



BRADNINCH TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES

**The Guildhall
Bradninch
Exeter, Devon**

Minutes of the Bradninch Town Council Meeting
Monday 11th November 2024, 7pm, The Guildhall, Bradninch

Draft minutes subject to amendment.

Present: Cllr E Ottery (Chair), Cllr S Birley (Vice Chair), Cllr P Andrews, Cllr J Blythe, Cllr P Chambers, Cllr S Crawford, Cllr S Glendinning, Cllr S Lefebvre, Cllr M Taylor, Cllr L Mottram, Cllr I Wild.

In attendance: Mrs A Marshall, Clerk, Devon County Councillor J Berry and 4 members of the public.

Standing Orders suspended.

Public Open Session:

- a) A resident living on Hele Road voiced concerns about the Council's plans to move car parking to the opposite side of Hele Road, and to place Double Yellow Lines (DYL) along the side of the road where vehicles currently park. It was thought that this would reduce the number of parking spaces and create more safety issues and Council was asked to reconsider. The Mayor explained that the Council's aim was not to reduce any parking spaces but to improve safety. A proposed site meeting with Highways to discuss the matter was pending, details would be published to enable interested residents to attend. The resident was also concerned about parking changes that could make walking along Hele Road more dangerous than it already is. He praised the recent installation of the speed sign.
- b) A second resident of Hele Road also voiced concerns about the potential change in car parking from one side of the road to the other as this would block her drive way and make vehicular and pedestrian access unsafe. She added that moving car parking from one side of the road to the other would not solve anything. She asked Council to reconsider the plans and asked for a restriction on parking in the road for high sided vehicles. The Mayor said that if a vehicle was taxed and insured it was legally parked and that height restrictions could not be applied. The Council was also asked to reject any plans for new homes without parking spaces. The Mayor confirmed that whilst the Town Council already has already adopted this policy, overall decisions are up to MDDC being the local planning authority.
- c) A third resident of Hele Road confirmed that overall visibility for vehicles and pedestrians is currently difficult along Hele Road but by moving parking from one side of the road to the other would make things worse. The Mayor confirmed that any decisions on this matter would be the responsibility of Highways, and that safety would be a major part of any decision making.

Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council, Police: No report from DCC or MDDC to date. Police statistics can be found on-line at www.streetcheck. C/Cllr Berry advised that an agreement had been made between TESCO and Homes England with regards to a land sale to enable the Cullompton relief road plans to move forward. Other news is that funding support for the most vulnerable had been secured until March 2025 through the Household Support Fund (HSF). Lastly, bus fares had, unfortunately, been increased.

Town Mayor: The monthly Mayors report had been circulated and would be uploaded to the Council's website at www.bradninch-tc.gov.uk. Dates for a Mayor's charity coffee morning and quiz were pending.

Remembrance Sunday and the Caretaker's retirement: The Mayor thanked Cllr Birley, Deputy Mayor, for overseeing an excellent Remembrance Sunday event again this year. Cllr Birley reported that the service had been well attended and that the contribution from the Bradninch Belles choir had been fantastic. The Duchy School had also been involved which had been very much appreciated. Cllr Chambers voiced his disappointment at the event being so religious, he asked for future events to give focus to the loss of life, dependents and relatives as an act of remembrance. Cllr Crawford thanked everyone involved for their excellent efforts. Cllr Blythe reported that the war

memorial is currently in need of cleaning and it was understood that a plan to clean the memorial was being considered. It was noted that the memorial is the responsibility of the Town Trust and not the Town Council. The Mayor commented on the lovely Wreath from the Women's Institute and volunteered to oversee a collaboration by Council members to make a similar Wreath. Cllr Chambers asked Council to consider a donation to the Royal British Legion, the matter would feature on the next meeting agenda. Cllr Birley reported on the Caretaker's retirement event of 1st November saying that it had been well attended. The Clerk was thanked for organising the evening. Standing Orders resumed.

24/109 Apologies for absence: Received and accepted from Cllr L Taylor, illness.

24/110 Declarations of Interest relating to items on this agenda: None at this time.

24/111 Confirmation of Minutes: RESOLVED to sign off the Full Council meeting minutes and the Finance Committee meeting minutes of 14th October 2024 as correct records.

24/112 Town Warden: RESOLVED to make the payments submitted. The monthly report had been circulated and Council gave thanks to the Town Warden for the excellent start he had made in role.

24/113 Highways:

- a) **Site meeting with the new Highways Officer** – a date for the meeting was pending. A response with regards to the Council's request for advice on Double Yellow Lines (DYL) along Hele Road was considered. To move the project forward, Highways required a plan from the Council and a supportive email from C/Cllr Berry. RESOLVED to leave this matter in the hands of Cllr L Taylor and to revisit the topic next month. Cllr Mottram suggested that a public meeting be held to allow residents to air their views on the matter. Whilst C/Cllr Berry was present, the matter of the appalling and erratic bus service in the town was raised. Cancellations and busses running late had become a regular occurrence and on-line information was often not obtainable or up to date. It had been known for buses to actually by-pass the town, without notification, if running late leaving many residents stranded. Council members asked C/Cllr Berry to confirm that DCC would hold Stagecoach to account, perhaps for 'Breach of Contract', due to the dire performance currently being provided. Early morning buses, going in both directions, seemed to be the most disrupted. C/Cllr Berry said that residents needed to report specific issues before the matter could be looked into.
- b) **Road safety between Bradninch and Cullompton** – to be discussed within the pending site meeting.
- c) **Installation of a third speed sign post at Cullompton Hill** - RESOLVED to obtain costings from DCC.
- d) **Cutting back of tree branches at the Recreation Ground** - two quotes were considered and it was RESOLVED to accept the quote for £150 to cut back the branches around the circumference of the stated tree.
- e) **Illegally parked car at the Recreation Ground** - a white car had been parked on Council property next to the Recreation Ground taking up a valuable parking space. RESOLVED that Cllr Ottery would use social media to ask the owner to remove the car and that the Clerk would inform MDDC.

24/114 Christmas Lights: The lights 'switch on' would take place at 6pm on 30th November 2024. Cllrs Crawford, Glendinning and Birley volunteered to help at the event and any other volunteers would be welcomed.

24/115 Communications:

- a) **Defibrillator cabinets** – an email from a resident asking for the defibrillator cabinets to be kept unlocked was considered. RESOLVED to pass this matter to Recreation and Amenities Committee who would be considering new cabinets at its 27th November 2024 meeting. RESOLVED to take up the resident's offer to investigate insurance for unlocked cabinets as the Council's insurance would not cover defibrillators in unlocked cabinets.
- b) **Injury caused by a slippery drain cover** - the Council was sorry to hear that a resident had been injured due to slipping on a drain cover on the footpath between Hornbeam Gardens and Fore Street. As Clarion Housing was responsible for this footpath, it was RESOLVED to provide the contact details to the resident so that direct contact could be made. The Clerk would contact Clarion Housing to express ongoing concerns about this, and also the uneven paving slabs that had been reported several times but remained uneven.

- c) **Historic information on Fore Street properties** - a resident had enquired about the availability of historic records on Fore Street properties. RESOLVED to invite the resident to contact Cllr Chambers who volunteered to help with investigations. The resident would also be referred to MDDC, the local history society and a book by Anthony Taylor called 'A Portrait of Bradninch' which provides background details on local dwellings.
- d) **Praise for Churchyard and Cemetery ground maintenance** - a non-resident had recently visited the Churchyard and Cemetery and had emailed to say how lovely both sites were currently looking. The Grounds maintenance contractor would be advised accordingly.

24/116 Allotment Working Group: RESOLVED to accept the following recommendations –

- a) **Plot 30B** - authority for a replacement shed and replacement fruit tree agreed.
- b) **Plot 22A** - authority to divide the current half plot into 2 quarter plots agreed, but the current tenant of 22A must put up fences to divide the 2 new plots.
- c) **Plot OC1** - authority to have the currently vacant plot tidied up by the Town Warden agreed, to include the removal of the old shed and securing of the fence.

It was noted that the agreed work to lower the hedge behind plots 1,2 and 3 would be completed by month end.

24/117 Burial Working Group: Cllr Wild reported on the following matters -

- a) **Permission to film in St Disen's Churchyard** – as the Council was responsible for the maintenance of the Churchyard, permission had been requested by a film company to allow filming of a Murder Mystery on the site. It was RESOLVED that, whilst the Council had no objection to this, the production company should seek permission from the Parochial Church Council and should also provide evidence of full liability cover as the Council would not be held responsible for any damage to property or injury to persons during the filming. Cllr Wild, on behalf of the Council, was granted authority to deal with the communications, as stated, on behalf of the Council.
- b) **Working Group and Wilding Group meeting** - Cllr Wild would call a combined meeting shortly.

24/118 Planning:

24/01321/TPO Approved. Work to the crowns of 2 protected Yew Trees at 58 Fore Street, Bradninch.

24/119 Footpaths: Cllr Andrews reported that the new strimmer/brush cutter, from P3 funds, had been purchased and that work on trimming back footpaths would commence this week with the help of the Town Warden. The annual checks on salt bins and council owned benches remained pending.

24/120 Finance: Cllr Glendinning reported that –

- a) **Bank balance** – £53,869.94 as at October 31st 2024. The 'free funds' figure stood at £-412 at the same date.
- b) **Payments and receipts** – RESOLVED to make the listed payments for November, including Clerk overtime and payment for the late invoices received from DALC (Cllr training), South West Water (Cemetery water), and Four Seasons Professional Tree Services (as per quote). The receipts for October were noted.
- c) **Employee annual salary increase:** RESOLVED to agree the national annual salary increases for the Clerk and Town Warden, backdated accordingly. The Town Warden had joined the Council's pension scheme.
- d) **2025/2026 budget and precept** – The Clerk and Cllr Glendinning had met to draft the figures for Finance Committee consideration at the 2nd December 2024 meeting. Final recommendations would be put to full Council for approval in December.

24/121 Town Trust: Cllr Chambers declared an interest due to being a Town Trust Trustee.

- a) **Guildhall lighting system** – Cllr Wild reported that the lights were now working. RESOLVED to use red and green lights to celebrate Christmas, Cllr Wild to arrange.
- b) **Town Council Representative on the Town Trust** – no applications had been received. A new advert had been published and Cllr Mottram was thanked for her work on this. Advertising would continue.
- c) **Chamber annual hire agreement** – rent to be £750. RESOLVED to renew the Agreement.

- d) **Resignation of Anne Porteous, Town Council Representative on the Town Trust** - Council was sad to hear that Anne had decided to resign from the position from February 2025, she would be greatly missed. RESOLVED to thank Anne for successfully bringing the Town Trust and Council closer together.
- e) **Hedge cutting at Church Street** – the Town Trust had agreed to pay 50% of the hedge cutting costs.

24/122 Football field removal of dead trees: A quote had been requested for the removal of the dead trees.

24/123 Council website support: RESOLVED to accept Cllr Mottram's offer to take on the responsibility for uploading local community information onto the Council's website to save on the Clerk's time.

24/124 Committee and Key Working Group membership and Council meeting dates 2025: RESOLVED to adopt both updated documents without amendment.

24/125 Old notice board in Fore Street: RESOLVED that the Town Warden should move the notice board to the allotment site as the pre-school had confirmed that it no longer wanted the item. Key being obtained. C/Cllr Berry left the meeting.

24/126 Cricket Club Lease: The new lease had been received for consideration. RESOLVED that, prior to adoption, Cllr Crawford would compare the old and new leases reporting any concerns to Council at the next meeting.

24/127 Risk Assessments:

- a) **Council Risk Register** – a review of the Risk Register and risk management process for the year to date took place. RESOLVED to amend the document to include risks associated with the new Town Warden employee.
- b) **West End Hall Fire Risk Assessment** - RESOLVED that Cllrs Andrews, Birley and Chambers would form a working group to review the report and make recommendations to full Council at the next meeting.

24/128 Unmetered electric supply at the Rec – EDF contract renewal: The fixed rate contract offer had expired and alternative payment methods had been requested of EDF but, to date, had not been received. Cllr Crawford proposed that payments be investigated and set up. Cllr Ottery proposed that as the payments had been budgeted for, and as funds were being set aside, no payments should be made until EDF supplied information on the amounts due and instructions on how the payments should be made. The latter proposal was RESOLVED.

24/129 Grant Funding 2025: Cllr Mottram declared an interest due to being involved with local organisations that would be applying for grant funding. It was RESOLVED to adopt and publish the updated grant funding application form. Application closing date would be 31st January 2025, funding would be distributed April/May 2025. The application form can be sourced from the Clerk at clerk@bradninch-tc.gov.uk or from the Council's website at www.bradninch-tc.gov.uk It was RESOLVED to set a grant funding budget of £2000 in total (£1000 from Council funds and £1000 from Bradninch Youth Centre Trust funds for youth related grants). Working group details pending.

24/120 PART 2: RESOLVED to enter into private session due to the sensitive nature of the business to be discussed, see below, and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, and the Local Government Act 1972, press and public to be asked to leave the meeting -

- a) **Clerk's annual review:** The review had taken place and the report had been circulated. Council expressed thanks to the Clerk for her ongoing excellent standard of work and for her continued commitment. In response, the Clerk confirmed that she was very happy in the role and thanked Council members for their continued support.
- b) **Nuisance neighbours:** Cllrs L Taylor and Crawford were in the process of drafting a letter, under Council instruction, inviting relevant parties to meet in order to discuss the ongoing issues connected with a particular local resident. Council was informed that, due to ongoing vexatious emails from the same local resident, the Vexatious Behaviour Policy had today commenced.

RESOLVED to end private session.

24/121 Events, comments, updates (no decision making during this item):

- a) **Action/Project Register** – updated and circulated.

- b) Councillor training** – Cllr Lefebvre had attended a ‘new councillor’ on-line training session by DALC and reported that it had been very interesting and informative. Further DALC training was pending.
- c) Downington Twinning - Mayor’s visit** – the Mayor and his wife were due to visit Bradninch on 10th December 2024 and the itinerary was considered. Cllr Wild would collect the guests, Cllr Lefebvre would host their stay and Rev Mears would provide a tour of St Disen’s Church. The Mayor would arrange an evening reception.
- d) West End Road closure 14 – 22nd November 2024** – the road would be closed for drainage works.
- e) White Lion Inn ‘winter warmer’** – the new Landlords were to offer free ‘winter warmer’ afternoons on Thursdays, between 2-4pm, to any resident wanting to pop in for free coffee, tea, soup, biscuits and games. It would be suggested that advertising could take place on local social media, in the local magazines and by way of posters.
- f) Firework display 2024** – Cllr Chambers reported that the event at the cricket club had gone really well, he thanked everyone involved in the organisation of the event.
- g) Royal British Legion** – a donation to the RBL from the Council would be considered at the December meeting.
- h) Community events** – Cllr Mottram reported that the free ‘Connection the Culm’ event would take place this Wednesday, 7.30pm, at the Guildhall. The next Repair Café would take place on 23rd November 2024.
- i) ‘Welcome to Bradninch’ sign** – Cllr Ottery reported that a lot of residents had complimented the new sign. Thanks had been sent to Mark Hill, local signwriter and creator of the sign.
- j) Facebook message** – Cllr Ottery reported that a message had been received from ‘Devon Landscaping’ asking to be considered for future Council and local work.

24/122 Next meeting of the Town Council: Monday 9th December 2024, 7pm, at the Guildhall. Members of the public are welcome to attend. Council meeting agendas can be found here www.bradninch-tc.gov.uk

24/123 A two-minute silence to recognise Armistice Day took place at 8.58pm, the meeting closed at 9pm.

PAYMENTS FOR OCTOBER	£	VAT	RECEIPTS FOR SEPTEMBER	£
Staff salaries (net)	2576.09	n/a	Burial income	0
Staff pensions employer/employee cont.	711.46	n/a	Allotments	1352.00
HMRC tax/NI	637.29	n/a	Bank interest	22.81
Vodafone monthly direct debit	32.09	Inc VAT	Town Trust Vodafone	13.37
Clerk’s expenses	409.88	Inc VAT	Precept (final half)	30,750.00
Town Warden’s expenses	1164.90	Inc VAT	DCC P3 Footpath Funding	1500.00
Garden Services (amended invoice)	3875.00	Inc VAT		
Duchy of Cornwall-Charwell Wetlands annual rent	102.55	Inc VAT		
Four Seasons Tree Services	1104.00	Inc VAT		
Source for Business (water) Bithywind Allotments Cemetery	111.88 29.49	n/a n/a		
Parish Online annual subscription	81.00	Inc VAT		
Radmore and Tucker (equipment)	1139.38	Inc VAT		
TLC (Christmas Lights)	458.98	Inc VAT		
DALC training (Cllr Lefebvre)	18.00	Inc VAT		