

Minutes of the Bradninch Annual Parish Meeting **Monday 20th April 2026, 7.00pm, The Guildhall, Bradninch**

Present: 51 members of the public, including Bradninch town Councillors, and County Councillor James Buczkowski.

Apologies: Simon Glendinning, Luke Taylor, Anthony Richards, Phil Bines.

Confirmation of the Annual Parish Meeting Minutes of 2025: It was RESOLVED that the draft meeting minutes from 2025 be signed off as a correct record.

The Duchy of Cornwall ‘withdrawing’ from Bradninch: The Chairman explained that the Council had first heard about this matter towards the end of March from residents and social media. It had not been told about the plans officially until an email response had been received following an enquiry from the Clerk which stated ‘The Duchy of Cornwall is ‘withdrawing’ from Bradninch’. The Council had immediately published a statement to inform residents of the confirmation and called for the Duchy to provide more information. A meeting was arranged by Leigh Rix, Duchy Representative, at short notice to which the Clerk and Chairman attended on 1st April. The situation was discussed and many questions were asked on behalf of residents. A further statement was published by the Council following the meeting to keep residents updated. The Council had passed on all information known to date to the public, and would continue to do so.

Whilst very little is still known about the way forward, the Council is committed to retaining the community assets that it currently leases from the Duchy for the use of the community, the football field, allotment site and nature reserve (Charwell Wetlands). The Council has been advised that it will be given the option to purchase these three sites and that they cannot be ‘gifted’ as was requested. The Council are currently arranging for these sites to receive Assets of Community Value status through Mid Devon District Council with the aim of reducing their values. Devon Air Ambulance Trust has been advised of the situation as it uses the football field. The Council has sought legal advice has been sought from Devon Association of Local Councils. Working Groups had been set up, involving members of the public and Councillors, to assist in documentation with regards to the purchase of the sites. Anyone interested in joining in are very welcome and should contact the Clerk for information.

Regarding valuations on the land, it had been suggested by the Duchy that the football field would be sold at agricultural value and that the allotment and nature reserve would be sold at ‘red book’ price although ‘gifting’, or reducing the values to a nominal fee, had been requested by the Council.

To pay for any purchases the Council would need to raise funds through donations, Crowdfunding, loans and other sources. Councils can borrow funds through the Public Works Loan Board which offers large sums at a low rates over a long term. Loan repayments would, however, need to be covered through precept (Council Tax) and rents.

A separate legal working group has also been set up, again involving members of the public and councillors, to look into whether the Duchy actually has the right to sell, and to oversee legal areas. Anyone interested in joining this group can find out more from the Clerk. Cllr Wild said that it was vitally important that the land in question be retained for the use of the community.

The Chairman would reply to a letter he had recently received from Prince William’s office confirming the Prince’s commitment to the town. He would voice the Council’s disappointment on hearing the announcement and how badly the situation was being handled.

The Chairman finished by inviting members of the public to get in touch with the Council with any concerns, or should they wish to become part of a working group. He confirmed that the Town Council was committed to doing all it could on behalf of residents on this matter.

Town Councillor Phil Chambers explained that ‘red book value’ is a method of valuing put together by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors with the intention that the valuations would stand up in Court as being fair.

It was confirmed by the Chairman that the Duchy had advised that it could not provide the Council with any personal information with regards to Duchy tenants. Tenants were invited to give their contact details to the Town Council so that they could be kept informed of any updates. Tenants were also invited to join working groups and to give permission to the Duchy to enable information to be released to the Town Council.

Anyone wanting to write to Prince William or the Duchy on this matter was encouraged to do so. It was noted that the Prince of Wales and the Duchy of Cornwall’s offices are separate.

It was confirmed that the Town Council had been told by the Duchy that the sale was taking place in order to fund other areas of interest.

Resident Simon Tytherleigh proposed that a Community Assets Fund be set up to accept donations, subscriptions and legacies from within the community. The funds would, hopefully, raise significant funds towards the purchase of the community areas. The Town Council would be best situated to hold and manage the funds. If funds raised were not used towards the purchase of the community assets, it could be used for other areas that would benefit the town and its residents. This proposal was seconded by Rev Olly Mears and RESOLVED by those present. This matter would be taken forward to the May Town Council meeting.

Bradninch Together offered to set up an open forum for folks to get together to discuss the Duchy matter and this was encouraged.

Concerns were raised about how much the assets would cost and what would happen if they were not purchased for the community as the sites could be sold for development. It was reported that the Duchy had advised that, if the Town Council was to secure purchase of the assets, clauses would be applied stating that development could not take place on the land.

The Clerk confirmed that the Charwell Wetland lease expires in 2037 and that the Bithywind Allotments and Football Field leases expire in 2030.

It was suggested that the whole Duchy matter should be put in the hands of the press although it was thought that being confrontational would not be beneficial. It was noted that some or all Duchy tenants have confidentiality clauses within their leases stopping them from speaking out about the situation in public. Mr Palmer and Cllr Chambers had both written to The Times and Sunday Times newspapers about the matter. Cllr Chambers may also contact the i newspaper. It was thought that Bradninch was not the only town that the Duchy were withdrawing from but no details were to hand.

Mayor's report: Councillor Steve Birley reported that the past twelve months in Bradninch had certainly qualified for the title of 'A mixed bag of the good, the bad, and the ugly'! We again enjoyed a simply fantastic Music Festival – the June 2025 edition proved to be a huge success. We also saw another Musical Gardens – an event that has become increasingly popular – and enjoyed by growing numbers. And what about the 2025 Bradninch Town Fayre – yes, hit by good old British weather – but it was another terrific event. We also marveled at that stunning Firework Display and Bonfire at Kensham Park, celebrated Twelfth Night in typical grand Bradninch fashion and the 2025 Christmas Light display was another 'cracker'.

The Charwell Wetlands has gone, quite literally, from strength to strength. The good folk involved in that area have really delivered and, to anyone yet to have a look at our Wetlands, I urge you to get your walking boots (wellies if its wet) and take the now, once again opened, circular walk.

Our Primary School and Pre-School continue to thrive – we are so fortunate to have two such excellent facilities in the Town – and we can also be very proud of our Town sporting bodies – Football, Cricket, Tennis and Bowls, who are all continuing to be delivered by the hard-working folk involved at each of the clubs.

So, if the afore mentioned qualifies for inclusion under the banner ofthe good, what's the bad? That's easy..... the continuing – and growing – plague of pot holes both here in the, Town and on almost every local road. The awful bus service – awful in as much as the, what I personally refer to as 'the lesser spotted 1A service being down to 'one an hour'. This is an on-going matter that we, as a Town Council, are not giving up on it and we shall continue to beat this particular drum. Also under the heading 'bad' has to be the flooding that the poor residents in Hele suffered earlier this year – a positive from that is that we did see the Bradninch Emergency Plan spring into action - thankyou to the good folk who run that particular Town operation.

Sadly, we again said 'good bye' to a number of Town residents and I'd like to mention one particular departure – that of the much loved, Jon Williams. He played such a leading role in many different walks of Bradninch life and, to this day, we continue to miss his energy and enthusiasm for all things 'Ninch'.

And finally, what about the 'Ugly' – well, that has to be the burning down of the shelter in the Recreation Ground. Replacing the shelter continues to be 'work in progress' – but I am very confident that, what ultimately once again sits in the Town's main play area, will be much appreciated – and revered. I have saved, arguably the worst of the 'Ugly' for the bombshell news that hit us just a month ago and that is the withdrawal of the Duchy from our Town. I am still not sure where all this ends up, but what I am sure about it is that we have some seriously committed folk determined to work, as a team, to make sure that however this Duchy withdrawal pans out, the Town will get the best deal possible – you can – dear Bradninch folk – rest assured that we, your Town Council, together with others, will be fighting every inch of the way for, and on behalf of – our dear Town. That folks, concludes the Mayoral Musings for the past 12 months – here's to the next 12.

He thanked Alison Marshall (Clerk) and Jez Shazell (Town Warden) for their continued focus and excellent work. Fellow Councillors were thanked for their time and energy. Cllr Emily Ottery was thanked for her input as a Councillor over the past 9 years and said that she had been a fantastic support to the community during that time and that she would be greatly missed. A card and bouquet of flowers were presented to her.

Police report: Up to date crime statistics can be found at www.streetcheck.com

Mid Devon District Councillor (and Bradninch Town Councillor) Luke Taylor: Firstly, apologies for not being able to attend tonight's meeting. I have been working away lately and due to this I have notified my group at Mid Devon Council that I will be standing down as Leader of the Council so I can focus my attention on the time I do have as being the District Councillor for Bradninch. A new Leader is to be elected at the Council AGM in May. My Deputy has been supporting me and I have still been dealing with case work and emails.

All Districts and the County Council will cease to exist in Devon under the Government's plans for LGR. There are several proposals under review by the Government and consultation has now ended. It is expected that shadow elections will take place in May 2027 with the new Council being fully established in 2028.

I am pleased that again Mid Devon had a balanced budget and whilst it is a difficult juggling task – our officers have worked extremely well to ensure we continue to provide the services we do. I know people will feel that the bills go up and we feel that services decline but the pressures on all Councils only ever increases with significant reductions in funding from central government.

Waste and recycling remains one of Mid Devon's strongest areas of performance. The 2024/25 national figures have just been released and Mid Devon achieved its best-ever results, ranking 10th out of 197 local authorities for recycling at 57.9%, and 6th out of 197 for the lowest level of residual, non-recyclable waste collected per household at 296.8kg. This was an improvement on the previous year's already strong position, when Mid Devon ranked 11th for recycling and 9th for residual waste. Council reporting also shows that while the recycling rate remained broadly steady compared with 2023/24, the total amount of waste collected fell, showing that residents are not only recycling well, but also reducing and reusing more. That is a very positive long-term direction of travel. This year saw the introduction of pots and pans from the kerbside – something I had been campaigning for, for several years.

New social housing - Housing delivery has continued despite a difficult national environment. In December 2024 the Council acquired 39 new homes at StGeorge's Court in Tiverton for social and affordable rent. In March 2026 we completed five new energy-efficient council homes at Eastlands, Hemyock, built for local people on a former underused garage site. Alongside that, the Council is developing eight other sites and working on proposals for five more, with the potential to deliver more than 90 homes across the district. This reflects a continued commitment to increasing the supply of good-quality, affordable council housing for local residents.

Leisure access for unpaid carers - A further area of progress has been support for unpaid carers through Active Mid Devon. From 1 May 2025, the Council introduced a one-year trial giving adult unpaid carers a 25% discount on membership or 20% off casual sessions, while carers under 18 were given free access. By 26 February 2026, the scheme had reached 198 unpaid carers, including 57 young carers using free membership, alongside adult carers benefiting from discounted access. This is an important example of the Council using its leisure service to support wellbeing, prevention and early help for people who make an enormous contribution to our communities.

Overall, the past year has been one of both delivery and change. Mid Devon has continued to perform strongly in core services, to invest in new social housing, and to widen access to support for carers, while also making the case that local government reform must not come at the expense of local accountability and community voice. End.

Devon County Councillor James Buczkowski: The past year has marked a period of significant change at Devon County Council, with a new administration formed in May 2025 operating without overall control. That has required a more collaborative approach to decision-making. From my perspective, the focus has been on maintaining financial stability, strengthening oversight, and ensuring that investment is directed toward the services residents rely on most, particularly highways, children's services, and support for vulnerable residents.

Bradninch and Local Priorities - Highways and Infrastructure: If there is one consistent issue raised across the year, it is highways. That is not new, but the scale of the problem has become harder to ignore. A combination of severe winter weather, historic underinvestment, and drainage issues has led to a significant deterioration in road conditions. At one point, thousands of potholes were outstanding across Devon, with crews working at full capacity just to keep up with safety repairs.

Locally, issues such as rural routes around Bradninch have required repeated escalation. We are not where we need to be, and residents are right to expect better. Years of underinvestment, combined with recent weather, have left many roads in poor condition. In response, additional funding has been allocated to repairs and to longer-term capital investment, alongside a shift back toward preventative maintenance. My focus is on making sure that this investment translates into real improvements locally, and that Bradninch receives its fair share, while continuing to press government for a funding model that properly reflects rural networks like ours.

Baulk Bridge Replacement - A major infrastructure project affecting Bradninch is the Baulk Bridge replacement, scheduled to begin in May 2026. Full closures are planned during school holiday periods to reduce disruption, with diversion routes and

traffic management plans being developed. Additional mitigation is being discussed with the Town Council to manage traffic through Bradninch. This is necessary work, but it will bring disruption. The key is whether we shape that disruption early or simply react to it later.

Bus Services and Connectivity - The reliability of local bus services has remained one of the most frustrating issues this year. The Bradninch service is operated commercially, meaning the County Council has limited control. Despite petitions and representations, there has been little meaningful engagement from the operator. To move beyond anecdotal evidence, I launched a local survey to capture real user experience, including reliability, missed services, and gaps in provision. The intention was to build a robust, evidence-led case to challenge the current service standard. However, the response rate was limited and did not provide a sufficiently strong dataset to draw firm conclusions or apply meaningful pressure. That does raise a question. If we are to challenge a commercial operator effectively, we need credible, defensible data, not just individual complaints. I am keen, therefore, to work with the Town Council to relaunch this work, potentially in a more coordinated way, to gather stronger evidence from residents. With a more comprehensive dataset, we would be in a far better position to:

- Demonstrate the real, lived experience of the service
- Challenge the gap between the timetable and actual delivery
- Make a stronger case for improvements or intervention

Without that evidence, we risk continuing to be told that the service is “operating as expected,” even where local experience clearly suggests otherwise.

Casework and Community Engagement - Alongside strategic work, a significant part of my role continues to be direct engagement with residents. I hold monthly councillor surgeries in Bradninch at the Guildhall, on the second Saturday of each month from 10:00am to 12:00pm. These sessions are deliberately informal and accessible. Residents can drop in without appointment to raise concerns, ask questions, or simply discuss local issues. They provide an opportunity to:

- Raise individual casework directly
- Highlight recurring local concerns
- Discuss wider issues affecting the community

While attendance varies month to month, the value of these sessions is not measured purely in numbers. They provide an important connection between residents and the County Council, ensuring that issues are heard first-hand rather than filtered through formal processes. They also help identify patterns. Many of the issues raised through surgeries, particularly around highways, drainage, and infrastructure pressure, are not isolated cases but part of wider trends that need addressing at a system level. In addition, I attend Bradninch Town Council meetings regularly and will continue to do so. This is important. Strong links between the County Council and the Town Council ensure that local priorities are understood early, concerns are raised collectively rather than in isolation, and issues can be escalated more effectively. It also provides a clear route for two-way communication, so that decisions taken at county level are better understood locally, and local concerns are properly represented at county level. I also provide monthly written updates to the Town Council, which are often published on the Town Council’s website for residents to access. I will continue to prioritise both surgeries and attendance at Town Council meetings, and I would encourage residents to make use of these opportunities. Early conversations often lead to quicker resolutions.

Investment in Bradninch – Locality Budget - Each County Councillor is allocated a Locality Budget to support grassroots community activity. In 2025–2026, I have allocated £3,350 to projects in Bradninch, supporting:

- Duchy Pre-School – £500
- Duchy School PTFA (Choir) – £200
- Involve Community Builder (Division Wide) – £1,200
- Bradninch Youth Club – £500
- Bradninch Community PA – £250
- Bradninch Scouts – £500
- Bradninch Acoustic Music Group – £200

These are relatively small amounts in the context of council budgets, but they tend to go further because they support volunteer-led activity.

County Council Work and Decisions - Budget and Financial Position - The 2026–27 budget sets out a clear direction:

- Increased investment in highways and infrastructure
- Continued pressure from adult social care and SEND demand
- A focus on maintaining financial resilience rather than short-term fixes

There is no easy answer here. Demand is rising faster than funding, and councils are expected to bridge that gap. The risk is that short-term decisions create longer-term problems, which is why maintaining financial discipline has been a priority.

Support for Residents - Several programmes have been developed or expanded this year:

- A new Crisis and Resilience Fund to replace the Household Support Fund, focusing on targeted support rather than one-off payments
- Additional funding for rural households facing high heating oil costs
- Strengthened domestic abuse support through a new multi-year strategy

These are positive steps, but they also reflect the scale of underlying need.

Children's Services and SEND -Improving outcomes for children, particularly those with SEND, has remained a central priority. A new locality-based approach to EHCP support has been introduced, alongside structural changes aimed at improving timeliness and coordination. National funding changes may address historic deficits, but long-term sustainability remains uncertain. There is progress, but it would be premature to call it success. Families will judge that based on their experience, not policy changes.

Local Government Reorganisation -Local Government Reorganisation remains a major strategic issue. Government is expected to determine the future structure of councils in Devon, with proposals ranging from multiple smaller unitaries to a single county-wide authority. Any changes will have long-term implications for service delivery and local democracy.

The key test is simple: will any new structure improve services for residents? The evidence from elsewhere suggests that is far from guaranteed.

Looking Ahead -The coming year will be shaped by three pressures:

- Infrastructure recovery – particularly highways and drainage
- Financial sustainability – balancing rising demand with limited funding
- Structural change – through Local Government Reorganisation

There are opportunities within that, but also risks. The worst outcome would be distraction from the basics while large structural changes are debated. There is always a temptation in reports like this to present a list of achievements. That is not the full picture. Some progress has been made, particularly in investment and strategic direction. But that only matters if it translates into real, visible improvements on the ground. Many of the issues raised by residents a year ago remain the same today. That is the reality, and it is where the focus needs to be. My priority for the coming year is simple: to ensure that the investment and changes already agreed deliver tangible improvements locally, and that Bradninch sees the benefit of that work. The test for the coming year is not whether we can announce new initiatives, but whether residents in Bradninch actually see a difference where it matters:

- Better roads
- Reliable transport
- Accessible services

That is the standard that should be applied.

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Finance - Bradninch Town Council 2025/26: Cllr Simon Glendinning, as Chairman of the Town Council's Finance Committee, had submitted the following report - The Town Council set a budget each year to cover essential running costs for administration, amenities, staffing costs and areas for which the council has responsibilities such as the allotments, the wetlands and burial grounds. It also, as part of the budget setting process, provides a fund for local groups to apply for annual grants.

The Council receives its income from several sources, rental from allotment holders, burial fees, rental for the land leased to the sports clubs and grant funding for specified expenditure or projects. The balance is covered by the Town's Precept.

At the end of the financial year to 31st March 2026, the Council finished the year under budget by £1,284, following an adjustment for the mayors charity fund. This amount will be transferred to an earmarked reserve for the recreation ground lighting project. This takes the total reserves held by the Council to £45,185, split between general reserves of £15,284 and £29,901 for earmarked projects. Copies of the annual accounts are available on request from the Town Clerk and will also shortly be available on the Town Councils Website.

Finance - Bradninch Youth Centre Trust: Copies of the 2025 accounts were made available and can be obtained from the Clerk.

Community Group reports:

1. Town Trust and the Guildhall: Piers Kotting reported -

Guildhall maintenance and development

- Professional surveys have led to maintenance planned and costed for spring/summer 2026.
- Funded by Averil Snell Legacy.
- Spend of circa £50k on repairing and maintaining the structure of the building as it stands today.

Guildhall use

- successful employment of Development Officer, raising of profile, online presence for Town Trust and Guildhall as a venue.
- Organising events, managing a ticketing service open to other Bradninch events to use.
- Supporting the new snooker club.
- Obtaining collective alcohol license and running a bar all contributing to the place becoming in more economically viable as well as vibrant.
- We have taken the opportunity of the retirement of our Caretaker, Terry, to evolve to a more self-service model of operation to keep costs down, now working as is the case with most other community spaces in Devon.

Guildhall Next:

- The trust is working with BTC and Bradninch Together on a process of understanding what facilities the town has at present and where there is overlap, which will lead to better understanding of what it needs for the future, so we can plan accordingly.
- An excellent first meeting involving multiple parties who control assets late in 2025 set this in motion.

Parochial Charities:

- We consulted on a new grant giving scheme – cost of living help most wanted - and the new scheme is being launched early summer 2026.
- Use of fields – with the tenancy for two of our fields having become available we're looking at the best use of these assets for the benefit of the community.

Behind the scenes:

- The transfer of the Bradninch Town Trust charity to a new charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) is almost complete, awaiting Charity Commission approval.
- Online bookkeeping and financial management has been introduced, online storage of documents.
- We have closed three redundant charities, streamlining the activities into falling under two umbrellas:
 - **Town Trust** – broadly responsible for providing the "Town Hall".
 - **Parochial Charities** - broadly responsible for relieving the effects of poverty and enhancing opportunity for young people seeking a trade.

Accounts:

These are published on our website.

People:

- Thanks to Terry who retired after many years of great service.
- Thanks to retiring Trustees in 2025/26 – Anne Poteous, Ron Parnell, and Piers Kotting.
- Welcome to new trustees Rosie Walker and Katy Mackenzie.

Looking ahead

- There are two open slots for trustees so if anyone is interest please contact chair@bradninchtt.org.uk
- working closely with the Town Council to support the use of property and premises for the future flourishing of Bradninch.

2. Bradninch Football Club: Steve Huxtable, Chairman, reported -

I've been involved with the club for the past 13 years. The first couple solely as a parent of my older son, the past 11 running a team for my younger son and his friends, and the last 4 years of that as Club Chairman.

During my time at the club, it has continued to grow and this season we've had around 190 players and coaches involved.

With that many individuals directly involved throughout the season we are not a small club. It is worth noting that those numbers do not include youth player's parents and guardians, who are not directly involved.

Finances

The club is balancing the books well while keeping player fees low and affordable. We have good involvement from our members in maintaining our facilities at our home of Kensham Park.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Town Council for the grant provided last year which was used to maintain vital equipment and for this year's grant that will be used to help install dugouts for our youth teams.

Fundraising continues to be important to the club and we thank the local community in their support of this. Recently the Football Club held an Easter Egg Hunt, hosted at the Cricket Club, and this was a very successful event.

Bradninch Rocks will be taking place again this year – largely due to requests from those outside of the Football Club, who have committed to help run the event. The event will take place on Saturday 18th July. This year's Bradninch Rocks is dedicated to Jon Williams who has always supported the event and is greatly missed by all of us at the Football Club.

On Field

With a very wet winter – we, like most grassroots football clubs, have had a lot of cancelled matches. Now that the good weather has returned, our teams are busier than ever, fitting all the postponed matches in before the season ends in May. We currently have 1 men's team and 6 youth teams training and playing matches. All are doing well and enjoying playing for Bradninch.

It was 7 youth teams until very recently when our Under 14's coach decided he was unable to continue, and the team was unable to continue without him.

All our teams are enjoying playing football and despite losing one of our age groups we continue to grow. Just this afternoon I was out training the latest group of children – these are the Under 6's who, believe it or not, have been going for around a year now. In fact, we were able to keep them training throughout the winter thanks to the Duchy School providing us an indoor environment to train in. It's a really good partnership to have started with the school and I hope that we can continue it together.

Finally

We had recently asked the Duchy of Cornwall whether there was a possibility of more land to grow into due to the ongoing congestion at Kensham Park. It was then that we were made aware that the Duchy of Cornwall had plans to pull out of Bradninch. So, plans to expand need to remain on the back-burner for now while we focus on working with the Duchy of Cornwall and the Town Council to secure our current home.

Thank you to both the Town Council and the local community for its continued support of the Football Club.

3. Bradninch Together (Brad Tog): Sophie West reported on activities over the past year and that it had helped coordinate the 5th edition of the Bradninch Town Fair which had been very successful again. It had facilitated and exploratory conversation among the custodians of different public spaces within the town, considering whether there might be opportunities for mutual support, collaboration and , potentially engagement with the wider community in relation to the facilities available. This project is moving forward and has gained a good following. In January 2026 Brad Tog supported, for the second time, the annual Bradninch 12th Night event which, like the Town Fair, is coordinated by an informal steering group. As well as hosting this, Directors assisted with cutting willow for lantern making, publicity and lantern making workshops. Over 30 brilliant creations were paraded through the town on the night of 6th January. In addition, Brad Tog Directors continue to take on individual projects to assist the community such as ongoing flood prevention efforts and an Owl Project which involved sourcing funds for Owl boxes and a webcam which helped collaboration between the Town Council and the Duchy School.

4. Bradninch Scouts: Caira Estell reported -

Bradninch Scouts is working hard to sustain and build on the rich programme of activities that Jon Williams, alongside fellow leaders, developed so successfully over many years.

Since Jon's very sad passing, the Scouts Committee has taken on significantly increased responsibilities and has been on a steep learning curve. This has also been shaped by growing expectations from Scouts UK at a national level. We are currently rebuilding the committee to ensure we have the skills and expertise needed to meet these expectations, particularly in areas such as safeguarding and health and safety. We warmly welcome members of the local community who may be interested in joining and strengthening our committee.

Alongside the committee, each section—Squirrels, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers—relies on the commitment of volunteer leaders and parent helpers. We are always keen to hear from people who can support these groups. No specific experience is required; we simply ask for enthusiasm to work with young people, a willingness to help organise or support activities, and a clear DBS check. If you would like to help, please contact Zoe Jarrett as Group Scout Leader at 1stbradninch@gmail.com.

The Groups continue to grow and develop. We have one Scout who will be attending the World Scout Jamboree in Poland in 2027 and another scout attending a European jamboree in Denmark this year. Scout camps continue to take place through connections with our fellow Scouts at District and County level.

Our Annual General Meeting will take place on 14 July. We warmly invite parents, young people involved in Scouts, and members of the local community to attend. We are very grateful for the ongoing financial and wider support of Bradninch Town Council. We use the Town Council's support (along with other supporters) to ensure that Scouts remains accessible to the hardest pressed families within the town. We always welcome the ideas and input from our Bradninch community as we work to ensure Bradninch Scouts continues to go from strength to strength.

Please talk to Zoe or one of the committee members if you have any questions or suggestions.

5. Landunvez Twinning: Sophie West (for Phil Bines) reported on Twinning activities over the past year.

6. Bradninch Bee Yard: Katy Mackenzie provided an overview of Bee Yard activities over the past year.

7. Bradninch and Kentisbeare Cricket Club: A report from Eliot Action was read out -

The Cricket Club continues to go from strength to strength, both on and off the field, and remains a central part of the local community.

On-field performance - The club has enjoyed a sustained period of success, competing at the highest level of Devon cricket. We are proud to have been Devon Premier League Champions three times in the last four seasons, reflecting the strength, consistency, and commitment across the senior playing group. Alongside this, we continue to run multiple senior teams, ensuring cricket is accessible for players of all abilities and commitment levels.

Junior and women's cricket - One of the most significant areas of growth has been within our junior section. Participation continues to increase year on year, with strong demand across all age groups. We are particularly proud of the continued development of our girls' cricket pathway, which is helping to broaden access to the game and create a more inclusive club environment. This growth does bring challenges, particularly around coaching capacity, facilities, and volunteer support, but it remains a major priority for the club moving forward.

Facilities and clubhouse development - Over the past 12 months, we have made significant strides in improving our facilities and enhancing the overall experience for members and the wider community. A key development has been the evolution of our clubhouse offering, now operating under the name "Barrel & View." This reflects a broader ambition to create a welcoming,

community-led venue rather than a traditional members club environment. The aim is to make the space more accessible, increase community usage, and create a sustainable revenue stream that supports the long-term future of the cricket club. In addition, the club is currently progressing plans to develop a rooftop terrace area. This would provide an improved viewing experience, enhance matchday hospitality, and further strengthen the club's ability to host community events. As you know, we have worked through the appropriate planning process to ensure the development is delivered in the right way for both the club and local residents. We are in the process of seeking funding and a confirming a timeframe to build.

Fundraising and investment - To support both current operations and future development, the club is placing increased focus on structured fundraising initiatives. This includes sponsorship opportunities as well as wider engagement with local businesses and supporters. We are also exploring additional funding routes to support facility improvements and long-term investment into the club's infrastructure.

Community engagement and partnerships - The club remains a strong community hub, hosting events, social activities, and providing a space for local people to come together. Our digital reach has grown significantly, with over one million impressions across social platforms in the past year, helping to raise the profile of both the club and the local area. Alongside this, we are keen to strengthen relationships with other local clubs, organisations, and community groups. Whether through shared use of facilities, joint events, or collaborative initiatives, we see this as an important part of the club's role within the town and wider area. We continue to focus on being inclusive, family-friendly, and accessible to all.

Volunteers and governance - Like most grassroots sports clubs, we rely heavily on volunteers. We currently have a number of roles across the club that would benefit from additional support, including committee positions, junior coaching, match day roles, and general operations. We would actively encourage anyone with an interest in supporting the club to get involved.

Key priorities for the next 12–24 months -

- Continued investment in junior and girls' cricket
- Strengthening the volunteer base across all areas of the club
- Progressing clubhouse developments, including the rooftop terrace
- Delivering successful fundraising initiatives to support growth
- Expanding partnerships with local clubs and community groups
- Enhancing community engagement through the Barrel & View
- Maintaining high standards of on-field performance
- Ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the club

Bradninch & Kentisbeare Cricket Club is in a strong position, with clear momentum both on and off the field. We remain committed to developing the club in a way that benefits players, members, and the wider community for years to come.

8. Charwell Wetlands: Simon Tytherleigh reported on behalf of the Wetlands Working Group –

Active over past year and now a sub group of the town council with different members taking on different things within the group, thriving and doing well. Management plan approved by town council . Biodiversity plan and bat survey last year – 13 species of bat at the Wetlands including rare ones. 3 working groups sessions, all welcome to attend, cake and work at the wetlands, equipment provide. Coffee morning £150 raised for ongoing maintenance. Town Warden on board who maintains and puts in walkways and bridges etc. monthly then working groups more of a support. £500 pa from Town council and funds from Sustainable Bradninch and funds brought forward from previous group. January applied to South WW nature recovery fund, one for 7.5k for bridge works towards next field and removal of willows in the middle of the site. 81k for big open areas of water, boardwalk and stockproof fencing so cattle could be let in. No reply regarding lending yet. Amenity and for nature to enjoy. Dogs on a lead. Open Day in the summer, maintenance ongoing. Need to keep residents in the loop so meeting planned when reply from SWW received. Chairman said that today someone reported that they saw tadpoles, newts, pond skaters, beatles, damsel fly and lots of other things.

9. Bradninch Millers Morris: Jenny Richards reported –

Thanks to Council for grant towards printed jackets to give instant identify with new banner. Thanks to the town council for awarding us a grant towards the cost of providing printed jackets for our side. These have proved to be extremely popular and useful to both musicians and dancers alike. When dancing out we are recognisable by the colours of our kit, black shirts and trousers with blue, green and yellow accessories. This however did not give us an instant cohesive team identity and our new jackets have given us that. Now people can not only hear the sound of the bells but they know exactly where they are coming from. I think it is a fair comment to say that at the Spring Fair in Cullompton recently we had more interest from potential new recruits than ever before as both our jackets and our new banner promoted the fact we were very local. A good starting point for a conversation. Thank you for helping us to promote our town.

10. Women's Institute: Jenny Richards reported

Bradninch WI were very pleased to be awarded some grant aid money towards the work we put into making our town a delightful place to live. Over the last year we worked on several projects covering not only the seasons but important events such as the 80th Anniversary of VE Day. For this display we knitted what literally seemed like an army of soldiers, sailors and airmen as well as many poppies as we could. We often get asked the question what do we do with the displays? The answer is

many things. The bus shelter itself is in quite an exposed position. The displays are subject to whatever the weather wishes to throw at it, wind, rain, sun all of which when they happened, seem to have been pretty extreme. The thatched roof also likes to drop what can only be described as grot on to the displays so all in all some of it is not fit for further use. Some displays have been given away, the pre-school and the Baptist Church were happy to take one each. We were also able to provide Christmas decorations for Exeter Leukaemia Fund for their tree in Princesshay. I'm also pleased to say that much of it gets reused or repurposed, the arched window panels are currently being used for the fourth time now. There is also a need to buy new materials to keep the displays looking fresh and attractive. It seems the community really appreciates our efforts. It had been noted by the beginning of March that the shelter had been bare since 12th Night and when was it going to be decorated again? This together with all the lovely comments we received when putting up the display make it all worthwhile. I'm told photos of the display are sent all over the world. Bradninch WI would like to thank the town council for their continued support.

11. Sustainable Bradninch: Lucy Mottram reported –

There will be the regular repair café this Saturday, all are welcome to come along to the Guildhall to get things mended. Bradninch food hut has now saved 25 tons of food over 25 years. There are around 30 volunteers and regular talks and films are put on for all to attend usually at the Guildhall. On 13th May a talk about the Right to Roam and access rights will take place. A Glow Worm Walk will take place in July and all are welcome to attend and all events are free and as accessible as possible. SB is in the process of discussing a library of things with the Town Trust which involves the public being able to borrow items.

12. St Disen's Church: Rev Olly Mears reported –

The Church had been involved in many things over the past year including beer and carols in the pub, the Donkey service, pastoral things, serving the local primary school with assemblies and afterschool events, visiting Parklands Nursing Home as part of our community, continuing with the Warm Welcome as a hub of the community which has been helped with funding from the Town Council. These events take place from 10am – 1pm during winter and 10-12 in Summer months on Wednesdays and all are welcome to attend. These events are volunteer dependent so in areas of finances and admin if any member of the public can give some time please get in touch. If you want to know more about Church life come to the Church next Monday evening. We are here for you, souls matter to us.

13. Bradninch Bumps Babies and Beyond:

We are here for those who are pregnant and until children go onto school. You can find us at the Guildhall every Friday. Thanks go to the Town Council for grant funding which, this year, has helped us make a lovely space for kids and families to use. Come along and join us, and tell others too!

14. Bradninch Red Barrows:

We have had many 'away missions' and this year, around 12, and we have openings for anyone who would like to come and have a go and enjoy themselves. No particular talents are needed other than to hold a barrow and run a little bit, it's not overly taxing. We will be at the Devon County Fair at Westpoint, Summerset Armed Forces Day in Taunton, Darts Farm, the Apple Pie Fair and have a secret mission in July. We train on Wednesday's at the football club, its fun, come and join us. You can find more on the website at www.red.barrows.com

Questions from the floor: None.

Cllr Chambers gave thanks to the Mayor for running the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.42pm