

**Brixton Parish Council - Annual Report for 2022 from Liz Hitchins**  
**Chairman presented at Brixton Parish Council on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023**



During the past year Brixton Parish Council has continued to meet regularly, supported by enthusiastic volunteers, and a range of working groups moving us on from the impact of the pandemic.

Maintaining communication continues to be paramount using a variety of processes including the Council website, regular newsletters, Facebook (2 sites) and community notice boards located in Sherford, Carroll Island and Brixton Village. Currently the Parish Council is investigating streaming its meetings to increase the opportunities for people to engage in the Council's business.

The Parish Council agreed its precept of £36,245 in January 2022 to meet the financial requirements of the parish, covering a wide range of activities for the benefit of the whole community. This included the celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee last June which was a great success with bunting, tree planting, a church service, and a community picnic as well as individual street and neighbours' parties. Thank you to everyone in the working group and the community who contributed to make the Jubilee celebrations so memorable. A working group was also set up for the Kings Coronation (6<sup>th</sup> May) which will be in next year's report.

Annual grants have been made by the Parish Council to South Hams Citizens Advice, South Hams CVS, The Samaritans, Ivybridge Ring and Ride, Yealm Brownies/Rainbows, 1<sup>st</sup> Elburton Brownies/ Guides, Dementia Friendly Parishes around the Yealm, Yealmpton & Brixton Caring, Brixton Scouts and to St. Marys Church towards the lighting.

Annually the Council has revised and updated its policies, procedures, and the Community Emergency Plan. Thank you to Helen Williams for overseeing the Community Emergency Plan on behalf of the Parish Council and for being our Snow Warden. Helen relinquished these responsibilities during the year. Thank you to Roger Wakeham who represents the Council on the Hele Trust.

The Council's Business Continuity Plan adopted in 2020, which ensured that the business of the council could continue during the pandemic, has been updated regularly in line with changing national and public health policies. Cllr Arran provided independent scrutiny of the financial accounts on a regular basis. The annual performance appraisal of the clerk's work took place in September. I am personally, and as a council we are, indebted to Kirstie, our clerk, for all her work in ensuring the Council operates effectively and efficiently. Training is a priority for the Council. Skills audits and development plans have been introduced for the clerk and councillors.

The work of the parish council has continued through Working Groups which have met by zoom. These include the Environment Working Group, the Traffic Management Group, the Platinum Jubilee Group and more recently the group making plans for Brixton to celebrate the Coronation. The cost-of-living group set up in November met face to face on a regular basis in 'The Foxhound' as 'The Foxhound' provided a warm hub from January to March 23 and continues to provide a place for people to socialise on Thursday afternoons. We are indebted to St. Marys Church, the Brixton Feoffee Trust, Greg Webb, and Ian Calvert (Facebook administrators) for their support to the community during the cost-of-living crisis.

The Bee Wild Group, part of the Environment Working Group, with a grant from the national Big Green Week, in September held a community event at the school, a tree walk around the village, daffodils were planted in the autumn and brightened up the village in the early spring and an open afternoon was held at The Old Mill Site at Cofflete Creek. The Parish Council has adopted a policy of 'No Mow May' to encourage insect life on our verges. On some verges wildflowers are being left to grow for the whole season. Thank you to the Brixton Bee Wild

Group - Jenni Robertson, Shirley Deeney, Heather Compton, and Alex Whish for raising awareness of the importance of bees, trees, and nature in our community, and for helping with other volunteers to plant 11 trees to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee as part of the Queens Canopy. Three bird and bee friendly trees have been planted to celebrate the Kings Coronation.

Wildlife and nature are important for the land at the Old Mill project led by Cllr Parish. An information board has been produced by the South Devon AONB in collaboration with the Parish Council, and a seat has been purchased to be on the site so that the peace and tranquillity of the area can be enjoyed by all. The second phase of this project is about to be started. Thank you to Cllr Parish for his time and ideas in progressing this project and for ensuring that his other project Brixstix Play Space is regularly monitored to provide a safe play area for our children. A waste bin has recently been installed there by South Hams District Council at the request of the Parish Council.

Street sweeping through the village continues the first Saturday in each month except for August and January. Thank you to all our volunteer street sweepers and to Steve and Sharon at 'The Foxhound' for their hospitality after the mornings work.

Brixton Parish Council is represented on several groups relating to Climate Change and the Environment. It is one of the 7 riparian parishes located in the catchment of the River Yealm on the River Yealm Water Quality Group leading on the improvement of the water quality of the river in collaboration with the Yealm Estuary to Moor project. A water quality monitor has been purchased by the riparian parishes and now over 30 volunteers - known as 'the Yealm Dippers' are sampling the water down the length of the Yealm, and the subsequent data is being used to compare with and possibly challenge the EA findings. This is, now, as you are all aware a national issue. Thank you to Helen Staddon who represents the Council on the Yealm Estuary to Moor project and Martyn Oates who represents the Council on the Yealm Harbour Authority.

The Traffic Management Group meets quarterly and is attended by the DCC Highways Officer, Nick Colton, to address the issues of road and traffic safety across the parish. The Parish Council made an unsuccessful application to Devon County Council for a 20 mile an hour speed limit through the village; and is currently waiting for proposal from Devon County Council for traffic calming on Stamps Hill and Red Lion Hill. There are plans to trial the lanes to the east of Sherford as Quiet Lanes. Plans to close Monkey Lane remain unresolved. The condition of the road surface of the A379 remains outstanding and is the subject of discussion with our County Councillor, John Hart. I would like to thank Nick Colton who attends regularly and is very helpful and supportive to us in keeping our roads and lanes safe as possible. I would also like to thank Roger Smith, our Community Road Warden, for all his help and support on traffic matters and for the regular relocation, with Shaun Tapper's help, of the VAS sign working towards ensuring drivers keep within the speed limit. New volunteers have been recruited to Speedwatch thank you to Jim Eccles and Roger Smith for their persistence in making sure that this valuable road safety speed check is fully operational in the village. A consultation exercise took place in October to seek the views of parishioners on improving safety and parking around the Green. A working group will be set up to progress this and any proposals will be the subject of further community consultation.

The P3 group has met virtually monitoring the public rights of way in the parish. The wall on Footpath 26 has been restored with a small length needing completion. Consultation has taken place on the relocation of PROWs in the Sherford development. Thank you to those volunteers who monitor the condition of the footpaths and report any issues to the Council so that immediate action can be taken. The Council is closely involved with Plymouth City Council (PCC), Sherford Consortium and others drawing attention to PCC our concerns about the condition of the footpath at Dawes Lane, Elburton.

Planning continues to be a major item on our Council agendas, and it is a critical issue for the community on the urban fringe of Plymouth. The adopted Brixton Neighbourhood Plan provides guidance and informed support when considering planning applications. The Neighbourhood Plan is in the process of making a minor modification and consultation took place in January this year. This has now reached Reg 15 in the process.

Climate change, the reduction of carbon emissions and the improvement of the environment continue to influence planning recommendations of the Council, particularly in relation to renewable energy and the management of surface water runoff. I would like to thank Councillors Ian Martin and Michael Wills for coordinating the arrangements for the Parish Council to respond to planning applications to South Hams District Council. Thank you also to all councillors, who sometimes at very short notice, have attended site meetings.

Planning applications for Sherford, because of their complexity, are usually the subject of a separate meeting of the Council with input from the relevant Planning Officers. The Parish Council is represented on the Sherford Community Land Trust by our nominated director, a local resident, Steven Williams. Thank you to Steven for his regular detailed updates the Council on the progress of the Trust and the wider development of Sherford as a town and community. I would also like to thank Cllr Nix who takes an active interest in the development of Sherford. He brings his detailed knowledge, interest, and involvement in all aspects of the progress of Sherford which has been particularly helpful in street naming, responding to planning applications and supporting the parish council's involvement with the establishment of the country park adjacent to Brixton village.

Cllr Arran continued to be responsible for the appearance of the Green which looked particularly striking for the Platinum Jubilee. Thank you to Cllr Arran for ensuring the Green continued to look attractive throughout the year and that we had a Christmas Tree in December. Thank you to Julie Eccles and Joe Parish for looking after the two phone boxes and checking the defibrillators located in them there i.e. on the Green and at Fordebrook. Working with the South West Ambulance Service defibrillator training was up for our parishioners.

Thank you to Councillor Clegg who with his responsibility for Silverbridge Way, and representing the Council on the Brixton Composters Group, Cllr Clegg regularly updates the Council to ensure that Silverbridge Way is always in a satisfactory condition for all users and that there is a constructive working relationship with Brixton Composters. Yealmpton PC and Brixton PC in collaboration with the landowner and tenant for Silverbridge Way have started to work on plans to extend the path inside the hedge from its current exit on the A379 to Bens Farm Shop.

Councillor Robertson continued to bring issues affecting the residents of Carrollsland to the attention of the Council. I would also like to thank her for looking after the planting in the box at Chittleburn Hill, which is not an easy task.

Aardvark continued to provide the Parish Council with a monthly update on the progress of the restoration of Steer Point Quarry together with information on lorry movements, complaints, and the traffic plan etc. Planning permission has been given by DCC for a six-month extension to complete the restoration. A Public Right of Way on the site will enable access to this reclaimed land.

Regular liaison between the local Police and the Chairman has been set up and has worked well dealing with urgent issues and updating when necessary.

The Parish Council continues to support St. Mary's School as an important community resource for our children, their families and for the community. It gave an award to a child in

each year groups at the school who had made the most significant progress during the previous year at the school end of year celebration.

I would like to thank our 2 District Councillors Dan Brown and Matt Chown for their attendance at our Council meetings and following up issues on behalf of the parish and individual parishioners. Both did not stand for re-election, and we wish them well for the future. I would also like to thank Devon County Councillor John Hart for his support throughout the year. I would like to thank Jenni Robertson for her bee friendly work, representing Carrollsland and looking after the flower bed at Chittleburn Hill. Jenni resigned from the Parish Council and moved to Scotland. I would also like to thank Edd Arran who did not stand for re-election at the most recent elections for his work for the council particularly looking after the Green and ensuring we had a Christmas tree. However, he is going to continue to look after the Green as a volunteer. Both Jenni and Edd made significant contributions to the overall effective working of the Council.

I am now in my third year as a Director of DALC. I have regularly attended the Board meetings and the County Committee where wider issues affecting town and parish councils across Devon are raised and, where appropriate, forwarded to NALC.

Finally, 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 living in 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, for continuing to move the Parish Council on so effectively.

In conclusion I would like to thank all our volunteers and those residents who support the Parish Council throughout the year. Your continued support is very welcome and important to us.

E. Hitchins

May 2023