

Minutes of the meeting of Bridford Parish Council held on Monday 1st June 2026 at 7pm in the Village Hall.

Present – Cllr. Topley (Chair); Cllr. Marriott, Cllr. Gallagher, Cllr. Acheson, District Councillor Andy Swain, 9 members of the public and Tamsin Mowat (Clerk)

Meeting opened at 7pm

Agenda item	Action	Owner
1) Public Discussion: Chair reported that Anne Mayes (who couldn't be at the meeting) has concerns about the South West Water tankers going up and down towards the farm recently. Anne wondered if it is excess use in the hot weather or has the pumping system that brings water up to the reservoir tank for the village broken down? Not sure whether they were taking water out or putting water into the reservoir. Noted and keep a watching brief. Clare Ashenden-Pearce spoke about the speeding petition. Clare wants to finish the petition and has also been keeping an eye on the speeding as it seems to be an ongoing issue. Clare to do consultation at Fete on 11th July and try to get 200 names on petition. Cllr. Marriott mentioned the hedgehog signs that might help. Parishioners raised significant concerns about the potential development of affordable housing on part of the play park, particularly around the loss of well-used facilities such as the BMX track and basketball court, reduced safe outdoor space for children, construction disruption, traffic and parking pressure, access for lorries, and the impact on elderly or disabled residents. Several parishioners emphasised the park's importance as a community meeting place and a key reason families value living in the village. Parishioners also asked about planning rules, whether homes could be reserved for Bridford residents, emergency air ambulance landing options, how to find out what land TDC owns, and whether development could be limited to a less disruptive part of the site. Further questions included details on site layout, access and the timescale of the proposed development. Councillors noted that any proposal would need to go through the usual planning process, including consultation through Dartmoor National Park Authority, and that parishioners would be able to comment formally. Cllr. Topley explained that Teignbridge District Council owns the land and that Bridford Parish Council leases and maintains it but does not yet have detailed information about the proposal. TDC has indicated a need for five affordable homes in Bridford, which the Parish Council understands but is also wishes to retain the play park as an essential resource for the village. Other possible sites have been considered, but there are planning and ownership constraints. Drawings have been requested from TDC, and a public consultation meeting is expected in the autumn.	Double check speed watch on list of roles from May meeting and amend if necessary Compile and send a list of questions for TDC Liaise with new play park committee	Clerk Clerk Cllrs. Topley and Symons

Cllr. Topley said that the Parish Council's role is to gather views, facilitate discussion, and pass concerns to TDC. Residents were encouraged to submit questions and ideas to the Clerk and Chair, use the consultation process, and consider forming a play park committee to support the ongoing upkeep of the park. Clare Ashenden-Pearce volunteered to start a play park committee and Cllr. Topley thanked her.		
2) Apologies For Absence: – to vote and agree whether to approve apologies received: Cllr. Hollingsworth (unwell), Cllr. Purser (holiday) – both accepted and approved. Cllr. Symons absent – apologies sent but not received before meeting.		
3) Declarations Of Interest: None		
4) Minutes – to approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on the 11 th May 2026 and the minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting on 7 th May 2026. Both sets of minutes approved and signed.	Post approved minutes to website	Clerk
5) Review action points from previous meeting Clerk's: Send contract details of GD to Cllr. Marriott (carry over), put note in Unity to request help with keeping the Village Garden tidy, update Anne Mayes on any changes to accessing website, ask Alex Weaving if he knows about drainage arrangements in Oxen Park Gate (carry over), compile list of queries to TDC re. potential development (noted as an action from Public Discussion above), post approved minutes to website, print QR code slips, put consultation in Unity for June, contact Christow Primary School re. consultation of pupils who use Bridford play park, list play park actions for June meeting – put on agenda, put in Unity article info about tetrapaks now being collected at kerbside, make payments in Unity Trust Bank, send planning comments to DNPA, post updated policies and financial documents to website (points 15-18 on May's agenda), pay insurance invoice, apply for DCC Locality Funding, note risk assessment and safeguarding check to be undertaken for event, post DCC's Highways handbook to website and put in Unity article for June, send email to DCC in support of complaint over Knotweed and Skunk Cabbage Councillors': JT: Assess hedge on Church Lane - done and consultation poster for bus shelter – Clerk to send to Cllr. Topley, SP: Trim hedge by Venn – Cllr. Purser has it in hand, Pound Lane and AH: Create QR code slips - done, PM: Hedgehog signs – Cllr. Marriott showed options: put on a stake and put them on rotation around the village. Discussion around 30mph zones and potential funding for signs.	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 Report two large potholes at top of Church Lane to DCC	Clerk Clerk Clerk Clerk Clerk
6) District and County Councillor Reports (circulated ahead of meeting). Summarised here and full text at the end of the minutes. District Cllr. Swain attended in person and covered the desire to retain the play park and the need for affordable housing, the issues around planning	Liaise with Cllrs. Swain and Purser over looking	Clerk

permission in the National Park, the impact Local Government Reorganisation and there was discussion with Councillors about these topics, as summarised below. In addition, Cllr. Swain said he has money for community groups to apply for funding and that BPC could act as a broker for community groups as in previous cases. There followed much discussion with Councillors and expression of views around housing and play park location and funding, setting up a sub-committee for the process, the need for a play park for health and wellbeing, looking into asset transfer process, the terms of the current lease for the play park, potential to work with the Woodland Park to look into other ideas of using the space and setting up a play park committee with Cllr. Topley and Cllr. Symons as Parish Council links. It was agreed that on several of these points we are awaiting answers from TDC. Cllr. Topley said that once a play park committee is set up, the committee can apply for funding from the TDC Councillors' Community Fund.	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	Clerk Clerk
7) Chair's Report (for information only) – summarised here and full report available at the end of the minutes Chair covered AGAR, Welcome book, AI training, VH meeting, Play park consultation and TDC's affordable homes proposal and Play park action plan	Arrange site visit to play park for all Councillors in August Add invoice for copper grease to July agenda to be paid	Cllr. Topley Clerk
8) FINANCES <u>Income</u> None this month <u>Expenditure</u> <u>Clerk's salary, pension and other expenses</u> <u>To be paid</u> Clerk's salary June £666 minus tax (£0) and employee's Pension contribution to NEST (£64.53) so £601.47 BACS HMRC tax and NI for June c.£37.35 BACS (subject to running PAYE Tools) Clerk's Pension employer contribution to NEST June £4.35 DD <u>Other items to be paid</u> Insurance renewal (as agreed at May's meeting) £946.57 Hiscox through Gallagher, renewal due 1st June - BACS Coloured card from Amazon for Play Park consultation slips for door drop £4.67 (paid on Clerk's personal Amazon account to save on postage) - BACS <u>Recurring payments</u> Clerk's homeworking expenses - £6 per week SO	Make payments in Unity Trust Bank	Clerk

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) Unity Trust Bank service charge £7 per month by DD Bank reconciliation and Unity Trust Bank statement and CC statement for May 2026 supplied Council to resolve to accept the accounts – resolve and accepted		
9) PLANNING Planning Applications - Dartmoor National Park has asked for observations from the Parish Council on the following planning applications: Applications Decisions 9) Planning Dartmoor National Park has asked for observations from the Parish Council on the following planning applications: <u>Applications</u> 0155/26/BC - Class BC - temporary recreational campsite 7 pitches mixed use 15th July 2026 to 12th September 2026 at Beech Tree Farm, Doccombe – no objections <u>Decisions</u> W/25/6000921 – Appeal Decision for Lower Lowton Farm, Bridford - Refusal of Full Planning Permission - Dismissed	Send comments to DNPA	Clerk
10) Internal Audit Report – to note no issues raised by the internal auditor. Noted and all in agreement. Chair congratulated Clerk on the AGAR work on behalf of the Parish Council.		
11) Certificate of Exemption – to resolve to agree the Certificate of Exemption. Resolved and agreed.	Send to external auditors	Clerk
12) Annual Governance Statement – to resolve to agree the Annual Governance Statement is accurate. Resolved and agreed.		
13) Annual Accounting Statement – to resolve to agree the Annual Accounting Statement is accurate. Resolved and agreed.		
14) Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Council's accounts – to resolve to agree the dates of publication on the website and notice board from 4th June-15th July, thus covering 30 working days and including the first 14 days of July as required by law. Resolved and agreed.	Post public rights and accounts to website	Clerk
15) Road warden scheme and insurance issue – discuss and decide best course of action – details sent ahead of the meeting. Clerk to continue to speak to insurers to try and agree cover and feed back. Clerk to go back to DCC re. insurers – if their cover were better then more would join scheme.	Liaise with insurers and contact DCC re. insurance issue	Clerk
16) Funding for Autumn celebration – discuss ideas and agree next steps: Chair said that we can apply to DCC Locality Funding for benches for village garden and children's art competition, but it won't stretch to Autumn Celebration as well due to number of other applications. Ideas were discussed for the Autumn celebration such as a fundraising event: bacon butties and hedgehog buns, Halloween, Scarecrow competition, bringing the village together for families,	Carry over Autumn Celebration to September meeting to	Clerk

pay to enter a scarecrow and pay to do trail and have baps and buns? Create scarecrows in teams?	finalise details	
17) Fete BPC stall – discuss and agree format and who to prepare and run stall. Chair can plan things but capacity issue on the actual day of the Fete - Saturday 11 th July. Information sharing stall for BPC with easels: consultation and chat to people about the role of the Parish Council. Cllr. Marriott happy to put a display together. Cllr. Acheson and Cllr. Gallagher to help Cllr. Topley on the day. Set up beforehand – Cllr. Marriott to support.	Put Fete stall on agenda July to finalise details	Clerk
18) Affordable housing consultation plans – discuss best approach; timing of meeting and possible subcommittee. To be confirmed from TDC.	Liaise with TDC over affordable homes public meeting	Clerk
19) Highways as standing item - discuss latest issues and agree actions. Note DCC have advised that surface dressing on Teign Valley Road (B3193 Teign House Inn to Bridford Bridge junction, Bridford) is due to start on 21st July. Hedgehog signs to be finalised by Cllr. Marriott - agreed to spend from Miscellaneous budget - £54 signs and a vinyl sticker for phone box Back road to Bridford – no further details from DCC about repairs as yet Seven Views on Pound Lane: bollard on corner marking enormous hole – unsafe - needs proper post or crash barrier put in – does it belong to DCC?	Post surface dressing details to website Ask Devon Highways for update on back road to Christow Report hole on corner by Seven Views to DCC Send Clerk details of hedgehog signs Purchase hedgehog signs	Clerk Clerk Clerk Cllr. Marriott Clerk
Clerk's report for information only Road Warden scheme, DCC Highways, AGAR		
Councillors' reports and Out and about in the community for information only None		
Email information DALC bulletins - up to #24 and NALC bulletins DNPA Planning applications		

DCC Highways updates		
Meeting finished at Date of next meeting Items for Information - The next council meeting will be on Monday 6th July 2026 at 7pm in the Village Hall. Note that there is no meeting in August and the September meeting will be on Monday 7th September 2026 .		

Signed:

Date:

Chair of Bridford Parish Council

AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return) – The AGAR is a statutory end of year financial and governance document, completed annually to show we are transparent, accountable and can demonstrate proper use of public funds. Well done to Tamsin: our AGAR has been signed off with no issues to note. It has been even more work than usual with new actions and people to chase. Thank you very much.

WELCOME BOOK CIRCULATION

Many thanks to Kathy Fitzjohn who has decided to retire from Welcome Book distribution in the village – she has only been doing it since it was introduced about 20 years ago! Please let me know if you would like to take on this role.

TRAINING FEEDBACK – As reported at last PC meeting, Tamsin went to first one of 3; this one was the second, about community engagement, the third one is about bias/ethics/data privacy and so on

KEY POINTS

SAFETY

- When using an AI Forum, check what the copyright allows – varies from forum to forum
- Don't use AI generated 'real' people (illustrations are fine)
- Don't use own personal email for anything other than domestic purposes: don't use within AI forums for council business
- Don't use blindly – always check everything by a real human and ensure is BPC friendly – ensure human oversight
- Consider bias/ethics/data privacy

THINGS THAT CAN BE DONE/ADD VALUE TO PC BY RELEASING TIME FOR OTHER THINGS

- Can answer a question; will respond if asked how can it help us
- Produce a questionnaire; bring together questionnaire findings
- Produce a logo, posters and videos; rebuild a website/update a website
- Source replacement costs
- Look for charity funding and word a charity request
- Précis documents; minutes; notes and articles; order handwritten notes
- Write a business case or any action plan

CONCLUSION

Not ideal to use personal AI access, consider at some point investing in the cost of an AI license

In line with agreed parish plan suggestions, each of us to make use of AI as we feel comfortable with

Suggest we ask AI to make us a Bridford PC logo

VH/PC UPDATE

VH Trustees planned meeting with PC and ACRE postponed by VH trustees

PLAYPARK CONSULTATION

I suggested in my Chair's Report last month that we would hope for drawings to be ready for the fete and a village meeting arranged for the autumn. We have recently heard back from TDC that they think it unlikely drawings will be ready in time for the fete. We are waiting to have an indication of

timescales in due course so hopefully we will have more information in time for the next Parish Council meeting on July 6th. At the moment, surveys and so on have apparently yet to be undertaken so we are not expecting things to move as quickly as we originally thought.

As Councillors we are aware that there have been many queries and concerns about TDC proposals for affordable housing on play park land. We as individuals and at meetings are very happy to engage with residents to talk through plans. At the moment though, we have no more information than was made available at the Annual Parish Meeting and subsequently also posted on local Facebook pages. We have been very pleased to see that parishioners care so much about the Playpark and to this end we are asking if people could complete the Playpark questionnaire (so far, we have received 52 replies) so we can get a rounded picture of the ways the Playpark is used and by whom. Additionally, we have been trying for some time to organise a Playpark Committee to support the Playpark in terms of DIY and fundraising, but up until recently people have understandably been too busy. I would appreciate it if people could contact us if they would like to be involved in setting up an informal group/committee: the Playpark still needs to be maintained while affordable housing plans begin to unfold and as a Parish Council we are anxious to ensure the Playpark does not deteriorate; as previously mentioned, the Playpark equipment has been in place for about 20 years and is definitely in need of some TLC.

PLAYPARK ACTION PLAN

Thanks to Cllr Symons who has completed all the work on our list, except for painting the fort and weed removal on the BMX track and Basketball court.

Thanks to Ian Lucraft who, together with a little help from myself, greased all the rusted joints on the play park equipment.

District Councillor Andy Swain's report – given in person as in attendance at the meeting

Cllr. Swain said it was really helpful to know how people feel about the play park. He was impressed with what everyone was saying – fabulous to want play park and fight for it but affordable housing is also important, and we need to balance things. DNPA planning is hard to get agreement for. TDC – it's unusual to own land in DNPA.

Cllr. Swain mentioned Local Government Reorganisation – no idea who's going to be in charge yet so priorities might change. Apparently, delivering small amounts of affordable housing in villages is something TDC wants to do – unlikely to be more than 5. Have to show need for however many houses. Cllr. Swain said we can object to TDC and if they do go ahead make sure that we stay engaged and get the best we can from what is available.

Cllr. Swain said he has money for community groups – support dark skies – church light timer has broken and light is on at random times. £400 for a new timer if the church applied for it? Friends of church need to apply. Clerk to email Cllr. Swain and Cllr. Purser with details.



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

Dear Colleagues,

May has been another busy month, combining local work across the division, detailed casework with residents, and key meetings at County Hall. Highways continue to dominate much of my time, alongside significant decisions on libraries, the Council's financial position, Children's Services, Adult Social Care and public transport.

Cabinet received the final revenue and capital outturn for 2025/26, with the Council ending the year in a balanced position—an encouraging sign following sustained financial pressures. The Council underspent by £9.8 million, although Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and SEND remain under considerable strain. This improved position has enabled targeted investment, reflecting a strengthened financial approach and delivery of efficiencies. Key allocations include £4 million for highways maintenance, £1 million to support the Children's Social Care workforce, £416,000 for SEND-related diagnostic work, and £2 million to the Service Transformation reserve. These decisions will directly influence service stability and infrastructure improvement.

During last month I sent out as promised the Parish Highways Handbook by email, I will be at Chudleigh Town Council tonight to hand out hard copies and hope to be at many other Parish Council meetings to share the handbook enclosed in attachments.

I also have a further handbook specifically on Potholes and all the information around the subject, sometime over the next few weeks.

Highways, Potholes

Highways remain a primary concern for residents. Devon maintains England's largest local road network, exceeding 13,000km, with a £390 million backlog and an estimated £102 million annual requirement simply to prevent further decline. While sobering, these figures underline the need for transparency about the scale of the challenge and the limitations of current funding, which has often necessitated reactive rather than preventative maintenance. An additional £15 million for highways has been approved for 2026/27, followed by £10 million annually for four years. While welcome, effective use of this funding is critical, with a focus on underlying issues such as drainage, structural weaknesses, and road foundations. I continue to work with officers, parish councils and residents on local highways matters. Local insight is invaluable in identifying recurring issues and preventative solutions, and I encourage continued reporting through official channels. Notably, our division has secured one of the highest levels of repair activity through online reporting. Cabinet also agreed to expand a 12-month proactive pothole repair trial. This approach allows crews to address emerging defects alongside safety-critical ones, reflecting a more practical and preventative maintenance model. I will be monitoring its expansion closely and advocating for inclusion of rural areas.

Libraries

On libraries, I supported—following over 25,000 consultation responses—to maintain current staffed opening hours and remove proposed restructuring. This is a positive outcome, recognising the wider social value of libraries, particularly in rural communities. Additional measures include investment in Open+ technology, a new volunteer strategy, partnership models supported by a £1 million fund, increased book funding, and the removal of overdue fines from October 2026.

Children Services.

Children's Services also remain a priority. There has been measurable progress over the past year, including increased permanent staffing, reduced reliance on agency workers, and a strengthened focus on workforce stability. While further improvement is required, current initiatives—including workforce investment, fostering support, and preventative strategies—indicate positive direction. Foster carers play a vital role, and it is essential the Council continues to support, retain and properly recognise their contribution.

Public Transport

Public transport and connectivity have been prominent this month. The Council has increased its public transport support budget by £2.5 million, recognising its importance, particularly in rural areas. I have welcomed the government's announcement of free bus travel for 5–15 year olds in August, while calling for the scheme to be extended to 16–18 year olds to support access to employment. However, challenges remain, particularly around service coverage, reliability and connectivity. Community transport providers continue to play a critical role. Transport remains a key concern for young people, influencing access to education, employment and wider opportunities. Locally, I continue to address highways and transport casework. Changes to traffic patterns require careful monitoring to ensure impacts on congestion, services and residents are properly understood. Alongside this, I continue to support residents and town/parish councils with a range of local issues. While often incremental, this work is essential in delivering practical outcomes.

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 opens new page):

<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

Councillor Richard Keeling, MLOL