and will try again</p>	<p>Contact interested parishioner and invite them to next meeting. Send them application details re. co-option and add voting to co-opt to September's agenda</p> <p>Post DNPA forum briefing note to website</p> <p>Contact Ines Scillitoe, DCC Highways to ask about the Spring Plate on Pound Lane; has it been fixed?</p> <p>Follow up with Andy re. return of gritter</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Cllr. Topley</p>
<p>Email information</p> <p>DALC bulletins - up to #27</p> <p>NALC bulletins</p> <p>DNPA Planning applications</p> <p>DCC Highways updates</p> <p>National Grid update</p> <p>Updated Code of Conduct</p> <p>Gov.uk domain options</p>		

<p>Items for Information - The next council meeting will be on Monday 1st September 2025 at 7pm in the Village Hall. Note that there is no meeting in August. Meeting closed at 21.02</p>		
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Signed:

Date:

Chair of Bridford Parish Council

County Cllr. Keeling’s report for July 2025

Firstly, thank you to the Clerks and Councillors who have contacted me, and I have met over the last month with various issues in their Town/Parish.

I must give my apologies for your full council meeting as I will be attending the Local Government Association Conference, this gives me the opportunity to talk with fellow Leaders and Ministers about our pressures in Devon. I will also at conference be attending a South West Councils meeting of all the Leaders from the region, sharing and problem-solving major issues facing our councils and ultimately our residents.

I have recently attended DCC Cabinet meeting where a frank take on the finances and highways, the household support fund and a huge investment in homes for children was discussed. Please see attached link [Devon County Council - Cabinet 25.06.25](#) I have also pulled together in this report below work that has been agreed.

DCC Finance

We have ended the 2024/25 financial year without going over budget, but only by relying on temporary savings and one-off government funding.

A report presented to cabinet showed that we managed to stay within its £637.5 million budget and ‘balance the books’ despite growing demand for services like social care and support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

We had been expecting to overspend by nearly £4 million in November but managed to avoid this through a mix of short-term measures, including delaying some projects, not filling vacant jobs, and using a one-off grant from government.

The report also showed that £40 million in planned savings were delivered across council services, though this fell short of the £50 million target.

Our highways teams will carry out a repair blitz on potholes in a few trial areas of the county following a decision by the Cabinet

While approving an £83 million programme of capital funded highway maintenance schemes, our Cabinet heard from Councillor Dan Thomas, Cabinet Member for Highways, who stated that the condition of Devon’s roads is not up to scratch because the county is “grossly under resourced by central government”. Councillors backed proposals to trial areas where all potholes would be filled, rather than just dealing with safety defects. Although the exact details are still to be agreed, this pilot would be used to establish the budget implications of changing maintenance procedures.

Councillors also agreed that a task group from the Audit Committee should be formed to review the previous Cabinet’s decision from last November on the future delivery model for highway maintenance. The Cabinet at the time resolved that a procurement process should get underway for a Term Maintenance Contract to deliver core highway work such as safety defect repairs, gully emptying and winter service, supported with smaller “Framework Contracts” for additional patching, surfacing, drainage and other improvements.

It was also agreed to examine the costs of accelerating the remarking of white lines across the county.

A new long-term plan to improve the outcomes of Devon’s most vulnerable young people by overhauling how they are supported and cared was approved.

In a bold move away from the council’s previous preference to commission, rather than directly deliver, residential places for children in its care, councillors agreed to an ambitious multi-million investment programme to establish 12 new children’s homes; 20 specialist foster places; and up to four new therapeutic schools, over the next 10 years.

‘Growing Futures: Homes for children and young people in care in Devon’ aims to provide new homes, support, residential therapeutic care, education and treatment for children with complex psychological, emotional and behavioural needs.

Our plan will be delivered through a strategic partnership worth up to £156 million and aims to address deficiencies in current care arrangements.

We are required to provide suitable homes for children in care; but nationally an over-reliance on for-profit providers has contributed to rising costs and poor value for money.

In Devon for instance costs have almost doubled in five years amid rising demand.

There has been a 29 per cent increase in Devon children in residential homes since 2020 and many of those are not in the county.

The new strategy will aim to reduce costs and improve long-term outcomes for children through more stable, local, and therapeutic housing and education options.

It was agreed it to allocate a smaller pot of national funding to help families struggling with high costs of food, energy, and other essential household items.

We have received funding to operate a Household Support Fund (HSF) since 2021. Last year, it totalled £10.1 million, but this year (2025/26) the funding has fallen for the first time, to £8.9 million – a decrease of 11.87 per cent.

Funding is allocated to support households across Devon in various ways. A large proportion of it goes in providing free school meal holiday vouchers to children and young people who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals during term time. Around 22,500 children and young people are eligible for benefits-related free school meals in Devon.

It’s also shared among Devon’s District Councils to support households struggling to afford essentials, helping those approaching them directly for support and/or targeting households in receipt of some benefits who they already know will be struggling with the cost of living. As the previous Executive Member for Finance at TDC I saw the real benefits this fund has achieved. In the last year TDC identified those vulnerable residents not receiving winter fuel allowance and helped with their cost of living.

Some of it is used by Citizen’s Advice Devon, helping households struggling with high energy and water costs through an Energy and Water Relief scheme.

And Devon Community Foundation operates a Food Fuel & More, HSF-funded, grant scheme to support voluntary and community organisations, helping vulnerable people who are less like to access support through the other available support gateways.

Councillors agreed to continue funding free school meal holiday vouchers, to the same level – £15 per child per week during school holidays.

The decision effectively commits half this year’s total Household Support Fund (HSF7) for free school meal holiday vouchers, compared to around 26 per cent of last year’s (HSF6).

The rest will be allocated proportionally to Devon district councils, Citizens Advice Devon and Devon Community Foundation.

In addition, councillors agreed to set up a vulnerable families' contingency fund, to give the council flexibility to provide additional support for households later in the year, in response to cost of living issues – as a consequence of wider political and economic pressures.

More adult learners will have the opportunity to access education and skills training in the upcoming academic year.

I strongly welcomed this investment as this was identified as a major way of improving workplace skills and I have seen first-hand the benefits at South Devon College.

Following an extra £1.4 million investment from the Department for Education (DfE), it was agreed to commission additional delivery of adult learning from external providers.

Devon's adult education service, Learn Devon, currently supports around 6,000 learners, aged 19 and over, each year through the Adult Skills Fund (ASF). The fund supports people to gain qualifications and skills that improve their employability and life opportunities.

Councillors explored a number of delivery options, but decided to commission delivery across a number of external providers through an open and compliant procurement process, supported by our procurement team.

This will build on existing delivery capability in the area which means the programme can start this August, and allow provision in different locations, communities, and qualification areas.

The increase in ASF funding enables local residents, including those on low incomes or with caring responsibilities, to access flexible, community-based learning. Courses funded through ASF are designed to align with local labour market needs, helping residents gain qualifications and skills that are in demand, and supporting progression into secure, higher-paid jobs or further learning.

For local businesses, it ensures the local workforce has up-to-date skills that match industry needs, especially in sectors with skill shortages such as health and social care, construction, and digital. This makes it easier for employers to recruit locally, and by investing in local talent, ASF funding reduces skills gaps and helps build a resilient economy that can respond to change, such as new technologies or market shifts.

As always please contact me by email or call on my mobile if you have any issues in your Town/Parish.

Kind regards

Richard

Chair's report July 2025

Clerk

Tamsin passed 3rd of 5 ILCA modules. Congratulations Tamsin! We really appreciate Tamsin's professional attitude to her role and commitment to training in the face of what has been a couple of heavy months work – wise for her.

Butts Close verge

I was approached by some Butts Close residents who were unhappy about the state of their verge/s as you go into Butts Close. I met with our Wildlife Warden, Lucy Smerdon and a Butts Close resident, during which it was agreed the verge/s could be cut leaving a patch of wildflowers to seed. Whilst there we realised that part of one verge and garden hedge had already been cut by Teign Housing contractors despite some local intervention at the time. Lucy in her role as Wildlife Warden took this to Teignbridge Wildlife Warden meeting, who agreed to offer some education to Teign Housing for their contactors

We had just missed Graham Dicker for mowing, so residents said they would do it themselves this one time. I asked Graham to add it to his work schedule for the next time he came to the village. Serendipity took a hand

and Graham was able to cut the verge/s the very next day. It was agreed that Lucy would devise a cutting plan for next spring to be shared with the Parish Council and Butts Close residents. This was informally agreed

Phone Box notice

As you know we have had trouble with book 'dumping' in the phone box. I finally was able to put up a larger less friendly notice, since when things seem to have improved:

WELCOME TO THE VILLAGE BOOK EXCHANGE RUN BY VOLUNTEERS FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL

BRIDFORD PARISH COUNCIL REQUEST: PLEASE - PLEASE - PLEASE

STOP!!! AND THINK!!!

and

DO NOT leave a pile of your unwanted books here: volunteers have to get rid of them for you which is not the purpose of this Book Exchange

SO

1. PLEASE - ONLY PUT INTO THE BOOK EXCHANGE AS MANY BOOKS AS YOU TAKE OUT
2. DUE TO LIMITED SPACE WE CAN ONLY ACCEPT BOOKS AND JIGSAW PUZZLES

NO CDS

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

Any problems, please contact Judy Topley (Bridford Parish Councillor) – 253650

Telecare phone alarms

One resident in particular has been in regular contact with me with concerns over Telecare alarms when BT switches over from landline to digital in November. It is appreciated that this is a real cause for alarm for those residents who do not possess a mobile phone. We have asked our clerk to put a piece in Teign Unity. The advice is as follows: If you or someone you know uses a Telecare alarm, you must call the landline provider. They will help make sure alarms keep working through the switchover. To find out more, click on this link: [Digital Phone Switchover](#)

We appreciate that the changeover will be difficult for some parishioners whilst understanding technology is moving on. For example, some new mobile phones have an emergency call system that will connect via satellite to the emergency services.

BT is offering a battery pack backup (BBU) or emergency phone to those residents 'in need', which apparently includes those in areas with a poor signal. Apparently, you can call BT Customer Support on 0330 1234 150 to explain that you're a Digital Voice customer and would like to know if you qualify for a free BBU, if you qualify for a free BBU, BT will guide you through the claiming process

The Parish Council will review where parishioners are with regard to this change and use information received to update Bridford's Emergency Plan if necessary when it is due for review around May 2026

Sewage/sludge bio solid spreading

A resident has been in contact with me with information about bio solid spreading following the noxious smell in the village earlier on the year. I reported at the time that I had contacted the farm and the Farm Manager had agreed to work with SWWater to not spread so near the village in future.

The practice is not illegal. The parishioner has asked me to draw councillors' attention and that of the wider community to the following piece on the BBC website: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3e5y85p488o>

Drawing peoples' attention to this article does not constitute the parish council taking a view, rather it is hoped it reflects the very real concerns of some of those who live within Bridford. In the interests of balance, I have posted the following link for parishioners who are interested in the debate:

<https://assuredbiosolids.co.uk/>

Dark Skies

Joseph Dunkley has been in touch with Devon County Council lighting scheme, working with them to get the street lighting working correctly across the whole village. He has reported Oxenpark concerns re their lighting as it is apparently on a different system. In addition Joseph is working with the church to get the lights to come off and on at the correct times. All this work is on – going and he will report back at a parish council meeting in the autumn. Joseph has had some contact with a dark skies specialist in Dunsford village, but communication is at an early stage. Many thanks to Joseph for leading on this piece of work.