

## Who can become a councillor?

Anyone can stand as a candidate provided they meet the qualification requirements. You can find out more by contacting the Electoral Services office on 01803 207071 or emailing [electoral.registration@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:electoral.registration@torbay.gov.uk).

An event for persons thinking of becoming a councillor has been arranged for Thursday, 8th March. Further details can also be obtained from the Electoral Services office.

## Where will the council be located?

The new council will be located in the former Citizens Advice Bureau office in Brixham Town Hall.

## How will the council be accountable?

The decisions of the parish/town council will be made by the elected councillors at meetings of the council. The meetings will normally be open to the public and advertised in advance.

There is also a legal requirement for parish/town councils to hold an annual meeting at which members of the public can have their say. Usually the council takes this opportunity to report what it has done and intends to do as well as listening to local people.

## Where can I get any further information?

For any further information please call Torbay Council on 01803 207206 and leave a message on the answer machine. We anticipate a number of calls but we will endeavour to get back to you with a response as soon as possible. Alternatively, you can email [brixhamparish@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:brixhamparish@torbay.gov.uk) or visit Torbay Council's website: [www.torbay.gov.uk/brixhamparishcouncil](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/brixhamparishcouncil).

# New Brixham Parish Council



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This document can be made available in other languages, on tape, in Braille, large print and in other formats. For further information please contact 01803 207171.

In July 2005 Brixham residents in the Berry Head-with-Furzeham and St Mary's-with-Summercombe wards, voted in favour of a parish/town council for Brixham.

As a result a parish/town council will be operational in Brixham from May 2007. However, there will be an extensive settling-in period whilst the role of the new council is determined but it will inevitably mean some changes for the local community.

Torbay Council has a statutory duty to make the initial arrangements for the establishment of the new council. A working party was formed last year to progress the details of the new council and work with the set-up team – a local group of residents who were involved in the campaign for a parish/town council. The majority of the working party is made up of local ward councillors, supported by officers at Torbay Council. The Working Party has met on a number of occasions and members of the public have attended its meetings to contribute to the discussions.

### What is a parish or town council?

A parish/town council is a small local authority and is often described as the tier of local government closest to the people. It is an elected body made up of local people representing the interests of the community.

Parish and town councils exist so that you, the local people, can have a say in the things that happen where you live.

### What is the difference between a parish and town council?

When a local council is created it is referred to as a parish council, however, at the first meeting of the newly formed council the elected councillors can decide on whether it should be called a parish or town council. They both have the same powers and duties but a town council can choose to elect a town mayor instead of a chairman.

### What can a parish or town council do?

A parish/town council has a limited number of actual duties including the management of allotments. They do, however, have wide powers should they decide to use them and may, with the agreement of the relevant district/unitary council (in this case Torbay Council), carry out certain functions normally carried out by those authorities.

Here are just some of the types of work they can do:

- grants for local groups
- managing playing fields and play areas
- crime prevention issues
- traffic calming
- preserving heritage
- developing and promoting local arts and entertainment

Another important role of a parish/town council relates to its right to be consulted on planning applications.

### How much will it cost?

Parish/town councils are entitled to levy extra council tax from their area and this will also be the case for Brixham.

In the first year of a newly established parish/town council the budget is set by the relevant district/unitary authority, but in future years the parish/town council has the ability to decide on its own budget. Torbay Council has agreed that the budget for the new parish/town council will be set at £212,000 which will meet the initial setting up and running costs of the new body. These costs cover, amongst other things: the elections; the salary of the town clerk and other staff; the rental for the accommodation; and any extra services to be provided.

When the new council tax bills are issued in March this year, Brixham council taxpayers will note that they will be required to make an additional payment as a contribution towards the costs of the parish/town council. The amount payable by each council taxpayer in the financial year 2007/08 will be calculated according to the valuation band for their property. Depending on their banding, the amount it is expected the local taxpayer will pay is set out in the table below which also shows (in brackets) approximately how much this works out per week:

<b>A</b>	<b>£21.27</b>	<b>(41p per week)</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>£24.81</b>	<b>(48p per week)</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>£28.36</b>	<b>(55p per week)</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>£31.90</b>	<b>(61p per week)</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>£38.99</b>	<b>(75p per week)</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>£46.08</b>	<b>(89p per week)</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>£53.17</b>	<b>(£1.02 per week)</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>£63.80</b>	<b>(£1.23 per week)</b>

The levels of council tax are less than most of those levied by other local councils of a similar size in Devon. In 2006/07, the average council tax (band D property) for town councils in Devon was £39.24.

### Who will run the council?

Parish/town council elections will be held on 3 May 2007 to elect twelve councillors to run the council for four years. They will represent the two separate wards with seven from Berry Head-with-Furzeham and five from St Mary's-with-Summercombe.

A town clerk will be appointed to advise the councillors, answer enquiries and manage the administration of the council. This should be done by September 2007. In the meantime the Democratic Services Team at Torbay Council will provide administrative support, but the meetings will be held at a venue in the Brixham community.