Minutes of the Bratton Clovelly Annual Parish Meeting

Held on Wednesday 8th May 2024 **7:15pm** at the Parish Hall, Bratton Clovelly

Present: 5 members of the public, Councillors. Braidwood, May, Bowyer, Huggins and Gilbert, Jellyman WDB Cllrs Mott and Southcott, Alex Rhaag (WD housing) and R Ward – clerk

**1.** **Chairman's Welcome** Cllr Huggins welcomed 5 members of the public to the meeting

**2. Apologies**: WDBCllr Mott

**4. Approval of minutes of the last meeting dated 24th May 2023**– *Approved*

**5. Reports from Local Groups/Organisations**:

**Parish Paths Partnership (P3) annual update**

The P3 scheme is an initiative to ensure that the rights of way network is properly maintained and well publicised. It has the support of the National Association of Local Councils and is Devon County Council funded.

The County Council was one of the first 15 Highway Authorities to participate in this scheme, which encourages community involvement and enjoyment of public rights of way. Devon County Council is working in partnership with parish/town councils, landowners and local voluntary groups.

The main aim is to improve the condition of the local rights of way and keep them open and used properly.

There’s a very good website on the Devon County Council website and here is a link to an interactive map where you can search for all paths in Devon - https://www.devon.gov.uk/prow/interactive-map/.

There is a Public Rights of Way Lead Officer, Ros Davies, although she started a new role across the South Hams in 2023 and recruitment took place for a replacement who we hope to meet in 2024.

In Bratton Clovelly Parish there are 14 sections of footpath/bridleway which meander over a distance of nearly 23 kilometres…or just over 14 miles in old money!

The Parish Council try and walk all the paths at least once a year and, like everyone else, can report issues to Devon County Council direct through their website. The link is here - https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem/map/map\_src/prow/

This link takes you through to a map page where you can quickly search for the stretch you are on and then report very easily using the pop-up box which asks what the problem for the x5 different scenarios that are most common i.e. signage/surface/structure/obstruction/overgrowth faults.

All of the 14 paths failed for one reason or another this year and lack of signage was a common problem as was water logging but it was a very wet winter! We await new way markers to be sent out to us but there are lengthy delays at the county council.

Below is the high level report to the council which is accompanied by more detailed path reports clarifying failures:

We’re fortunate to have a good network of paths around the Parish and thank you to all those who help take care of them, keep them clean and ensure they are useable for the next user.

**Parish Clean-Up Report 2024**

On Saturday 27th April 2022 members of the community once again joined together for our Bratton Clovelly Annual Parish Clean-Up, which has been taking place in this current format for 28 years.

The planning went well and the event saw a turnout of 28 Bratton Clovelly parishioners. The volunteers collected their hi-viz jackets, gloves & black bags, received their pick-up routes and headed off, in pleasant weather. On their return, all the detritus found along the Parish Roads was collected together near the Parish Hall to wait for West Devon collection. All went very well, no problems occurred, with less litter and rubbish found this year, (about 10 sacks-full) although the usual spillage from vehicles was evident amongst items found. Worth noting is the number of Parishioners who take it upon themselves to pick up rubbish throughout the year, as well as on the Clean Up day.

**Badminton Report:**

Where are all the badminton players? Our numbers have dropped but we still try to meet on Wednesday pm at 8:00 pm

If unsure please ring 01837871248

All abilities welcome, equipment available. Please come along and join us.

**Bratton Clovelly Art Group – 2024**

The art group meets every Wednesday in the Tor room at the Parish Hall. The past year has seen a small increase in attendees and the group continues to attract participants from the parish and immediate area. Artistic interests range from watercolours to acrylics, oils to pastels, collage to drawing, with varying subjects including landscapes, portraiture and still life. New attendees have brought a new approaches to art-making and we have been delighted to welcome a spinner/weaver to our group and well as someone with an interest in illustration and history. We are looking forward to seeing the finished booklet when a guide to the bench ends and carvings in Northlew Church is published later in the year in aid of church funds.

The group held one exhibition during the year and are planning another for the summer months.

The art group is a welcoming and social group that could not be so were it not for the time and effort put in by the organisers and special thanks must go to Sarah Simpson for keeping us all in order and to all the participants who take it in turn to provide delicious cakes and biscuits to aid the creative process. Thanks must also go to Bratton Clovelly Parish Hall for offering a generous discount to their regular parish groups. Without this, the Art Group and other similar groups in the parish would struggle to continue.

Art, Craft, tea and cake. What better way could the possibly be to spend an afternoon with likeminded friends.

C Atkinson

For Bratton Clovelly Creative Arts and Crafts Group.

**6. Report from the Parish Council Chairman**

The year 23/24 has presented the parish Council with many challenges and here is the Chairman’s report covering this period.

The PC entered the new term under the championship of Cllr Bernard McNelis. Sadly, due to personal reasons, he had to step down in the autumn. On behalf of the PC I would like to my appreciation for his service to the Parish.

Cllr Huggins was initially nominated as the acting Chairman and elected Chairman in Spring 24. The Parish council is now complete with 6 elected Councillors and 1 co-opted councillor.

Over this term a period of development has taken places with councillors taking courses in order to better serve their community. This has included councillor training held in Okehampton and online (Teams) training in respect of Planning, the aim to better inform and enable councillors to deliver on behalf of the parish and parishioners. As part of this development councillors have specific areas of responsibility as well as general ones.

The following is a precis of this:

Playground: Cllr Bowyer – the playground has provided many challenges over this term; safety issues combined with the RoSPA reports and general upkeep. I am pleased to say that, despite the best efforts of the weather it is now a safe and compliant area that serves the whole parish.

Footpaths and Bridleways: Cllrs Braidwood Gilbert and Jellyman – The aim is to assess and report all matters that affect parish rights of way. I am pleased to report that all the paths and bridleways have been walked numerous times and a report outlining their general condition and works required has been submitted to DCC. Whilst the PC undertakes the whole network, parishioners are empowered to report any observations directly to DCC.

Finance: Rachel Ward (Clerk) and Cllr Jellyman – the details of this are covered under a special item. The PC has an annual grants policy which allows the allocation of £300 across the year. In this year support has been given to the Okehampton District Transport Group. The PC welcomes applications for an allocation from this fund.

Community Defibrillator: Cllr May – ensuring operational status is critical to those in need of this essential medical device. It has been deployed once this year and without the commitment of the Parish Councillors lives would be at risk.

Planning: This is an area where councillors have been faced with significant challenges, hence the planning training undertaken this term. A working group of Cllrs Gilbert, Jellyman, May and Bowyer now review all planning applications and report back to the PC for decision making. Further training will be undertaken when available and relevant.

Roads: Cllr Huggins – The ongoing issue with the poor conditions of the roads within the parish is a major concern to all parishioners. Proactive engagement with WDBC and Devon Highways has been initiated but it would be fair to say that the resolution has been slow. Parishioners are encouraged to use the “Pothole/poor road surfaces portal in the Devon County Highways website as this is the most effective way of highlighting issues. The PC has no power to implement repairs.

Policing: Cllr Huggins – Early engagement with the newly formed West Devon Rural Policing Unit lead was established in autumn 23. Sadly little appears to have developed at a local level, with no face to face dealings with the team. There is much reliance on sifting through websites to glean information. Other avenues will be pursued in 24/25 and it is hoped that this will provide a more practice approach with regards to the area.

General: All councillors - over this term the PC has continued to address as many issues as possible. Of note this year was a makeover of the War memorial garden which saw councillors and volunteers from the parish undertakes the extensive work to make the square and making it a better area, enhancing the village and giving it a place to reflect. Thank you to everyone who contributed and supported this.

The parish clean-up, coordinated by Kerry Brookes and supported by the PC and members of the parish. The event took place on 27/04/24 and was the 28th year in its current format. 28 parishioners turned out for the event, duly equipped with hi viz waist coats gloves, bin bags and litter grabbers. The event went without issues. Although there was less litter than usual, 10 black sacks of rubbish were collected. It is of note that some parishioners continue this community spirit throughout the year – Thank you to all involved.

In Summary: the balancing of personal/professional lives continues to be a common thread with all councillors, but I have to commend the councillors for giving up their valuable time as volunteers to serve on the PC. We all want to do this on behalf of all parishioners. I would like to mark all my fellow Cllrs for the hard work dedication and commitment, and thank WDBCllrs Terry Southcott and Caroline Mott as our ward councillors for their support and guidance.

Kevin Huggins Chairman of Bratton Clovelly Parish Council

**7. Parish Council Financial Report FY 2023/24**

During the financial year 2023/24 the Council managed its finances effectively with total precept spend slightly under budget. Although being slightly overspend in areas like staff training and the cost of an in-depth play equipment survey this had been compensated for by slight underspends in areas like dog bin emptying and Japanese Knott Weed treatment – a battel we are winning.

The Council was also able to maintain its contingency fund to agreed levels, giving it ring-fenced funds totalling £10,430. These are set aside to support spend on contingencies, elections and maintenance, as well as the unspent monies raised to refurbish the playground.

Having explored the idea of new play equipment it was decided to undertake a thorough overhaul of what we had, and in doing so, we were able to get the playground up and running much earlier than if we had had to continue fundraising for new equipment. A total of £6713.88 was spent last year refurbishing the playground and there is an outstanding bill for labour still to come, this will be funded from Parish Council reserves rather than this year’s budget.

There are no further transactions that would have a financial impact on the year end accounting statements.

The budget for 2024/25 was agreed in January 2024 and set at £7851, 50% of this has been paid to the PC in April and the remainder will be received in September.

This will fund expected rises in all costs.

R Ward May 2024 Clerk/RFO Bratton Clovelly Parish Council

**8. Questions from the floor -** None

**9. Closure of meeting** 7:40 pm