

**Minutes of the Annual Council meeting of Bridford Parish Council held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 7pm in the Village Hall.**

**Present** – Cllr. Topley (Chair); Cllr. Purser (Vice Chair); Cllr. Marriott, Cllr. Gallagher, Cllr. Hollingsworth, Cllr. Symons, 2 members of the public; Tamsin Mowat (Clerk)

Meeting opened at 7pm

Agenda item	Action	Owner
<p><b>1) Election of Chair</b>                      a) Invited nominations and elected a Chair for the year – Cllr. Gallagher proposed Cllr. Topley, Cllr. Hollingsworth seconded and all unanimously agreed                      b) Received the Declaration of Acceptance of Office by the Chair – signed and received                      Cllr. Marriott arrived at 19.02</p>		
<p><b>2) Election of Vice Chair</b> - Cllr. Gallagher proposed Cllr. Purser and Cllr. Hollingsworth seconded – all in favour and all agreed unanimously</p>		
<p><b>3) Confirm appointment of signatories</b> for authorisation of internet banking payments with Unity Trust Bank – Cllr. Topley, Cllr. Purser, Cllr. Marriott all agreed and confirmed to continue as signatories</p>		
<p><b>4) Appointment to Roles/Groups:</b> Footpaths and grit bins – Dan Tidball, Snow Warden – Anne Mayes – all Councillors and Clerk thanked her, Wildlife Warden – Lucy Smerdon and wildlife liaison - Cllr. Marriott, Allotments – Cllr. Topley, Book Exchange – Cllr. Hollingsworth, Clothing Bank – Karen Gervers, Consultation - Cllr. Gallagher, Notice Boards - Cllr. Topley, planning (remove as all Councillors comment at PC meetings), Poster Design – Cllr. Hollingsworth, Play Park - Cllr. Symons and Cllr. Topley, Village Garden - Cllr. Topley, website - Clerk; Clerk updated about website domain: now registered to the Parish Council due to GDPR regulations, VH observer - Cllr. Topley, Police liaison role - Cllr. Purser, Twinning liaison - Cllr. Marriott, Road Wardens - TBC; minute names at later date once confirmed as awaiting agreement of cover from insurers, Data Protection Officer - Clerk, Safeguarding Lead - Clerk, Safeguarding Deputy Lead - Cllr. Topley - all reviewed and agreed</p>	<p>Send contract details of GD to Cllr. Marriott</p> <p>Put note in Unity to request help with keeping the Village Garden tidy</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>5) Public Discussion</b>                      Anne Mayes reported that the lane down to the Village Hall needs cutting again as getting narrow. Alex has just cut the hedge along allotment side for PC but other side needs doing apparently – Cllr. Topley to have a look.</p>	<p>Assess hedge on Church Lane</p>	<p>Clr. Topley</p>

<p>Anne Mayes also mentioned that the hedge on Pound Lane between Venn and Shippens is growing high and taking out view along road</p> <p>Website – Anne Mayes has always posted Snow warnings and updates – would like to know how to access website in future as ownership is changing to PC.</p> <p>Dan Tidball raised the issue of drainage if new housing is built on part of the play park. Is there to be a mains drainage connection?</p> <p>Discussion around development in Bridford. Development Plan shows limit of development that is currently allowed. Cllr. Gallagher interested in when the development line was set for Bridford – presumably at the time housing need was reviewed – Dartmoor Local Plan (4/5 years ago). Could be a conflict between what’s needed and what’s available. (Discussed at this point to allow Cllr. Gallagher to contribute before she had to leave.)</p> <p>Cllr. Gallagher left the meeting at 19.36 to attend another meeting</p>	<p>Trim hedge by Venn, Pound Lane</p> <p>Update Anne Mayes on any changes to accessing website</p> <p>Ask Alex Weaving if he knows about drainage arrangements in Oxen Park Gate</p> <p>Begin to compile list of queries to TDC re. potential development</p>	<p>Cllr. Purser</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>6) Apologies For Absence</b> – to vote and agree whether to approve apologies received: Cllr. Acheson due to work commitments – agreed and approved by all. District Cllr. Swain apologies received.</p>		
<p><b>7) Declarations Of Interest:</b> In accordance with the Code of Conduct, members are required to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have, in items to be considered at this meeting. Members are also reminded that any change to their Declaration of Interests must be notified to the Monitoring Officer at District Council within 28 days of the change. None.</p>		
<p><b>8) Minutes</b> – to approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026 – approved and signed</p>	<p>Post approved minutes to website</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>9) Review actions from previous meeting:</b>  <b>Clerk’s:</b> Post approved minutes to website, request help from Cllr. Keeling re. contacting TDC Legal Team over churchyard closure and reply PCC, put Councillors’ full reports at end of minutes and on website, post Chair’s full report at end of minutes and on website, make payments in Unity Trust Bank, post policies to website, carry over play park consultation to</p>		

<p>May meeting, send APM invites out and post agenda for APM to website, report potholes at Cossick Cross to DCC</p> <p><b>Councillors’:</b> EG: QR code for consultation on park gate (carried over) – completed and on display on the play park gate. Code has gone to Graham Padgham for the Fete programme. Slips to be done with QR code to be posted through doors. PM: Hedgehog signs to be trialled (carried over – carry over to June meeting), SS: paint fort in play park (carried over – play park report has overtaken this now – see below), JT: purchase APM nibbles and refreshments – done and AH: send What Three Words to Clerk for Cossick Cross potholes – completed and reported, SS and JT: visit to Playpark to review and plan for identified actions – completed</p> <p>Cllr. Topley thanked Cllr. Symons for his support with the play park maintenance</p>	<p>Create QR code slips</p> <p>Print QR code slips</p> <p>Put consultation in Unity for June</p> <p>Poster for noticeboard in bus shelter</p> <p>Contact Christow Primary School re. consultation of pupils who use Bridford play park</p> <p>List play park actions for June meeting – put on agenda</p> <p>Hedgehog signs</p>	<p>Cllr. Hollingsworth</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Cllr. Topley</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Cllr. Marriott</p>
<p><b>10) District and County Councillor Reports</b> – summarised here and full text available at the end of the minutes</p> <p>District Cllr. Purser’s report: County Cllr. Keeling and District Cllr. Swain covered most of what’s going on in their reports. Annual meeting of Teignbridge next week – new Chair and Vice Chair to be elected. Cllr. Purser has put his name forward for the audit committee. Refuse collection – bit hit and miss but unexpected sickness has caused problems – a few days late sometimes but still come. Lido will be open for the summer. Local election results may impact LGR but wait and see on that. A lot of money spent on preparation for LGR. There should be a decision made about what’s happening in Devon in July. Tetra packs now being collected (Clerk to put in Unity).</p> <p>District Cllr. Swain’s report covered the local leaders’ event, recycling, Teignmouth Lido, Carbon Action Plan, a new National Planning Policy Framework and TDC’s Local Plan</p> <p>County Cllr. Keeling’s report covered roads, highways and infrastructure, children, young people and families, health and social care, community safety, libraries and community hubs and local grants and funding for community groups</p>	<p>Put in Unity article info about tetrapaks now being collected at kerbside</p>	<p>Clerk</p>

<p><b>11) Chair's Report (for information only)</b> - summarised here and full report available at the end of the minutes and on the website</p> <p>Chair's report covered: thanks to Anne Mayes and the gritting team; thanks to Nige Skelton for the welcome book; the clothing bank; targets for BPC from the APM; play park inspection and consultation and the Village Halls' cluster meeting</p>		
<p><b>12) FINANCES</b></p> <p><b><u>Income</u></b> First half Precept direct credit from TDC £7689.50</p> <p><b><u>Expenditure</u></b> <b><u>Clerk's salary, pension and other expenses</u></b> <b><u>Paid</u></b> Salary update: Clerk's Salary for April was actually £666 minus income tax £0 and employee's Pension contribution £64.53 so £601.47 - BACS as one week of leave was not unpaid leave but paid annual leave (mistakenly noted on April agenda but paid correctly and entry to HMRC on PAYE Tools correct too)</p> <p><b><u>To be paid</u></b> Clerk's salary May £666 minus any income tax (after running PAYE tools) and Pension contribution of £64.53 so £601.47 – BACS HMRC tax and NI for May expected to be £37.35 BACS Clerk's Pension employer contribution to NEST May £4.38 DD</p> <p><b><u>Other items to be paid</u></b> SLCC membership annual renewal – £158 - BACS Hall hire for Parish Council meetings in upper hall Jan-March 2026 £30 and use of lower hall for Post Office from Jan to end March 2026 £66 - BACS DALC invoice for Intro to AI Course attended by Clerk £42 incl £7 VAT – BACS DALC invoice £19.20 incl. £3.20 VAT New Councillor e-training Cllr. Acheson – BACS Microsoft renewal (one month free) so due to be paid in May £84.99 – BPC CC</p> <p><b><u>Other items paid</u></b> Printer paper from Amazon on BPC CC - £10.99 authorised and paid by Clerk as office supplies</p> <p><b><u>Recurring payments</u></b> Clerk's homeworking expenses - £6 per week SO Clerk's SIM and data plan - £3.99 per month recurring payment on BPC CC HP Instant Ink £4.49 - BPC CC CC monthly fee £3 by DD to Lloyds Bank (for Unity Trust)</p>	<p>Make payments in Unity Trust Bank</p>	<p>Clerk</p>

<p>Unity Trust Bank service charge £7 (£1 increase April 2026) per month by DD</p> <p><b>Bank reconciliation and statement and Unity Trust Bank and CC statement for April 2026 supplied</b>  <b>Council to resolve to accept the accounts</b> – resolve to accept the accounts – all agreed and resolved</p>		
<p><b>13) Planning</b>  Dartmoor National Park has asked for observations from the Parish Council on the following planning applications:</p> <p><u>Applications</u></p> <p>0127/26 Full Planning Permission - Side and rear extensions to dwelling at Scator, Bridford – supported – all agreed</p> <p><u>Decisions</u>  None</p>	<p>Send planning comments to DNPA</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>14) Clerk data handover procedure document</b> (circulated before meeting) – new for 2026 – resolve to adopt – agreed and resolved</p>	<p>Post to website</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>15) Asset register</b> (circulated before meeting) – review updated version for 2026/7 and resolve to adopt – agreed and resolved</p>	<p>Post to website</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>16) Standing orders</b> (circulated before meeting) – review and update for 2026/7 and resolve to adopt – agreed and resolved</p>	<p>Post to website</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>17) Statement of internal control</b> (circulated before meeting) - review updated version for 2026/7 and resolve to adopt – agreed and resolved</p>	<p>Post to website</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>18) Risk assessment</b> (circulated before meeting) – review updated version for 2026/7 and resolve to accept – agreed and resolved</p>	<p>Post to website</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>19) Insurance renewal for 2026/7</b> – second year of three-year fixed term contract with Hiscox through Gallagher, renewal due 1<sup>st</sup> June at £946.57 resolve to agree to pay renewal amount (small increase on last year of £7.70 due to index linking which adds a percentage to sum insured amounts to protect from inflation increases). Agreed and resolved to renew.</p>	<p>Pay invoice</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>20) Autumn celebration</b> plans and DCC Locality Funding application: agree budget to apply for and scope of application – benches in Village Garden and Autumn celebration £800 for</p>	<p>Apply for locality funding</p>	<p>Clerk</p>

<p>celebration and £1000 for benches – Clerk to put in application to Devon Locality Funding and include Art Exhibition for children as part of Autumn celebration</p>	<p>Note risk assessment and safeguarding check to be undertaken for event</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>21) Highways as standing item</b> - discussed latest issues and agreed actions: potholes – all being reported. Cllr. Marriott: new Highways Handbook from DCC had useful information in – put on website and flag up in Unity. Cllr. Symons mentioned Steps Bridge closure – date for completion was 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026 but no further news on whether that still stands.</p>	<p>Post Highways handbook to website and put in Unity article for June</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>Clerk's report (for information only)</b> Road Warden scheme, DCC Highways, AGAR update, website domain registration update.</p> <p>Japanese Knotweed and Skunk Cabbage on back road to Bridford – reported by Cllr. Reed at Christow PC and complaint now raised as no action taken for over a month – BPC agreed to support Christow PC's complaint by emailing all those on the email chain</p>	<p>Send email in support of complaint over Knotweed and Skunk Cabbage</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>Councillor's reports/training/Out and About in the Community (for information only)</b> – Cllr. Topley raised that a parishioner has reported a dog howling. Cllr. Topley advised that it's a civil matter that needs to be raised with TDC as a noise issue or to the RSPCA. Cllr. Purser advised that TDC has a dog warden.</p>		
<p><b>Items for Information</b> - The next council meeting will be on <b>Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2026</b> at 7pm in the Village Hall.</p>		
<p><b>Email information</b> DALC bulletins - up to #21 and NALC bulletins DNPA Planning applications DCC Highways updates Churchyard closure update</p> <p><b>Meeting finished at 9.03pm</b></p>		

Signed:

Date:

Chair of Bridford Parish Council

## CHAIR'S REPORT MAY 2026

### Gritting Team

Many thanks to Anne Mayes and the gritting team for their hard work over a, luckily, quite quiet winter. Fingers crossed it won't snow in June which I understand has previously been the case!

### Bridford Village Welcome Book

The Village Welcome Book has been updated: many thanks to Nige Skelton for doing this piece of work.

### Clothing Bank

The Clothing Bank has been emptied and the price per kilo still going down. Many thanks to Karen Gervers for organising this and thanks to Lorraine Hart for helping to keep the bank clean and tidy.

### Annual Parish Meeting (APM)

We had a lively APM last week where much discussion took place on various issues, leading to some targets for us as a parish council. For example: dark skies; establishment of a village WhatsApp; beating the bounds; PC involvement in twinning next year as it is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary; continue to monitor quality of bus service; keep an eye on LGR with particular regard to any threat of services being split.

We have had some very good feedback following the meeting: 'well done you've got the layout and format right, very relaxed'; 'an enjoyable meeting'; 'a useful meeting both hearing what PC is doing and plans, plus hearing from other volunteers'

I think we have the right tone and format. I suggest next year we have a later start, 7pm but still have the meeting on a separate date to our Parish Council Meeting; this will avoid rushing. Finally, in order to make the best use of our Clerk's time it is suggested we arrange the meeting for April next year

### Playpark

I have circulated to councillors the actions agreed by Cllr Symons and myself when we inspected the Playpark on May 10<sup>th</sup> following our annual ROSPA inspection. Whilst going through the list we found one piece of equipment was broken; a sign has been put up and Cllr Symons will get to it at his earliest convenience. Many thanks to Cllr Symons for his hard work and expertise in monitoring the Playpark so professionally.

### Playpark Consultation

The QR Code is up outside the playpark; it is also with the Fete Committee Chair, Graham Padgham who has kindly agreed to incorporate it into the fete programme. The Parish Council will leaflet houses with the QR code in June. I think by the end of the summer holidays it will be time for Cllr Gallagher to compile the results for us to send to Teignbridge District Council (TDC).

With regard to TDC consulting with Bridford parishioners over the proposed affordable housing scheme to be built on playpark land, I suggest our clerk asks TDC if they can have the outline drawings ready for our fete stall on July 11<sup>th</sup>. It would make sense for Bridford, if a Village Meeting could be arranged early on in September. We will discuss these timings with TDC to establish if they fit with their timescales.

In addition, I suggest we consider setting up a subcommittee for this ongoing piece of work to include some councillors as well as informed, experienced members of the community; we want to ensure that at all times Bridford's best interests are at the heart of discussions and plans.

## Teign Valley Village Halls Cluster Meeting

I attended for half the meeting a Teign Valley Village Halls Cluster Meeting. It was helpful in understanding how village halls and parish councils can enhance the ways they work together for the good of their communities. The ideas raised lead to interesting discussions of ways forward for our own Village Hall at the last Bridford Village Hall Meeting, which I attended as an observer.



### **Councillor Richard Keeling's Report May 2026, to Chudleigh, Hennock, Ashton, Bridford, Christow, Doddiscomleigh, Dunsford, Mortonhampstead, Tedburn St Mary & Trusham.**

Dear Colleagues,

This year has been my first year serving as your County Councillor, and it has been an incredibly busy and eye opening one. Being elected in May was a real honour, but the pace quickly picked up, particularly as I was also appointed Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care straight away. This has meant a steep learning curve and a very full diary, but it has also given me the opportunity to make sure rural communities like ours have a strong voice at County Hall.

#### **Roads, Highways and Infrastructure**

Road conditions have been one of the issues most frequently raised with me by residents. Devon is responsible for around 8,000 miles of roads, making it the largest highways network in the country. After a winter of severe weather, the pressure on this network has been immense.

This year the council agreed an additional £19M of investment into highways, with £4M specifically ringfenced for drainage and gully clearance. This is crucial in rural areas where standing water leads quickly to potholes. I have spent time out on the ground with Neighbourhood Highways Officers inspecting local problem areas and feeding residents' concerns directly into future work programmes.

#### **Children Young People and Families**

Supporting children and families has been a major priority. Devon currently looks after around eight hundred and ten children in care, and there is a continuing need for more foster carers. This year we have taken steps to improve foster carer support, including better allowances and access to equipment.

I have also been proud to support the Places to Go Things to Do youth grant, which has already distributed £160,000 through over one hundred small grants to youth projects across Devon. These grants have supported everything from rural youth outreach sessions to creative and wellbeing activities. Due to its success, the scheme will run again this year with a further £160,000 committed.

#### **Health Social Care and Community Safety**

Healthcare access remains a real challenge in rural areas. I have consistently raised concerns about NHS dentistry shortages, long ambulance response times and proposals to remove fire co responders from rural communities. These co responders often arrive first in emergencies where ambulance delays are unavoidable, and I have spoken out strongly about the risks of withdrawing this support.

Alongside this, I have supported a new 4 year domestic abuse strategy 2026-2030, aimed at increasing access to safe accommodation and specialist support, particularly for people facing additional barriers.

### **Libraries and Community Hubs**

Libraries are something I care deeply about, especially because of their importance as community hubs in rural towns and villages. Devon's library service currently supports fifty libraries, with more than 2.3million visits each year, supported by hundreds of volunteers.

The recent library consultation received an unprecedented response, with over 25,000 residents taking part, making it the largest consultation of its kind the council has ever run. We are currently carefully considering all feedback, including thousands of written responses.

A detailed report setting out the findings and recommended next steps will be presented to Cabinet in May. The existing library budget of just over £7M has been protected, and an additional £1M has been set aside to support genuine transformation and community led improvements. Throughout this process I have been clear that libraries are far more than places to borrow books. They provide warm spaces, digital access, learning opportunities and a welcoming environment for all ages.

### **Local Grants and Community Support**

Over the last year I have been pleased to support a range of community projects through councillor locality funding. From May, this funding will increase to £10,000 per councillor, helping to support youth groups, community facilities, accessibility improvements and local events. These small grants can make a big difference, and I am always happy to discuss ideas with local groups.

### **Looking Ahead**

This first year has been full on and at times challenging, particularly balancing the responsibilities of a Cabinet role alongside representing a large rural division. However, it has also been incredibly rewarding. I have met so many passionate people, learned a great deal, and been able to help secure real improvements for our area.

Thank you to town/parish councils, volunteers and residents for your support, feedback and many conversations throughout the year. Please do feel free to get in touch at any time if there is something you would like to raise or discuss. I look forward to continuing to work with you over the year ahead.

### **Potholes**

Please note that you can report online and track your issue quickly, link here [Report a problem - Roads and transport](#)

Please contact me if you have any questions on Devon County Council or Teignbridge District Council.

**Kind regards**

**Cllr. Richard Keeling**

District councillor's report, Andy Swain, May 2026

There is a Local leaders' event for parish councils, which hopefully you already know about. Wed June 3, 6:00 – 7:00 pm, and also online by teams.

Recycling "Rezine" is a quarterly email from the recycling team that provides information on recycling events, competitions, changes to services, and more (link opens new page):

[www.teignbridge.gov.uk/rezine](http://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/rezine)

The Teignmouth Lido reopening for this season is confirmed, largely thanks to the Overview and scrutiny committee referring the decision not to open, back to executive after it became clear that community groups were keen to run it which gives a chance for us to secure its long-term future. The lido will open for the 2026 season on Saturday 23rd May.

### **Carbon action plan**

We recently scrutinised the next phase of the Teignbridge carbon action plan.

(Overview and Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 14th April, 2026)

TDC has reduced its direct Scope 1 and 2 carbon footprint by 18% between 2018/19 and 2024/25. This reduction is set to be approximately 30% by 2027/28.

A huge amount of work has been done on energy intensive buildings - council offices and leisure centres. "Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme" £2.3 million for the leisure sites, £0.7 million for Forde House, and £0.3 million for Broadmeadow.

Fleet Electrification: fuel saving of around 31,000 litres of diesel per annum, the equivalent of driving a hatchback around the world 17 times.

The new Local Plan 2020-2040 has considerable improvement in climate relevant policies.

The next phase will focus on procurement (to address scope 3 emissions), energy efficiency, and continuing fleet electrification.

A question was asked and answered: "the financial savings on these measures equate to a 100 year payback – isn't that a very poor return on investment?"

This is very much missing the point that the purpose was not to make money but to decarbonise our activities and this has been achieved. The fact that there is any financial payback at all is a bonus, albeit a welcome one that underscores the short sightedness of not embracing climate action.

The (large amount of) money spent was mostly sourced through grants specifically allocated to decarbonisation, so was not carved out of the Teignbridge budget, but was added to it.

The projects involved focussed on areas where heating systems and vehicle leases were end of life, and considerable investment was needed anyway.

### **Planning**

The government is pressing ahead with a new national planning policy framework. This makes development easier, and further limits opportunities to oppose.

In my youth house prices were 2-3 times salaries, now they are 8-10. Tory policy has always been that prices can only be reduced by building more houses, but I think that doesn't work. The housing crisis would be better fixed by other means, make it easier to move house, incentivise down-sizing, reform the selling process, and replace stamp duty. Incentives like the rent a room scheme encourage smarter use of the stock we have. Building and retaining council homes raises the expectation for rental homes in quality and price, and puts the brakes on rent increases. I am very pleased that TDC is continuing to deliver on this.

The problem is that the standard formula for housing numbers includes an affordability uplift. The logic is that if house prices are high and salaries low, then houses are unaffordable, and you need to build more. This uplift was capped at 40% but that cap has been removed. The problem is Teignbridge lies between Exeter and Plymouth, with many people earning higher salaries in those cities, but only salaries earned in Teignbridge count. Skewing the results, making Teignbridge look less affordable than it is. This has increased the Teignbridge target from 720 homes per year to 1,088.

The Council is now legally required to start work on another new Local Plan. It is rather like painting the Forth bridge.

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