



A meeting of the Parish Council was held in Bratton Fleming Village Hall on Wednesday 20 September 2023 at 7:00pm.

Present: Cllrs Mrs A Bell (Chair), F Benbow, T Ellis, Mrs L McLean, P Huxtable, Mrs P Kellaway, J Pitkeathly, M Prowse and T Shapland

In attendance: 6 parishioners, Parish Clerk.

56. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs N Catmore and County Cllr Mrs Davis.

57. Public Participation

1. It was explained that the draft minutes would be posted on the council's website on the Friday prior to the next meeting.
2. it was reported that water was running off the Millennium Green car park, into Green. It was agreed that regrading the car park would resolve the problem.
3. overgrown hedges were reported at the Sports Club, Lower Knightacott and the White Hart. Clerk to contact the owners requesting that the hedges be trimmed.
4. The renewal fee of £40 was due to the Information Commissioners Office on behalf on the Rural Alliance. Clerk to check the funds remaining.

58. Declaration of Interests

Cllrs Shapland and Prowse declared an interest in item 68 as Millennium Green trustees. Cllr Mrs Kellaway declared an interest in item 71 – payment to her son.

59. Approval of Minutes of the meeting held 19 July 2023

A number of typos were amended.

The amended minutes of the last meeting were agreed and signed as a true record.

60. Matters Arising from Minutes of meeting held 19 July 2023

Cllr Benbow reported that another meeting with 361 Energy was being planned as part of the feasibility study between the company and the school, church, village hall and pre-school regarding the micro-hub. The meeting was needed to discuss any likely energy increase in future years.

Cllr Benbow explained the problems he was encountering over land that he leased from NDC, and in the past has maintained. There were now problems with an overhanging tree, which was on land believed to be owned by North Devon Homes. Cllr Prowse offered to check/forward the map at NDC which showed land ownership and maintenance responsibilities.

Everyone was encouraged to sign the petition to retain the mobile library in North Devon. This service was particularly important in communities not served by a regular, or any, bus service. It was agreed that the parish council would also sign.

The clerk reported that Devon County Council was withdrawing the Parish Paths Partnership, which the parish council was in the process of joining. This was especially disappointing as volunteers had put in a lot of time surveying all the paths and bridleways in the parish. The decision by DCC was made as part of a review into its non statutory services as it took a careful look at its finances.

61. Planning Applications:

77481 Application for a lawful development certificate for commencement of works relating to planning permission 71469 Kipscombe Bratton Fleming.

The parish council did not possess the relevant information, and was therefore unable to make a comment.

77523 Creation of agricultural access track, Swallows Cottage Bratton Fleming.

There were no objections to the application.

77558 Side extensions to dwelling to include installation of rear dormer, 1 Homer Close Bratton Fleming.

The council noted the neighbour concerns, but recommended that it be approved.

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62. Correspondence

1. DALC Newsletter. It was agreed to circulate the latest edition, highlighting the link in order that councillors could obtain future editions direct.
2. Bratton Fleming News. For personal reasons Mrs McLean had resigned as editor of the News, although she would help produce the next (Christmas) edition. Mrs McLean was thanked for all her work as editor.
3. Roadside trees and ditches. DCC had supplied details on responsibilities of the council and adjacent landowners regarding roadside hedges, overhanging branches, gullies and drains. It was agreed to post the information on the website.

63. Code of Conduct – adoption

Copies of the newest Code of Conduct, prepared by North Devon Council, had been circulated to councillors.

It was unanimously agreed that this should be adopted by the parish council.

64. Defibrillator training – update

Cllr Mrs Catmore had arranged a one hour defibrillator awareness session with South West Ambulance Service, which would take place in the Village Hall on Wednesday 1 November at 10am.

65. Public Spaces Protection Orders – Dog controls

The present Order was being reviewed by North Devon Council. Everyone was encouraged to take part in the online consultation questionnaire, which was easy to complete.

It was suggested that an additional dog bin in the village would be an advantage.

66. Community Speedwatch

It was noted that people in Goodleigh had decided to run their own speedwatch in the village, and not work with Bratton Fleming.

The PC had been advised by Cllr Davis that a community speedwatch group was a pre-requisite for qualifying for a 20mph speed limit in the village. A group could only be established if enough people were prepared to volunteer. It was suggested that the village schoolchildren may be able to produce leaflets, to get the point across. It was thought that it would be good to get the PTA involved in the scheme.

Cllr Mrs Kellaway left the meeting.

67. Parish Online – update

Cllr Ellis reported that he now had full access to the new website.

Photographs of councillors were still needed. He offered to contact the photographer.

All the parish councillors were willing to have their telephone numbers included on the website, together with the clerk.

Cllr Ellis was thanked for all his work in getting the website established.

68. Millennium Green Playground – future improvements

Thanks were extended to Mr Simon Ryder for the recent fundraising event which had raised £200 for new play equipment. It was agreed that the parish council would also cover the £55 cost of hiring the hall for the event.

Cllr Mrs Bell advised that the contractor who completed phase 1 had provided some initial quotations for replacing the existing multiplay climbing frame. He had also inspected the existing frame and advised that it was structurally sound and could be comprehensively refurbished. He was willing to work in partnership with the community which would allow some of the work to be done by local trades and volunteers. This would result in a significant saving over installing a brand new item. It was agreed that a baseball hoop would be a worthwhile addition for older children.

It was suggested a work party event be arranged to encourage volunteers to get involved.

69. Highways

Concern was expressed over the state of the Barnstaple road, with numerous potholes. The road was becoming extremely dangerous, as motorists swerved to avoid potholes, often crossing the centre white line. It was considered that DCC's measure of what constitutes a safety defect was totally inappropriate.

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Problems were being experienced in Station Road with motorists parking against the churchyard wall, not leaving enough space for traffic to pass between them and the chicane outside the school gate.

Cllr Ellis would approach last year's interested party to enquire whether they would still be prepared to undergo online training to become the parish snow warden. The presence of a recognised snow warden in the parish would mean that the council could obtain additional stocks of salt.

70. Reports

1. District Councillor's Report

Cllr Prowse reported that additional work on the Pannier Market meant that the completion had been delayed.

The old frontage to the building in Boutport Street, opposite the top of Butchers Row, had now been carefully taken down.

The old Leisure Centre was due to be taken down shortly.

The planning appeal at Fremington had been dismissed as North Devon Council was found to have a five year land supply for housing.

He had thanked the planning department for submitting a strong case at the planning appeal for the White Hart, which had been dismissed.

2. County Councillor's Report Free Tree Scheme 2023/2024

This year, Devon County Council are offering free tree packs to landowners and communities within Devon, for the fifth consecutive year. Each free tree pack will contain 45 trees comprising three types of native broadleaved tree commonly found throughout Devon.

There are currently plenty of schemes and initiatives encouraging landowners and communities within Devon to plant native broadleaved trees. Doing so will help replace the vast number of ash trees that are now dying through ash dieback, as well as supporting wildlife, enhancing our landscapes for people to enjoy, and helping to reduce greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change.

Last year, Devon County Council gave away 150 packs of free trees to landowners across Devon, thanks to the Emergency Tree Fund.

Are you eligible?

If you have a field corner or another area where you would like to establish a small copse, linear woodland or extend an existing woodland, you can apply for a free tree pack. In previous years free packs of 45 saplings containing oak, birch and rowan trees have been supplied to eligible landowners. To give trees enough space to develop a good crown and grow to maturity, we advise planting at 3m random spacings, which requires an area of approximately 400m sq. (e.g. 20m x 20m) for 45 trees.

How to make an application:

To apply, please complete our online [form](#) by 27th of September 2023. This is the deadline that would enable tree packs to be delivered in time for you to plant in National Tree Week (25th of November – 3rd of December). Applications after this date would be subject to availability. You will be notified if you have been successful before the end of October 2023 and your tree pack will be dispatched to you on a date confirmed by the tree nursery we appoint.

If you are interested in the scheme, please do not delay applying. In previous years, the scheme has been extremely popular and highly oversubscribed.

Growing Communities fund

This DCC grant aims to help local groups and organisations become more resilient and help those in the communities cope with financial pressures. Groups that are encouraged to apply include those who bring communities together for meaningful activities and social interaction, offer people a warm, safe haven or alleviate food poverty. The aim is to build self reliance and resilience within a community.

Rural Give Way marking project

This project is aiming to remark all the rural Give-Way and Stop markings across the whole of the County. In addition to simply remarking them DCC are using a more robust product that will improve the life-expectancy and lead to a lower whole life cost and reduced carbon cost.

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There are approximately 6,000 rural Give-Way markings that will be treated. For your information there is another 1,500 in our market and coastal towns. The project is estimated to take 4-5 years to complete.

Lining works to include:

To remove existing markings and refresh

- single dashed white lines
- double dashed white lines
- stop lines
- give way triangles
- up to 5 centre lines from the junction

Safety Defects

Following the extremely high numbers of publicly reported potholes across the network during the first part of the year, and the increase in repair gangs as a response, numbers have gradually stabilised through the spring and into the summer, however, remain above average for the time of year. This has meant that there is still some residual pressure on inspection teams in assessing backlogs. Evening and weekend working has remained in place in some areas to assist with this.

Work is underway to improve the messaging on the ‘report a problem’ webpages to reduce the number of defects that are incorrectly reported – since January this year this represents around 55% of all reports received.

Following a very challenging winter for asset condition and safety defects, the numbers recorded across the network had reduced sufficiently that Highway Safety Inspectors (HSI) were able to re-start the identification of non-safety or ‘serviceability’ defects in June. This process offers HSI’s the discretion to record defects that do not meet investigatory criteria in our Highway Safety Policy.

The ‘Elastomac’ trials demonstrated at the Members event in Spring is continuing. The product is envisaged to provide a lower carbon and cost-effective means of repairing carriageway defects. The mastic product uses up to 70% recycled materials, including lorry tyres, that would otherwise be incinerated and, in the right scenarios, allows reactive works gangs to undertake repairs much more quickly when compared to conventional techniques.

Winter Service

Preparations for winter have been taking place over the summer, with the fleet of gritters receiving their annual servicing and calibration checks. Works to install solar panels on some of the salt barns have also been progressed and salt stocks are being replenished ahead of winter.

By keeping the age of the gritting vehicles under 10 years old maintenance costs are reduced and ensures the fleet is safe and appropriate for the task in hand. In preparation for this winter, 8 of our oldest/most costly gritters will be traded-in against 6 nearly new vehicles. This will reduce the secondary fleet from 12 vehicles down to 10, an appropriate balance of service resilience against financial pressures.

Gully Cleaning

Over 5,000 drainage issues identified by the gully cleaning crews and highway officers have been resolved since April. The challenge remains dealing with over 15,000 outstanding reported issues with funds available.

The ongoing trial to pre inspect gullies due to be cleaned on the cyclical programme has shown 49% of gullies inspected to date do not require cleaning. The aim of the trial is to ensure plant and equipment is being deployed where it is most effective.

A joint trial with Devon's Flood team to place gully sensors in selected streets in Devon is in the preparation stages. It is hoped this externally funded trial will offer insight into whether technology can be used to inform policy or reaction for cyclical gully cleaning. The trial intends to run for an 18-month period from the winter period.

Roadwarden Scheme

It is a formal agreement, between Devon County Council and a town or parish council, which enables them to deliver minor works in or around the public highway.

The Road Warden Scheme allows communities to:

- organise minor works either on or off the live carriageway (see types of work below)
- carry out minor works either on the live carriageway or away from the live carriageway.
- Pothole repairs (when they do not meet our intervention criteria).
- Clearing weeds.

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- Cleaning signs.
- Cleaning drainage (gully grating).
- Cutting grass.
- Repairing finger posts.
- Cutting hedges.
- Set up a road closure for special events.
- Managing verges for wildlife

All works must be discussed, in the first instance, with the local highway neighbourhood officer. This list is not exhaustive. Work must be undertaken in line with guidance (method statements) provided by Devon County Council. Please see the 'Details' tab for guidance documents.

Road Wardens would not be responsible for carrying out safety repairs as this remains the responsibility of the council.

A Road Warden should:

- be nominated as suitable by the town or parish council
- be the communication link between DCC and the parish council
- agree to work within the arrangements set forward by the Road Warden agreement
- co-ordinate any minor works which are undertaken within the parish or town
- ensure that [risk assessments](#) are undertaken and are easily accessible upon DCC request.

A Road Warden volunteer should:

- be nominated as suitable by the town or parish council or similar body
- have received suitable training to carry out minor works
- agree to work within the arrangements set forward by the Road Warden.

In my parishes who have joined the scheme it is proving to be very popular and useful. Parishes can apply for funding for equipment etc. I would be very pleased to support any application from the Parish.

Snow Wardens

Gentle reminder to order any salt you need, the colder weather will soon be upon us. You may need to update contact details if there has been any change in who your snow warden is, with an election earlier this year I am aware we may have forgotten to talk about this during the summer.

Grit bins should be filled but if you would check just in case that would be really helpful, if they need filling the link is below;

3. Composting Group

Cllr Shapland reported that income had been £2135.07 for 60.69 tonnes material removed from site during April, May and June. Payment for July (6.75 tonnes) and August (84.4 tonnes) was still awaited.

Payments during the past two months had been £36 for stamps, £126 for JCB hire, and £98.44 for gloves, saw blade and diesel.

The balance stood at £8865.16.

There were now a number of new volunteers working regularly on the site, and there was a need for additional certificate holders to operate the chipper. Training cost £50 per person, with a minimum number of trainees of 6. It was agreed that training was important, and that the group should proceed to get more certificate holders.

4. Woodland Group

The clerk reported that the bank had been in touch regarding the Woodland Group account, which had not been used for three years. If the account was not used within the next month, the bank would close it. It was agreed that, as the parish council was responsible for the upkeep of the woodland, the money in the account should be transferred to the parish council, and ringfenced for woodland expenditure.

It was noted that the group had been formed in order to access grant funding to establish the woodland.

5. Chairman’s Report

Nothing to report.

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71. Finance

1. Payments:

Bratton Fleming Village Hall – hire (June)	£ 13.50
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Mr A Kellaway	£290.00
Mr T Squire – Salary and Expenses (Aug)	£130.67
Mr T Squire – Salary £ (Sept)	£115.08
Information Commissioner’s Office	£ 40.00

The six accounts were agreed for payment.

72. Items for consideration for the next Agenda.

Road Warden Scheme; Community Speedwatch; Play Area improvements and event; Bratton Fleming News.

73. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 18 October 2023

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Signed

Chairman

Date