



A meeting of the Parish Council was held in Bratton Fleming Village Hall on Wednesday 18 December 2024 at 7:00pm.

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

**In attendance:** 3 parishioners, Parish Clerk

**85. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllrs Mrs N Catmore, Mrs L McLean and Cllr Mrs Davis

**86. Public Participation**

A parishioner enquired into the current position regarding the Parish Paths Partnership scheme. Although the Clerk had recently received a newsletter, nothing further was known. He would make enquiries and report back at the next meeting.

**87. Declaration of Interests**

None.

**88. Approval of Minutes of the meeting held 20 November 2024**

Min. 76. One typo was amended.

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

**89. Matters Arising from Minutes of meeting held 20 November 2024**

None.

**90. Planning Applications:**

78858 Construction of a timber framed and timber clad 'boot room' on front entrance of property. The Byre Middle Knightacott Bratton Fleming

It was resolved to recommend approval.

79335 Conversion of agricultural barn to dwelling together with associated works. Barn at Peace Park Farm Bratton Fleming

It was resolved to recommend approval.

79447 Part retrospective application for an agricultural workers dwelling and construction of a new irrigation pond. Little Valley Farm Bratton Fleming

It was resolved to recommend approval.

79544 Prior approval for change of use of agricultural building to one dwellinghouse Class Q (a)(b). Barn at Haxton Down Farm Bratton Fleming

It was resolved to recommend approval.

**91. Correspondence**

1. NDC - Climate and Environment Grant – outstanding allocation. Cllr Benbow explained that only about half of the allocated grant had been claimed, due to a lack of details, especially from the Pre-School.
2. Email from parishioner regarding incorrect deliveries. An email had been received from a parishioner claiming that delivery drivers had often tried to make deliveries to her home, instead of the shop. The clerk advised that the shop had been informed, and that they would be requesting that their suppliers delivered to the correct address.
3. DALC Newsletter. This had been circulated to councillors. Of particular interest was an item advising that a building society was offering an interest account to parish councils. Clerk to make enquiries.
4. Letter of thanks from the Christmas Tree Festival committee. Noted.

5. A parishioner had expressed concern that a property in Furze Park Road which had been empty since the last tenant moved out, had its windows blown wide open during Storm Bert. Rain was now entering the property, causing damp to the neighbouring properties.  
Cllr Prowse advised that the empty houses department at north Devon Council should be contacted, and would be able to help.
6. Rollout of Ultrafast Broadband. Cllr Benbow expressed his concern over the plans by BT to discontinue copper landlines to properties in 2025. This would mean that all telephone services would be carried by broadband services. Recent storms had caused widespread failure of the broadband system. Fortunately many properties still had landline telephones, meaning that contact in the event of emergency was still available. This would not be possible when the landline service was withdrawn.

**92. Outreach Post Office**

The outreach post office had relocated to the village hall. Easier access had resulted in an increase in numbers, including some new customers.

**93. Highways**

Cllr Benbow expressed his concern over the lack of maintenance on the A399, especially the lack of drainage maintenance through Westland Farm and Friendship Cross, which repeatedly caused the road to flood, which was especially dangerous in winter when the water froze. As one of the highest 'A' roads in Devon, he strongly believed that it should receive more attention.

It was also noted that the same road through the Bray Valley was in a very poor state, with numerous potholes. Although it had been reported numerous times, no repairs had been carried out.

**94. Reports**

**1. District Councillor's Report**

Cllr Prowse reported that the council was investigating what action could be taken to combat the lack of housing. Support for Community Land Trusts could be a good solution.

The council was looking into the possibility of purchasing more properties in Ilfracombe, where temporary housing was in great need.

The council was objecting to the government's increased requirement for new housing in the area - an increase from 750 to 1300 properties per year. As well as the housing market being quite stagnant, infrastructure was not in place to serve such an increase.

The new car park at Seven Brethren was due to open in January. Work was progressing well on the old Bear St/Queen St car park, which will be renamed the Central Barnstaple Car Park.

The government had announced its devolution proposals to abolish the two tier County Council and the District Councils in Devon, and to replace them with a single tier Unitary Council. DCC would be holding a meeting to discuss the proposal in January.

**2. County Councillor's Report**

A report had been received from Cllr Mrs Davis, which had been circulated to councillors and posted on the website.

**3. Composting Group**

No report received.

**4. Woodland Group**

Mr Turner had prepared proposals for maintaining the woodland.

Work on repairing the upper footbridge would be carried out in the Spring.

**5. Chairman's Report**

The Chairman reported that she liaised regularly with both the District and County Council and local Councillors, as well as the BF Community Benefit Society and other community organisations and services in order to try and resolve issues and progress improvements, where possible and that she would continue that role in the future.

She expressed her thanks to everyone, who had helped her and the community throughout the year.

**95. Finance**

**1. Request for grants**

A request for financial assistance, accompanied by the latest set of accounts, had been received from St Peter’s Church towards the upkeep of the burial ground.  
It was agreed to award £600, in line with the council’s budget for 2024/25.

**2. To approve Payments:**

Bratton Fleming Village Hall – Nov hire	£ 13.50
Lonsdale Direct Solutions (printing BF News)	£330.00
Mr T Squire	£130.10
HMRC	£ 7.40
Gallagher Insurance	£594.56

The five accounts were agreed for payment.

**96. Items for consideration for the next Agenda.**

Footpaths update; Unitary Authority for Devon.

**97. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 15 January 2025**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:10pm.