

BLISLAND PARISH COUNCIL



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ANNUAL PARISH MEETING FOR BLISLAND

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Blisland Electors held at Blisland Village Hall on Thursday 14th May 2025 at 6pm.

The Chair of Blisland Parish Council welcomed everyone attending the meeting.

Present: 13 members of the public , 8 Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk

1. The Meeting approved the Minutes of the 2024 Annual Parish Meeting held on 23rd May 2024
Proposed: Cllr Trevarthen, **Seconded:** Cllr Stansfield

2. **Community Transport Update presented by B. Cornelius**

Since 2019, community transport provision has faced significant challenges, including the loss of existing infrastructure such as EV charging points and transport services.

An application was submitted to Peninsula Transport to explore options for delivering a transport network across the Camel Valley. The resulting study confirmed that current provision is insufficient to meet local needs.

Funding has now been secured to appoint a Community Transport Coordinator for an initial 12-month period. Additionally, a bid was submitted to the CAP for an electric vehicle, which has been ranked as the number one priority under community transport.

Four candidates have been shortlisted for the Coordinator role—two with direct transport experience and two with strong transferable skills.

There is a clear need for neighbouring communities to collaborate, and contributions are being sought from each parish within the CAP area. The Coordinator role is expected to be four days per week, with potential to expand depending on future developments.

Currently, there is little to no public transport available, and alternative options are costly—for example, a return taxi journey from Bodmin to Treliske can cost approximately £150.

While there is a case for advocating for increased subsidised public transport, it is important to remain focused. The transport study identified specific needs, and although additional funding opportunities exist, there is a risk of overextending efforts and failing to deliver meaningful outcomes.

The Coordinator will assess the most effective approach to operating a community bus service. In the meantime, volunteers are being sought for potential bus driver roles. Anyone interested is encouraged to come forward.

3. Annual Report from the outgoing Cornwall Councillor Cruse was read by the Parish Clerk

It seems incredible that this is my fourth year as your Cornwall Councillor. The number of emails and cases has increased over this period of time, with more and more complex cases coming forward. The reduction in Councillors has increased our work load by 30% and is now a very time consuming position. I have used the Casework Assist feature and found it generally effective to get to the right officer within the Council to deal with the matter. Committee work continues to take a great deal of time, since each meeting requires the reading of hundreds of pages, and all to be diligently read since we are taking important decisions on many matters, particularly in planning and health care. I have taken this very seriously with a 92% attendance across all committees and Full Council. I have personally not been involved in finances or constitutional matters since I don't feel I have great expertise in that domain. Financially the Council has struggled partly to do with the payment of some rather nasty debts incurred by the previous administration which were due to impart a 53 million surcharge if not paid off and the increase in demand for Adult Social Care and Children's services as well as the increase in temporary housing requirements. The Portfolio holder for Finance and the Financial Officers have produced a balanced budget and they are to be congratulated particularly since the Labour Government has reduced funding and cut the Rural grant. I would add it was a piece of cross-party co-operation which enabled the Budget to be approved, and I feel this is particularly noteworthy.

I enjoy my role on the Harbours Board and would like to mention how well this is run by the Maritime Manager Chris Jones, his grasp of all matters to do with the Harbours is excellent and our reserves have increased annually with some great improvements to some harbours. I have also found my role on the National Landscape Partnership very enjoyable and there have been some excellent public participation events where we have been able to involve residents who may not normally access these wonderful spaces.

I have also been pleased to note that more members of the public have used the 'report it' system which has enabled a more accurate recording of where problems are positioned, and I have always found it to be a very effective system.

There is much to be said for continuity, and it is my hope that our administration is able to continue looking after Cornwall in the following four years.

Cllr Stansfield added that the newly elected Cornwall Councillor couldn't attend due to conflicting commitments

4. Police Community Update

Local Police Officers Tom and Doug continue to hold monthly community surgeries, which remain well attended and valued by residents.

Crime figures over the past year show no significant spikes or emerging patterns of concern, and there was no additional information of particular concern to report. Officers recently engaged with a couple of campervan users in the area, and no issues or concerns were identified.

However, there have been several targeted thefts in the wider area. A number of large lawn mowers have been stolen, and the crematorium reported the theft of both a tractor and a lawn mower. These incidents appear to have been deliberate and targeted.

The officers reiterated their commitment to supporting rural communities and farmland areas.

Cllr Stansfield commended the value of the community surgeries, noting that they continue to be both successful and helpful in maintaining local engagement with the police.

5. Parish magazine report presented by Howard Sprenger – the Community News Editor

Over the last year, the number of subscribers has risen from 105 to 129 and the number of copies printed each month from 180 to 200. This increase is largely a result of the opening of the shop at St. Breward (although we like to think that the quality of the magazine might have something to do with it too!)

Each of the 12 issues has been available on the 1st of the month, except for the January issue, which was delayed by a few days due to the Christmas and New Year holiday. We usually have plenty of contributions although more are always welcome. The January issue was increased by 4 pages to 44 as a result of the amount of material available.

Beth Cauldwell has stepped down as Chair and I now take the chair at the four meetings we have each year. We are also looking for a new Deputy Editor as Richard Cavin will be leaving Cornwall later this year. My thanks go to them and all the other committee members for their help over the last year.

In my June Editorial I shall be thanking the retiring Cornwall Councillors for their contributions to the magazine while they have been in office and I would be very pleased to include thanks from Blisland and St. Breward Parish Councils in their submissions for the June edition.

6. Village hall report presented by Phil Shephard – the Chair of the Village Hall

The past year has been extremely busy for the Village Hall Committee, whose members continue to work tirelessly to support the hall and its activities. Thanks were expressed to all committee members for their ongoing commitment and hard work.

The committee currently includes dedicated maintenance and health and safety representatives. The Chair's role has also expanded significantly and now includes responsibility for bookings, promotion, and social media.

A wide range of events has been organised throughout 2025, including two particularly successful events – the Easter Fayre and the Christmas Fayre.

Regular Bingo and Quiz Nights continue to be very popular. However, live music events have been less successful, with only 51 tickets sold at a recent event, and discos have not attracted the level of attendance hoped for.

Due to the workload placed on the small committee, it has been suggested that events should be limited to around eight per year to make them more manageable.

In terms of maintenance, the roof has recently been strengthened, although the existing dip in the structure cannot be corrected without removing the entire roof. The current solar panel system is also operating inefficiently and is not considered financially viable to repair. The committee is therefore exploring the possibility of replacing the panels and battery system, while remaining mindful of the need to protect the hall's financial reserves.

Bob Smith has joined the Village Hall Committee, while Kelly and [name] have stepped down. Clare, the Treasurer, will also be stepping down from her role.

The hall has recently attracted interest from the NHS, which is hoping to hold four events per year at the venue.

The committee acknowledged that attracting people through the doors remains a challenge. Final thanks were again given to all committee members, not only for organising events but also for the considerable amount of ongoing work required behind the scenes to keep the hall operating successfully.

7. The Community Association report was presented by Pat Almond – the Treasurer

Shop has had a successful year financially and we had a modest trading surplus, though we continue to subsidise the Post Office.

On the positive side

- Craft sales, cafe income and business unit rental all continue to contribute significantly to keeping the overall business thriving.
- The Shop has supported many charities and village organisations with fund raising events
 - Bacon Butties Saturdays for the Village Hall, Alzheimer's Society and the Air Ambulance
 - Continues to host the monthly Police Surgery
 - Organised an Author's evening with Sherry Vowden 101 Squares on Bodmin Moor
 - The original Shop sign was restored, thanks to Derek Crowle and Mary Riddiford and now hangs outside the Shop.
 - New flooring has been installed.
 - Funding has been applied for from the Lottery Fund to enable a person to be employed for a year to develop the café and craft area
 - A grant was awarded for the purchase of a new laptop that is available for public use.

Although the Shop is in a sound financial position, and has all the business units currently rented, there are several issues which impact on our continued viability.

- Continued price inflation pressures
- More shop closures than we would like due to a lack of volunteers
- Reduced weekly takings as a result of closures
- PO now loss-making but very much part of our community shop ethos
- Need to reinvest funds - flooring, shop refit, decoration, roof inspections and repair

We cannot stress highly enough how vital our volunteers are, without them we would not have our Community Shop. This is something we constantly need to impress on the whole village. We will not continue to be sustainable if we have to keep closing for several afternoons per week. Those who do use the community shop will start to drift away if we are not open when they need us. Some members of the committee have served for 10 years.

If the village wants to see the Shop thrive and continue to be an asset to the community, then please consider volunteering.

- If you work from home, come and work in the Shop for an hour or so, great wifi, free tea & cakes.
- If you have an hour to spare donate it to the Shop, bring your knitting, book, dog and sit in the café, sometimes all that is needed is a second person to be available in the Shop. Blisland Community Association

8. Institute report was presented by Cllr Lee Spencer

As always, a busy year at the Institute. Disappointingly our mobile hairdresser who was getting popular, was unable to continue last year for personal reasons. We also had a number of Art & craft shows have again been well supported. It's worth noting if you didn't know that our Easter & Christmas art exhibition, all of the commission is generously donated back to the institute to help maintain it for future generations. As with other village assets, it is important that the community continues to support events to keep them viable. The institute also hosts the fortnightly Friday community coffee mornings plus a number of private bookings.

Maintenance wise, we had the two front windows repaired this year since the sills were in a poor state of repair. We were lucky enough to secure a grant through the National Lottery Heritage Fund which covered over a substantial part of the costs which was a great result.

We recently gained further funding for a survey for us to determine the priorities for the future. The Council will now discuss the report and keep you updated on any potential grant funded improvement projects for the building.

Thanks to those who help out, give their valuable time and without which it would be a lot more difficult.

9. Report from Blisland with Temple PCC was presented by Robert Pippard – the Secretary

Robert updated the Assembly that the Rev Robyn was licensed in 2024.

The Church currently holds two regular community services each month, together with a monthly evening prayer service and an annual benefice service.

Temple Church continues to hold regular services and remains an important part of the wider church community.

Following a break in recent years, Carol Services returned to Blisland in 2024 and were very well received. The Church also continues to enjoy and promote a wide variety of music within its services and events.

Efforts continue to ensure that the church buildings are maintained as sustainably as possible. An application has also been submitted to extend the graveyard.

The Church has received a grant from the Diocese to help improve services and activities for children and young people. The congregation remains open to constructive suggestions from the community regarding future activities and improvements.

10. Blisland Fayre report was presented by Keith Lowden

Keith Lowden reported that the Blisland Fayre has now completed its third successful year.

The event performed well financially and generated a profit, with 80% of the proceeds being returned directly to the community. Last year, funds were used to sponsor the community Christmas lunch, and this year donations of £100 are being made to various local community groups.

Attendance throughout the day was estimated at between 400 and 500 people.

The organisers are continuing to retain 20% of the profits each year in order to build a financial buffer to help cover future costs and ensure the long-term sustainability of the event.

The Fayre is organised by a small committee of four volunteers, all of whom were thanked for the considerable amount of hard work and commitment they contribute to making the event a success.

11. Report from the Parish Council was presented by the Chair – Cllr Meads

Firstly, I would like to introduce and welcome to the Parish Council three new Councillors, Clare Shannon, Gerry Sutton and Phil Kennen , all of whom joined last year .

It has been another busy year for the Parish Council.

Members have provided consultation responses to 19 planning applications. and have also carried out a number of site visits . Denham House, Carwen, Fourwinds, Trewardale

The Council has also engaged with a number of key organisation over the last year

Graveyard Extension

It has provided support and advice to members of the Parochial Church Council on grants with the offer of help in completing any grant applications. It has also assisted in providing guidance associated specifically with the proposed graveyard extension .

SWW Sewerage Treatment Plant

There have also been site meetings and regular email communication between the Parish Council and SWW over the breakdown of the Sewerage Treatment Plant including

- the timescale for the installation of the new Biological Treatment Unit,
- the number of tankers that were visiting the site to remove the waste and the damage they were causing to the roads, especially the entrance to the site and the grass edges of the Village Green.

The work has now been completed; the Treatment unit is now operational and the road leading into the site has been resurfaced.

At this point I would like to say **thank you** to the resident/s who noticed and alerted the Council to the pollution in the river.

Community Shop

Members have also met with the Chair of the Community Shop regarding renewing the noticeboard with a much larger one that will provide more information space for both the shop and the Parish Council. This is ongoing .

Planning

The Parish Council has also met on a number of occasions with CC Planning Officers especially related to the Governments new National Planning Policy Framework and other related issues.

Certain Councillors have also attended The Community Area Partnership Meetings

Grants

The Council has also provided some funding, of up to £100, to help support the coffee morning group.

Finger Post

Last year the Council had hoped to add new finger signs to the existing signpost on the corner of the Village Green. Unfortunately, this was not possible. The alternative has been to use the old metal lamp post for the three signs which is in keeping with the existing signpost that we had hoped to use. The lamp post has been painted in preparation for the signs to be fitted, which I understand will be shortly. The new directional signs are, the Village Hall, the Village Shop and the Institute . In addition, the Council has also had the rusty toilet sign cleaned and repainted.

Highways

The Parish Council has on numerous occasions this year been in contact with CC Highways Department over the removal of the broken Granite Way Marker at Tresarret, which is a scheduled monument. .The Parish Council will continue to pursue Highways over, **its removal, its repairing and its reinstating..**

Water runoff from the fields is still an ongoing issue although work has been carried out by the landowners and CC Highways which has reduced the amount of water on the roads although it has not removed the problem altogether, and there are still issues which may relate to the drainage system from the dualled A30. The Parish Council is continuing to monitor the situation along with CC Highways.

The runoff from the fields at St Pratt's Cross was also investigated. The problem was eventually found to be a mix of the water runoff not hitting the road drain and that part of the drainage system under the road had collapsed. Work has been carried out to rectify the problem which is now being monitored.

The Institute

Last year saw the completion of the refurbishment to the front windows of the Institute with a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund of £7,928

The Council has also taken advantage of a grant from CC Community Capacity Fund of £2,375 to have two surveys carried out on improving the fabric of the building and its facilities. Damp continues to be an issue which will be addressed as will the buildings acoustics problem. In addition, a hearing loop will also be installed as part of the upgrading of the building making it more user friendly. Plus, the possible addition of a sound system for presentations ,meetings etc..

Policies

As you will have read in the Digital Newsletter the Parish Council has written, reviewed and adopted a number of Policies related to the various activities and assets of the Parish, that the Council either owns or operates on behalf of the Community. The aim of these Policies is to provide a framework that operates in the overall interest of the entire Parish; three that have recently been updated are the Policies in connection with the Financial Regulation of the Parish Council, the Policy regarding the use and maintenance of the Village Green and the Council's Grant and Donation Policy.

Blisland Newsletter

The Blisland Parish newsletter continues to provide information on relevant topics helping to keep the community informed with its regularly updates on what is happening locally and sometimes nationally if it has the potential, to impact on the Parish. It is a continues task updating the content of the Newsletter and thanks must go to Councillor Stansfield for maintaining the flow of news .

The newsletter has reported on SWW progress on renewing the treatment plant and on discussions with CC Highways over the water runoff from the fields and has promoted events and activities in and around the Parish .

Over the year the Council also has also awarded a number of contracts for example the maintenance of the swings, which includes a health & safety inspection, the footpaths within the Parish - and the Village Green, its trees and benches.

Going forward the Parish Council

- will be considering the changes in the NPPF, the overarch aim of which is to build 1.5 million houses within the lifetime of this GOVERNMENT FOR Cornwall this will mean increasing the number of houses they have to deliver from 2700 per year (which they have not achieved anyway) to 4421 per year and the implication this may have on the Blisland Parish.
- The Council will also be looking to produce a Neighbourhood Priority Statement when the existing NDP runs out in 2028 This will align with the new NPPF and the new Cornwall Development Plan when it is produced.
- The Community Bus service is a Service which the Council are supportive of and will be looking to be involved in going forward.
- The Graveyard extension is something the Parish Council has already provided some administrative advice and guidance on and will continue to do so, as and when requested over the coming year.

I would like to finish my report with a big thank you to my fellow Councillors for their support and for all the hard work and commitment they have given over the last year to carrying out their Council duties.

I would also like to thank our Clerk for her continuous administrative work ensuring the Council carries out its statutory duties appropriately .

My thanks also go to our Responsible Finance Officer for ensuring the Council finances are kept in order.

Lastly a thank you to our caretaker for maintaining the public toilets and keeping tidy the surrounding

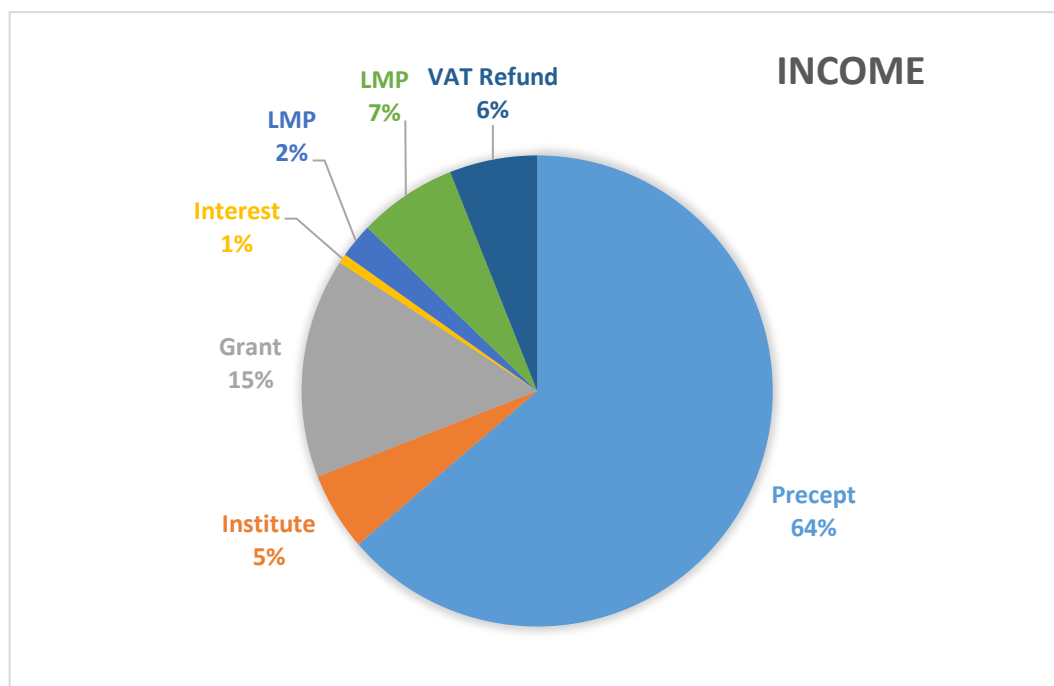
12. Report from the Parish Council RFO

The 2024/25 Financial year commenced with a total of £47,200 being held between the two Parish Council Bank Accounts. At the end of the said period, the sum of £58,496 will be carried forward to the 2025/26 financial year.

The sum to be carried forward also falls within the acceptable financial holding for a Parish Council.

Income

The council received a total income of **£52,580.67** during the year. This was primarily made up of the **Precept**, which accounted for **£33,500** or **63.75%** of the total income. Additional income sources included **£7,942.87** from a **Grant** (15.11%), **£4,815.45** from the **Local Maintenance Partnership (LMP)** (9.16%), and **£3,166.92** from a **VAT Refund** (6.02%). Income from the **Institute** contributed **£2,818.16** (5.36%), while **Interest** earned on funds amounted to **£337.27** (0.64%).

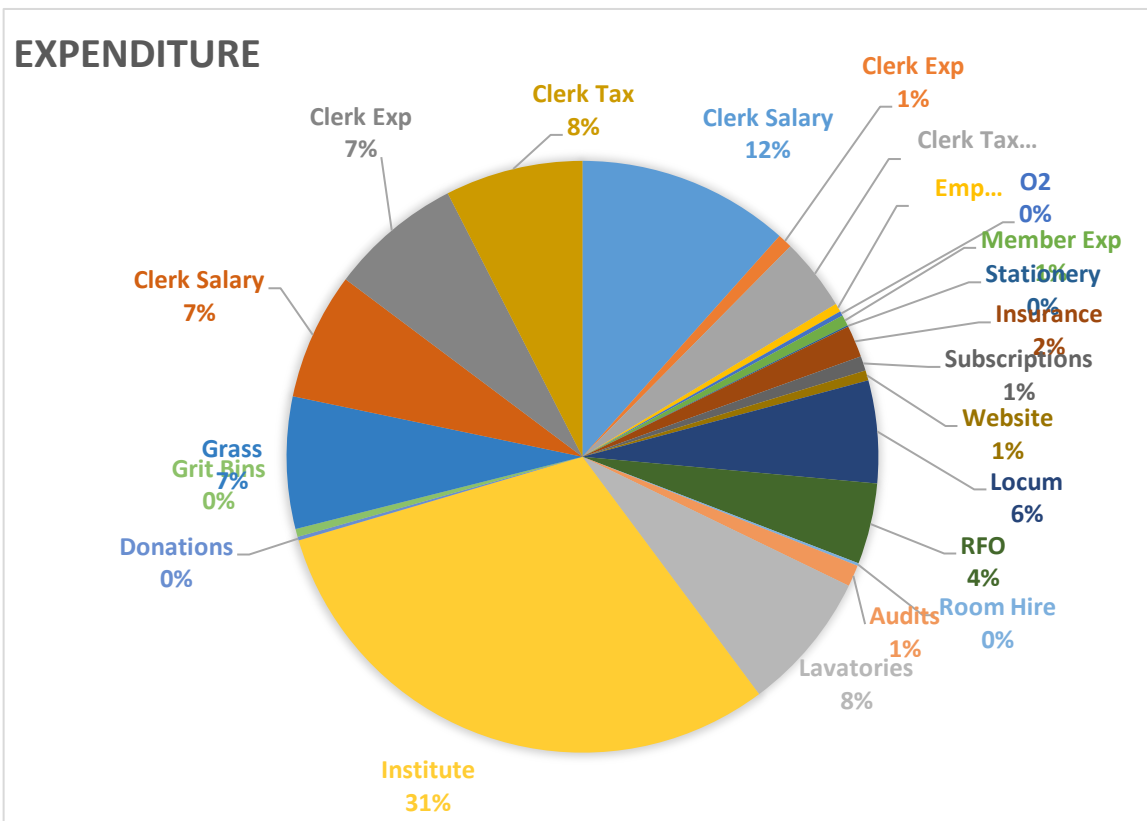


Expenditure

The council's total expenditure for the year was **£41,465.90**. A major area of spending was the **works carried out in the Institute to replace the windows**, with a total cost of **£15,137.83**, a large portion of this was covered by a **grant from the National Heritage Fund**. The **Clerk Salary** amounted to **£5,732.75** (**13.82%**), while **Grass cutting** cost **£3,563.16** (**8.59%**) and **Lavatories** came to **£3,775.15** (**9.11%**).

Staff-related costs included **Clerk Expenses** (£399.93, **0.96%**), **Clerk Tax** (£1,957.25, **4.72%**), **Employer NI** (£230.28, **0.56%**), along with additional personnel-related payments of **£3,439.45** (**8.30%**), **£3,579.71** (**8.63%**), and **£3,719.98** (**8.97%**).

Other key expenditures included **Locum services** (£2,770, **6.68%**), **RFO payments** (£2,185, **5.27%**), **Insurance** (£860.12, **2.07%**), and **Subscriptions** (£394.89, **0.95%**). Smaller amounts were spent on **O2** (£124.56, **0.30%**), **Member Expenses** (£292.54, **0.71%**), **Stationery** (£40, **0.10%**), **Website** (£270.94, **0.65%**), **Room Hire** (£72, **0.17%**), **Audits** (£580, **1.40%**), **Donations** (£97.10, **0.23%**), and **Grit Bins** (£216, **0.52%**).



Blisland Institute

The Blisland Institute represents an important asset to the Parish Council, and to the Parish and in 2024/25 generated an income of £2,818, which accounts to 5% of the total income.

Blisland toilets:

Blisland Public Convenience is a valued community facility managed by the Parish Council. Last year, we received public donations totalling **£143.66**, and in January began receiving a regular monthly contribution of **£12** from a local resident

13. Questions

Phill raised concerns that advertising for the event had been insufficient and suggested that attendance numbers should be higher. He felt that the event needed greater promotion and visibility within the community.

Robert Pippard seconded these comments, noting that the event was not particularly obvious or widely publicised.

Pat Almond suggested that distributing flyers throughout the area could help improve awareness and increase attendance at future events.

Meeting closed 19:10

Signed:

Date