

Brixton Parish Council

How Brixton Parish Council ensures that the council delivers value for money



This statement outlines how value for money and continuous improvement is sought and delivered by Brixton Parish Council with specific regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of public money and the Council's resources. Brixton Parish Council fully understands that its main source of income is the annual precept (tax payers' money) and is publically accountable and responsible to provide value for money (VFM being the optimal use of financial resources to achieve intended outcomes, not simply achieving the lowest initial price). Brixton Parish Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders are reviewed annually and outline the financial rules regarding procurement at all levels.

Economy: minimising the cost of resources used or required – *spending less*

The Clerk and Council, as far as reasonable and practical, seek competitive quotes for routine administration expenditure and secure the lowest (VFM) prices. Brixton Parish Council also works with other local Parish Councils to obtain economies of scale e.g. joint maintenance of permissive path Silverbridge Way linking the parishes of Brixton & Yealmpton. The Parish Council collaborates with other local organisations to fund new community facilities e.g. the Parish Council pays a third of the annual cost of the Brixton village website, and contributed a third of the cost of two defibrillators. Positive feedback to the Parish Council has been given by users of these services and further constructive suggestions for continuous improvement for the Parish Council to consider/implement.

Efficiency: comparing output from goods or services and the resources to obtain them – *spending well*

During 2019 the Parish Council extended the periods to obtain better quality services and VFM when tendering for grass cutting and for maintenance of Silverbridge Way. Since September 2018 street sweeping/weeding, previously contracted out, is now done by a team of volunteers (Parish Councillors and residents) reducing costs and increasing community involvement and cohesion. The initial cost for tools and equipment was met by the Parish Council but has since been covered by successfully applying for a grant. The Council's annual insurance policy was instead renewed for three years from May 2020, thus ensuring no increase during a period of uncertainty.

Effectiveness: the relationship between the intended and actual results of public spending (outcomes) – *spending wisely*

Through its grant and donation programme the Parish Council is able to achieve more by making grants to local charitable organisations promoting health and well being than by its own actions. These include The Samaritans, Citizens Advice, Ivybridge Ring & Ride, South Hams CVS, Dementia Friendly Parishes around the Yealm, Yealmpton & Brixton Community Volunteers. These local charities have been particularly important in supporting people throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

To ensure that positive outcomes are achieved a Grant and Donation Policy is followed. Organisations in receipt of grant funding are invited to report at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council the services they provide for the benefit of the local community. This provides the Parish Council with valuable feedback about from users/residents.

Training of Councillors and the clerk is considered an important investment as it increases skills and knowledge for the benefit of the parish. The quarterly parish newsletter has achieved its intended results of keeping the parish well informed of local and county issues/news and obtaining feedback prior to Brixton Parish Council making key decisions. During the first 10 weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic the parish newsletter was produced weekly and became an invaluable source of information for the whole community. The 'Welcome Pack' brochure produced by the Parish Council has been replaced by putting all current local information on the Brixton Devon website.