



# Brixham Town Council

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**Town Clerk: Mrs Tracy Hallett**

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<b>Report Title</b>	Brixham Signal		

## Purpose of Report

To review the charging structure for the Brixham Signal.

## Overview

The Brixham Signal was first produced in July 2008 as an eight page black and white newsletter. It has developed over the years and is now a 24 page newsletter with the front and back pages (inside and out) as colour.

At the time, the Town Council wanted to apply for Quality Council status and to achieve this, the Town Council introduced the newsletter as a form of communication to residents.

It should be noted that in 2008, the Council did not have any social media presence or a website of its own. The Council had a page on Torbay Council's website.

The Brixham Signal is issued quarterly in the months of January, April, July and October with just over 10,000 copies being printed.

## Current Charging Structure

	Advert Size			
	Eighth	Quarter	Half	Full
4 issues (Black & White)	£114.38	£240.19	£480.38	£960.75
1 Issue (Black & White)	£34.31	£68.63	£137.25	£274.50
Front / Back Page (Colour) 4 Issues		£366.00	£732.00	
Back Page 1 Issue (Colour) 1 Issue		£109.80	£219.60	
Inside Front / Back Page (Colour) 4 Issues	£160.13	£320.25	£640.50	£1,281.00
Inside Front / Back Page (Colour) 1 Issue	£48.04	£96.08	£192.15	£384.30

## Cost to the Council

The 2021/22 draft budget allows for a budget of £11,840 for the Brixham Signal. This is made up as follows:

Printing	£4,020
Royal Mail delivery	£7,820

In addition to this, there is admin time for:

- Contacting existing advertisers at renewal
- Finding new advertisers
- Producing the newsletter
- Liaising with printers and Royal Mail

On average this amounts to 10 hours per issue.

The 2021/22 draft budget allows for £4,000 income generated from selling advertising space. Therefore, the cost to the Council is £7,840.

## Delivery

At the inception of the newsletter in 2008, a local business delivered it to every residential property. However, whilst they were reliable, it would take them up to four weeks to deliver which meant that much of the information was out of date by the time the final one was delivered.

Royal Mail deliver the newsletter within a week. However, it is not without its flaws.

1. The newsletter has to be delivered to the Swindon Royal Mail depot to be sorted into delivery batches before returning to the Brixham sorting office for delivery.
2. We have received the following complaints over the years:
  - Some residents do not receive the newsletter
  - Some residents received two copies
  - Royal Mail treat a block of flats as one delivery point. Therefore, instead of delivering one to each flat, only one copy is delivered to the block.
3. The timeframe dictated by Royal Mail means that articles have to be submitted to the Town Council at least one month prior to the issue date.

## Cost Considerations

To calculate the charges, the following considerations have been taken into account:

- Delivery
- Printing
- Admin Time
- Number of pages of advertising space

The current format of the newsletter has four pages of advertising and based on the delivery and printing costs, the Council would need to charge the following:

	<b>E</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>F</b>
One Issue B&W	£112	£205	£396	£773
Four Issues B&W	£336	£614	£1,188	£2,318
Four Issues Front / Back Colour		£983	£1,900	
Four Issues Inside Front / Back Colour		£860	£1,663	

If advertising was increased to six pages, the charges would be:

	<b>E</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>F</b>
One Issue B&W	£75	£136	£264	£515
Four Issues B&W	£224	£409	£792	£1,545
Four Issues Front / Back Colour		£655	£1,267	
Four Issues Inside Front / Back Colour		£573	£1,109	

For comparison purposes, we have obtained quotes for 4 additional pages in the Signal to allow for more advertising pages. This would increase the printing costs but not the Royal Mail cost. The annual budget would then increase to £16,820.

8 pages of advertising:

	<b>E</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>F</b>
One Issue B&W	£79	£144	£278	£542
Four Issues B&W	£236	£431	£833	£1,626
Four Issues Front / Back Colour		£689	£1,333	
Four Issues Inside Front / Back Colour		£603	£1,166	

10 pages of advertising:

	<b>E</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>F</b>
One Issue B&W	£63	£115	£222	£434
Four Issues B&W	£189	£345	£667	£1,301
Four Issues Front / Back Colour		£551	£1,066	
Four Issues Inside Front / Back Colour		£482	£933	

It should be noted that the more advertising space available, the more admin time will be spent on seeking advertisers.

### **Digital Newsletters**

The Town Council now has a large social media presence and its own website with a page dedicated to the past and present newsletters. These methods are used to engage with the community and publicise the Council's activities.

The benefits of digital newsletters are:

- Reduced timeframes resulting in more up to date information in the newsletter.
- Reduced costs.
- Improving the Councils carbon footprint and therefore helping the environment.
- The newsletter will reach the residents who want to read it.
- Every page can be full colour.
- Email contacts, websites etc can be presented as clickable links, making it easier to access internet content and service providers.

The disadvantages of digital newsletters are:

- Some residents will not receive a copy due to no internet access at home.
- Advertisers may not be so keen to advertise.

By moving to a digital version, the Council could consider issuing additional newsletters throughout the year. This can either be done on an adhoc basis known as “special issues” or increase from quarterly to bi-monthly with fewer pages but more up to date information.

### **Matters to take into consideration**

Advertisers usually sign up for a full year of advertising space and their renewals are at different times of the year. Some advertisers are due for renewal now and the decision has been made to only offer them a renewal for one month to allow the Council to consider the contents of this report. However, there will be other advertisers that are not due for renewal yet, some of which only renewed their advert in November in time for the January issue.

### **Digital Advertising Rates**

It is difficult to gauge how many people will view the Brixham Signal if it was only produced on the Councils website. Advertising in a digital newsletter would normally be sold based on the number of hits. However, we do not have a clear picture of how many hits we could receive if the Brixham Signal was just published on the Councils website.

It is therefore considered that the Council should use a marketing platform. Both NALC and DALC use a company called mailchimp to issue their newsletters. A marketing platform such as this will allow residents to subscribe / unsubscribe to the newsletter. A subscription with Mailchimp, based on 10,000 subscribers will cost in the region of £700 per annum.

It is considered that the following rates would be realised:

	<b>E</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>F</b>
One Issue	£15	£27	£52	£101
Four Issues	£58	£107	£206	£402
Four Issues Front / Back		£170	£330	
Four Issues Inside Front / Back		£149	£288	

This is based on:

- Mailchimp Subscription
- Admin time
- 4 pages of advertising
- Full Colour
- 50 printed copies

The aim being to ensure that the newsletter is cost neutral to the Council by the end of the financial year 2021/22.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Council should:

- Move the newsletter to a full colour digital version from July
- Retain the quarterly issue with adhoc “special” editions as and when required
- Subscribe to Mailchimp
- Continue to print 50 copies that can be available to collect at the Town Hall and the Library (when COVID allows).
- A new digital advertising rate should be introduced commensurate with the lower costs of producing the newsletter as shown above.
- Advertisers to be contacted to advise of the change and (1) agree a longer advertising period based on the amount they have paid, the period remaining and the new charges or (2) agree a refund if they no longer wish to advertise. It should be noted that this will only affect 4 advertisers.
- The What’s On and Contact Numbers sections of the Brixham Signal to be removed from the regular issues BUT create a separate issue that can be updated and issued as and when required.