

Minutes of the meeting of Bridford Parish Council held on Monday 6th July 2026 at 7pm in the Village Hall.

Present – Cllr. Topley (Chair); Cllr. Purser; Cllr. Marriott, Cllr. Symons, Cllr. Hollingsworth, 4 members of the public; Tamsin Mowat (Clerk)

Meeting opened at 7pm

Agenda item	Action	Owner
Public Discussion: Play park and affordable homes – there was discussion around the location of the access road to the potential new development, parking for current and new homes, the ownership and potential protection of the land. Clare Ashenden-Pearce is looking into whether the land can be protected as a play park. Meg Brocks has created a display of photos of the play park in use over the years for the village Fete. Anne Mayes said that South West Water had been dealing with an issue with a tap outside New Park and said they would return in a week to see if they could find a leak and solve the problem – it affected 6 houses in New Park. Anne Mayes also raised that the hedges need to be cut along Pound Lane. Vision lost on corner of Southwood and further down and very overgrown. Hedges shouldn't be cut between 1st March and 31st August to protect nesting birds but can be cut on roads in summer if causing a danger to anyone. Anne asked if DCC could do a safety cut – in the past when Clerk has requested DCC have said they will only do a safety cut at a junction or if there is something dangerous encroaching on the road and otherwise the PC would have to pay, which we haven't budgeted for. Anne Mayes also raised the junction at Weir View – can't see anything coming from the right as you come from Exeter to turn towards Venn Garage – it would be a good idea to have a sign for people coming down from Dunsford to put headlights on so they can be seen. Clare raised an issue with buses apparently speeding up Pound Lane. Chair said we have been logging issues raised by a number of parishioners; including issues with inconsistent service provision and buses not stopping at the bus shelter and will now write a letter of concern to Dartline on behalf of BPC.	Ask TDC about access road location	Clerk
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2) Apologies For Absence: to vote and agree whether to approve apologies received. Cllr. Acheson on holiday. Cllr. Gallagher work commitments. Voted and all approved and accepted. District Cllr. Swain sent apologies.		
3) Declarations Of Interest: None		
4) Minutes – to approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on the 1st June 2026 – approved – all in agreement and signed	Post approved minutes to website	Clerk

5) Play park and affordable homes proposal –Cllr. Topley read out key points from the update from Mary Ridgway at TDC Housing which covered that: they apologised for delays in the process which were largely due to staffing changes, the feasibility study that has been undertaken but not yet shared as permissions are being sought; technical surveys have not yet been undertaken and are due to take place over the summer; the proposed homes (5 homes in 4 buildings as two are maisonettes) and access road would likely cover 45% of the play park (on the upper part where the BMX track and basketball court are currently) and that the remaining space could be left for the play park; a new housing needs survey needs to be undertaken by Devon Communities Together as previous one now 3-4 years old - DNPA has much more strict local eligibility criteria for affordable homes than Devon one; a drop in session for parishioners will be arranged for the Autumn – new members of the Housing team to take over then Cllr. Purser said that the current set up at TDC is uncertain due to local government reorganisation and roles are changing – two staff at TDC in Housing department are leaving. Cllr. Topley said there are two competing issues – we want affordable homes and the play park – we can only try and do what’s best for Bridford. BPC remains neutral and will continue to communicate with all parties. Play park clean up and picnic day arranged by Friends of Play Park for Wednesday 5th August Cllr. Topley said it’s positive that there’s an active group in support of the Play Park. Clerk got in touch with TDC Assets – TDC Housing have staked their claim and Assets are waiting to see how it pans out. Clerk also got in touch with TDC maintenance regarding repairing the fences around the play park – waiting to hear back. Cllr. Gallagher reported to the Chair before the meeting that we’ve had 58 responses to BPC Play Park consultation. Clare Ashenden-Pearce volunteered to post the play park consultation QR code to Teign Valley Facebook group. Cllr. Purser requested a motion to make a discussion private about the proposed affordable housing to be built on part of the play park, due to the sensitive nature of the topic. Cllr. Topley seconded the motion. Private discussion took place for five minutes and then returned to public meeting. It was resolved that BPC’s position is to remain neutral – in favour of both the affordable homes, if there is a need locally, and retaining the rest of the play park too. In the meantime, BPC will keep the play park going and maintain it. The housing needs survey results are due to come back in September/October – the Council won’t discuss further until then; when it has been established whether there is a need for housing.	Ask TDC when feasibility study will be shared and what dates surveyors expected Let Anna at Devon Communities Together know no feedback for survey and happy for them to go ahead Safeguarding and risk assessment for play park day in Aug Posters for play park day to be put up around the village	Clerk Clerk Cllr. Topley Cllr. Topley
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6) Review actions from previous meeting: Clerk's: double check speed watch on list of roles from May meeting and amend if necessary, compile and send a list of questions for TDC, post approved minutes to website, send GD's contract details to Cllr. Marriott, ask Alex weaving about drainage in oxen park gate, clerk to post article in unity re. knotweed and skunk cabbage, send QR code to Cllr. Topley, Clerk to report two large potholes at top of church lane to DCC, liaise with Cllrs. Swain and Purser over looking into buying the play park under asset transfer, contact TDC re. maintenance of fencing around play park, check terms of current lease for play park, liaise with new play park committee, arrange site visit to play park for all councillors in August, add invoice for copper grease to July agenda to be paid, make payments in unity trust bank, send comments to DNPA, send certificate of exemption to external auditors, post public rights and accounts to website, liaise with insurers and contact dcc re. insurance issue, carry over autumn celebration to September meeting to finalise details, put fete stall on agenda July to finalise details, liaise with TDC over affordable homes public meeting, post surface dressing details to website, ask devon highways for update on back road to Christow, purchase hedgehog signs, report hole on corner by Seven Views to DCC Councillors': JT and SS: Liaise with new play park committee, JT: Arrange site visit to play park for all Councillors in August, PM: send hedgehog signs details to Clerk Cllr. Marriott to paint hedgehogs signs and put them up around the village – one on the corner by the phone box, Seven Acres and Pound Lane	Create list of roles for use each year Follow up with TDC re. fencing around play park Contact DCC re. insurance issue for Road Warden scheme	Clerk Clerk Clerk
7) District and County Councillors' Reports – District Cllr. Purser – local election in Dawlish so moratorium for a month and waiting for reorganisation of local council to be announced at end of July and will also depend on whether Andy Burnham becomes PM. TDC lots of staff going. Audit meeting – all fine and going through ok. Police Advocate liaison: no monthly meeting for four months as liaison person keeps changing but replacement in place now. Recent police crackdown on supply and use of drugs raids in pubs, clubs and night-time economy in Devon and Cornwall - 103 arrests, 16 adults and children safeguarding, significant amount of drugs and cash seized, including 5kg of class A drugs, and many weapons		
8) Chair's Report (for information only) – summarised here and full report available at the end of minutes: Cllr. Topley covered: Community Hub training, allotments, Friends of the Play Park, Churchyard strimming, Parish Plan and the Bridford Village WhatsApp group		
9) FINANCES <u>Income</u> £13 cheque for Clothing bank from Chilcorn Ltd <u>Expenditure</u> <u>Clerk's salary, pension and other expenses</u> <u>To be paid</u> Clerk's salary July £666 minus tax (£0) and employee's Pension contribution to NEST (£64.53) so £601.47 BACS HMRC tax and NI for July c.£37.35 BACS (subject to running PAYE Tools)	Put article in Unity about clothing bank Make payments in Unity Trust Bank	Clerk Clerk

Clerk's Pension employer contribution to NEST July £4.38 DD <u>Other items</u> <u>To pay</u> Book of 8 second class stamps £7.28 from Sainsburys (to Clerk as cheaper than Amazon) – BACS <u>Paid items</u> DALC AI training £42 BACS - authorised and paid by Clerk as in agreed budget line and under £200 Copper grease for play park equipment from Cllr. Topley £12 BACS – authorised and paid by Clerk as in agreed budget line and under £200 Hania Lee's invoice for internal audit £126 BACS - authorised and paid by Clerk as in agreed budget line and under £200 Renewal of domain registration to Gandi £19.18 (inc. VAT) for June 2026-June 2027 – authorised and paid by Clerk as in agreed budget line and under £200 CC Bird scarer tape from Amazon (authorised and paid by Clerk as under £200 and in an existing budget line) £10.38 CC <u>Recurring payments</u> Clerk's homeworking expenses - £6 per week SO Clerk's SIM and data plan - £3.99 per month on BPC CC HP Instant Ink £4.49 - BPC CC CC monthly fee £3 by DD to Lloyds Bank (for Unity Trust) Unity Trust Bank service charge £7 per month by DD Bank reconciliation and statement and Unity Trust Bank and CC statement for June 2026 supplied First quarter financial report for 2026/7 supplied Council to resolve to accept the accounts – resolved and agreed		
10) Planning Dartmoor National Park has asked for observations from the Parish Council on the following planning applications: <u>Applications</u> None this month <u>Decisions</u> 0155/26/BC- Class BC - temporary recreational campsite 7 pitches mixed use 15th July 2026 to 12th September 2026 Beech Tree Farm, Doccombe - Prior Approval not required		
11) Fete stall – agree arrangements. Cllr. Marriott to attend late afternoon – Cllr. Topley to put up stand – three boards to go up and display about play park over the years, speeding, housing needs survey and QR code cards for consultation. Cllrs. Gallagher and Acheson to attend as well.		
12) Allotment judging – agree judge and arrangements – Cllr. Topley to ask Lucy Henderson	Ask Lucy if she will judge allotments	Cllr. Topley
13) Autumn celebration – agree format and date: to be discussed in September by sub-group	Set up sub-group for Autumn Celebration	Cllr. Topley

14) Councillors' visit to the play park – agree date in August – all Councillors to pop in over the summer informally at a time that suits them	Informal visits to play park over summer	All Councillors
15) Highways as standing item - discuss latest issues and agree actions. Consider ditch clearance work and water run off ahead of the Autumn/Winter – decide actions. All drains on Pound Lane blocked or covered in grass – report again. Work on the back lane between Bridford and Christow has started. Nice job of surface dressing on Teign Valley road between Teign House and Weir View. Cossick Cross potholes have been repaired. Nettles have been cut back at Weir Cross by a parishioner so visibility is better. Hole in the road outside VH entrance (photo provided by Cllr. Topley) Ditch clearance – thanks to Seven Acres for keeping the top ditches clear – Cllr. Topley to contact and Cllr. Symons can pick up any other urgent jobs that need doing.	Contact Seven Acres re. ditch clearance Report Pound Lane drains again and hole in road on Church Lane outside VH entrance to DCC Highways	Cllr. Topley Clerk
Clerk's report (for information only) Japanese Knotweed and Skunk Cabbage update, update on insurance issue for Road Warden Scheme and bird poo in play park issue		
Councillor's reports/training/Out and About in the Community (for information only) Cllr. Symons – Collapsed and broken road signs we reported (at Thorn Cross and Laployd Cross) have not been replaced yet	Follow up with DCC Highways about signs at Thorn Cross and Laployd Cross	Clerk
Items for Information - Note that there is no meeting in August so the next meeting will be on Monday 7th September 2026 .		
Email information DALC bulletins - up to #29 and NALC bulletins DNPA Planning applications DCC Highways updates		
Meeting finished at 21.02		

Signed:

Date:

Chair of Bridford Parish Council

CHAIR'S REPORT – JULY 2026

COMMUNITY HUB TRAINING

I attended Community Emergency Hub training and received a box to use if an emergency affects the village. Information and advice from this training will be incorporated into our Emergency Plan which will be available for comments and resolution at our September 2026 meeting

ALLOTMENTS

For information, unfortunately we have deer damage again on the allotments

FRIENDS OF THE PLAYPARK

I attended the inaugural meeting of the Friends of the Playpark. The meeting was very positive. A WhatsApp for committee members has been set up and the Friends group now has an email address.

The Playpark is on the agenda for this evening's meeting

CHURCHYARD

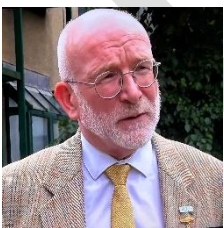
I am happy to report that the churchyard has been strimmed by TDC; TDC has made a good job of it

PARISH PLAN

I was recently given a copy of Bridford Parish Plan 2005 someone found when clearing out. Interestingly it concentrates on the whole parish not just the parish council; I look forward to discussing this when we have our next Parish Plan Meeting in February 2027. It turns out that Cllr Purser wrote this Parish Plan!

BRIDFORD VILLAGE WHATSAPP

Grania Fine and Carolyn Studd met to discuss setting up the WhatsApp. It just needs administrators and then it's good to go. I explained that it will work like the Christow Village one, which is run and managed by parishioners and is completely independent of the Parish Council



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

Dear Colleagues,

Firstly I would like to thank all that have contacted me over various road schemes throughout the Valley, this summer is critical to get all the work done in preparation for winter months, so that we don't repeat last winter's epidemic of potholes.

June has been an intense month. The prolonged hot and dry weather has affected our roads, farms, rivers and public services, while several major announcements have raised important questions about the longer-term future of Devon. These include proposals for a strategic mayoral authority, a new national roadmap for farming, more flexible library opening, investment in extra care housing.

The extreme heat has also had a direct impact on Devon's highways. Devon County Council has been using a process known as "dusting" on some roads, spreading a fine layer of stone to stop bitumen becoming soft

and sticky. Road surface temperatures were expected to reach around 60°C during the June heatwave. The treatment has been focused on major routes, although motorists have been advised to take additional care on rural and recently treated roads. If you've seen our road gritters out and about, you were not hallucinating from the heat! We swapped the grit for sand and used the same vehicles as we use in the winter.

This is another reminder that climate change is no longer an abstract or distant issue. It is affecting the practical work of local government now. A cold and wet winter damages foundations, road edges and drainage systems. A very hot summer then softens surfaces and creates further deterioration. The Council must increasingly plan for both extremes.

The answer is not simply more reactive repair. We need better drainage, stronger road foundations, appropriate surface materials and preventative maintenance that reflects the conditions we are now experiencing. The additional highways investment agreed this year is welcome, but climate resilience must be built into how that money is spent. We are in the process of preparing the highways contract for tender next year, we will be opening up for bids to take on the £900 million contract for 5 years, to cover the creation of any new unitary authorities.

I continue to raise local defects with our Neighbourhood Highways Officer, particularly where drainage problems cause the same section of road to fail repeatedly. Parish councils are extremely helpful in identifying where water regularly collects, where drains and gullies are blocked, or where small defects are likely to become much more expensive failures. Please continue to report these through the online system and send me details of persistent or especially serious problems. I would like to see each parish produce a volunteer road warden who would be trained free of charge, to be able to make minor repairs to B, C and U roads within 30 and 40 mph zones.

One of the largest political developments this month has been the proposal that Devon could become one of the first areas to establish a new strategic mayoral authority. The Leader of Devon County Council has said that Devon could be ready to hold a mayoral election as soon as May 2027, subject to agreement and support from government. The stated ambition is to secure greater local control over areas such as housing, infrastructure, economic development, education, welfare and opportunities for young people.

I support genuine devolution. Decisions about Devon should, wherever possible, be taken in Devon rather than by departments in Whitehall. A strategic mayoral authority could provide access to long-term funding, strengthen Devon's voice with government and allow transport, housing, skills and economic development to be planned across a wider area.

There is a strong argument that the South West has missed out compared with areas that already have mayoral combined authorities and multi-year investment settlements. A clear, accountable Devon-wide voice could help us make the case for better rail infrastructure, rural buses, affordable housing, skills, broadband, coastal investment and support for important sectors such as farming, tourism, defence and renewable energy.

Devolution should bring decisions closer to communities. It should not simply move centralisation from Whitehall to a distant office elsewhere in Devon. A mayoralty must not become an exercise in personality politics or place too much unchecked power in the hands of one person.

It is also important to distinguish strategic devolution from local government reorganisation. A mayoral authority can coordinate investment and strategy without necessarily determining the structure of the councils delivering day-to-day services.

Parish and town councils must be part of that discussion. Whatever structure eventually emerges, there needs to be a meaningful place for community-level decision-making. Local knowledge cannot be replaced by a larger administrative map. The people who understand a blocked drain, an unsafe junction, a struggling community building or an isolated resident are usually those closest to the problem.

Another important announcement this month was the publication of the Government's Farming Roadmap 2050. Farming is fundamental to Devon's economy, landscape and identity. Nationally, farmers produce around 65% of our food, manage approximately 70% of England's land and underpin a £153 billion agri-food industry. The roadmap attempts to provide a clearer direction for the next 25 years, based around farming that is profitable and productive, environmentally sustainable and resilient to future shocks.

The commitment to long-term planning is welcome. Farming businesses cannot make sensible decisions about land, buildings, equipment, succession or environmental management when policies and payment schemes repeatedly change at short notice. Farmers need stability, fair markets and a government willing to recognise that food security is a strategic national priority.

I also welcome the recognition that food production and environmental recovery should not be presented as opposing choices. Healthy soils, clean water, functioning ecosystems and better management of nutrients all help farms remain productive and resilient. Farmers are often the first to experience the consequences of drought, flooding, disease and changing weather patterns.

The real test, however, will be delivery. The roadmap must translate into schemes that are understandable, properly funded and accessible to smaller family farms, not just large businesses with the resources to employ specialist advisers. Farmers must receive fair returns for producing food and for the public goods they provide, including nature recovery, flood management, carbon storage and care for the landscape.

Infrastructure matters as well. Rural businesses need reliable broadband and mobile coverage, an electricity network capable of supporting new technology, appropriate planning rules and access to the skills and labour they require. A rural economy cannot thrive if every service is designed around the assumptions of a large town or city.

There has also been a further positive development for Devon's libraries. Open Plus technology is due to be installed at 11 libraries between July 2026 and March 2027, following a successful trial in Cullompton and a further trial at Northam. Registered members who complete a short induction will be able to enter participating libraries outside normal staffed hours, potentially including mornings, evenings and weekends. They will be able to borrow and return books, use computers and Wi-Fi, study, work and use photocopying facilities.

Crucially, staffed opening hours are being retained. Technology should expand access rather than replace librarians and other staff. Many residents need help to use computers, access public services, find information or simply feel confident using the library. Open Plus should complement that human support.

A library that can be used after work, after school or at weekends can provide a valuable study space, workplace and community resource.

The scheme is part of the wider library investment programme agreed following the consultation earlier this year. It is encouraging to see the decision to protect staffed hours being followed by practical work to increase access. Our aim should be a library service that is growing in usefulness and reach, not one being managed into decline.

In Adult Social Care, work has now started on a £20 million extra care housing development in Cranbrook, which I visited 2 weeks ago. The scheme will provide 58 affordable homes for older people and adults with additional support needs. All of the homes will be available for social rent, with Devon County Council helping to enable the project by providing the land at no cost.

Extra care housing allows people to retain their own front door and independence while having support available when it is needed. It can help prevent or delay admission to residential care, reduce isolation and allow couples to remain together when their care needs differ.

My Locality Budget remains open for applications, although demand has already been high. I am keen to support projects that provide a clear community benefit, particularly those that help children and young people, reduce isolation, improve access to nature, protect community facilities or strengthen local resilience. Please encourage suitable organisations to contact me before submitting an application. I have recently agreed to funding for 50 children from low-income families to access free swimming lessons at the Chudleigh pool.

Finally, I would like to thank town/parish councils for their ongoing contribution. Their local knowledge is invaluable in identifying issues early and supporting effective engagement with the Council.

Road Defects

Please note that you can report online and track your issue quickly, link here:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/>

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

Kind regards

Cllr. Richard Keeling

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