



Brixham Town Council Strategy 2020-2023

**Adopted:
Reviewed:**

FOREWORD

Welcome to the latest Brixham Town Council Strategic plan for the period 2020-23, following 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 last four years for residents, businesses and visitors and the Council is determined to continue to build on these improvements going forward.

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 to take on more of the services which it has traditionally provided.

While the Council will resist taking on more services that it can practically handle or our community can afford we will press on to achieve a strong, positive future for our town's community and infrastructure.

The new Council elected in 2019 has employed fresh thinking, that draws on feedback given by local people to the previous Council and is reviewing its priorities to create an updated strategy that identifies the issues that we would like to progress during the coming years.

There will continue to be difficult decisions to be made with spending priorities from the money that the Council receives through the precept and other sources. However, the Council is determined to continue with improvements to the town, even if this involves increased spending. We recognise that any spending increases can only be made if we have the clear support of the community.

Councillor Jill Regan
Chairperson
Brixham Town Council

CONTENTS

Item		Page
1.	Introduction & Summary	4
2.	Brixham Town Council	6
3.	A Vision for Brixham	7
4.	Objectives	8
5.	Management of Our Assets & Resources	12
6.	Delivering and Influencing	12
7.	Action Plan	13
8.	Budgeting and Financial Planning	13
9.	Action Plan Monitoring and Review	13
APPENDIX	BTC Strategic Plan Action Plan	15

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 impact can be short or longer term. So, we appreciate that 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 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 2020-23 the Town Council wants to 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 thrive.

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 local population is currently around 17500. New housing developments under construction or with planning permission are set out in Torbay Council's plans.
- The Town Council is firmly not-party political. This means that 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 by promoting the town and investing in public improvements.
- The fishing industry is the largest local employer but generally business interests in the town are mainly small and 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, including and is considering whether to take on more.
- The Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan, now formally adopted, gives our community greater control over future development and helps protect our heritage and environment. It 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 with 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.

This Strategic Plan sets out Brixham Town Council's vision and explains how it aims to achieve its objectives for 2020-2023. 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, Receptionist, Town Lengthsmen and a Building and Facilities Officer.

The Council works through 5 main committees:

Community Services (CS);
Evaluation (E);
Finance and General Purposes (F&GP);
Planning and Regeneration (P&R); and
Town Hall committee (THC)

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 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 council also works through a number of ad hoc working groups and also supports community-based working groups made up of local experts and practitioners in various areas, such as mental health, etc. The activities and membership of the Town Emergency Plan are currently under review as this Strategic Plan is being written.

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.
- manages its own facilities and services in an efficient, effective and responsive way, at an affordable cost that raises particular challenges given the nature of the 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 that comprises a Board of Directors, including a maximum of three town councillors who report to BTC.
- works constructively with Torbay Council to encourage the Unitary Authority to meet its duties to Brixham residents by actively lobbying its Cabinet, Executive Leads, Members and Officers 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 is 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 visitors and creates 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 – CULTURAL BRIXHAM** is about promoting Brixham as a centre of arts development, heritage, charm and innovation to attract creative industries and jobs, creators and leisure visitors.
- **THEME 5 – SUSTAINABLE BRIXHAM** will be delivered through: the Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan; helping address concerns around affordable housing; encouraging improvements in transport links; influencing public service provision and focussing activities and resources on maintaining the public realm and maximising opportunities for young people.
- **Theme 6 – COMMUNITY BRIXHAM** - the Town Council remains committed to developing its community engagement

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 its 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 our 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.
- 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, rail and the car, as well as helping maintain safe pedestrian and cycling routes and addressing any identified heavy traffic and congestion issues, including investigating the possible 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 people together and to promote diversity and equality and explore opportunities for improving education for all.
- Recognise sporting achievement within the parish with an annual award
- Assist and enable organisations which support the most vulnerable in our community
- Maintenance of financially viable self-supporting allotment garden provision

II) BUSINESS BRIXHAM OUR OBJECTIVES

- To encourage and promote spaces where new and growing businesses will want to embed themselves 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
- 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 complimentary and conflicting interest and developing shared strategies.
- To support implementation of structures to help meet the digital and IT needs of residents.
- To explore what opportunities could exist for apprenticeships & for re-skilling/up-skilling 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 and support partners to build a bold 'Destination Brixham' marketing strategy targeting local, regional and national attention (in that order) with stronger 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 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

V) SUSTAINABLE BRIXHAM OUR OBJECTIVES

- To achieve maximum community benefits through implementation of the Brixham Peninsula 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 that maintain and improve the community infrastructure and public realm.
- To make Brixham environmentally sustainable through the protection of our environment.
- To encourage businesses in the sustainable use of the natural environment.
- To help continuation of Brixham's Fairtrade Town status
- To support 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
- 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

VI) COMMUNITY BRIXHAM OUR OBJECTIVES

- Maintain positive & constructive strategies and policies for engaging the community
- 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
- 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 and provide a banner facility in Fore Street to advertise local events
- Hold an annual public consultation about the budget and other consultation 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 in the community.
- 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 Town Council's vision for Brixham. 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 – Agreeing the remaining package of assets and services to be devolved from Torbay Council and implementing any appropriate transfers.
- Asset Management Plan – Reviewing and updating the Town Council's Asset Management Plan in the context of the strategic objectives.
- Decision-making – working to 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.

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.

We 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 by having clear and simple policies and processes.
- community engagement by 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 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 and is not hampered by a ‘use it or lose it’ annual spending plan (where money cannot be rolled forward into a new financial year).

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 the precept 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 quarterly. Reports and updates will be considered by Councillors and staff.

Contact details:

Tracy Hallett, Town Clerk, Brixham Town Council Town Hall, New Road, Brixham
TQ5 8TA

Tel: 01803 859678

e-mail: info@brixhamtowncouncil.gov.uk

website: www.brixhamtowncouncil.gov.uk

Join us on Facebook, Twitter and Linked In

APPENDIX

BTC Strategic Action plan

Objective	Action	Priority	By when	By who	Monitored by
Affordable Housing Scheme	Under Investigation	High	2020/21	BTC	Town Hall Committee
Assisted Gardening Service	Pilot Scheme	High	Starting April 2020	Lengthsmen	Community Services Committee
Information Point	Move to Library and make effective	High	Early 2020	BTC	F&GP
Town Hall Regeneration	Community Engagement	High	January and February 2020	BTC	THC