

BISHOPSTEIGNTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2025 MINUTES

HELD 6PM MONDAY 7 APRIL 2025

APM25.01 ATTENDANCE:

Up to 40 participants at various times including BPC Chair, councillors and clerk to the council, parishioners, Cllr. Peart, & M. Wrigley MP.

APM25.02 COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AWARDS

The chair was pleased to present the following awards, the first two came from public nomination and the parish Council deciding on the winner:

Individual: Mr Eddy Stephenson.

As recognition for his wonderful contributions to parish life over the years, including establishing the Healthy Living Group (HLG) from a Surgery relocation working party, his team efforts with emergency resilience, and of course National Coastwatch to name a few, Eddy was presented with a certificate, and £25 for personal use as well as £25 donation to his preferred charity, which is HLG.

Community Group: Bishopsteignton Heritage

On behalf of the organisation a certificate and £50 award to the organisation was presented to Mr. John Reynolds, Chair of BH. This was gratefully received by John who thanked everyone involved in the organisation including staff, trustees and volunteers as well as all the visitors and enquirers. He briefly spoke of the exciting plans including expansion within the community centre and Arts Council accreditation.

A gift was presented to Mr. Chris Grimshaw as thanks and recognition for his support to the council and parish in attending the Local Plan Examination procedures held at Forde House in Autumn 2024 for which much research was conducted on his behalf.

Flowers were presented the ex-councillor Mrs. Jo Head, for all her support of parish activities over the years, before, during, and after her time as a councillor.

Flowers were also presented to Mrs. Hilary Corlett who, along with her husband Tony, has collated and edited content for and distributed a Welcome Pack to new parishioners for over 20 years. They are now standing down for this task and the welcome pack shall be taken over by the Parish Council, albeit in a revised electronic form where possible.

APM25.03 BPC CHAIRS REPORT

Introduction

I am pleased to present my latest report as Chair of the Parish Council, having been honoured to be re-elected at the Parish Council Meeting in May 2024.

My main aims continue to ensure that we serve all areas of the Parish, provide the best services possible, endeavour to progress Community Projects, and to continually improve our communication processes, all within the limited resources available.

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Key Achievements during 2024/25

- Strategic Plan agreed and published in a format to convey Council Objectives in a meaningful way. Ongoing monitoring with progress to be reviewed during the year
- Teignbridge - Local Plan 2020 - 2040 Review: Examination by Inspector undertaken in public in November. For us, this particularly relates to housing proposals - V2 and V3 in the Parish, - Bakers Yard and two fields opposite. Chris Grimshaw represented the Parish Council and Parishioners. Several parishioners also attended, including myself as BPC Chair, having the opportunity to present appropriate information, within the strict guidelines. The Inspectors Final Report is anticipated early Summer.
- The role of the Asset Management Committee, is the driver for many enhancement initiatives of our 'Green Spaces', including managing the various contracts. This work has once again been significant and is enthusiastically led by our Vice-Chair Cllr. Robert Gateshill. This includes tree planting at the Lawns, landscaping and many works at the Cemetery including the Garden of Rest. Kate Yeo, John Parkes, and Hilary Davies have been magnificent 'hands on' workers making a significant contribution.
- Climate and Ecological Change has been ever present in our decision making, and in seeking opportunities to embrace this critical requirement. We have been very appreciative of the opportunity to continue to work with Kate Yeo and her colleagues in Sustainable Bishop. A new Group is currently in the process of being set up, consisting of Councillors and Parishioners.
- MUGA - Used by a variety of sporting groups and parishioners. We currently developing a maintenance programme to update this aging asset, in addition to undertaking work required, often sadly, because of vandalism
- The contribution of BERT, operating in line with the Emergency Resilience Plan which is regularly reviewed, is a significant contribution to the community.
- Additional Defibrillator at Michaels Field
- We are so fortunate to have the Bishopsteignton Healthy Living Group in the village, which includes Care Watch, Memory Cafe and Singing for memory, led by Alun Williams and Eddy Stephenson, as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. So, once again, I wish to thank everyone involved for their significant contribution.

Clearly the above and other matters shown below, considered by the Parish Council, have been many and varied, in a very demanding, but rewarding and satisfying period. A summary is shown below:

Ongoing Tasks vital to the Parish

- Parish Council 2025/26 Budget and precept demand to Teignbridge District Council, again considerable work required and on all financial processes, including Community Grants, significant documentation for audit, resulting in a 4.8% increase. To put it in context, this is an increase of £3.04 per year for a band D property.
- Numerous Planning matters considered as a consultee, necessitating a good understanding of Planning Regulations.
- Teign Estuary Trail - I must thank Estelle Skinner of TDC, Josh Manning and other officers of DCC and Judith Sharples of the Campaign Group for their contribution to the Stakeholder meetings, which I am pleased to Chair. These meetings consist of Members and Officers of DCC and TDC, BPC Councillors and members of the TET Campaign Group. The Business Case and Tourism Opportunities Report have now been completed. This will be key in achieving the required funding and land acquisition. The TET is being progressed in the sections from Morrison's to the Passage House, Newton Abbot. Priority is being given to the section from Bishopsteignton to the Passage House.

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- Lawns - Scout Building - There has been ongoing communication with Elaine Cawthraw - Chair of Scouts and TDC officers and Members for many years. Following planning application approval in June 2023, it was anticipated that significant progress would be made. However, despite the efforts of the Scouts Organisation and BPC, it has not been possible to progress, due to TDC not being willing to discuss the way forward regarding the Covenant, relating to the Lawns.
- Police Monthly Surgeries (PACT) for community participation. Thanks to Saul Bunce, also to Cllr. Reg Gill for organising and attending the events.
- Highway Issues - Always a significant matter - Regular communication with the DCC Neighbourhood Highways Office to discuss general highway matters.
- Children Play Parks - Lawns and Cockhaven Close - Equipment inspected regularly and repairs undertaken as necessary.
- Greater Publicity of the Parish Council fund for Community Projects
- Parish Council Policies and Procedures - During this period numerous developments have been undertaken to operating procedures, significant use of social media, Financial System and the Cemetery Management System.
- An opportunity is being undertaken by the Clerk and Chair of BPC, to be involved in an initiative to seek closer working between Bishopsteignton Heritage, the Community Centre Management Committee and BPC for the wider benefit of the community.

None of the above could be achieved without the dedication, commitment, help and support of the Vice-Chair, all members of the Parish Council, current and past, and significantly the Clerk to the Council. I therefore wish to acknowledge, and convey my considerable appreciation and thanks, on your behalf.

The Clerk's Report produced for every Parish Council meeting, and published on the BPC website, posts on Facebook and Social Media, are excellent ways of keeping up to date on current matters the Parish Council is undertaking.

Thanks

I now wish to mention and commend the contribution of several parishioners who regularly give time to undertake tasks for the Parish Council, hence the community:

- Peter Hepworth (Tree Warden)
- Youth organisation Scouts, who undertake various tasks, including the annual Public Rights of Way Survey and various Litter Picks.
- Lewis Myers for Defibrillator Training and the team who check monthly that the defibrillators are functioning correctly.
- Mel Deeks for Cemetery support on administrative processes.
- Many who plant and maintain the flower troughs by the toilets, bus stop and car park on Fore Street.

I would also like to wish Carol Roberts - Chair of the 2025 Village Festival, Committee and the many people involved great success at the event. This always makes a significant contribution to the well-being of the community.

Finally, I feel it is important to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of the BERT Team, and others who assisted in dealing with the very sad consequences of the recent fire at a property in Smith Hill. Thankfully no one was physically injured.

Conclusion

CHAIRMAN

DATE

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For the Parish Council to function effectively the Clerk of the Council plays a significant and pivotal role, carrying out many administrative and financial duties: as 'Proper Officer & Responsible Finance Officer', and providing guidance on the operation of the Council's democratic processes. The parish is indebted to the work of the Clerk, therefore I wish to thank Kim on behalf of all Councillors and the community.

*Cllr. Henry Merritt
Chairman, Bishopsteignton Parish Council*

APM25.04 ADDRESS FROM MR. MARTIN WRIGLEY, MP FOR NEWTON ABBOT CONSTITUENCY

Martin thanked Henry, the council and the clerk for the invitation and parishioner for welcoming him this evening but felt Henry had missed thanks to a very valuable person on the parish council, himself as Chair! Particular mention was made of Henry's excellent efforts in pushing forward the Teign Estuary Trail and Martin hoped this success might continue.

He gave a detailed account of his time so far as our MP, including the sudden change in roles and how this is rewarding and humbling, if somewhat busy! Martin listed some of his achievements so far but did stress it only felt like yesterday he was elected. He opened to the audience for questions and willing to hear of any concerns he might take on.

There were no questions or concerns raised for Martin, he said he was happy to discuss with the audience individually after the meeting.

APM25.05 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The following Parish reports were provided prior to the meeting:

1. **Bishopsteignton WI**, see appendix A.
2. **Bishopsteignton Scouts**, see appendix B.
3. **Bishopsteignton Twinning**, see appendix C.
4. **Singing for Memory**, see appendix D.

Further points were raised by members of the audience:

5. Mrs. Elaine Cawthraw raised the opportunity for volunteers in the parish to fulfil several different roles. Firstly, as scout group leaders, see promotion poster within appendices. Secondly, for HLG Care-watch telephone handlers, to share the role allowing for holiday relief.
6. Mrs. Jo Head wished to convey thanks to Knit & tinK for the lovely post box topper decorations recently displayed. To this someone mentioned the excellent plays and pantomimes held in the village across the year and that we are all lucky to live in such a positively active village.
7. Mr. Terry Banon raised the empty flats at Green, Fore Street, asking if anything can be done in times of a housing shortage crisis adding the six flats have been empty since the covid recovery period, at least 2 years. The clerk has reported this to the housing officers at Teignbridge District Council, so they are aware, but promised to chase for an update. It is likely they are struggling to reach the owner.
8. The Clerk raised several points for public information:
 - Sadly, Sustainable Bishop is now dissolved but this coincides with the formation of a new community led council committee; CIA (Climate Impact Actions Group). New members would be most welcome, to make contact to find out more.
 - Following the resignation of Cllr. Head, there is one vacancy on the parish council. If anyone is interest in this role, or to hear more about it please discuss with the clerk, or a current councillor.
 - As well as taking over the village welcome pack the council is also now hosting the village diary on its website; previously hosed by Bishopsteignton.org but no longer an active website. The place to look for new activities, see what is happening in the village, and if organising an event to ensure no

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clashes. The clerk offered that for any events to be added to the diary they should be emailed to her directly.

- There is a program of events organised to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day on Thursday 8th May including Cream Tea, beacon lighting on the day and Lindy Hop lesson and a street party on Sunday 11th. See posters and social media for more details.
- Following the unfortunate circumstances surrounding the recent fire at Applegarth there are several fundraising efforts across the parish including a just-giving page, coffee and cake morning on Saturday 12th at Cross House, and book and plant sale outside Shute Barn.

The chair thanked everyone for attending. The evening continued with the opportunity to speak directly with BPC members, Martin Wrigley MP, and the clerk. Further friendly mingling and refreshment consumption took place until the meeting closed just before 8pm.



Beginning with our 2024 May meeting we had an interesting talk on the history of Exeter given by a gentleman who conducts guided walks around the city.

In June we held a most successful Cream Tea in honour of the 80th Anniversary of The D Day Landings, this was extremely well attended by our members and villagers.

July, due to the speaker cancelling (South West Water!!) we improvised with a selection of photographs and postcards which brought back memories and we discussed these with each other. This was followed by a Bingo session.

We do not meet in August - however our Group, Shaldon, Stokeinteignhead and Teignmouth held the Group Meeting which several of our members attended.

In September we heard about the people involved with Blood Bikes. Men and women who transport essential medical materials across the country using their own adapted bikes.

Our skittles evening resumed in September when we entered the WI League.

In October we welcomed a volunteer from RNLI who told us they had been operational for 200 years. Many women now took on these hazardous rescues saving many lives.

November saw our ladies taking part in a Craft Afternoon making Christmas Roses, everyone succeeded and proudly took their creations home!

We held a Christmas Party in December and were entertained by a very talented Magician. A Christmas lunch was also enjoyed. Several members went on a Christmas shopping trip to Truro and the Carol Service in Exeter Cathedral was attended too. We ran a successful Tombola stall at the Village Hall Christmas Fayre.

In January 2025 we were given an insight into the entertainment business with photographs of pantomimes and shows. We entered the WI Devon Quiz that month too.

February saw us welcoming two local gentlemen who gave an interesting and illustrated talk on the history of Bishopsteignton.

We celebrated our 52nd Birthday in March with the usual refreshments and cake. We were entertained with singing, poetry and stories.

Hopefully Bishopsteignton WI will continue to flourish for another 52 years!

We meet on the 1st Thursday of the month at 2.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.



Bishopsteignton Scout Hut and The Lawns

You may have seen in the local press and on the village social media pages that unfortunately Teignbridge District Council (TDC) has rejected the Parish Council's request to make it possible for the Scout Group to construct a new community facility on a very small area of the Lawns.

THE LAWNS COVENANT

Bishopsteignton Parish Council (BPC) and Bishopsteignton Scouts would like to set the record straight on the various accusations being made on social media. At no time has either organisation acted irresponsibly; all actions were carried out as requested by Teignbridge District Council.

The Parish Council clerk contacted TDC several times by telephone and email to ask for clarification on a covenant contained in the Deed of Transfer from TDC to BPC. The covenant states that the land should not be used for any other purpose other than a recreation ground or public open space. The transfer deed also states that the covenants can at any time hereafter be released waived or modified. It DOES NOT say that there should be 'no building' and the existing Multi Use Games Area is an example of built on land. The Parish Council's intention was to strengthen the covenant not to completely release it. It was pointed out to TDC that Bishopsteignton Scouts would be spending a considerable amount of money on a planning application (the ecological survey alone cost £4370) but they still insisted that they would not give a formal decision until the planning had been approved. All communications with TDC at that time suggested that there shouldn't be a problem.

PROTECTED BATS IN BISHOPSTEIGNTON HOUSE

Due to the protected bat roosts in Bishopsteignton House, the Scout Group required a thorough and comprehensive ecological survey. They contacted a well-respected, local ecologist, George Bemment, who had surveyed the bat population in Bishopsteignton House over several years. She recommended a colleague who had assisted her in monitoring the bats. The survey revealed there were two areas on the Lawns suitable for the building; the site proposed and another which would have closer to the houses in Lawns End.

The rare bats are extremely light sensitive and only forage and commute along the west side of the Lawns because there is no light pollution from housing. It is vital that this side of the Lawns stays dark, hence no lighting from the proposed building facing west. TDC should take note as in the Teignbridge Local Plan it is proposed to build 70+ homes on the adjacent field!!

UNNECESSARY TIME, MONEY AND EFFORT WASTED

TDC's failure to give decision on the covenant before gaining planning consent has caused much frustration. If those involved at TDC had considered their communities interest instead of kicking the can down the road all this could have been avoided.

It is still our opinion that it is within TDC's remit to vary the covenant so we can only assume they are running scared of reprisals from a very small number of our community.



Bishopsteignton Twinning Association



Bonjour a tous!

30 years ago, in 1995, a charter was signed between Bishopsteignton and La Roche Maurice in Brittany in France acknowledging our twinning friendship. We are delighted that this twinning link is still going strong with old and new families making connections.

Whilst many of us are fortunate to know and visit France ourselves there is something special about being linked to a French community and getting to know other families. It is particularly special for young people who see at first hand a slightly different way of life and a new language. This enhances their lifelong learning and encourages them to be unafraid to try new things and experiences.

Around 25 of us will be visiting La Roche Maurice from the **16-19th May** this year and we understand there will be a celebratory dinner for all of us to mark this special occasion. We usually have the French mayor and dignitaries present at these events.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish council for its support last year when we hosted LRM as we receive no other funding apart from our own fundraising efforts. This enabled us to cater for them on the Sunday evening up at the Humber Barn. It was a glorious sunny evening and very enjoyable for all.

Our own fundraising events have included a successful Beef Bourguignon Christmas event and we were delighted with the numbers and support. We have just hosted a Bingo and Curry evening at the community centre, and we thank all those who cook, compere and help us before and on the night.

Once our visit to France is complete, we will be planning for 2026 to ensure we offer them a memorable return visit to our beautiful village.

Why not be part of this rewarding initiative? Contact Stuart our secretary bishopsteigtonta@gmail.com and he will respond with any questions you may have.

Meilleurs Voeux pour le reste de 2025.

Jess Gibby

Appendix D - Singing for Memory

Bishopsteignton Singing for Memory is part of the Healthy Living Group (HLG - Registered Charity CIO no. 1175894). The HLG also includes the Memory Café and Bishopsteignton Care Watch. Singing for Memory is a social group for anyone of any age in the Bishopsteignton area who lives with dementia or memory loss, or who lives on their own and feels isolated. It *brings people together, provides people with a safe environment in which to meet, and hopefully helps to reduce feelings of isolation which folks may be experiencing*. Meetings are currently at the Methodist church on the afternoon of the fourth Tuesday of each month. Outings are arranged from time to time, the next will be to The Pavilions in Teignmouth to see the Neil Sands show "Hope and Glory".

It's run by a Volunteer Team which is a formal sub-committee of HLG. The Chair is Finella Whitehorn and Roger Avery is the Secretary.

Meetings are organized in such a way that there are always more voluntary helpers than participants – at the last meeting on 25th March there were 13 helpers, the compere, and 9 participants. The general pattern is to have a sing-along – the current compere is John Amery who accompanies on the keyboard – followed by a tea which almost always includes home-made scones and cakes. Volunteers are assigned specific tasks, which include looking after named participants, preparing the venue and clearing it up afterwards, and organizing the refreshments. There is also a need for volunteer drivers to get participants to and from the Methodist church, there were 5 drivers for the last meeting but some of them were also helpers.

So it's a lot of hard work, but well worth while. Above all, *we have fun*.

If you would like to find out more, whether as a potential participant or as a volunteer – always a desperate need! – please contact Finella 07802 031 993 or finella.whitehorn@btinternet.com

Roger Avery