

BRANSCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Year Ending: 31st March 2021

Clerk to the Council & Responsible Finance Officer:

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ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21



Activity Report for Branscombe Parish Council 2020/21

Branscombe Parish Council had an unusual year under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected and directed many of its operations and efforts. The Parish Council did not meet in April 2020 due to the restrictions around COVID-19, however the Council met a total of ten times over the twelve-month period. The Annual and Annual Parish Meetings were postponed from May 2020 until May 2021, in line with new Statutory Instruments put in place by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as face-to-face meetings were not possible.

Highlights from the year are given below:

Item	Description
Police and Crime Reporting	Welcome to our new Neighbourhood Beat Manager PC Beth Salter, and farewell to PC Adam Speers of Devon & Cornwall Police. Our Constables provide support at Parish Council meetings and attend at the Village Hall on a Wednesday afternoon when the Post Office is open, giving residents and businesses the opportunity to <i>Have Your Say</i> and discuss any relevant issues.
Branscombe Coronavirus Support	Several members of the Parish Council joined the Branscombe Coronavirus Support Network and helped vulnerable members of the community with shopping, urgent supplies, posting mail and friendly phone calls where needed while ensuring to “spread only kindness”. The Parish Council also successfully applied for a DCC grant on behalf of the Branscombe Coronavirus Support Network Volunteers, which was used towards the purchase of face coverings for all resident Villagers. The face coverings were washable, 2-ply but with a pocket to add a disposable layer or filter to make them 3-ply, and produced locally in Ottery St. Mary.
Devon Air Ambulance Night Landing Site	The Parish Council project with Devon Air Ambulance (DAA), the Village Hall Committee and the Cricket Club was completed by purchasing iron stakes to mark the night landing site as locally as possible from Branscombe Forge.
Emergency Plan	The Parish Council developed an Emergency Plan to provide resilience for the community, to prepare for forecasted events, and respond to major incidents. It contains contact details for emergency services and the local community support and a defined incident control hierarchy when supporting emergency services. The BPC Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) described therein will assist / liaise with the emergency services wherever possible, prior to, during and after an emergency event. A copy of the Plan is available on the website.
Emergency Equipment Availability	The total number of defibrillators available in the Village remains at five. Maps with their location and that of other emergency equipment such as sand bags and grit bins, are available on the Parish Council website branscombe-pc.org.uk (many thanks to villager Chris Bass for producing and updating these).

Item	Description
Support for Village Hall	The Parish Council worked with DCC on securing an EU Grant for installing an electric vehicle (EV) charging point at the Village Hall, although the Village Hall Trust decided not to continue with this option and to pursue an EV charging point that would be installed and maintained by the Hall itself. The Parish Council further supported the Village Hall by holding its meetings in the Branoc Hall Social Room until face-to-face meetings were precluded by the restrictions around Covid-19.
Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Compatible Website	The existing Branscombe Parish Council website was not compliant with the statutory requirements for accessibility; this was initially addressed on the existing website with statements describing known issues with the website. A grant was kindly granted by DCC Cllr Shaw towards the cost, and website designer Aubergine (who had negotiated discounts with the Society of Local Council Clerks) was selected for design, migration and ongoing website management. The new, fully compliant site has since been launched.
Highways and Footpaths	<p>There have been several road closures for work performed by DCC (and others). DCC have patched several village roads, with more planned in the upcoming financial year. Through a new scheme entitled "Doing What Matters" the Parish Council has worked with DCC to identify the areas of greatest strategic importance to the village in order to best make use of funds available, with several on-site meetings held between the Parish Council, the National Trust (NT) and DCC Highways. The flooding of Margell's Bridge Culvert by the Village Hall has been partially tackled with stones cleared from under the bridge in a joint effort between DCC and NT. All access on bridleways and footpaths that were blocked by trees or otherwise suffered from damage were reported to DCC and addressed in good time.</p> <p>To address cars speeding through our village the Parish Council worked with DCC to purchase new signs for Branscombe and Weston, including restricted access signs for vehicles travelling down Northern Lane and blocking the road / damaging property near to the School. These signs have been ordered but are yet to be installed.</p> <p>Councillors attend the regular Seaton and Colyton Traffic Group meetings with DCC Highways to represent the Village.</p>
Council Road Wardens	<p>Our Road Wardens repaired many potholes in the Village using quickset material (Viafix) in order to address areas of damage before they become larger problems using consumables paid for by the Parish Council and augmented by a DCC grant specifically awarded by DCC Cllr Shaw and another joint application to DCC by Beer and Branscombe Parishes.</p> <p>The Road Wardens also cleared shrubbery, rocks and weeds from the Parish Council owned land near the Fountain Head ("Graham's Bench").</p>
War Memorial	<p>The Parish Council maintains the St. Winifred's Church War Memorial, specifically by funding grass-cutting on a regular basis.</p> <p>A wreath was purchased and laid at the War Memorial in honour of those lost on Remembrance Sunday as part of this year's commemorations.</p>

Item	Description
Contributions and Donations	<p>Branscombe Parochial Church Council (PCC) requested the support of the Parish Council due to the depletion of church resources from an inability to perform regular services or hold other fund-raising activities in this most difficult year. One of the major regular expenses is maintaining the grassed areas, and the Parish Council agreed that keeping the churchyard neat and tidy benefits the whole village and therefore granted £1,000.00 towards the cost. Also, £20.00 was paid to the PCC for a Christmas message in the Parish Newsletter, although no other contributions were made as the Newsletter had been distributed electronically for much of the year.</p> <p>The Parish Council paid £71.20 for hanging baskets, which were placed outside the Village Hall. A memorial was provided for the Village Hall Social Room in memory of Gail Llewellyn, Clerk to Branscombe Parish Council from 2015-2020, who passed away while in office.</p> <p>A further donation of £50.00 was made to TRIP, a Honiton-based charity dedicated to relieving rural isolation and loneliness in East Devon by providing affordable transport, specialised disability equipment and a personal befriending service, and which is utilised by individuals in the Village.</p>

The Parish Council was consulted and where practicable commented on various initiatives, such as the removal of the BT public telephone box outside the Village Hall and new funding support for local bus services. The Council also investigated measures that could be taken to support DCC's after it called a Climate Emergency for the County.

The Parish Council responded to several complaints from within the village including some relating to anti-social behaviour, and particularly wishes to thank those holiday home owners who respected the residents of Branscombe Village and stayed away during the lockdowns instigated by government to address the spread of COVID-19.

The Parish Council finally wishes to thank Cllr Martin Shaw of Devon County Council, Cllr Geoff Pook of East Devon District Council and Rob Skinner of the National Trust for their attendance and support at regular Parish Council meetings.

2020/21 Finance Report

Branscombe Parish Council operates on a payments / receipts basis, meaning that any transaction is recorded in the financial period it is actioned, and there are no accruals or depreciation.

Despite total expenditure decreasing in the period, the Parish Council ended the year with a slightly reduced balance being brought forward to 2021/22.

Aside from the usual regular commitments, changes from 2019/20 include:

- The Clerk's pay scale was reviewed and increased in line with DALC guidance for 2020/21. HMRC fees were negligible as the Clerk makes her own tax arrangements.
- Clerk's office expenses increase due to a monthly Zoom charge of £11.99 + VAT, which is offset against the cost of hiring the Village Hall as face-to-face meetings were not possible. The Parish Council currently has £77.00 in credit with the Hall, which will cover foreseen meetings fees for 2021.
- Payroll fees increased from £225 in 2019 to £325 in 2020 due to there being two Clerks instead of one for a large part of that period.

Subs/Training and Insurance spending remained at 2019/20 levels; the annual insurance payment being fixed for this and next year.

Grounds maintenance was reduced as there were no costs due to damage. Although the retaining wall on the bus stop bench by the Mason's Arms needed further attention, this was repaired by Kenworthy & Arbourne Ltd. at no cost. The Council is very grateful for their services.

Under S137 the overall amount payable decreased from £7,003.26 to £4,589.82. This was not due to a lack of activity, rather that £2,607.30 was offset by grants received either from direct application to DCC or through Cllr Shaw's locality budget. The Council would particularly like to express their thanks for Cllr Shaw's support in this respect.

A particularly successful project was initiated using the Parish Council Road Wardens trained by DCC in 2019, who used Parish Council purchased and DCC granted material to fill potholes on village roads before they become larger problems and require substantial effort to resolve. This work will be ongoing. More thanks should be directed at villager Chris Bass who helped identify and classify potholes on our roads, and report them direct to DCC.

The overall value of receipts was reduced by 1/3 largely due to smaller grants being received (despite the number of grants successfully applied for increasing) and no VAT being reclaimed. Grants successfully applied for included: £495.00 from DCC for COVID Volunteers expenses, £150.00 and £284.00 from Devon Air Ambulance towards electricians' costs for the night landing site, £678.30 and £1,000.00 from Cllr Martin Shaw of DCC for road mending materials and towards the cost of a WCAG accessible website, respectively; totalling £2,607.30. As for last period there was no council tax support received. The largest income contribution was from the £7,700.00 Parish Precept, which was nominally

increased on 2019/20. The Clerk did not reclaim any VAT for this period, as a large claim was fulfilled at the end of 2019 so the balance come April 2020 was very small, and an amount of £703.35 may be claimed in April 2021.

Bank reconciliation is as follows:

Bank Reconciliation	Brought Forward from 2019/20	Receipts In 2020/21	Payments Out 2020/21	Balance Carried Forward 2021/22	Cheques not cleared
Current	£12,107.82	£2,607.30	£11,620.15	£3,134.97	£40.00
Savings	£10,561.50	£7,706.09	£0.00	£18,267.59	£0.00
Gardens	£770.09	£0.35	£0.00	£770.44	£0.00
Memorial	£361.92	£0.17	£0.00	£362.09	£0.00

Addition of a further signatory was in process due to Coronavirus restrictions on Councillors' meeting. The Clerk is working on an online banking application to facilitate swifter payments. An incentive to switch banks from NatWest to Co-Op or Metro banks was shelved because the accounts currently held do not have any banking fees associated with them due to grandfathering rules; any new account would eventually become fee-charging.

Overleaf, Parish Council running costs includes projects to benefit the Village and donations to other organisations, subscriptions, training, insurance, grounds maintenance and holding meetings. There were no audit costs, and we continue to be grateful to our internal auditor for donating his time free of charge.

Staffing costs include Clerk's wages and expenses for 6 hours per week, PAYE (HMRC) where applicable and Payroll services. It should be noted that your elected Councillors attend meetings on a non-pecuniary, purely voluntary basis.

The balance carried forward is earmarked for further purchase of material for your Parish Council Road Wardens to address minor road maintenance issues, to purchase signage to reduce speed in the village and direct large vehicles away from exiting the school end of Northern Lane, and to potentially install electric vehicle (EV) charging points in the Village to benefit both residents and visitors alike.

Full details of all payments and receipts can be found on the Parish Council web site: branscombe-pc.org.uk/ and are summarised in the 2020/21 Year End Summary of Accounts overleaf.



Mrs Nicky A. Langley
Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer
Branscombe Parish Council
25 April 2021

2020/21 Year End Summary of Accounts

PAYMENTS	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Subs/Training	£320.83	£235.54	£383.00	£104.90	£469.98	£453.79
Clerk's Wages	£1,922.33	£2,697.32	£2,179.67	£1,827.40	£4,378.34	£4,699.31
Expenses	£345.23	£846.09	£482.51	£333.16	£387.46	£519.07
Insurance	£187.67	£216.28	£220.21	£0.00	£440.42	£220.21
Ground Maintenance	£96.90	£85.00	£350.00	£166.20	£342.81	£100.00
Allotments	£50.00	£50.00	£80.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Meetings	£149.50	£149.40	£158.40	£146.40	£120.40	£0.00
HMRC	£699.40	£838.40	£577.80	£467.20	£184.40	£9.60
Payroll	£160.00	£340.00	£0.00	£190.00	£225.00	£325.00
S137 (Allowed incurred expenditure)	£2,279.00	£1,800.13	£189.50	£5,726.11	£69.21	£3,050.74
S137 (Devon Air Ambulance Project)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£6,934.05	£189.00
S137 (Road Wardens)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,350.08
VAT Paid	£454.16	£293.23	£28.66	£1,170.89	£1,688.74	£703.35
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£6,665.02	£7,551.39	£4,649.75	£10,132.26	£15,240.81	£11,620.15
RECEIPTS	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Council Tax Grant	£245.00	£179.00	£79.00	£60.00	£0.00	£0.00
Precept	£7,255.00	£7,500.00	£7,500.00	£7,500.00	£7,560.00	£7,700.00
Donations/Grant/Sponsorship	£300.00	£1,622.14	£0.00	£0.00	£5,162.81	£2,607.30
Bank Interest	£5.43	£4.00	£2.94	£14.04	£23.11	£6.61
Insurance Refund (overcharge)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£21.47	£0.00
VAT Refund	£417.72	£0.00	£347.65	£0.00	£2,680.84	£0.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£8,223.15	£9,305.14	£7,929.59	£7,574.04	£15,448.23	£10,313.91
BROUGHT FORWARD FROM PREVIOUS	£19,560.41	£21,118.54	£22,872.29	£26,152.13	£23,593.91	£23,801.33
Council Running Costs	£3,883.29	£3,675.67	£1,409.77	£7,314.50	£10,065.61	£6,067.17
Staffing Costs	£2,781.73	£3,875.72	£3,239.98	£2,817.76	£5,175.20	£5,552.98
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£6,665.02	£7,551.39	£4,649.75	£10,132.26	£15,240.81	£11,620.15
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£8,223.15	£9,305.14	£7,929.59	£7,574.04	£15,448.23	£10,313.91
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD	£21,118.54	£22,872.29	£26,152.13	£23,593.91	£23,801.33	£22,495.09

2020/21 Planning Applications Summary

Branscombe Parish has seen a reduction in planning applications in 2020/21 than during the previous year, when there were 24 applications. This is closer to the average of the two preceding years, when there were fourteen and twenty applications respectively. In 2020/21 there were sixteen applications and one appeal discussed, and one enforcement action by East Devon District Council (EDDC).

Branscombe Parish Council (BPC) supported twelve of the applications and objected to four. EDDC approved twelve applications, including a variation dating back to 2018, refused four, and one is still awaiting a final decision. The latter, application 20/0415/FUL, is for installation of a telegraph pole mast and was objected to by several villagers, who made representations in writing and by presentation to the Parish Council. The Council objected to the application in support of their concerns.

It was noted that EDDC approved over seven out of every ten applications made. EDDC and the Parish Council concurred on a similar percentage (69%) of the applications on which an EDDC decision was given, which is down from 82% last year.

Planning Applications

Date	App. No.	Description	BPC Response	EDDC Decision
23/02/2018	18/0539/VAR	Three Horse Shoes Inn Branscombe - Variation of Planning Condition 2 of Consent 15/1609/FUL to facilitate omission of Plot 6 and amended design of Plots 5 and 7	Support	Approved
03/03/2020	20/0415/FUL	National Trust Field Branscombe EX12 3DW - Installation of telegraph pole mast equipped with 2 no. 300mm transmission dishes and 3 no. antennas within 9 sqm compound, 2 no. equipment cabinets & associated hardstanding	Object	Awaiting decision
04/05/2020	20/0884/FUL	Hillend Branscombe EX12 3DN - Construction of detached single storey garage	Object	Approved
07/07/2020	20/1212/FUL 20/2013/LBC	Annexe Higher House Farm Branscombe EX12 3BH - Addition of solar panels to roof	Support	Refused
09/07/2020	20/1418/CPE	Certificate of Lawfulness for Land South of The Bulstone. Change of use of agricultural land for siting of caravan (on site in excess of 10 years)	Support	Refused
17/08/2020	20/1469/FUL	6 Chapel Row Branscombe EX12 3AZ - Construction of paved terrace, 2 no. retaining walls, steps and replacement of existing terrace	Support	Approved
26/08/2020	20/1752/FUL	Berry Barton Farm Berry Hill Branscombe EX12 3BD - Alteration to existing agricultural storage building (previous planning permission granted - 19/0386/FUL)	Support	Approved
01/10/2020	20/1945/VAR	1 Stoneleigh Country Holidays Weston EX10 0PJ - Removal of condition 3 of application 7/41/ 87/P0468/00039 to allow the unrestricted residential occupation of 1 Stoneleigh as staff accommodation	Support	Refused

Date	App. No.	Description	BPC Response	EDDC Decision
19/10/2020	20/2122/CPE	26 Stoneleigh Country Holidays Weston EX10 0PJ - A certificate of lawfulness to establish the lawful use of a building as a permanent residential dwelling	Object	Refused
16/10/2020	20/2251/CPE	Land South of The Bulstone Branscombe - Certificate of lawfulness for use of land for siting of caravan for mixed use holiday letting/occasional agricultural use	Object	Approved
26/10/2020	20/2333/FUL 20/2334/LBC	Edge Barton Manor Branscombe EX12 3BN - Refurbishment of pool house inc. replacement window instead of door, replacement of tiles, removal of stud wall, creation of new stud wall and replacement of rainwater goods	Support	Approved
04/11/2020	20/2390/FUL	Hillend Branscombe EX12 3DN - Construction of 2 no. outbuildings and associated landscaping (partially retrospective)	Support	Approved
11/11/2020	20/2454/FUL	Land at Woodhouse Hill Branscombe - Proposed menage (for private use)	Support	Approved
12/11/2020	20/2303/LBC	The Barn Edge Barton Manor Branscombe EX12 3BN - Retention and completion of insulation to underside of existing rafters inc. new boarding and plaster finish	Support	Approved
17/12/2020	20/2805/VAR	Hillend Branscombe EX12 3DN - Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission 19/1089/FUL to allow variation of design including the omission of 2 no. French doors in lieu of window and bi-fold door	Support	Approved
05/01/2021	20/2816/FUL	Woodhouse Farm Branscombe EX12 3BX - New agricultural building	Support	Approved
11/03/2021	21/0712/FUL	Hole Mill Branscombe EX12 3BX - Replace lean-to and attached substandard store with two-storey ancillary accommodation and linked glazed extension	Support	Approved

APPEALS

Date	App. No.	Description	EDDC Comment
20/03/2020	20/00021/REF	Application to convert an existing garage into a two-bedroom dwelling. Garage at Land West of 1 Lower Dean Branscombe Seaton EX12 3BB	Dismissed

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

Date	App. No.	Description	EDDC Comment
16/9/2019	17/1007/FUL	The Chapel House & 1 Blue Ball Cottage Branscombe EX12 3AY - wall marked on drawing BC-D.TP4 204 Rev A between the Chapel and Blue Ball Cottages is different to the long straight wall alongside the road that has so far been built	The owner and agent of The Chapel House are submitting a revised application to amend the plans