

Bradpole Parish Council (BPC) Chairman's Annual Parish Report 2021 (Apr 20 ~ Mar 21)

The past year has been one of the more unusual ones in the Council's 126-year history. The Council is aware of the affects that COVID 19 has had on our communities and is grateful for the efforts made by all those key workers, volunteers, and many others, who have contributed to help the residents of our Civil Parish.

BPC took measures under Gov UK COVID-19 guidelines from April last year, and subsequently, to mitigate any effect on the provision of Parish Council services.

Whilst it has not been possible to hold physical council meetings these are now regularly held via ZOOM. Meeting Agendas & Minutes are posted on our Parish notice boards as well as on the [Parish website](#).

During the past year BPC has been involved with much in our communities:

- At Bradpole Village Hall the previous Board of Trustees had stepped down and there was a concern that the Hall would have to close down for good. For several months BPC worked to ensure that the Village Hall, which is not owned by the Council, would be available for the community once the pandemic was over.

In October of last year a new team of Trustees was appointed at a General meeting in accordance with the Trust Deed. BPC will support the trustees as they strive to reopen the Hall for the benefit of the community. The new trustees have been invited to produce their own report to be published alongside this Parish Report.

- In the Autumn areas in the parish were affected by flooding and surface rainwater run-off problems. Working with those affected, and the Dorset Council flood team, work has been carried out to improve resilience to flooding.

This is ongoing and BPC will support community volunteers who offer to become Flood Wardens. BPC continues to operate under the principles of its adopted [Climate Change Action Plan](#).

- BPC has published a [circular walk around the Parish](#) and has been in liaison with the team from the long distance [Monarch's Way](#) and [Dorset Rangers](#) to improve waymarking over Watton Hill.

- A heritage project to refurbish the three Dorset finger posts around the parish is underway.

- The volunteer Bradpole Buzz team of gardeners has worked to improve our public areas by bee-friendly planting. Restrictions have interrupted their work but nevertheless we will witness the results this Spring.

In the past 12 months BPC has been consulted on 20 Planning applications and in many cases have added recommendations that have been engaged by the Dorset Planning officers.

The [Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan \(BANP\)](#), which includes Bradpole Parish, was formally adopted by Dorset Council in May 2020 following a referendum.

BPC currently holds the revolving Chair of the Joint Councils' Committee which oversees the BANP.

BPC has contributed to a number of public Consultations including those on the Dorset Local Plan and the Govt. "Planning for the Future" White paper. BPC comments are always based on what residents have told us when we have asked them to contribute towards local surveys ([Parish Plan](#) etc.)

COUNCIL FINANCES: The financial budget for 2021 ~22 increased to c.£50k as COVID prevented some expenditure, planned for the previous year, from being undertaken. This planned expenditure, together with the provided funding, has been brought forward to the current year.

The resulting precept of c.£41k for this year is very similar to the previous year resulting in little change to the Bradpole Parish element of the Dorset Council Tax and remains well below the national average.

The Council continues to hold cash reserves for future community projects as detailed on the Parish Website and in our annually updated [Action Plan](#).

Unfortunately unnecessary costs continue to accrue to the council, and consequently to Council Tax payers, from anti-social activity such as dog fouling and criminal damage to our green infrastructure (trees & shrubs etc.).

During the past year Cllr Ron Coatsworth stood down after many years of public service, we wish him the very best in his retirement.

We continue to seek new Councillors to represent our residents and have been delighted to welcome Cllr Mecki Testroet & Cllr John Mather as recently co-opted Councillors.

With an increase in legislation and devolved responsibilities, both from Local and National Government, we have been able to increase our clerical staff by appointing Jo Hughes as a part-time Deputy Clerk.

We welcome Jo to our team.

My personal thanks go to our employees and volunteer Councillors who have all helped in various ways to ensure that Bradpole Parish Council continues to serve residents during these Times of Covid.

Please keep informed, particularly at the present time, via the Parish Council website

www.bradpole.org.uk

social media platforms and Parish notice boards.

Cllr C. Baker,
Chairman Bradpole Parish Council
April 2021