

BPC

BRANSCOMBE  
PARISH COUNCIL



ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2021-2022



Published by Branscombe Parish Council  
May 2022  
[www.branscombe-pc.org.uk](http://www.branscombe-pc.org.uk)

## Parish Councils - What Do They Do?

In England, the parish council is the first level of local government and the closest to the views and needs of its local community. The parish council represents and makes decisions on behalf of the people in the parish, provides services to meet local needs and works to improve the quality of life in the community. As an elected body the parish council is responsible to its parish electorate.

Parish councils are governed by statute and can only exercise the powers and functions conferred on them by Acts of Parliament, but these laws provide councils with a wide remit to help improve their local communities. Parish councils also have the power to raise money through taxation (the precept) which is then used to maintain and improve facilities and services for the parish.

## Your Parish Council

Branscombe Parish Council (BPC) comprises 9 councillors all of whom are volunteers. The period of office is normally 4 years. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman are elected by the Council at each Annual Meeting of the Council in May and serve for one year. The Council employs a part-time Clerk who carries out all the administrative work for the Council and acts as the Responsible Finance Officer.

BPC is involved with a wide range of issues that affect the Branscombe community, including planning applications (as the local consultee), highways repairs and flooding, litter and dog bins, footpaths, community spaces and providing funding to other local organisations and groups. This report gives further information on what BPC has done for the parish over the past year.

Parish councils can also input to and influence other authorities that make final decisions on key services, such as district and county councils and the police. BPC is fortunate to have regular discussions at its meetings with Councillors Marcus Hartnell, Devon County Council and Geoff Pook, East Devon District Council, and Rob Skinner (National Trust). It also receives monthly reports from the Rural East Devon Neighbourhood Policing Team, Devon and Cornwall Police.

## Your Parish Councillors

Cllr Tony Fastnedge, Chairman  
Cllr Dave Pegler  
Cllr Ralph Cox  
Cllr Bill Evans  
Cllr Tony Lambert

Cllr Mike Pellatt  
Cllr Chris Pike  
Cllr Caroline Powell  
Cllr Mark White  
Clerk Adrienne Long

## Contacting Your Parish Council

You can contact the Council via the Clerk on [clerk.branscombepc@gmail.com](mailto:clerk.branscombepc@gmail.com) or on 01395 597330, or any of the Councillors direct using the contact details given on page 10.

*All photographs in this report © Adrienne Long*

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## BPC Meetings

After a period of holding its meetings online due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Council made a very welcome return to meeting face-to-face in June last year, albeit meetings had to be held in the somewhat large space of the main Branoc Hall. BPC was finally able to return to its 'home' in the Social Room of Branoc Hall in March this year.

BPC meetings are normally held on the first Thursday of each month in Branoc Hall (except for August). During 2021-2022 the Council held 14 meetings with the additional meetings called to discuss planning applications and other urgent matters.

Members of the public are very welcome to attend any of the Council meetings and a short period of time is always available at the beginning of each meeting when the public can raise any issues or questions with the Council. Dates of all BPC meetings are available on the BPC website [www.branscombe-pc.org.uk](http://www.branscombe-pc.org.uk) and on the parish council noticeboards in Branscombe and Weston.

## Welcomes and Farewells

In May last year BPC bade farewell to its Deputy Chairman and former Chairman, Cllr John Bass who took the decision to step down after 30 years of service. The Council is extremely grateful to John for all the work that he put into the Council over the years and hopes that he will enjoy having a little more free time. BPC then welcomed Cllr Mike Pellatt who was elected to the vacant councillor position in June 2021.

The Council also said goodbye to Cllr Martin Shaw from Devon County Council and welcomed Cllr Marcus Hartnell following his election to Devon County Council in May 2021.

Later in the year the Council had to say farewell to its clerk, Nicky Langley who left to take on full time employment and welcomed Adrienne Long as the new clerk.

## Council Groups and Representatives

In addition to all councillors covering a specific geographical area of the parish, some councillors also take on additional responsibilities. During 2021-2022 councillors served as follows:

BPC Community Emergency Response Team	All Councillors
Village Hall Representative	Cllr Chris Pike
Seaton, Beer and Branscombe Traffic Group*	Cllr Ralph Cox
Branscombe Road Wardens	Cllrs Chris Pike, Caroline Powell and Mark White
Village Jubilee Committee	Cllrs Ralph Cox and Caroline Powell

\* Traffic Group meetings were replaced in the Autumn of 2021 by a bi-monthly division highways inspection between Cllr Hartnell and the Devon County Council Neighbourhood Highways Officer. Cllr Hartnell subsequently reports back to the parish councils in his division.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

### Roads and Footpaths

BPC reported in its 2020-21 Annual Report that it had been working with Devon County Council on the purchase of new road signs for Branscombe and Weston, including restricted access signs for vehicles travelling down Northern Lane. The Council purchased the signs in April 2021 (at a cost of £767.12) and installed all signs over the summer.



The BPC Road Wardens have continued throughout the year to use the Viafix (quickset) material received last year to deal with any potholes or other areas of damage to roads before they become more serious issues.

Following the replacement of the Traffic Meeting groups with bi-monthly highways inspections between Cllr Marcus Hartnell and the Neighbourhood Highways Officer, Devon County Council (DCC), Cllr Ralph Cox has been liaising with Cllr Hartnell on the specific road and drainage issues that require attention by DCC. As a result, potholes have been repaired and gullies are scheduled to be cleared (June 2022). The need for the removal of debris in the stream and replacement of the culvert grating on Margell's Bridge to reduce potential flooding has also been raised and noted for action by DCC.

In response to the '20s Plenty for Devon Campaign' to make 20mph the default speed in all residential areas in the county, BPC has considered whether the Council could adopt this initiative for the parish, given that the national speed limit is applicable throughout the parish. Devon County Council (DCC) has subsequently allocated funds to support 20mph schemes, but BPC is unable to apply under this scheme as any new speed limits must be incremental, meaning that the national speed limit in the parish could only be reduced to 40mph. It may be possible for some limited traffic management schemes to be introduced in some places in the village and BPC will be working with DCC Highways on this over the coming year.



Councillors have continued to report any issues with footpaths to Devon County Council and have where necessary cleared some overgrown footpath areas to make them more accessible.

### Waste and Litter Bins

Last spring, following concern over the volume of litter and dog waste being left by visitors to the village near the Village Hall, the Council purchased an additional dog bin to be installed by the Hall.

The problem of 'overflowing' waste/litter bins in the Village Hall area has however remained a topic for discussion throughout the year and, following a review by East Devon District Council (EDDC) of its waste and recycling operation, the Council will be following this matter up again with EDDC over the coming months.

## War Memorial and Other Spaces

The Council owns and maintains the Branscombe War Memorial and 3 small pieces of land within the parish known as: Coronation Gardens; 'Graham's Bench' area; and the bus stop areas by the Mason's Arms.

To improve these areas, the Council has during the year arranged for the grass cutting and planting of the flower beds around the Memorial, the clearing and tidying of the Coronation Gardens area, the replacement of the fencing around 'Graham's Bench' area and the installation a new handrail on the steps up to the bench.



BPC has also purchased and installed two new wooden benches to replace those at the bus stop near the Mason's Arms.



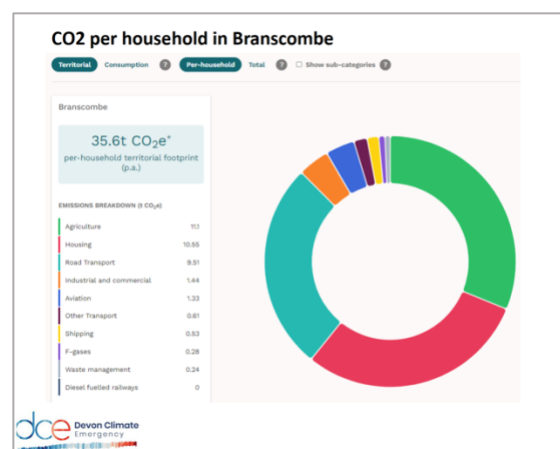
The Council is grateful to Cllrs Ralph Cox, Chris Pike and Caroline Powell who have given their time to tidy and maintain these areas and to Cllrs Pike and White who installed the new benches.

## The Climate Emergency

During the year BPC has started to address the vital issue of climate change and to look at what the Council and the village might be able to do at a local level.

Cllr David Pegler has taken on the role of BPC's lead on climate change and has provided the Council with an in-depth presentation on the background to climate change, how changes, particularly to sea levels might impact the village and the CO2 emission break down for the village and individual households. The presentation then looked at various options that could be considered by the village and individual properties to help reduce CO2 emissions, including for example the installation of electric vehicle chargers, the slowing of traffic through the village and the increased use of solar panels.

Given the importance of climate change, BPC plans to present this information to a wider village group and ask for feedback and ideas on how residents would like the Council and/or a new group to take this forward.



## PLANNING

### Planning Applications, Appeals and Enforcements

All parish and town councils are consultees in the planning system and have a right to be notified of all planning applications, appeals and enforcements in their areas and to express their views to the local planning authority. The planning authority may not agree with the parish council's recommendation, but it must take account of its views before granting or refusing planning permission.

During 2021- 2022, BPC has considered and responded to EDDC on 17 planning applications, 1 planning application appeal and 1 enforcement notice.

Full details of all the applications considered with BPC's recommendations and the final decisions from EDDC can be found on the BPC website.

### Neighbourhood Planning

Over recent months the Council has also looked further into the area of neighbourhood planning to assess whether it might be appropriate and timely for BPC to consider developing a Branscombe Neighbourhood Plan.

Whilst a neighbourhood plan carries statutory weight and must be taken into consideration by local authorities in any planning development, the production of the plan is a complex and lengthy process that requires specialist expertise and considerable engagement with the local community. Given the complexity and amount of work that Council members and others in the local community would need to put into producing a neighbourhood plan, together with the current uncertainty over the Government's reforms to the planning system, BPC has decided to put any further discussions on this matter on hold for the time being

## THE COMMUNITY

### Grants and Donations

During the year BPC was pleased to be able to provide grants of £500 to St Winifred's Church to assist with grounds

maintenance and £2,000 to Branscombe Cricket Club for the building of its new sports pavilion. The Council also donated £100 of vouchers for the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital Staff Lottery.

The Council is keen to support other village organisations and groups to maintain and enhance life in the local community and will be encouraging groups to apply for consideration for grant funding during 2022/23

### Remembrance

As is customary, a wreath from the Council was laid at the Branscombe War Memorial during the Remembrance Day Service in November in honour of those lost during the two World Wars.



## Marking the Queen's Platinum Jubilee



Since the autumn of last year when the national programme for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations and areas for local community involvement was announced, the Council has discussed how it could help support the village to mark this momentous event and has subsequently liaised with the Village Platinum Jubilee Committee on its proposed programme of activities.

The Council is pleased to be assisting with the organisation of the Jubilee Beacon Bonfire on the beach that will mark the start of the weekend of celebrations. BPC has also purchased the Branscombe Jubilee commemorative mugs that will be presented to each child attending the village school and has funded the live band for the evening Jubilee Dance in the Village Hall. The Council is grateful to the Branscombe Project who have also contributed to the purchase of the commemorative mugs.

Earlier in the year the Council accepted the offer from EDDC of an oak sapling to be planted in the village to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The sapling was planted on a very wet and windy day in mid-March with the 'official laying' of the commemorative plaque taking place during the Jubilee weekend.

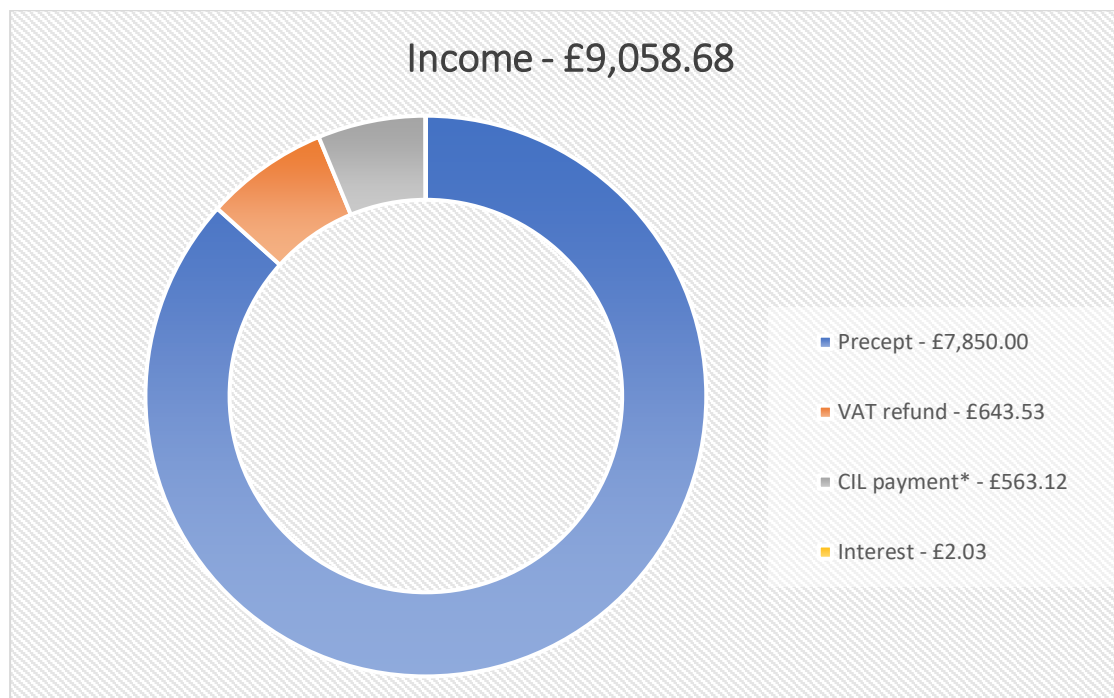


Cllr Cox assisting with the planting of the EDDC oak sapling (March 2022)

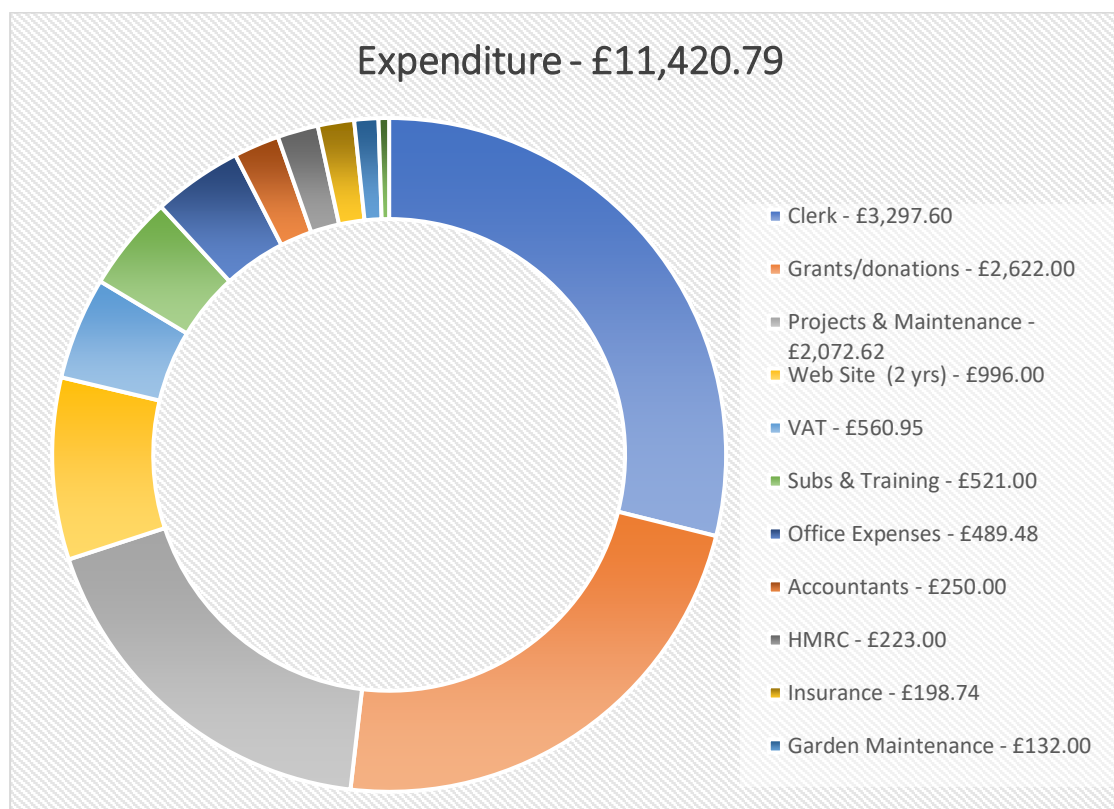


## COUNCIL FINANCE AND OPERATION

### Council Income and Expenditure 2021 - 2022

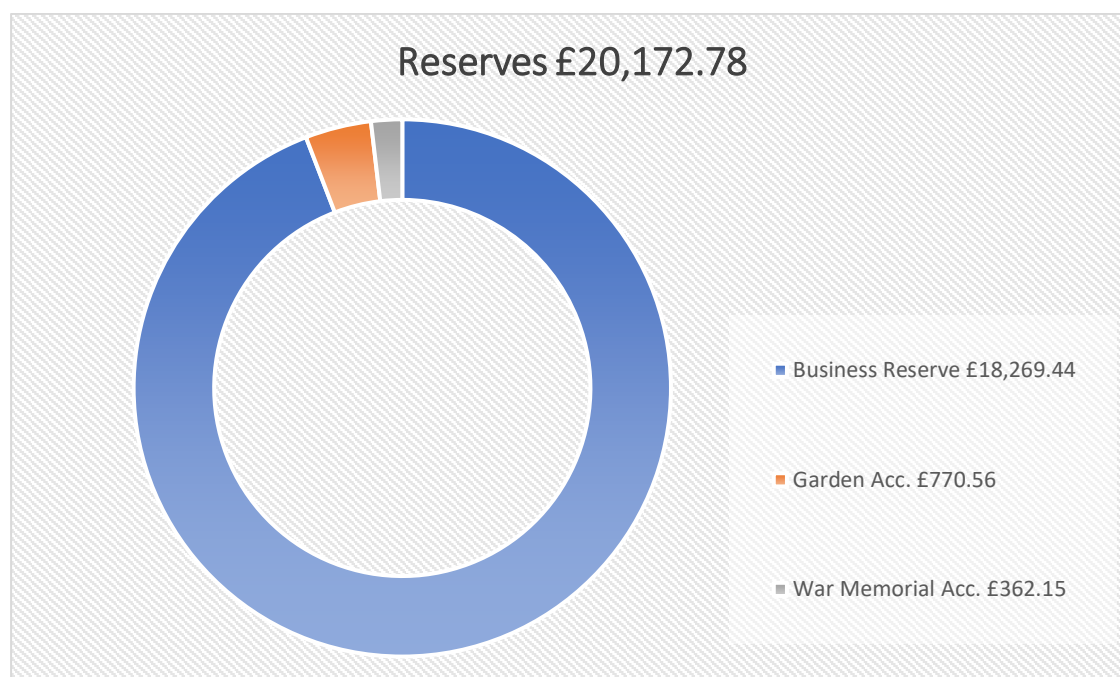


Note on Income CIL payment: the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a financial charge that can be made by local authorities on any new development. A proportion of the charge is then passed onto the parish/town council.





## Council Reserves



## Council Precept

The Council has deliberated hard on the funding of its budget for 2022-23 and the level of precept to be raised from the parish. Over the years BPC has carefully monitored and controlled its income and expenditure and maintained a strong financial base. In these unprecedented times, the Council felt that it was necessary to strike a balance between requesting any major increase in the precept whilst still maintaining its ability to deal with future financial demands. A final decision was taken to maintain the increase at the same level as that for 2021 - 2022 and raise the total precept by £150.00. (The total precept demand for 2022 - 2023 is therefore £8,000.

## Council Operation and Audit

The Council has over the year discussed and agreed that it needs to improve certain areas of its operation, including its banking arrangements and method of payments, and current council policies. It will be moving all banking online, reviewing and updating all existing policies and documents and putting others in place in line with good practice for parish councils. This work will be carried out over the course of the next 12 months.

As part of its statutory Annual Governance and Accountability Return, the Council is required to conduct an independent audit of its internal controls and finance and BPC is grateful to Graham Walford-Howell for acting as the Council's internal auditor for 2021-2022.

## KEEPING IN TOUCH

BPC is keen to ensure that its parishioners can keep up to date with the decisions it takes on their behalf and are aware of the wider issues that may impact those who live in Branscombe and Weston. The Council communicates through:

- its website: [www.branscombe-pc.org.uk](http://www.branscombe-pc.org.uk)
- its parish noticeboards: details of parish council meetings and other council information are displayed on the parish noticeboards located near the Fountains Head and Mason's Arms pubs, and at Weston. All BPC notices are also displayed on the Village Hall noticeboard
- the Parish Magazine and Branscombe Village Facebook.



## Contacting Your Councillors

<i>Councillor</i>	<i>Geographical Area</i>	<i>Contact Email</i>
Cllr Tony Fastnedge (Chairman)	Elverway / Watercombe / Sellarswood / Castle Corner	<a href="mailto:acfast8@gmail.com">acfast8@gmail.com</a>
Cllr David Pegler (Deputy Chair)	Bridge View / Parkfield Terrace	<a href="mailto:dlpegler@gmail.com">dlpegler@gmail.com</a>
Cllr Ralph Cox	Bulstone / Edge / Rockenhayne	<a href="mailto:r.cox000@btinternet.com">r.cox000@btinternet.com</a>
Cllr Bill Evans	Weston	<a href="mailto:billtorquay58@gmail.com">billtorquay58@gmail.com</a>
Cllr Tony Lambert	Deep Cut Culverwell Hole Bottoms to Woodhouse Farm	<a href="mailto:tony-lambert@talktalk.net">tony-lambert@talktalk.net</a>
Cllr Mike Pellatt	Street to the Village Hall	<a href="mailto:mike@pellatt.co.uk">mike@pellatt.co.uk</a>
Cllr Chris Pike	Millers Leas / Square / Vicarage Hill / Beach	<a href="mailto:orvillepike@hotmail.com">orvillepike@hotmail.com</a>
Cllr Caroline Powell	Mill Lane to Bennetts Close	<a href="mailto:caropow55@gmail.com">caropow55@gmail.com</a>
Cllr Mark White	Fountain Head / Hillside / Coxes Corner / Berry Hill	<a href="mailto:tmandaewhite@btconnect.com">tmandaewhite@btconnect.com</a>