

Brixham Town Council

Community Recovery Plan



Adopted
Reviewed

July 2020

INTRODUCTION

To begin to address the inevitable damage the COVID 19 pandemic has already had on the economy and life of our community (and the effects of which are likely to be continuing and long lasting) Brixham Town Council has begun to build its own Community Recovery Plan for our town. The idea of the Recovery Plan is to identify what we as a Council and as a community can do to help get Brixham back on track as and when lockdown is lifted.

Many businesses are reporting good trading since the easing of lockdown but also report a deal of nervousness of the possible effects of a potential 'second spike' or local lockdown.

Many of the ideas are developments or extensions of plans the Council already had and so can look to be funded through those plans. Others may need funding to be identified and agreed.

The Working Group are suggesting the Council should move forward with all of the ideas on this list. Councillors are asked to agree this and suggest any additional ones which may be deemed appropriate, after which the Working Group can develop a prioritised action plan with funding proposals for Council to agree in due course.

THE COUNCIL'S INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

Town Clerk's work on safeguarding staff and public, Town Hall campus closure and re-opening, including work with partners.

Producing and updating a list of businesses that were offering home deliveries.

Supporting businesses in applying for grants from Torbay Council.

BTC COVID 19 Emergency Social Fund

At the very start of the lockdown, the Council set aside its usual grant giving funds for 2020/21, plus funds held in the ear marked reserves, for those needing emergency support arising from the crisis. The newly formed grant amounted to £26,500. In addition, the Council received £13,000 from Torbay Council.

Under the Emergency Scheme of Delegation granted to the Town Clerk, it was agreed that the Council should spend the money granted by Torbay Council to fund a Mental Health support scheme. The project proposes providing counselling sessions to those who need support but who could not otherwise afford it, through referrals by the organisations within the 'Brixham Stronger Together' Partnership.

Support for & participation in the Brixham Stronger Together partnership

BTC's support was invaluable in the first days in paying for the creation of an information leaflet, distributed to all households, with information on useful contacts for those worried about any aspect of the emergency.

Maintaining bus services

Lobbying of bus companies, Torbay Council and our MP began in response to the proposed slashing of bus services within the town and continues.

CONSULTATION ON FURTHER ACTION

To help develop this Recovery Plan, the Council set up a Working Group comprising the Town Clerk with Cllrs Giles and Hoggart plus Matthew Crabtree, Chair of the Brixham Chamber of Commerce and Katherine Oliverio, Chair of the Brixham Stronger Together

partnership and General Manager of Yes @ the Edge, meeting (virtually) fortnightly. The Working Group wanted to consult as widely as possible, particularly with local businesses within the town as well as local voluntary and charitable groups, sporting organisations, school representatives and local residents. Brixham Chamber of Commerce discussed ideas from local businesses at their virtual meeting on 14th July. Ideas were sought for small things, some quick wins or for larger projects which may take longer to put together and need external funding. There may be things the Town Council can do, things we as a community can do or things for which we may need to lobby Torbay Council or national Government.

Information on the project, with a request for ideas, was included in the July edition of the Signal.

Overall, the ideas put forward are that Brixham should be a tidy, nice place to be, with good access around the town.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE RECOVERY PLAN

The consultation produced the following ideas:

High St Recovery:

By the Town Council

Offer free gutter clearing along Fore St and Middle St (via the Lengthsmen service)

Offer loans/grants towards re-painting/refreshing shop fronts within the central area and the lanes/shop backs around the central car park – to improve the ‘first impression’ of the town for new visitors

Renew markets in town – street markets/Fish Market/Scala Hall

Promote a Brixham ‘shop local’ scheme - this could include a ‘shop local’ loyalty card scheme and an app for finding local suppliers. This could also include provision of information and training for businesses, through the Chamber of Commerce, and local events – something we do so well in this town.

Improve information available about the ‘offer ‘ in the town, with signage (such as ‘You are here’ map displays’) and maps showing the locations of businesses, available to tourist destinations and holiday accommodation in and outside of the town. It has also been suggested looking at ways of improving information about the town to those with difficulties – be that those with hearing impairments (for whom speaking to people wearing masks presents particular difficulties, those with dementia or those with impaired mobility).

By working with Torbay Council

Seek improvements to the access to town from the central car park (including painting and creation of new accesses where appropriate).

Lobby Torbay to lift car parking and toilet charges in Brixham for, say, 1 year.

Bring forward the solar powered bins project for the town centre. Lobbying has re-started on this subject and proposals will be put to Brixham Town Council shortly. However, we will also need local organisations to get behind it to build momentum, also remembering that we are trying to achieve this for the whole of Torbay, not just Brixham, and that means wider partnership working, perhaps with Torquay and Paignton Chambers of Commerce.

Town Centre 'Greening':

By the Town Council

Landscaping improvements and general tidying up for the central areas, particularly around the central car park. This could be through floral displays or other schemes, in conjunction with Pride in Brixham and the Keep Brixham Beautiful project.

Transport & Travel:

By working with Torbay Council

Buses - work with Torbay to restore an in-town bus service including services to Higher Brixham

Buses - if that proves impossible, work to develop a community transport/bus solution, working with Torbay Community Development Trust and other organisations within the town in the first instance.

Pedestrian & cafe outdoor seating space - Increase space in town for pedestrian usage – several residents have suggested possibly closing King St, permanently or more likely on specific days & times, to help with social distancing and increase options for outdoor use. This will clearly require considerable thought, particularly if we are successful in keeping an in-town circular bus route.

Tourism:

By working with Torbay Council

Maintain a harbour side pontoon for the Heritage Trawlers. The Harbourmaster is looking to change the arrangements by which the heritage trawlers Pilgrim and Vigilance moor alongside the harbour, requiring them to go to a swinging mooring away from the harbour side when not either taking on or unloading passengers. Pilgrim and Vigilance are working together and asking that we assist to help them secure agreement for dedicated, permanent "residency" use of the end of the pontoon would be the singular, most helpful result for both vessels. This, they feel, is essential for maintaining the vessels, safe boarding/disembarkation for members of the public as well as access on open days, school visits and fundraising events. If they could secure a permanent mooring, they could look to further promote both boats with leaflet dispensers, renewed signage (pontoon signs are out of date), better waste bins suitable for sacks of rubbish (current litter bins are inadequate), improved electricity supply and perhaps also a roofed shelter, office & meeting space, etc.

Other:

By the Town Council

Continue to support the 'Brixham Stronger Together' partnership. This began working on areas such as food availability for the vulnerable but soon moved into looking at mental health support and so on and has developed into a really valuable resource, not simply for its original purpose – to ensure quick action and reduce duplication – but to build stronger relationships, making it easier for organisations to work together. We are looking to distribute second information leaflet on where and how to access support for those suffering with mental health issues, along with the Brixham BeWell scheme information, with food and assistance packs being developed by Yes@ the Edge & Youth Genesis (among others) for those with children suffering food poverty during the crisis. It is also suggested that, if the mental health referral scheme referred to above is successful, Brixham Town Council could look to funding this on an on-going basis.

Use BTC website and staff to provide a Brixham Volunteering Opportunities information hub – many people have discovered the value of volunteering (both for our charities and voluntary organisations and for themselves) during lockdown and are looking for ways to continue with it. This particularly includes younger people

Use local workmen and tradesmen – perhaps as a ‘starter’ for the garden scheme to work with (and free up time for) the Lengthsmen as that scheme grows.