

Brixton Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report



For 2016-2017



Brixton Parish Council - Annual Report for 2016-2017

2016 - 17 has been a year of considerable progress for Brixton Parish Council.

The new town of Sherford and Planning remains a major feature of our agendas. Representatives from the Parish Council - Michael Wills, Helen Williams, Brenda Huxtable, the clerk and myself attend regular Sherford Liaison Meetings which include Plymouth City Councillors, District Councillors and representatives from the Sherford Consortium. The Parish Council is part of the consultation arrangement by South Hams District Council for reserved matters for planning applications for Sherford. The Sherford Consortium is applying to the South Hams District Council for a variation to the original planning consent to take into account new technical approaches to design and building, managing the drainage for the new town effectively and using the topography to the benefit of the new houses. Building for Phase 1 has started and the first house has recently been occupied.

Cllr Helen Williams has been nominated by Brixton Parish Council to the Sherford Community Land Trust. This is an important role being part of the setting up of the Trust which will eventually be handed over to the residents of the new town. I would like to thank Helen for taking on this important role and for her tenacity in ensuring that the legal documents are fit for purpose now and in the future.

As a parish Brixton has been under considerable pressure from planning applications in the past 12 months for small and large developments with an application for a further 29 houses on the Canes Orchard development which was recently agreed at South Hams DMC and an application for over 60 houses at Stamps Hill which the Parish Council has objected to. In addition to this and throughout the year the Parish Council has been consulted by South Hams District Council on up to 40 planning applications most of which require a site visit of a minimum of 3 councillors. I would like to thank Councillors Ian Martin and Michael Wills for coordinating the arrangements for the Parish Council to respond to planning applications as part of the consultation process with South Hams District Council with informed recommendations and to thank those councillors who sometimes at very short notice attend site meetings.

Planning for the future remains a critical issue for this parish on the urban fringe of Plymouth. The Parish Council set up a Neighbourhood Plan Group in 2015. This group has met weekly throughout the year. This has been and continues to be a considerable time commitment for the group members and I would like to thank Ray Holland, Jon Capel, Greg Webb, Tony Steer, and Shirley Deeney for their time, commitment and enthusiasm to the process of producing Brixton's Neighbourhood Plan. A questionnaire was delivered to households in June last year and the results published in a report last July have informed the draft vision, objectives and policies for the emerging Brixton Neighbourhood Plan. These were the subject of public consultation earlier this month. The group is also consulting with local landowners. The group is in the process of starting to write the plan based on all the information you as a community have provided for us. On behalf of the NPG I would like to thank everyone for their comments and support they are very much appreciated and to the WI for producing refreshments at our consultation events.

The Traffic Management Group representing local people and Parish Councillors has met quarterly with Nick Colton, the local Devon County Highways Manager and Andy Potter PCSO to address issues affecting the safety of pedestrians, road users and environmental matters relating to traffic and the roads. I would like to thank Nick Colton and Andy Potter and the local residents for their time and positive contributions to the discussion on the main agenda items which include the condition of the roads, drainage, signage and speed in the village and through the lanes. It is good to get together to work out how to resolve issues constructively and collectively. Thank you to Roger Wakeham, Ian Calvert, Brenda Huxtable, Michael Wills and Kirstie for their support to this group.

Brixton Composters continues to be successful in the collection of green waste and creating an income for the community. Applications for funding are welcome. I would like to thank Councillor Gay Murch for representing the Parish Council on this group.

I would also like to thank Councillors Brenda Huxtable and Roger Wakeham who closely monitor our footpaths. We are grateful to local residents who walk the paths and have agreed to provide the P3 group (Parish Paths Partnership) with quarterly feedback on the condition of the paths so that repairs can be done promptly and the paths remain safe and accessible. Fly tipping continues to be a problem for the parish... through good liaison with Tim Pollard, South Hams Locality Officer fly tipping is dealt with promptly.

In Brixton village the Green and shrubbery at Brixton Lodge Gardens continues to look fresh and eye catching under the care of Mr Tony Davis and Mr Jack Gilbery. I would like to thank Mr Davis and Mr Gilbery for their time and interest in looking after the appearance of the village. The Parish Council completed the refurbishment of the 4 bus shelters during the year thank you to Councillor Roger Wakeham for co-ordinating this project and also to the Feoffee Trust and to Brixton Composters who have made financial contributions to their restoration. The Parish Council has agreed to purchase new entrance signs for Brixton promoting the village as in the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Parish Council is part of the Dementia Friendly Parishes around the Yealm linking Brixton with the parishes of Wembury, Yealmpton, Newton & Noss and Holbeton which is in now in its 5th year and linked to over 70 people with dementia and their families across the 5 parishes. Maxine Kennedy, coordinator for the project was recently invited to speak at the national conference of National and Local Councils and afterwards the Chief Executive of NALC, Jonathan Owen, tweeted that her talk was 'inspiring'. This is national publicity for the 5 parish councils.

Councillor Roger Wakeham has represented the Parish Council at the Hele Trust and we have been represented at the Ivybridge and District Association of Local Councils by Cllrs Michael Wills and Helen Williams. Annual grants have been made by the Parish Council to South Hams CAB, South Hams CVS, The Samaritans, Ivybridge Ring and Ride, Yealm Brownies, DFPY, Yealmpton & Brixton Caring and Brixton Scouts and to St. Marys Church towards the lighting.

The Parish Council continues to support St.Mary's School as an important community resource for our children, their families and for the community generally. Councillor Calvert and Williams are progressing ideas for the Parish and community to become 'bee friendly'.

During the year the parish council agreed having been approached by BT to adopt the 2 phone boxes in the parish – one in the village and the other at Brixton Torr. Negotiations are currently underway.

The village website, funded by the Parish Council and the Feoffee Trust, continues to be an excellent resource and source of information about what is happening in the Parish. I would like to thank Graham Searle for keeping the website up to date and relevant. The Parish Council posts notices on the 'I love Brixton' Face Book page so that we have as wide an audience as possible. I would also like to thank Councillor Ian Calvert for helping to promote the work of the Council on the Face book page. Under the requirements for parish councils to have greater transparency our clerk has set up a separate Parish Council website where all documents relating to the work of the Parish Council are available to view. The arrangements with the village website will remain the same and be reviewed annually. We now have our own Brixton Parish Council App. I would like to thank Kirstie for all her hard work in setting the website and App up modernising our communications.

The Parish now has a Community Emergency Plan and Community Emergency Team of councillors and local people led by Councillor Helen Williams. Helen has represented the Parish Council at County meetings about planning for emergencies and developing resilience in the parish. She has linked up with the Emergency Planning Councillor for Yealmpton PC and set up a joint meeting and joint training session in April so that the 2 parishes can work effectively together in an emergency. I would like to thank Helen for her diligent and enthusiastic approach to this important part of the life of our community.

In our Parish Plan 2012 we emphasised the importance of improving links for Carrollsland with the Parish Council. The Parish Council notice board at Carrollsland provides a link to the wider parish and we plan to hold a BPC meeting at Albion Oakes Club House this year.

The Parish Council continues to have a good working relationship with the Police PCSO Andy Potter. We welcome his attendance at our meetings and thank him for the efficient handling of issues we have brought to his attention... particularly where he has made personal contact with local people about their concerns.

Following the resignation of Patrick Loxdale in April 2016 BPC advertised and interviewed for a new councillor and we welcomed Joe Parish onto the Council. Joe has taken on the responsibility for providing some new equipment in the Brixstix play space and bringing some of the issues for the residents of Brixton Torr to our attention.

Sadly John Squire who had completed over 36 years as a District Councillor representing this Parish died last year. Councillors Dan Brown and Basil Cane represent Brixton at South Hams District Council. They continue to keep us informed about the considerable changes for District Council. We are grateful for their interest and their regular attendance at our monthly meetings.

I would also like to thank Devon County Councillor John Hart for continuing to take the time to attend meetings and his interest in the parish particularly the roads and the developing new town of Sherford. John will continue to represent Brixton Parish following the recent DCC elections and I would like to congratulate him on his return to office.

Our Clerk, Kirstie Aldridge, has continued to grasp the work of the Parish Council with enthusiasm, confidence and clarity. Following the Peer Review last year when Kirstie's work was commended the Parish Council applied for and gained the Foundation Award of the Local Council Award Scheme. This award demonstrates that the Council has all the documentation and information in place to operate lawfully and according to standard practice and building a foundation for improvement and development. In June we will be looking at how we move the Parish Council onto the next stage for the Quality Award. Kirstie is also completing the Cilca Training (Certificate in Local Council Administration). Following the recent internal audit, Peter Vasello, our new auditor, congratulated Kirstie on the high quality of her financial record keeping. So thank you Kirstie for all you have done on the past year modernising the governance and financial controls for the Council.

I would like to thank all the Parish Councillors for their hard work, time and commitment to the work of the Parish Council acting always in the best interests of the people of Brixton Parish. It is important to remember that we are all volunteers. I would particularly like to thank Councillor Michael Wills, our Vice Chairman, for his support and advice and his great support to me as Chairman and Kirstie Aldridge our clerk moving the Parish Council on so effectively.

In conclusion I would like to thank those residents who regularly attend the Parish Council meetings throughout the year. Your continued support is very welcome and important to us and we hope that you will continue to attend our meetings and bring your friends

Finally as a Parish Council we have continued to make good progress in a time of change and uncertainty. This is down to the Parish Councillors and local people working together in best interests of the Parish now and for the future which I think will continue to be challenging and complicated.

Thank you