



Brixham Town Council Strategy 2019-2023

FOREWORD

Welcome to the latest Brixham Town Council Strategic plan for the period 2019-23. This follows the Council's first Strategic Plan for the period 2016-2019 which resulted in a much clearer focus on a set of priorities for improving our town.

A huge amount has been achieved over the past four years and the Council is determined to continue improving the town and its surrounding areas for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

The effect of central government austerity measures, which have caused reductions in funding services across the board, have created a challenging environment. This has led Torbay Council to press parishes (like Brixham Town Council) to take on more of the services which it has traditionally provided.

Nevertheless, I believe there is a strong, positive future for our town's community and infrastructure.

The new Council from May 2019 has employed fresh thinking - which draws on feedback given by local people to the previous Council – to review its initial priorities and create an updated strategy which identifies a number of major issues the Council would like to progress.

There will continue to be difficult decisions to be made over the next four years – on priorities for spending the money that we receive through our precept and other sources. However, the Council is determined to continue with improvements to the town, even if this involves increasing our spending. However, we recognise that any spending increases can only be made if we can ensure value for money with long term sustainability and have the clear support of the community.

Councillor Jill Regan

Chair

Brixham Town Council

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1. INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

Brixham is not alone in going through a period of rapid change.

Obvious changes, such as the way people choose to shop, are affecting our town centre. National political changes may affect, for example, our fishing industry. New house-building policies will change our environment and so on.

Of course, change brings challenges and opportunities. This Strategic Plan sets out many of the issues faced by Brixham and suggests ways the Town Council can address them, directly or indirectly.

Even though Parish Councils can influence only relatively small, very local issues, the decisions we make have an impact on people's lives and that the impact can be short or longer term. So we appreciate we are accountable to residents and must use our assets and resources (which includes resident's money raised through the precept) responsibly.

In our Strategy for 2016/19 we set out our aims as being to provide a value for money service to the community of Brixham while ensuring that our voice is heard in Torbay and all avenues are explored to provide a better quality of life for all residents.

For the period 2019/23 the Town Council wants to develop this further and focus its efforts on ensuring that Brixham thrives as a place to live, work and visit; as a safe and healthy community that encourages and supports business, supports sustainable growth and is a place where people can achieve their potential.

We want to make the most of Brixham's tourism and historic assets and help it develop and grow as a widely recognised 'destination' town.

Important facts about Brixham and the issues and challenges it now faces:

- Brixham is predicted to continue growing in the period to 2023. Our current population is 17,500. New housing development under construction or with planning permission is set out Torbay's plans.
- The Town Council is firmly not party political. This means all Councillors have independent views and an equal say in how things are done - in the best interests of the community.
- The Town Council is keen to support town centre retailers and other businesses through promoting the town and investing in public improvements.
- The fishing industry is the largest local employer but generally business interests in the towns are currently mainly small & medium sized enterprises (SME's)
- There is strong support in our annual consultations for better health facilities to deal with the growing and ageing population with increasing healthcare needs. Mental health issues, particularly for younger men, continue to be of growing concern

- The Town Council has taken over some assets and services from Torbay Council and is considering whether to take on more.
- The Brixham Neighbourhood Plan, now formally adopted, gives our community greater control over future development and helps protect our heritage and environment and also seeks to address infrastructure issues including health, schools and transport.
- There is a very strong sense of community, with dozens of clubs, societies and sporting organisations providing an incredibly wide range of facilities and services throughout the town. We will do all we can to ensure that the pool of volunteers for these community organisations continues as so many of the services available in the town would disappear or dramatically reduce without them. This is a major priority for us.
- Transport links continue to be challenging for some, especially the limited local bus services, lack of a railway station, inadequate routes into and around the town for heavy traffic, and poor connections into the town from outlying estates and villages.

Detailed official statistical information relating to Brixham is set out in Appendix 1 to this document.

This Strategic Plan sets out Brixham Town Council's vision and explains how it aims to achieve its objectives for 2019-2023. The Plan explains how the Council's objectives are monitored, reviewed and evaluated. Implementation of this Strategic Plan will help achieve the Town Council's aim for Brixham to become 'a place where people want to be' – alive with centres of excellence, open to business and providing an integrated, safe, healthy community built on a foundation of managed development.

2. BRIXHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Brixham Town Council is made up of twelve elected councillors: seven for Furzeham with Summercombe ward and five for St Peter's with St Mary's ward. The councillors are supported by a Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, an Administrative Assistant and Receptionist, Town Lengthsmen & a Facilities Manager.

The current councillors are:.....add photos & pictures

The Council works through 5 main committees - Community Services (CS), Evaluation (E), Finance and General Purposes (F&GP), Planning and Regeneration (P&R) and the Town Hall committee (THC). Additionally, there are:

Additionally there are:-

- the Policy Working Group (PG) and the Strategy Group (SG) that report to the Evaluation Committee.
- the Town Hall Regeneration Working Group (THRWG) reports to the THC / F&GP Committee.
- the Community Health Working Group and the Community Flood Plan Working Group report to the Community Services Committee.

- the Allotment Working Group reports to the F&GP Committee.
- the Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Forum Working Group works with the Planning and Regeneration Committee.

The activities and membership of the Community Emergency Response Team are currently under review as this Strategic Plan is being written.

The Council also supports community based working groups made up of local experts & practitioners in various areas, such as Mental Health, etc

The Town Council:

- exists to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the people who live and work in Brixham, providing leadership through community engagement and development in a democratic and representational way.
- looks to manage its own facilities and services in an efficient, effective and responsive way, at an affordable cost – which brings particular challenges given our historic campus of Council buildings.
- seeks, where facilities and services are provided by others, to influence how they are managed, in accordance with the desires and ambitions of the community.
- has responsibility for several community assets such as allotments, amenity sites and events
- and much more besides
- wholly owns Shoalstone Pool CIC Limited (SPCIC), a company set up by the Town Council comprises a Board of Directors, including three town councillors who report to BTC.
works constructively with Torbay Council by actively lobbying its Cabinet, Executive Leads, Members and Officers to encourage the Unitary Authority to meet its
duties to Brixham residents and to ensure that Brixham residents do not pay twice for the services they receive
- Works constructively with many other bodies that are active in the community.

3. DELIVERING OUR VISION FOR BRIXHAM

To deliver this we have reviewed our previous Strategy to see what was still relevant or needed updating. A great deal of progress had been made since the previous Plan was introduced and it was clear that some of the themes were no longer applicable in their existing form.

Six new overall strategic themes have been developed:

- **THEME 1 – SAFE AND HEALTHY BRIXHAM** is about identifying, promoting and co-ordinating measures within our local community to provide opportunities for everyone in Brixham to enjoy a safe and healthy lifestyle.

- THEME 2 –BUSINESS BRIXHAM is about establishing and enhancing Brixham as a good place to be in business; providing a vibrant community of sustainable businesses, which offer a good selection of goods and services for its residents and create opportunities for local people to gain good employment.
- THEME 3 –FLOURISHING BRIXHAM is about allowing residents to flourish and succeed by ensuring the provision of a broad range of appropriate, desirable and accessible opportunities to achieve personal fulfilment.
- THEME 4 – DESTINATION BRIXHAM means working to ensure Brixham remains a place where people want to come – for leisure & arts activities, sports & recreation, long & short stays and more.
- THEME 5 – SUSTAINABLE BRIXHAM will be delivered through: the Brixham Neighbourhood Plan; helping address concerns around affordable housing; encouraging improvements in transport links; influencing public service provision ; focussing activities and resources on maintaining the public realm and maximise opportunities for young people.
- •Theme 6 – COMMUNITY BRIXHAM is about developing the community involvement in Brixham promoting history & heritage, arts development, sporting facilities, community gardens and all the many things in Brixham which happen because of the efforts of volunteers.

4. OBJECTIVES

Each theme has a set of objectives which form the basis of the Town Council's Plan. All of these will require high levels of resources to deliver many cannot be delivered by the Town Council on it's own but will require support & investment from government (local & national), our superb local voluntary sector and others across our community. We will work in collaboration with and in support of other community groups & local organizations to deliver our objectives & support out town.

I) SAFE AND HEALTHY BRIXHAM OUR OBJECTIVES

- To support and provide public safety measures such as: supporting community policing; providing civic amenities; assisting in safety/road safety campaigns, and tackling environmental concerns including litter, dog fouling and graffiti.
- To encourage greater physical activity through measures such as: helping facilitate and improve walking, running and cycling trails, outdoor gyms and children's play areas; supporting swimming pools and fitness classes, sporting events etc, and incentivising sports and fitness clubs, particularly Shoalstone Pool
- To improve access to healthcare services, including doctors and dentists; support and promote preventative measure initiatives through health and well-being groups, including steps to improve mental health and dementia care.

- To help improve access throughout the Brixham area across various modes of transport including cycling, buses, and the car, as well as helping maintain safe pedestrian and cycling routes and addressing any identified heavy traffic and congestion issues - including through extension of 20 mph zones throughout the town
- To strengthen social cohesion through running and supporting activities including sports events, fetes, festivals, youth initiatives and clubs alongside managing Town Council facilities and shared spaces for the community.
- To target social isolation and explore opportunities to bring old and young together; promote diversity and equality and explore opportunities for improving education for all.
- Recognise sporting achievement within the parish with an annual award
- To review & support the Community Emergency Response Team
- Enabling organisations which support the most vulnerable in our community
- Maintenance of financially viable self-supporting allotment garden provision
- To continue to help with the support of those of all ages suffering with mental health issues or social isolations, for example through the development of a Community Mental Health group within the Brixham area and by support to organisations working in this important area.

II) **BUSINESS BRIXHAM** **OUR OBJECTIVES**

- To encourage and promote spaces where new and growing businesses will want to embed themselves firmly in the community.
- To explore measures to enhance the shopping experience for residents and visitors.
- To explore 'buy local' schemes and incentives for residents and businesses to source goods and services locally and support the local economy.
- To enhance transport connectivity for the Town.
- To continue to support and collaborate with formal and informal business groups to connect them to one another and to the community.
- To support and encourage new and existing businesses to create and grow a diverse economy.
- To work with partners to bring forward plans for the enhancement of the Town Centre, with a viable regeneration plan that the community can support.
- To work with tenants and the community to bring forward a Sustainable Regeneration Plan for the Town Hall complex.

- Ensure street furniture, signs, information boards and highways and the general appearance of the town are maintained to a high standard, whether by the Town Council or by others
- Seek improvements to infrastructure providing access to and from the town
- To consider regeneration in economic, environmental and social terms to ensure that any changes are of benefit to local people
- To encourage increased economic activity and employment in the town

III) **FLOURISHING BRIXHAM**

OUR OBJECTIVES

- To promote, assist and support the full range of local community groups in providing opportunities to thrive through volunteering activities
- To develop mutual support between the Town Council and local schools, improving awareness of complementary and conflicting interest and developing shared strategies.
- To support implementation of structures to help meet digital and IT needs of residents.
- To explore what opportunities could exist for apprenticeships & for reskilling/upskilling of adults who are out of work, underemployed or returning to the workplace.
- To support leisure, sporting and cultural facilities within the parish
- To protect and improve the local environment and infrastructure of Brixham
- To celebrate Brixham's history and culture and protect local heritage assets
- Provide seasonal displays and promote events such as the Christmas lights, parade and market, local produce markets and summer floral displays
- Supporting community events that promote Brixham

IV) **DESTINATION BRIXHAM**

OUR OBJECTIVES

- To work with & support partners to support a bold 'Destination Brixham' marketing strategy targeting local, regional and national attention (in that order) with strong emphasis on online promotion.
- To promote and establish Brixham as a place in which to live and create, to source creative products and services and to enjoy and visit for cultural and heritage experiences.
- To work with others to create a social hub for Brixham artists and creative businesses. • To make the Town Council a welcome 'go-to' place to help creative ideas happen through linking people and their customers in Brixham.

- To support both short & long stay tourism within our town
- To work with and help facilitate our many community events & festivals, year-round.
- Continuation of our support for Brixham in Bloom
- Supporting appropriate organisations to conserve locally significant buildings, sites and objects
- Work to ensure a cleaner town environment with cleaner streets and reduced littering, dog fouling and graffiti
- To maintain and develop the town Christmas lights displays

**V) SUSTAINABLE BRIXHAM
OUR OBJECTIVES**

- To achieve maximum community benefits through implementation of the Brixham Neighbourhood Plan.
- To seek ways to help address concerns around the shortage of affordable housing.
- To press for improvements in sustainable transport links and networks; on- and off-street parking, and supporting and encouraging initiatives such as new cycling routes and road safety initiatives.
- To influence public service provision with emphasis on activities and resources which maintain and improve the community infrastructure and public realm.
- To make Brixham environmentally sustainable through protection of our environment.
- To encourage businesses in the sustainable use of the natural environment.
- Continuation of Brixham's Fairtrade Town status
- To support the development of the Emergency Plan for Brixham as well as Climate Emergency local actions - including Working with the Environment Agency, Community Volunteers, South West Water and Torbay Council to develop local flood resilience
- Work to reduce the reliance on single use plastics by the Council and the town e.g. reduction in the use of plastics and promoting increasing levels of recycling in our community
- Make the Council 'herbicide –free'
- Continue to seek to provide adequate cemetery provision within the community?????
- Monitor and make recommendations for sustainable improvements, as appropriate, to public transport links with Torbay Hospital and other parts of the Bay
- To support developments and expansion in Brixham which protect and enhance the heritage and character of the town and its surrounding area

- To lead the direction of regeneration, taking into account the views of our community as well as relevant development plans and agencies
- Take a lead on protecting our natural environment in collaboration with local and national organisations, supporting the activities of local groups and organisations in reducing the harm caused to the natural environment by human activity
- Support developments & expansion in Brixham which protect and enhance the heritage and character of the town and its surrounding area
- To lead the direction of regeneration in the town, taking into account the views of our community as well as relevant development plans and agencies

VI) COMMUNITY BRIXHAM OUR OBJECTIVES

The Town Council remains committed to develop its community engagement.

- To ensure that all Brixham Town Councillors and Officers are approachable and work for the benefit of Brixham residents at all times
- To encourage the participation of all age groups in the discussions and decisions that shape our community
- To ensure that Brixham residents are informed about BTC discussions, decisions and policies
- To support all community groups and organisations, large or small, unifying community efforts in Brixham
- To survey residents on issues of local importance and work to implement the priorities that they identify whenever possible
- Maintain positive & constructive strategies and policies for engaging the community
- Ensure that Brixham residents receive a prompt response when making contact with BTC via telephone, e-mail, in writing or at public meetings
- Maintain BTC notice boards, website & social media for the display of council notices and community posters
- Hold an annual public consultation about the budget and other consultation events
- Provide a banner facility in Fore Street to advertise local events
- Recognise community achievement through the Annual Civic Award, presented to people within the parish who have shown extraordinary commitment, dedication, energy and effort in the service of the community
- Promote youth participation in the development of our community and ensure that their views are taken into account by the town council and other partner organisations

- To work with local organisations within the town
- Maintain and improve the Town Hall complex for community use
- Working to ensure the future of Brixham's assets
- Actively support volunteer organisations & groups within Brixham, to support & develop community projects and signpost groups to appropriate bodies for funding advice
- Lobbying for sympathetic regeneration that ensures the character of the town is preserved and enhanced
- Work with partners to minimise any collateral damage caused to the economy by any regeneration work or new developments
- Work with partners towards providing additional public facilities, in consultation with residents
- Develop & maintain a responsive & timely external complaints system
- Work towards gaining a Quality Award under the Local Council Awards Scheme

5. MANAGEMENT OF OUR ASSETS & RESOURCES

The effective management of Town Council assets, resources and commitments is of critical importance in delivering the Strategic Plan. Assets and resources include land and buildings, people (staff, Councillors and volunteers), skills and knowledge. Supporting this will be:

- Asset Transfer and Delegation of Services – Considering any appropriate assets and services suitable to be devolved from Torbay Council.
- Asset Management Plan – Reviewing and updating the Town Council's Asset Management Plan in the context of the strategic objectives.
- Decision-making – Producing a scheme of delegation which ensures decisions are made efficiently and effectively and at the right level.
- Councillor and Staff Learning and Development – Continuing to invest in training and development of staff and Councillors to make sure the Council has the right skills and abilities in place to be able to deliver the strategic objectives.
- To build a reputation as an employer that attracts, develops, motivates and retains staff.
- To ensure that financial provision is made to enable the objectives of BTC to be achieved

6. DELIVERING AND INFLUENCING

The Localism Act 2011 passed significant new rights direct to communities and individuals, making it easier for them to get things done and achieve their ambitions for the place where they live. The transfer of assets from Torbay Council has increased significantly in the past few years, as has the pressure on the Council to

pick up services no longer provided by them. Financial pressures on Torbay mean this trend is likely to continue throughout the life of this new Strategic Plan period and beyond.

There is no indication that the funding constraints placed on local authorities will be reversed in the foreseeable future, so what we are experiencing now is a permanent delegation of certain functions to the local council sector. BTC will continue to defend and support organisations and groups that lose vital funding if it is financially viable to do so and the community support that approach.

The Town Council takes a measured and pragmatic approach to service delegation and asset transfer, looking to ensure any additional responsibilities are in the best interests of the community and are financially sustainable.

In addition to the services currently provided by the Town Council, there are many ways in which other service providers and individuals can be supported. The Town Council is committed to delivering its own responsibilities to a high standard; influencing and challenging others to make decisions in the best interests of Brixham's residents and exploring new and innovative methods of service delivery and community engagement. However, where services & improvements for the town can best be provided through our flourishing volunteer networks, we will look to support those.

The Town Council uses a wide range of channels of communication to connect with people, including social media alongside the more traditional methods. We are strongly influenced by what local people have to say about Brixham. We are keen to maintain an open dialogue and will listen and respond to suggestions and concerns which are brought to our attention. We encourage residents to attend our meetings or contact Councillors and staff to help, support and advise them about Council business and other matters affecting their lives. Our methods of influencing others include:

- financial incentives through grants and concessions and bringing groups together to help their development.
- helping people to get the support they need through having clear and simple policies and processes.
- community engagement through building strong relationships, partnerships and collaborative working.
- leading by example, demonstrating shared responsibility and having a positive attitude.

7. PRIORITISED ACTION PLAN

This Strategic Plan defines our overall aims and sets out which areas and themes are a priority in any given period.

The Action Plan set out at Appendix 2 below sets out how we will look to achieve these, by when and how and will be used to define what the Town Council is seeking to achieve and assist in the monitoring, review and evaluation within each priority area. As we work through the Plan we will engage with a broad range of the community through social media and more traditional methods, including print, where appropriate, to establish priority areas for early attention and those which may require a longer-term approach.

8. BUDGETING AND FINANCIAL PLANNING

The Town Council has robust systems in place to manage its finances and has built up sufficient flexibilities and reserves to cope with a rapidly changing environment which means it can, within reason, adapt to matters outside of its immediate control – such as cuts in local authority services. The Town Council has an annual budget and a three-year forward spending plan to account for its income and expenditure.

Nevertheless, there will be difficult decisions to be made over the next four years – on priorities for spending and decisions about how best to spend the money received through council tax and other sources. We will be consulting and asking for views on spending plans as they are developed. The Town Council has a financial risk management strategy, and an investment policy with the priorities of security, liquidity and yield, followed by ethical considerations.

9. ACTION PLAN MONITORING AND REVIEW

Progress with our action plan will be monitored and reviewed by the Town Council at least **annually**. Reports and updates will be considered by Councillors and staff.

Adopted by Full Council on
Reviewed:

Contact details:

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APPENDIX 1 - Data & statistics for Brixham

From “Basic Facts about Torbay broken down by ward” – LGA 2018 -:

Population as at 2011 census:

Furzeham with Summercombe: 10,161 – (5,313 female, 4,848 male)

St Peters with St Marys: 6,825 – (3,514 female, 3,311 male)

Age as at 2011 census:

Furzeham with Summercombe: 0-15 = 1,351 – 16-64 = 5,265 – 65+ = 3,545

St Peters with St Marys: 0-15 = 1,057 - 16-64 = 3,685 – 65+ = 2,110

Ethnicity:

	White	Multiple Ethnicity	Asian	Black	Other
F&S	10,042	82	33	11	5
StP &StM	6,441	41	36	0	2

Housing:

	Social Rented	Owned	Private Rented
F&S	240	2,089	638
StP &StM	258	3,487	910

Employment: % residents 16 – 64 claiming unemployment related benefits

F&S 1.7%

StP & StM 3.0%

Education: % with

	No Quals	Apprenticeships	Levels 1-14 Quals	Other
F&S	4.56%	28.08%	5.45%	58.92%
StP &StM	26.20%	5.27%	61.60%	3.93%

Health: No of residents

	V Good	Good	Fair	Bad	V Bad
F&S	3,817	3,635	1,858	671	192
StP &StM	2,592	2,267	1,117	434	110

“Public Health Brixham Town Overview” - 2018

2017 Population - 16,977 - Average Age - 53 (Torbay Average - 48)

Life Expectancy at birth (Male) - 80.1 (Torbay Average - 78.9)

Life Expectancy at birth (Female) - 83.2 (Torbay Average - 82.9)

Childhood Obesity: Children’s’ weights for Reception to Yr 6 pupils are higher but not significantly higher than Torbay or England as a whole.

Population age bands: Highest numbers in the 70 – 74 & 65 – 69 bands, lowest in the 35 – 39 band

Premature deaths (75 & under) per 100,000 population: 333 – slightly lower than both the Torbay rate & the rate for England as a whole

Deprivation in relation to living conditions – only a small area within the centre of town registers within this index with approximately 8% living in areas ranked among the 20% most deprived areas for living conditions in England

Deprivation in relation to living environment – approximately 31% of residents live in areas ranked among the 20% most deprived areas for living environment in England

Education:

46.8% of Brixham children gained GCSE pass grades in 8 core subjects 2016/18 compared to 45.2% in Torbay & 47.3% in England overall

68.85% had access to Early Years support compared to 69.8% in Torbay & 69.5% across England

24.20% of Brixham children accessed free school meals as compared to 27.9% in Torbay & 26.1% across England

Crime: Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour rates in Brixham in 2016/17 & 2017/18 were significantly lower than in the rest of Torbay

Finance: 20.6% of children in Brixham were assessed as living in low income families as compared to 21.1% in Torbay & 18.3% in England as a whole.

Between 2015 & 2018 1.69% of Brixham’s population were in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance or Universal Credit as compared to 2.3% for Torbay & 1.9% for England

Debt query rates to the Citizens Advice Bureau were significantly lower for Brixham residents than for Torbay

14.7% of Brixham residents aged 60+ claimed Pension credits between 2015 & 2018 compared to 15.6% in Torbay & 12.7% in England

Adult Social Care support - between 2015 & 2018 11,343 new support requests were made to the CAB by Brixham residents aged 65 & over compared to 12,544 in Torbay

Learning Disabilities support – the rate of claims in Brixham is significantly less than across Torbay as a whole

Long term mental health support – the rate of claims from 18 – 64 year olds in Brixham between 2015 & 2018 was significantly lower than the rate in Torbay as a whole

Primary Personal Care support – the rate of claims in Brixham is significantly lower than the rate for Torbay as a whole

Admissions to hospital – the rate of admissions to hospital were significantly lower in Brixham than for Torbay & for England as a whole. However, the rates for admissions both due to alcohol abuse or related to obesity, while lower than Torbay, were both significantly higher than for England as a whole. Both admissions of children aged 0 - 14 & those for falls for residents aged 65 & above were also significantly lower than the rates for Torbay & England as a whole

Appendix 2 - BTC Strategic Plan - Prioritised Action Plan

Objective	Action	Priority	By when	By who	Monitored by	