



BRADNINCH TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES

**The Guildhall
Bradninch
Exeter, Devon**

Minutes of the Bradninch Town Council Meeting
Monday 10th February 2025, 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 S Crawford, Cllr P Chambers, Cllr S Glendinning, Cllr S Lefebvre, Cllr L Mottram, Cllr L Taylor, Cllr M Taylor, Cllr I Wild.

In attendance: Mrs A Marshall, Clerk, and 1 member of the public.

Standing Orders suspended.

Public Open Session: Resident Sue Eakers updated Council on local flooding issues as follows –

1) Overspill from Drains – investigations had continued regarding overspill from blocked or collapsed drains at the base of Cullompton Hill, junction of Fore Street and Parsonage Street. There are concerns about water damaging road surfaces and undermining properties. Also, the water could freeze resulting in danger to the public. The work had already been flagged by Highways as a safety defect for addressing. The work had been chased again today by the local DCC Highways Officer.

2) Hen Street - the work to plough the hedges in Hen Street had been agreed, and given a timescale of January/February 2025, but the work remains outstanding. The local DCC Highways Officer had chased this work again today as urgent.

3) Flood prevention of Hen Street – an agreement is in place with the Duchy of Cornwall and the tenant farmer to reinstate the buddle hole at the bottom of Stoney Lane, the work remains outstanding. The local DCC Highways Officer had chased this work again today as urgent.
Sue was thanked for her persistence on this matter.

Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council, Police: No official report received from C/Cllr Berry. Report from D/Cllr L Taylor had been circulated and can be found on the website and noticeboard. Cllr Taylor reported on national discussions around devolution and local government reorganisation and what that means for the local community. A public meeting will be called to help with understanding once the way forward is clear. Police crime data can be found online at www.streetcheck.

Town Mayor: Report circulated. Cllr Ottery reported on the recent funeral of Cecil (Nobby) Daniells, and said that ‘Nobby’ had spent his entire life in Bradninch and that his lovely smile would be very much missed. A moment of recognition and reflection took place.

The Mayor’s coffee morning on Saturday had been a great success and all those attending were thanked and congratulated. £430.56 had been raised for the Bradninch 1st Scouts Group.

Standing Orders resumed.

24/159 Apologies for absence: None.

24/160 Declarations of Interest relating to items on this agenda: None at this time.

24/161 Confirmation of Minutes: RESOLVED to agree the meeting minutes of the Finance Committee, Bradninch Youth Centre Trust and the full Council meeting of 13th January 2025 as correct records. RESOLVED to agree the Recreation and Amenities Committee minutes of 29th January 2025 as a correct record. The documents were signed accordingly. Cllrs L Taylor and S Crawford confirmed that they had completed the annual West End Hall inspection and had found no issues to report.

24/162 Town Warden:

a) Monthly Report – noted. RESOLVED that Cllr Wild would investigate the ownership of a new pole recently installed on Hele Road as it appeared to be obstructing the new speed sign.

b) Work Experience – RESOLVED that due to documentation not yet being in place, and as an earlier commencement date would involve Council funding, the project start date would be postponed until 19th March 2025.

c) Charwell Wetlands Nature Reserve – approximately 20 helpers had attended the public event last Sunday at the wetlands to help tidy up the site, thanks were given to everyone that had attended. RESOLVED that, pending a suitable risk assessment, the Town Warden should commence work on the raised platform above the pond, to include a non-slip surface, using materials to hand. Costs for additional materials to be taken from the agreed monthly allowance or by referral to full Council. The Recreation and Amenities Committee would oversee the wetland project.

d) Photographs – RESOLVED to ask for Town Warden permission to post photos from the monthly report on social media and the Council's website.

24/163 Highways:

a) Double Yellow Lines on Hele Road/safety issues on the Bradninch to Cullompton road – Cllr L Taylor reported that a site meeting remained pending.

b) Baulk Bridge – Cllr Andrews reported that Council members would be meeting with DCC members this Thursday, 13th February, to discuss how to lower the impact of vehicles through Bradninch when the bridge is closed for repairs. Items for discussion would be as detailed in the Council's objections to MDDC, phasing of the work, questioning the length of time for road closures, taking into account ongoing road closures in the town for gas and water works and traffic volume. Cllr Andrews would lead the working group meeting on behalf of the Council and would be joined by Cllrs Birley and Chambers. Feedback at the March meeting.

c) Traffic enforcement on Fore Street – an enforcement officer had visited the town and had booked 3 vehicles parking illegally at the top of Fore Street. Further visits would be requested.

d) Notification of road closures – Langford Cross through Langford for water works between 14-16 May 2025. Fore Street 24 February 2025 for up to 5 days for Airband underground cable works. Hen Street, footpath 5/Doctors Lane, between 6-18 June 2025 for gas works.

e) Mud on road - Weekes Cross to Ash Cross is currently covered in mud making the road dangerous. RESOLVED that the matter would be raised with the local DCC Highways Officer.

24/164 Communications:

a) Email from a resident – poor state of road surfaces in and around Bradninch. The resident stated that the pot hole in Station Road had been reported and that the Hele Road surface was breaking up in places. Council agreed that some road surfaces in the town were currently awful and encouraged residents to report issues through the DCC on-line 'report a problem' page. RESOLVED that Cllr L Taylor would raise the issues with the local DCC Highways Officer.

b) Email from a resident – Church Street looking a mess. Council agreed with the residents comments and RESOLVED that Cllr L Taylor would take the matter to MDDC. Cllr Chambers declared an interest due to the Town Trust, of which he was a Trustee, owning a property in Church Street which was under discussion. He suggested that tenants are responsible for keeping the frontage of let properties tidy and not landlords. RESOLVED to forward the issues raised to the Town Trust.

c) Emails from residents - West End Hall car parking spaces.

i) Request to spread the annual parking space fee over the year. RESOLVED not to allow this process due to the additional overhead costs it would involve. Annual increases would continue to be noted well in advance within the Bradninch Youth Centre Trust meeting minutes for public view.

ii) Parking spaces are not always free due to other cars parking there, a tenant had received abuse when asking for the space to be vacated. RESOLVED to allow residents, at their own expenses, to purchase spare number plate(s) to fix to West End Hall (2 screws per plate) at the head of relevant parking spaces. Removal of plate(s) and making good the wall at the end of the tenancy would be a requirement, as would keeping the plate(s) up to date when vehicles are changed. Tenants to be notified.

d) Youth Club representative resignation. Cllr Ottery gave huge thanks to Cllr M Taylor for her time on the Youth Club Committee, and for always going above and beyond requirements in the role. Cllr P Andrews volunteered to join the Committee which Cllr M Taylor would take forward.

e) Royal Garden Party nomination. RESOLVED to nominate Cllr M Taylor plus a guest.

f) Town Trust Chairman. Council was pleased to hear that Anne Porteous had withdrawn her resignation from the Trust and that she had now taken on the role of Chairman. As Council still has a vacancy for a Council Representative on the Town Trust, existing Council Representatives would be asked to consider any names to be put forward. Any member of the public interested in taking on this voluntary role can find out more by contacting the Clerk on clerk@bradninch-tc.gov.uk.

24/165 Allotment Working Group: Nothing to report.

24/166 Burial Working Group: A meeting would be arranged shortly.

24/167 Planning:

a) 24/01712/TPO – Granted. Pollarding of 1 Holm Oak tree, Strathculm Court, Hele. Noted.

b) 25/00049/FULL – Application. Improvements to existing farm access at Russels Park Farm, Cullompton. RESOLVED to submit ‘no objection’.

c) Housing Needs Survey – Cllr Andrews reported that a survey inviting comments on future housing needs in the town would be issued to relevant householders shortly. The survey results would be fed back in due course. This project has no cost implications for the Council. Cllr Andrews was thanked for his involvement.

d) Phone box, Millway – a proposal to remove the connection (not the phone box) had been received. Conservation Area noted. RESOLVED that Cllr Ottery would ask the Emergency Planning working group for comments and that the Clerk would seek information on the past year’s usage. Further discussion at the March meeting.

24/168 80th Anniversary of VE Day (8th May 2025): RESOLVED to look into purchasing a VE Day flag, involving the Town Trust, and to light up the Guildhall with relevant colours. The Women’s Institute would be advised of the plans.

24/169 Footpaths: Cllr Andrews was due to meet a representative of Clarion Housing regarding the footpath between Hornbeam Gardens and Fore Street. Discussion would involve the ongoing uneven surface, the slippery drain cover and recent injuries to users. On another point, broken kerbs in High Street and Westfield would be investigated and residents are encouraged to report such issues through the DCC on-line ‘report a problem page’.

24/170 Finance:

a) Bank balance – noted as being £37,248.36, with ‘free funds’ reported as being -£610, as at 31st January 2025.

b) Payments and receipts – RESOLVED to make the February payments, including 4 hours overtime for the Town Warden, and to note the receipts. Invoices had been received from EDF, in baulk, relating to the street lights at the Recreation Ground. The invoices covered November 2022–January 2025 at a total cost of £1,616.22. Invoices had been requested several times by the Clerk. RESOLVED to object to the invoicing in conjunction with the 12 months invoicing rule. Clerk to cancel any direct debit instructions and to investigate alternative suppliers.

c) VAT reclaim – noted that the recent re-claim of £1,463.39 had been accepted by HMRC and paid.

d) Donations received - £75 had been received from the Town Trust towards the Christmas Lights event and £150 had been received from the Memorial Fund towards the new defibrillator cabinet. RESOLVED to send thanks.

24/171 RoSPA annual play equipment inspection: RESOLVED to agree to the annual inspection at a fee of £80 plus VAT and to pay an additional amount, up to £50 plus VAT, for the Town Warden to accompany the inspector. RESOLVED to investigate equipment inspection courses for the Town Warden.

24/172 Defibrillator cabinet purchase: The cabinet had been purchased and delivered. The kind donation towards costs would be acknowledged. RESOLVED that a qualified electrician should be employed to install the new cabinet, Cllr Birley volunteered to look into this.

24/173 Cricket Club artificial wicket: Mitigation proposals, with respect to the potential impact a new artificial wicket would have on the local environment, had been received from the Cricket Club and were considered. RESOLVED to thank the club for the effort put into addressing the concerns and to accept the offer of a donation to be put towards the upkeep of the Charwell Wetlands Nature Reserve (and not towards wild flowers as had been suggested). Cllr Mottram abstained from voting but did not object to the resolution. A Cricket Club representative had voiced hopes that the club and Council could work closer together going forward, this was welcomed by all present.

24/174 Annual Parish Meeting: RESOLVED to book upstairs at the Guildhall for Monday 28th April 2025, 7.30pm, and for all those receiving Council grants this year (information pending) to be invited together with other local organisations. All interested members of the public are invited to attend. Agenda pending. 2024 draft meeting minutes can be found on the website.

24/175 Events, comments, updates (no decision making during this item):

a) Action/Project Register – circulated and noted. Churchyard ‘wilding’ to be removed as project now complete.

- b) Walking Guides** – remain on sale at the SPAR and £115 to date had been raised from sales. Funds will be returned to the Council's 'winter warmth' grant funding pot in due course.
- c) Westfield kerb** - Cllr Blythe reported a broken kerb at the bottom of Westfield which is dangerous. She will report this on the DCC on-line 'report a problem' page.
- d) Film Night** – Cllr Mottram reported that the next film night will take place at the Guildhall on 19th February. Food available and free entry. See posters/contact Cllr Mottram for details.
- e) Parish Online** – Cllr Wild reported that the on-line site states that the Council's licence is due to expire. The Clerk was looking into this.
- f) First Aid and defibrillator training** - Cllr Mottram had attended this training and reported that, according to course information, most defibrillator cabinets are locked like those in Bradninch. The reasons for this are to mitigate theft and vandalism. She would produce a poster showing the locations of local defibrillators and instructions on how to access them. A future training session for residents was also in the process of being arranged.

24/176 Next meeting of the Town Council: Monday 10th March 2025, 7pm, at the Guildhall. Members of the public are welcome to attend. Council meeting agendas and minutes can be found here www.bradninch-tc.gov.uk
The meeting closed at 9pm.

PAYMENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2025	£	VAT	RECEIPTS FOR JANUARY 2025	£
Staff salaries (net)	1755.17	n/a	Burials	1146.66
Staff pensions employer/employee cont.	628.73	n/a	Allotments	86.00
HMRC tax/NI	507.79	n/a	Bank interest	23.63
Vodafone monthly direct debit	32.09	Inc VAT	Town Trust Vodafone	13.37
Clerk's expenses including defibrillator pads	366.58	Inc VAT	T.Trust donation - Christmas Lights	75.00
Town Warden's expenses	2.00	n/a	Resident donation - defib cabinet	150.00
Fine Memorials refund/overpayment	7.40	n/a	HMRC VAT reclaim	1463.39
SWW Allotments water	105.37	n/a		
SWW Cemetery water	27.33	n/a		
R L Building & Landscaping (Christmas trees)	245.00	n/a		
The Defib Store (defibrillator cabinet)	538.80	Inc VAT		
White Lion Inn (Mayor's visit/Mayor's Fund)	207.00	n/a		
Green Scheme Ltd (Rec surfacing)	1422.00	+ VAT		