



BRANSCOMBE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

12th May 2022

ORGANISATIONS'
REPORTS
2021 - 2022



Annual Report by Cllr Marcus Hartnell Devon County Councillor for Seaton & Colyton

Roles & Responsibilities 2021/22 Devon County Council (DCC)

Corporate Infrastructure & Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee (CIRS)
Investment & Pension Fund Committee
East Devon Highways & Traffic Orders Committee
East Devon Locality (County) Committee
Community Safety Partnership

Constituency Activity

I represent the following communities:
Seaton (Town Council, East Devon District Council & Devon County Council)
Colyton & Colyford (Devon County Council)
Southleigh, Northleigh & Farway (Devon County Council)
Offwell & Widworthy (Devon County Council)
Beer & Branscombe (Devon County Council)

As a tri-hatted Councillor I have helped many constituents over the past year. The most common requests are related to highways matters and it is also the most frustrating. The overall condition of our roads has improved in recent years however a combination of reduced budgets and rising costs will mean that the next financial year will be very challenging. I continue to make regular inspections with the local Highway Officer and with local Councillors. This is proving to be more effective than holding traffic group meetings. I have supported Southleigh Parish Council to enable repairs to the foundations and retaining wall near Turners Court to protect the road from subsiding. This project was jointly funded by Southleigh Parish Council, DCC Community Enhancement Fund and my locality budget. I have supported applications from Colyton, Colyford & Beer for 20mph speed limits to improve road safety and continue to push for safety improvements on the A3052 through Colyford and the A35 through Wilmington & Offwell.

The final planning and delivery stages of the multi-use trail (Stop line way) in Seaton between the Cemetery and White Cross Farm are progressing. The Compulsory Purchase of land is complete with initial survey and design work being undertaken now in readiness for the autumn when work will commence clearing vegetation. Completion should be in 2023. Along with my fellow EDDC Ward members I have been involved in discussions covering the future development of the Moridunum and Seafront improvements, the next steps for the Seaton Jurassic Visitor Centre and the Joint Axe Valley Levelling up bid. All three of these items dovetail between EDDC & DCC and are ongoing.

In my role of EDDC Councillor I did not support the increase in parking charges to £2 per hour across many East Devon coastal car parks, and I am concerned what impact this will have. As many households will be feeling the squeeze from increased energy and food prices, the amount of consumer discretionary spend will reduce accordingly. There is a real risk visitors will park for shorter periods which will hit our shops and businesses, jeopardising the post Covid economic recovery. As County Councillor I am concerned that these price increases will create parking problems in other areas, as those who are not prepared to pay these extortionate prices will use on-street parking to the annoyance of residents.

On a more positive note, I was pleased to propose the role of a Disability Champion for Seaton. This role will assist Seaton Town Council with its decision making, ensuring when decisions are made consideration is given to people with disabilities. I am pleased to have pledged £1k of my locality budget towards rubber matting for the beach at Seaton, enabling wheelchair users to have access onto the pebbles.

About my Locality Budget – please bring forward projects/proposals where you require top-up funding to deliver. Guidance can be found at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/democracy/councillors-nav/locality-budgets/>

Best Place – Devon County Council Plan 2021-2025

The DCC strategic plan up to 2025 can be viewed online.

The plan focuses on how we will help the county to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, build on the resilience of local people and communities to create a fairer, healthier, and more caring place, and grasp the opportunity to create a greener, more prosperous and inclusive future for all.

The best place - Strategic Plan ([devon.gov.uk](https://www.devon.gov.uk))

Committee work

All County Committees are meeting in person at County Hall and meetings are also recorded or live streamed for public viewing.

The CIRS committee has overseen the 3-year extension of the Milestone highways maintenance contract, input into the new council plan, the budget, rural road safety and speed policy, as well as received regular Highway's performance stats and ongoing updates in relation to Covid-19.

The Investment & Pension Fund Committee is responsible for the £5bn Devon pension fund. The work of the committee is to receive regular reports on investment strategy and policy, climate change impact, audit, and ongoing training for members. Of particular interest is the committee decision last year to divest passive investments in companies with exposure to fossil fuels and mining. As a result, 25% of the total pension fund is now invested in a Passive Climate Transition Benchmark (CTB) fund.

My first year as your Devon County Councillor has been really fulfilling and enjoyable. I have enjoyed meeting and getting to know many Town & Parish Councillors across the division, and through attending many of your meetings beginning to understand the challenges faced, which vary from broadband provision to potholes and everything in between!

Over the coming year the Council faces budgetary pressures in all services, with inflation and demand for services being the most significant. The Highways maintenance budget will be challenging and the pressures from both funding and increasing costs will mean tough choices. To assist with tackling some of the minor works that are important to communities but often don't get prioritised, I'd like to advocate the Road Warden Scheme. This is a formal agreement between Devon County Council and a town or parish council, which enables them to deliver minor works in or around the public highway. Work can be carried out by a qualified Road Warden volunteer. I plan to complete Road Warden training myself and encourage at least one member of each Town/Parish to do the same. Works we can then tackle as volunteers are Pothole repairs (when they do not meet the county council's intervention criteria); clearing weeds; cleaning signs; cleaning drainage (gully grating); cutting grass; repairing finger posts; cutting hedges and vegetation; managing verges for wildlife and with Chapter 8 training and setting up and managing road closures for special events. I believe this approach will make each community more resilient and empowered. More details will follow in my monthly reports.

I very much look forward to working with Councillors, Town/Parish Clerks, and residents over the coming year to assist with your priorities and to support each community, ensuring you are informed, supported, and prepared for the challenges that lie ahead.

Cllr Marcus Hartnell
April 2022

ANNUAL POLICE REPORT FOR MAY 2021 – MAY 2022

The COVID-19 pandemic reduced a large percentage of crime across all parts of Devon & Cornwall, and as we've moved out of restrictions and back into normal life, our crime figures have started to reflect this again. Despite the number of crimes increasing this year to 30 from 22 in the previous year, you can see that the number of incidents reported to police have reduced. This means that the crimes were reported and dealt with in retrospect rather than being ongoing live incidents.

The main crimes are public order offences of which there were six. The majority of these were reported as disputes between neighbours which resulted in either threatening, insulting or abusive language being used. The second most prevalent is all other theft offence, of which there were also six. This includes thefts from motor vehicles, thefts of number plates from car parks and other thefts which tend to occur due to being in a remote area with vehicles/goods often being left unattended whilst people are out walking etc. This is addressed by the placement of warnings and signs to remind owners not to leave items unattended etc.

Vehicle offences includes the main roads, so these crimes do not always directly impact the Village.

Vigilance by villagers throughout the year has been greatly appreciated by Devon & Cornwall Police.

Statistics are provided on page 5.

Sam Parfett, Neighbourhood Beat Manager Seaton
Rural East Devon Neighbourhood Policing Team



Devon & Cornwall Police

Building safer communities together

Crimes Recorded - 01/05/2021 to 06/05/2022 - KN3F

Offence	Recorded Crime 01/05/2021 to 06/05/2022	Recorded Crime 01/05/2020 to 06/05/2021	Recorded Crime % Difference
Violence with Injury	3	2	50.0%
Violence without Injury	2	4	-50.0%
Stalking and Harassment	3	4	-25.0%
Other Sexual Offences	3	1	200.0%
Burglary Dwelling	0	1	-100.0%
Burglary Non-Dwelling	1	6	-83.3%
Vehicle Offences	2	1	100.0%
All Other Theft Offences	6	1	500.0%
Criminal Damage	2	1	100.0%
Public Order Offences	6	0	-
Possession of Weapons	1	0	-
Possession of Drugs	0	1	-100.0%
Other Offences	1	0	-
Total	30	22	36.4%

Non Notifiable Offences | 5 | 3 | 66.7%



Devon & Cornwall Police

Building safer communities together

Incidents Recorded - 01/05/2021 to 06/05/2022 - KN3F

Incident Closing Category	Incidents - 01/05/2021 to 06/05/2022	Incidents - 01/05/2020 to 06/05/2021	Incidents % Difference
Anti Social Behaviour	8	18	-55.6%
Crime Recorded	8	5	60.0%
Public Safety	22	30	-26.7%
Transport	13	10	30.0%
Total	51	63	-19.0%

2021 National Trust Rangers Annual Report (May 2022 BPC AGM)

COVID-19

Luckily as we enter the summer of 2022, the hangover from Covid-19 appears to be fading from the day to day operation of the National Trust. Although we have been back operating at full capacity (and beyond in many cases) for over a year, since our staff have returned from furlough and our budgets put back on track, we experienced large backlogs of work throughout much of 2021, and increased pressure from domestic 'stay-cations' only compounded issues. I'm glad to report that 2022 is a far more positive outlook as we now start to make progress on a more even keel.

Events

As highlighted above we are now working to something that could be described as more 'business as usual', with events penned in the diary for this year. So far we have had a very successful, fully booked dawn chorus walk in Branscombe, on International Dawn Chorus day and we have other events planned from more active organised walks to yoga experiences.

We have increased our teams capacity in the discipline of visitor experience and have recruited a Visitor Experience Officer into the team, which has increased our capacity to deliver great public engagement – you may have noticed our social media has been far busier in the last 6 months, with engaging stories from our work in the East Devon area, and that is testament to our new Visitor experience officer post.

Annual works

Summer works of 2021 were busy with the usual grasscutting, keeping the rights of way networks open for all to enjoy. As the summer of the 'Stay-cation' blossomed, it was paramount that we kept this important and well walked network in Branscombe, and beyond, open and safe with well maintained infrastructure (steps/benches etc).

Volunteer numbers are still high with 2 well attended weekly volunteer days – without whom we really could not operate. Throughout the winter we worked hard on several projects conserving important habitats and scheduled ancient monuments (mostly out of the branscombe parish.)

Ash dieback

Much like Covid-19 we are bored with the mention of 'Ash dieback', which is having a huge impact on our woodlands in East Devon. The winter of 21/22 has been our worse year by far with contractor bills running into 10's of thousands pounds in order to work on trees, protecting people, homes and road networks from potential hazards posed by diseased and dying trees. Our fear is that although we are hopefully over the peak of heavy intervention, we are far from out of the woods and are unfortunately likely to be taking action working on ash trees for many winters to come.

Rob Skinner
Lead Ranger
May 2022

BRANOC HALL - 2021 Report

Unfortunately, due to the ongoing effects of the Covid 19 Pandemic, Branoc Hall remained closed for a major part of the year. When, and if, regulations permitted, we were able to accept some bookings but it was necessary to ensure the Covid regulations with regard to hand cleansing, reduced numbers and circulation protocols were adhered to. This inevitably meant this further discouraged use of the hall for many people.

However, I am delighted to report a number of more positive things that happened.

1. Given the significant increase in visitors to Branscombe, possibly due to the need to take holidays in the UK due to Covid travel restrictions across the world, it became clear that we were not taking full advantage of the income possibility from our car park. All the signs were updated and renewed with a £5 per day suggested donation. Given the fact that we had largely become a cashless society, we also publicised the facility for paying directly into our bank. Last years income to hall from the car park was a magnificent £10.5K, a 40% increase on prior years and more than made up for the income deficit due to reduced bookings.
2. Joost and Kezia Van Gurp, having taken over the position of managing the bar at the hall, opened up a small shop in the Social Room. This was really something of a research exercise to try and understand whether a village shop could become viable in the longer term and, if so, what could Branoc Hall do to assist the enterprise. Initially sales were slow but as the increased visitor numbers mentioned previously increased, sales became very encouraging. Sadly however, when the summer came to an end, the support from the village was insufficient to make the venture viable and it was forced to close. Nonetheless a worthwhile exercise.
3. Early in the year, Branscombe Cricket Club came to the Hall Committee with a proposal to replace the current pavilion, which required substantial repairs, with a larger, more sustainable, building, which could also be used by other groups within the village. This was to be funded by grants and donations with the actual construction being undertaken by club members overseen by a local builder. In 2021 the hall had claimed and received £10K under the Governments Covid Support Grant Scheme. It was unanimously agreed by the Hall Trustees that this scheme was a very worthy recipient of this money as we saw it as a facility, which could help bring activity back to the village after the Pandemic had subsided.
4. Sadly one plan that did not come to fruition was our request in June to the Parish Council for the provision of a litter bin in the area of the hall/forge/bus stop. It was very evident that the increased number of visitors resulted in a very much greater amount of litter. Whilst we did our best as a Committee to keep this under control, it was felt that an official bin at or near the hall would help enormously to keep the village tidy. As at this date, this has not happened.

David Lamb,
Chairman of Trustees,
1/05/22



THE FRIENDS OF ST. WINIFRED'S CHURCH, BRANSCOMBE

Registered Charity No: 1151031

The Friends of St Winifred's

Summary report for the Branscombe Annual Parish Meeting 12th May 2022

Our membership at 31 December 2021 stood at 187 including 34 life members

The combination of the Membership leaflets and social media enquiries about the Friends together with local links continues to see new members join which helps to keep the numbers going when sadly we lose valued friends.

The last two years has prevented works from being carried out at the church as you know resulting in very little movement going out from the Friends until 2021.

During 2021 the Friends made grants of £1,750 for the churchyard wall repair and £780 for the organ repair.

Since the Friends year end of 31st December 2021 we have made grants of £9,709.04 to the PCC for the works originally quoted in 2020 and included the repair to the boundary wall, the tomb grave and last year's replacement of the oil tank.

There will be further grant proposals made to the Friends at this year's AGM for other works carried out at the church from the new Quinquennial:

Timber floor repairs £570 and South Porch coping stones repairs £1042.90

The Friends AGM is on Saturday 18th June 2022 in the Branoc Hall starting at 3pm followed by a cream tea.

Friends old and new members are very welcome.

With my best wishes

Emma Cox

Chairman

BRANSCOMBE RAVENS CRICKET CLUB

Another successful year for Branscombe Ravens Cricket Club playing a total of 17 fixtures despite a large number of weather cancellations, winning 10 and drawing one.

Membership remains high and it is a pleasure to see a number of youth players progressing to be full time members of the squad.

Unfortunately, Covid restrictions meant we could not complete our Annual Tour to Amsterdam, but we did manage to welcome a number of new touring sides to the Village, all of whom were blown away by the warm welcome and beautiful location.

The year also saw the planning and initial phase of construction of the new Branscombe Sports Pavilion. We are hugely proud to not only provide the Cricket Club with a permanent home, but also give something back to the Village and provide a facility that can be used by the school, local clubs and organisations or individuals and ensure the playing fields and tennis court are utilised as much as possible.

We are most grateful to all who have provided funding towards the project, including of course the Parish Council, and whilst we are still a little short of our funding target, we hope to complete the project during the summer.

Graeme Shorthouse

THE BRANSCOMBE CRAFT CLUB

Unfortunately, the Craft Club has been on hold during COVID, we are hoping to start up again this year and are just in the process of arranging dates and venue.

Joan Pike

REPORT FROM THE BRANSCOMBE PROJECT (MAY 2022)

A quiet year. We've been 'tidying up' the Project. The Devon Heritage Centre in Exeter has offered to house the Project Archive and we've been boxing up some of it, and sending it on its way. Jan Wood at the Heritage Centre has been very helpful.

We've also been sorted out the storage room at the Village Hall: making room to store boxes of Project books and all the exhibition boards. This has been a joint effort by a lot of Project members.

The Project website was in need of refreshing and updating. Martin Smith, an IT wizard, very kindly took on the task and the site is now easier to use and includes new material.

Project books have been selling well – particularly at the Sea Shanty – and we've reprinted 'Cliff and Beach'.

The first Annual John Torrance talk was given in November. This is funded by the AONB. The first talk was one that John had written himself during Lockdown about the Branscombe Woodlands.

We've had two excellent Winter Talks, by Patrick Dillon and Sue Dymond. The third, by Rose Ferraby, had to be cancelled because she had covid. And the fourth, about organic farming, biodiversity and rewilding is still to come.

There will be a one-day exhibition on Farm Outbuildings on April 25th.

We're hoping to play a part in the Arts Festival this Autumn.

Best wishes to everyone ...

Barbara Farquharson

HARVEST FAIR REPORT

With covid taking over everyone lives over the past 2 years; the harvest fair has not happened since 2019. The committee met a month or so ago. and it was decided this year not to have one and will be addressed again in the future. There was some money being used to help towards the fireworks which are is being planned for November 5th, 2022

Abi Fuell

BRANSCOMBE C OF E PRIMARY PTFA REPORT

It's been a strange couple of years due to Covid-19 as you can imagine for the PTFA.

The year six`s normally get an end of year treat but due the pandemic, this became difficult, so they were presented with a gift voucher and year 6`s 2021 had a day out.

We always help with contributing towards the coach for swimming lessons in Sidmouth.

Class two topic was space, so we helped pay for a company to bring a space dome which included activities.

We have just held out first quiz, for 2 years which was a success, another will be planned for in the Autumn.

We are hoping to have a PTFA AGM where more people will get involved and discuss ideas how we can help the school and children. The school is very small, so if we can help, we do try.

Abi Fuell
