



BRADNINCH TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

The Guildhall
Bradninch
Exeter, Devon

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

In attendance: Mrs A Marshall, Clerk, Mr J Shazell, Town Warden, C/Cllr J Berry of DCC, no members of the public.

Public Open Session: Resident Sue Eakers kindly updated Council on local flooding matters. Sue reported that the blocked drains at the bottom of Cullompton Hill, which had been causing a continuous flow of water across the road, had been cleared in February leaving the area dry and safe for now. Regarding outstanding works, a response remained pending from the DCC Highways Officer in connection with the Hen Street drains and buddle hole. Due to this, C/Cllr John Berry had chased for a reply and had received a DCC Highways response stating 'the contractors have been stretched to capacity due to higher priority winter weather issues and whilst we cannot give an exact timescale, the works have been ordered'. As hedges in Hen Street had been cut back by the farmer a while ago, there were concerns that the hedges would grow back before DCC Highways got round to the ploughing work. It was also noted that the bird nesting season could delay works further. Sue was thanked for the update.

Town Trust Representative: Postponed until April.

Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council, Police: No reports received to date. C/Cllr John Berry reported that this would be his last visit to a Bradninch Town Council meeting as he would not be standing for re-election in May. All present gave thanks to John for his support over the years and the Chairman wished John a happy retirement following his 24 years in role. C/Cllr Berry provided an update on the Governments devolution process, involving Devon County Council, and said that proposals were being put together for submission to the Government later this year. Cllr Blythe asked for an update on the road slip issue along Back Lane and C/Cllr Berry confirmed that the site had been inspected and that no work had been planned there.

Town Mayor: The report had been circulated and would be published on the website at www.bradninch-tc.gov.uk

24/177 Apologies for absence: Received and accepted from Cllr L Taylor due to work commitments.

24/178 Declarations of Interest relating to items on this agenda: None received at this stage.

24/179 Confirmation of Minutes: RESOLVED to sign the Full Council minutes of 10th February 2025 as a correct record.

24/180 Town Warden: RESOLVED to pay the monthly expenses. The monthly report was accepted and the recommendations were considered. It was RESOLVED that as the new speed sign only now works in one direction along Hele Road, due to a new pole being installed by National Grid which restricted the sight line, the sign would only face in one direction. At the Westfield site, the sign would be faced in the most effective direction. Cllr Chambers suggested a third speed sign pole at Heggadon Close which was noted.

Arrangements had now been secured for local resident Toby Clark, currently attending Bicton College, to join the Council on work experience between 21st March and May end.

It was RESOLVED that the Duchy of Cornwall could instal dog poo dispensers along the footpath between Hele Road and the Cemetery. The Town Warden would keep the dispensers filled and funding for replacement bags would come from the DCC P3 scheme.

24/181 Highways:

a) Double Yellow Lines (DYL) on Hele Road - It had been confirmed by DCC that DYL along Hele Road, by the junction of Dukes Orchard, would be extended by 1.5 car lengths for safety reasons. A site meeting remained pending with regards to other DYL on Hele Road and safety issues on the Bradninch to Cullompton road.

b) Baulk Bridge – Cllrs Andrews, Birley, Chambers and Crawford had met members of DCC to discuss the road closures planned in connection with repairs to the bridge and how the resulting additional traffic would impact on Bradninch. As a result, road closures had been reduced from ten to four weeks, night time working had been organised, a footpath facility would remain in

place, for example. All present thanked the working group, led by Cllr Andrews, for the excellent work carried out on behalf of the Council. It was RESOLVED that the objection to the planning application could now be removed. The Clerk would respond to DCC accordingly.

c) Bus shelters – Cllr Blythe reported that a resident had requested more bus shelters in the town with protection from the rain as this could encourage more residents to use public transport. One location put forward was at the bus stop on the Townlands side of Hele Road. RESOLVED that this should be put to the Recreation and Amenities Committee for consideration and investigation into whether Section 106 funding could be used for this purpose.

d) High Street pavement – Cllr Andrews reported that repairs were needed to kerb stones on High Street and that he was happy to do the work with the support of the Town Warden. This was RESOLVED.

e) Hele Road pot hole – Cllr Crawford reported on a pothole that had been so badly filled that it now formed a ramp which could cause safety issues. The location is along Hele Road near the entrance to the allotment site. RESOLVED to report this on the DCC report a problem page as an obstacle on the highway.

24/182 Communications:

a) Bradninch Road Closures - email from a resident concerned about an increase in road closures in the town. It was agreed that all the road closures were very frustrating but that it was encouraging that repairs were being carried out. It was reported that South West Water had been fined due to the recent emergency road closure along Hele Road taking so long to complete. Also, several signs had been left around the town stating 'road closed' when this was not the case. It was agreed that road closures greatly impact the local bus service and it was noted that residents had been left standing at bus stops when buses had been cancelled as on-line information was not always up to date. Whilst the majority of issues appeared to be caused by different departments or companies not working together, the impact on road and public transport users was unacceptable. RESOLVED that Cllrs Wild, Andrews and Mottram would take this matter forward by contacting representatives of various companies in order to arrange a meeting to discuss the impact on residents. Meg Booth, Head of DCC Highways, and C/Cllr Berry would also be invited.

b) Town Fair – email request regarding the spending of the Council's agreed funding towards the 2025 Fair. RESOLVED that the £500 agreed towards the 2025 Fair could be put towards the Uncle Tacko and Spike show. Cllrs Glendinning and Mottram declared an interest in this matter due to being members of the Town Fair steering group.

24/183 Allotment Working Group: The Clerk reported that all plots were currently let, that one resident was on the waiting list and that all annual renewals had been completed. Cllr M Taylor reported that a working group meeting would be called shortly.

24/184 Burial Working Group: Cllr Wild put the following recommendation to full Council for consideration following a recent working group meeting -

a) Headstone checking – recommendation that the Town Warden attends a training course with ICCM to enable him to oversee the safety of headstones in both burial grounds. RESOLVED to book the training course and pay for accommodation and mileage within a budget of £300. RESOLVED that a rolling programme of headstone checking would need to be put in place together with a process, policy, risk assessment, budget and method statement.

b) South East wall boundary repairs at the Churchyard – recommendation for unbudgeted intervention on this boundary wall to enable the clearing of growth between the two Lawson Cypress trees and inspection of the wall. RESOLVED that further information was required from the working group with regards to costings and who should complete the work prior to a decision being made.

c) Churchyard wall maintenance – recommendation that written agreements with residents of neighbouring properties, regarding Churchyard wall maintenance, should not proceed. RESOLVED.

d) Patching repairs to the Churchyard cob wall – recommendation that work to patch the North East cob wall commences as soon as practical, regarding Planned Preventative Maintenance, instead of attempting a full restoration. Town Warden to take the work on. RESOLVED that a proposed budget for this work was required prior to a decision being made.

24/185 Planning:

a) Phone Box, Millway – further consideration was given to the proposed removal of the connection, 6 calls had been made from the phone box in the past 12 months. The Emergency Plan group had suggested that keeping the phone connection would have no advantage due to the move to digital. RESOLVED to object to the removal due to the connection continuing to be used by the public.

b) 25/00075/PNAG – Prior Approval Not Required. Noted. Agricultural/forestry development for the construction of a weighbridge at Bagmore Farm, Bradninch.

c) 25/00123/CLU – Certificate of Lawfulness. Existing alterations to roof extension at 4 Fore Street, Bradninch. RESOLVED to submit 'no objection'.

d) 24/01143/PIP – Appeal made to the Secretary of State against the decision of MDDC. Permission in Principle for the erection of up to 3 dwellings at Strathculm Road, Bradninch. RESOLVED to call a planning committee meeting on March 19th 2025 to discuss further.

e) 25/00158/LBC - Listed Building Consent. Replacement of 2 ground floor windows at 15 Millway, Bradninch. RESOLVED to submit 'no objection'.

f) A25/00295/CLU – Certificate of Lawfulness. Existing use of a building as a dwelling in breach of conditions (agricultural purposes) of planning permission. The Flower Shed, Bradninch. RESOLVED to call a planning committee meeting on March 19th to discuss further.

24/186 VE Day 80th Anniversary (8h May 2025): RESOLVED to purchase a flag at a cost of £19.99 net to be flown at the Guildhall. The Town Trust had kindly agreed to donate towards the purchase. Cllrs Birley and Chambers were thanked for their input on this matter.

24/187 Footpaths: Cllr Andrews had attended a site meeting with a Clarion Housing representative, regarding the footpath between Hornbeam Gardens and Fore Street, following residents tripping on the uneven surface and slippery drain cover. The representative had agreed to recommend that the footpath be resurfaced and that the drain cover be changed. Cllr Andrews to chase a response. No other footpath news.

24/188 Charwell Wetlands: Following a request from Hi-Line (for National Grid) it was RESOLVED to allow the growth encroaching onto the power lines to be cut back at no cost to the Council. The Clerk reported that funds had been received from the disbanded Wetlands Group and it was RESOLVED to place these funds, together with the £200 budgeted, into 'earmarked reserves' for Wetland maintenance. Cllr Ottery reported that several residents had fed back positively regarding the recent work at the Wetlands site. All present were pleased to hear that the site was now being used by more residents.

24/189 Finance: Cllr Glendinning reported on the following -

a) Bank balance – noted as being £33,285.12 as at 28th February 2025. The 'free funds' figure was pending and dependent on the result of the EDF claim (see below).

b) Payments and receipts – RESOLVED to make the listed payments for March, to agree 2 hours overtime for the Town Warden and to note the receipts for February. Cllrs were reminded that access to the on-line SCRIBE accounting system can be gained through the Clerk.

c) EDF Energy Complaint (Recreation Ground lights) – the Council's complaint in connection with reducing the electricity bill was in the process of being considered by EDF. A result was expected this week.

d) Vodafone, Guildhall wi-fi – RESOLVED to accept the pending increase in costs and to advise the Town Trust accordingly.

24/190 Grant Funding: Cllr Glendinning, on behalf of the working group, put forward recommendations for the 2025 grant funding distribution of £2,000. It was noted that 18 applications had been received. Cllrs Ottery, Crawford, Wild and Mottram declared interests due to being involved with some groups applying for funding.

It was RESOLVED to accept the following recommendations:

Youth Club	£200
Fireworks Group	£150
Memorial Fund	£100
Music Festival	£0
Acoustic Music Club	£0
Football Club	£100
Bumps, Babies, Beyond	£200
Bradninch Together	£120
Citizens Advice	£0
Millers Morris	£120
Sustainable Bradninch	£120
Scouts	£200
Women's Institute	£120
Duchy Pre-School	£200
St Disens	£160 (from 'winter warmth' reserve funding).
Landunvez Twinning	£70
Twelfth Night	£100
Duchy PTFA	£200

Payments would be made on-line in April. The working group were thanked for their input. It was agreed that an increase in available grant funding should be considered during the next budget process.

24/191 West End Hall lights: It had been reported that some light fittings at the hall were in need of replacing. It was RESOLVED that replacing bulbs would fall to the tenant but that the Council had responsibility for replacing light fixtures when felt necessary. RESOLVED to obtain a quote for the required work for consideration.

24/192 Annual review of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct: Following a review of each policy, it was RESOLVED to continue with the documents as presented and without major amendment. Tracked changes to future documents was suggested.

24/193 Annual review of Statement of Internal Control, Asset Register, Risk Register: Following general it was RESOLVED to accept them as presented.

24/194 Defibrillator cabinet installation: Cllr Birley reported that an electrician had agreed to do the work which was expected to be completed within the next week or two. RESOLVED to pay the resulting invoice once the work had been completed satisfactorily.

24/195 Events, comments, updates (no decision making during this item):

a) Action/Project Register – updated and circulated.

b) Planning Committee Meeting – Wednesday 19th March, 6.30pm, at the Guildhall. Chaired by Cllr Andrews.

c) Sustainable Bradninch – Cllr Mottram reported that a ‘plant-based dinner’ would take place this Wednesday.

d) New initiative - People Planet Pint – Cllr Mottram reported on this event which will take place on 27th March, all are welcome to attend. Free drinks available, funded by an internet web hosting company.

e) Repair Café – Cllr Mottram reported that the next event will take place on 5th April at the Guildhall.

f) LNP conference – Cllr Mottram reported on a proposed Local Nature Partnership event to discuss local nature.

g) Millers Morris – Cllr Wild thanked the Town Council, on behalf of the Millers Morris, for the agreed grant funding which would be used to purchase sweatshirts for the performers.

h) PTFA Quiz – Cllr Ottery reminded all present of the pending PTFA Quiz which will take place at the School. Anyone interested in attending can email Emily.ottery@bradninch-tc.gov.uk

Cllr Blythe asked future quiz organisers in general to consider smaller maximum team numbers to promote inclusion.

24/196 Next meeting of the Town Council: Monday 14th April 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

24/197 Annual Parish Meeting: Monday 28th April 2025, 7.30pm, at the Guildhall. All are invited to attend.

The meeting closed at 20.40

PAYMENTS FOR MARCH 2025	£	VAT	RECEIPTS FOR FEBRUARY 2025	£
Staff salaries (net)	1722.29	n/a	Burials	1266.28
Staff pensions employer/employee cont.	612.99	n/a	Allotments	116.00
HMRC tax/NI	486.39	n/a	Bank interest	24.41
Vodafone monthly direct debit	32.09	Inc VAT	Town Trust Vodafone	13.37
Clerk's expenses	67.99	Inc VAT	Mayor's Coffee Morning	430.56
Town Warden's expenses	114.69	Inc VAT		
Town Trust room hire (Mayor's Fund)	34.00	n/a		
Mayor's Coffee Morning (Mayor's Fund) pd	8.84	n/a		
Bradninch Scouts (Mayor's Fund) pd	430.56	n/a		
Mark Hill Signs	70.00	n/a		
Microsoft 365 annual subscription	19.99	Inc VAT		
B Gear - allotment rent refund	45.00	n/a		
D Williams – replacement tree	79.98	Inc VAT		