



BRADNINCH TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES

The Guildhall
Bradninch
Exeter, Devon

Minutes of the Bradninch Town Council Meeting
Monday 9th June 2025, 7pm, The Guildhall, Bradninch

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

In attendance: A Marshall, Clerk, C/Cllr Buczkowski and 2 members of the public.

Standing Orders Suspended.

Public Open Session: None.

Town Trust Representative: Anthony Richards, Town Council Representative on the Town Trust, reported that remedial structural work to the Guildhall is ongoing, mostly on the roof which has been leaking badly. Internal plastering and decorating will commence once the building has dried out. Recommendations to replace all existing exterior render has delayed any exterior decorating. Costings to instal a lift are around £145,000 so fundraising is required, developing a costed long term plan for the buildings' use is ongoing. The Trust's existing investments, properties and Charities, are considered to be endowments and so are unlikely to be realised into cash. The Trust is looking into complementing the intentions of other property owners in the town to optimise facilities available to residents. Bradninch Together has offered to facilitate such a process. It is hoped that the Council would want to join this project which could involve West End Hall. A public consultation is being considered. A new grant giving scheme, to distribute modest funds from the Parochial Charities, is being created. It is possible that the two smallest charities will be 'wound up' having exhausted their assets. Hirers of the Guildhall are being asked to be more self-sufficient in getting out and putting away tables and chairs to help with staffing. Anne Porteous has recently resigned from the Trust and Piers Kotting has temporarily taken on the role of Chair. It was confirmed to Cllr Crawford that a Surveyor had been contracted, and that advice had been given, regarding the Guildhall roof. Cllr Birley thanked Anthony for his report and he praised the idea of optimising local facilities for the benefit of the community. Cllr Mottram added that a Climate Action Plan should be put in place to cover public buildings and how carbon footprints could be reduced generally.

Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council and the Police:

Devon County Councillor James Buczkowski (DCC's Cabinet Member for Finance) reported that the formal appointment of a Liberal Democrat led administration had taken place in May, although there was no overall control. The new leadership is focused on building consensus and delivering tangible improvements to the lives of Devon residents. Priorities include road maintenance and supporting vulnerable children. In Bradninch, focus on roads remains key and residents are encouraged to report any Highways problems on-line at www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem Once done, the reference number can be used to escalate the problem through Cllr Buczkowski who is currently overseeing the road surface failures on Station Road, Hele, and on the road between Trinity Cottages and Bunneford Cross.

Stagecoach - no meaningful response from Stagecoach, or the Traffic Commissioner, regarding the removal of the Bradninch bus service has been received and the silence is unacceptable. Cllr Buczkowski will be meeting the Deputy Director for Transport Operations at Devon County Council on 13th July to discuss the lack of public consultation, and the impact on the community.

Residents' Surgery – the first 'drop in surgery' will be held on 14th July at the Guildhall from 10am - 12noon. No appointment is needed, just pop in and have a chat. D/Cllr Luke Taylor will also be there.

You can access the full report at www.bradninch-tc.gov.uk

District Councillor Luke Taylor (Leader of MDDC) reported on the following -

First Cabinet Meeting of Mid Devon will be held in Cullompton on 17th June. A key discussion item will be the Cullompton relief road which has moved forward again following the purchase of land from Tesco.

Remote Council meetings have been sanctioned by the Government, this will happen at some future stage, and will support Cllrs unable to attend meetings in person.

Exe Valley Leisure Centre has new swimming related changing facilities now open.

My Mid Devon portal is an on-line service allowing residents to manage local services relevant to them, all from the comfort of home. The system allows feedback, reporting of issues, provides information and much more.

Councillor Surgeries will commence on the second Saturday of each month, 10am to noon, at the Bradninch Guildhall co-hosted by me, as your Mid Devon District Councillor, and Cllr James Buczkowski, your new Devon County Councillor. Come and chat to us with no appointment necessary.

Devon Businesses e-newsletter has been launched by MDDC to keep local businesses up to date with emerging opportunities and initiatives including grant schemes, training and events, and useful support resources.

Bradninch Musical Gardens - congratulations to the organisers, it was amazing! Well done to everyone that helped make Bradninch look so great.

Bradninch Music Festival – a huge thank you goes out to the organisers of this year's festival. Another great event which really does showcase our community.

Stagecoach – recently, a bus due at Cullompton did not turn up and so residents set off to walk home to Bradninch. Luckily, I spotted them and gave them a lift home. The Stagecoach situation has not moved forward, and may actually be getting worse. The recent response from the Managing Director made little sense so would be pursued. Cllr Crawford would arrange a working group meeting in order to take the matter forward.

The full report can be found at www.bradninch-tc.gov.uk

Police – latest crime figures can be found online at www.streetcheck. Cllr Ottery reported that all residents of Passmore Road had recently received a letter reporting a possible drugs den in the area. Residents had been asked to report any information to the Police.

Town Mayor: Cllr Birley reported on what a wonderful place Bradninch is to live in. The recent Musical Gardens event had been superbly put together and serenely delivered. The Duchy Mile had also been a fabulous event. The Central Dairy is proving to be a splendid addition to the town and the two Pubs are seemingly thriving, which is to be applauded. The four main sporting groups covering Football, Tennis, Cricket and Bowls continue to offer fabulous opportunities. Finally, the Wetlands Area, offers a delightfully relaxing atmosphere full of umpteen different birds and is well worth a visit. Thanks must go to resident Mike Leonard, who continues to do so much good in raising funds for the community and for the Youth Club in particular. We can all help with local fund raising by supporting his Terracyle Scheme. There is a whole list of items that can be dropped into the metal bin outside the Guildhall for reuse. The full report can be found on the website at www.bradninch-tc.gov.uk

Standing Orders resumed.

25/25 Apologies for absence: Received and accepted from Cllr M Taylor, holiday.

25/26 Declarations of Interest relating to items on this agenda: Cllr Chambers declared an interest in Town Trust matters due to being a Town Trust Trustee.

25/27 Confirmation of Minutes: RESOLVED to agree the full Council minutes and the Bradninch Youth Centre Trust minutes of 12th May 2025, and the Recreation and Amenities Committee minutes of 28th May 2025, as correct records. All documents were duly signed.

25/28 Finance and Governance: Cllr Glendinning reported -

a) Internal Audit Report – the report had been completed with no issues highlighted by the Internal Auditor. It was RESOLVED to pay the resulting invoice.

b) Annual Governance and Accountability Return Section 1 – RESOLVED to agree and sign the document.

c) Annual Governance and Accountability Return Section 2 – RESOLVED to agree and sign the document.

d) Bank balance – noted as being £51,382.00 on May 31st 2025. No 'free funds' available currently.

e) Payments and receipts – RESOLVED to agree the payments, including overtime for the Town Warden, and to note the receipts. The EDF monthly invoice (Recreation Ground lights) had now been received. RESOLVED to make the payment and to query the £14 admin fee. Cllr Crawford would put forward recommendations for alternative suppliers at the July meeting.

f) Public Rights for the inspection of accounts – noted as being 13th June to 24th July 2025.

g) Internal Auditor 2026 – RESOLVED to accept the quote from J Vanderwolf for £65.00

25/29 Town Warden: The monthly report was reviewed, the expenses were agreed and the recommendations, as follows, were considered -

- a) Wooden youth shelter – repairs needed to rotting wood (see item 25/34 below).
- b) Hen Street stream bank – Cllr Crawford declared an interest due to living in Hen Street. As DCC Highways no longer clears the weeds from the stream banks it was RESOLVED that the Town Warden should trim the area, as a one off, reporting back to Council thereafter.
- c) Work Experience – the successful placement had officially ended. Following a request to extend the placement until June end, it was RESOLVED to do this. RESOLVED to look into the possibility of apprenticeships going forward.
- d) Memorial headstone checking – course attended. Recommendations regarding a checking process to follow.

RESOLVED that to help with local understanding of the Town Warden role, regular publishing of completed works information would feature in local magazines and on social media. Clerk and Cllr Birley to oversee.

25/30 Stagecoach Bus Service: Further to earlier discussion, Cllr Andrews suggested that a bus service leaving Exeter at 5.30pm and 7pm was not helpful to most Bradninch residents. Residents are encouraged to provide feedback on the current service through social media. Cllr Wild reported that there were no Stagecoach service performance checks taking place by DCC as this had ceased prior to Covid. Trying to monitor performance was, therefore, a waste of time. It was strongly agreed to keep the fight for a better and more regular bus service for Bradninch going. It was suggested that Stagecoach is a huge 'hoover' of state subsidy, receiving nearly £50 million from the Government per year.

25/31 Highways:

- a) Vehicles parking in turning circles – Cllr Blythe reported on the issues and Cllr Chambers proposed double yellow lines be requested on the Culver Close and Hornbeam Gardens turning circles which was RESOLVED.
- b) Hele Road double yellow lines, dangers of Cullompton Road, site meeting – Cllr L Taylor reported that as the local Highways Officer is on sick leave he would aim to follow up the matters with the new C/Cllr.
- c) Prohibition of through traffic – Potthayes Cross to Hele Bird Farm, Bradninch - 16-18 June 2025. Noted.
- d) Road surface between 4 Trinity Cottages and Bunneford Cross – a resident had complained about the road surface being full of potholes and the matter had been escalated to the C/Cllr who was pushing for repairs.
- e) Back Lane - Cllr Ottery reported that weeds had now covered the warning tape along the crumbling road on Back Lane, towards Trinity, which was now a danger to the public. Councillors and the public were urged to report this, and any other Highways issues, on line at www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem

25/32 Communications:

- a) Community Speed Watch – Cllr L Taylor reported that posters and flyers were being distributed locally with the aim of raising sufficient interest to get an active group of volunteers together to take this project forward. It was hoped that a Speed Watch session would take place in the town in the near future.
- b) Wild flowers at Culver Close – Cllr Mottram invited the Council to support Sustainable Bradninch with investigating local interest regarding this project. RESOLVED that the Council would support the project, Clerk to contact MDDC regarding permission to plant wild flowers on this verge.

25/33 Planning:

- a) **25/00414/HOUSE approval** - retention of garage conversion to office, 6 Landunvez Place, Bradninch. Noted.
- b) **25/00123/CLU certificate of lawfulness** – existing alterations to roof over kitchen, 4 Fore St, Bradninch. Noted.
- c) **25/00158/LBC approval** – listed building consent for replacement of 2 ground floor windows at 15 Millway, Bradninch. Noted.

25/34 Recreation and Amenities Committee: Cllr Crawford put forward recommendations from the Committee -

- a) £106 funds for Townlands Play park – recommendation to purchase an adult bench. RESOLVED to support but for bench designs to be put forward for consideration at the July meeting. Cllr Ottery suggested a memorial plaque.
- b) Wooden Youth Shelter – the shelter is becoming unsafe due to rotting wood. Recommendation to allow the Town Warden to make the repairs at an estimated cost of £800 (held in reserves for equipment maintenance) RESOLVED.

25/35 Trees at Townlands and the Recreation Ground: The Tree Warden had confirmed that the new tree at the Recreation Ground had not died. Three trees along Hele Road, however, had died and he had recommended their removal and replacement. Cllr L Taylor had reported this matter to MDDC, this being MDDC land.

25/36 Footpaths: An advert had been published for a new volunteer Footpath Warden and, to date, four responses had been received. RESOLVED that Cllr Andrews take this matter forward. Overgrown hedges had been reported along Hele Road by the blue bus stop and the school. RESOLVED that the Town Warden should cut back any dangerous brambles on both hedges. The Council had received reports of the wire fence around the Wetland site being cut in two places to allow access to the field. This irresponsible action had been reported to the Duchy of Cornwall, as landowners, and would also be reported to the Farmer. Although not a Council matter, it was RESOLVED that Cllr Ottery would issue a post on social media advising of the damage and the dangers of the cut wire strands.

25/37 Burial Working Group: Cllr Wild reported that quotes for Churchyard wall repairs and the clearing of growth remained pending. The gravel area at the Cemetery did not appear to have been sprayed for weeds, Clerk to investigate.

25/38 Training for Councillors and Employees: RESOLVED that the Town Warden attend a play equipment Inspection course and a weed spraying course. Cllr Mottram objected to the weed spraying course resolution. Cllr Lefebvre would attend a final New Councillor courses in July. Cllrs Andrews, Chambers and Crawford would attend MDDC Planning training in July. Cllr Birley would arrange the annual refresher meeting for those on the Emergency Plan working group. No other training needs identified at the current time.

25/39 Town Trust: There were now two (of four) Town Council Representative vacancies on the Town Trust and so advertising would continue. Two residents had shown an interest which would be followed up.

25/40 Grounds Maintenance: Noted that the current contract was now in its final year. New contract details would be considered over the summer ready for Council consideration, and issuing, in the autumn. Due to recent queries, it was RESOLVED to ask the Contractor to note future invoices with work completion dates, and to text the Clerk once works had been completed.

25/41 Events, comments, updates (no decision making during this item):

- a) Action/Project Register – circulated and noted. b) Broken bin on Millway – reported to MDDC by Cllr L Taylor.
- c) Music Festival - Cllr Chambers reported that the Music Festival had gone very well, despite the weather, and gave thanks to all involved. All present agreed that the production was extraordinary.
- d) People Planet Pint – Cllr Mottram reported that the next event would be at the White Lion on 19th June at 8pm.
- e) Jumble Trail - Cllr Mottram reported that the next Jumble Trail was planned for 12th and 13th July.
- f) Parking blocking access - Cllr Blythe reported that vehicles were regularly parking on white lines blocking vehicular access to residents properties, especially near the school, and called for the practice to cease.
- g) Recreation and Amenities Committee - Cllr Crawford reported that an additional Cllr is required on the Committee and that this would be considered at the July meeting.
- h) Fore Street trees - Cllr L Taylor reported that the tree trunks need trimming back again, Town Warden advised.

25/42 Next meeting of the Town Council: Monday July 14th 2025, 7pm, at the Guildhall. Members of the public are welcome to attend. Agendas and minutes can be found on the website at www.bradninch-tc.gov.uk or can be requested from the Clerk at Clerk@bradninch-tc.gov.uk

PAYMENTS JUNE 2025	£	VAT	RECEIPTS MAY 2025	£
Staff salaries (net)	2358.37	n/a	Burial income	497.51
Employee pension (employer/employee cont.)	814.97	n/a	Allotment deposit	50.00
HMRC Tax/NI	749.49	n/a	Bank interest	19.12
Vodafone monthly direct debit	34.15	Inc VAT	Town Trust Vodafone	13.37
Town Warden expenses	8.41	Inc VAT	Town Trust VE Day Flag	10.00

Clerk expenses	170.88	Inc VAT	Allotment roller	20.00
EDF (Rec lighting)	192.69	Inc VAT	Mayor's Quiz	77.00
Bradinch Scouts (Mayor's Fund)	98.47	n/a	Cricket Club Rent	369.76
Town Trust (room hire Mayor's Fund)	35.00	n/a	Football Club Rent	378.99
Bank charges	5.75	n/a	Bowling Club Rent	198.78
J Vanderwolf (internal audit)	65.00	n/a	Tennis Club Rent	pending
ICCM training (Town Warden)	210.00	Inc VAT		
Garden Services (grounds maintenance)	1977.38 300.00	n/a n/a		

Meeting closed 20.54

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