

Bradninch Together Community Interest Company

2023 Annual Report



Introduction

This report covers the third operational year of Bradninch Together's activity as a Community Interest Company (CIC). Having started as an informal community group in March 2020, the CIC was incorporated in 2021 for the purpose of supporting and developing community activity and facilities in the Parish of Bradninch. Any profit made from its activities is diverted back into community activity and support.

Bradninch Together CIC has three key objectives to benefit the community:

1. To gather and sustain a team of volunteers who are willing and able to provide nimble and effective responses to community needs.
2. To facilitate the provision of essential needs to relieve hardship, in particular for the elderly, disabled, unwell, and disadvantaged.
3. To enable people to develop projects that enhance care, kindness and mutual support.

We actively welcome approaches from individuals and groups for their community projects and ideas to sit under the BradTog umbrella. Through connecting with us, projects can benefit from the provision of a legal structure, informal advice/coaching, a connection to BradTog's profile and network and access to its communications platforms. It is expected that projects supported by BradTog be driven by those who bring them forward: we are keen to use our learning and networks to help others in the community who have ideas and energy to bring their projects to life.

If you are interested in affiliating your community project with BradTog, or in developing a new project under our umbrella, please contact secretary@bradtog.org.uk

BradTog's activities are overseen by a team of Directors. During 2023, we welcomed Jim Porteous as a Director, joining Kate Beith, Sue Eakers (Secretary), Sally Livsey (Treasurer), Anthony Richards and Sophie West (Chair).

Activities during 2023

Bradninch Winter Project

Between October 2022 and March 2023, BradTog was pleased to support the Town Council in running the Bradninch Winter Project, which was funded by a grant from the Devon Council Growing Communities Fund, secured by Councillor Jim Porteous. The project involved both the promotion of existing community activities in the town and support for the establishment of new activities. In particular, BradTog was involved in communications,

joint funding with the Council two short-term casual paid roles to improve the BradTog website and to procure and promote information on community events and activities.

The Bradninch and Hele Emergency Plan and Flood Prevention Works

During 2023, Sue Eakers and Jim Porteous continued to work with the Town Council on the development of the new Emergency Plan for our parish. Their work was supported by two grants received from the Devon Communities Resilience Forum, one facilitating the working group and the other providing funds for adaptive works to the Guildhall to enable a generator to supply electricity.

The final version of the Bradninch and Hele Emergency Plan was formally adopted by Bradninch Town Council at its meeting of 9th October 2023. The Community Response Team includes representatives from the Council and Bradninch Together; and the BradTog volunteer network is included in the plan as a group who could be mobilised to offer support during an emergency situation.

The Emergency Plan can be found at <https://bradninch-tc.gov.uk/bradninch-and-hele-emergency-plan-2023-completed/> It will be reviewed every six months to ensure that it remains up-to-date.

Houses on Hen Street have suffered repeatedly from flooding as a result of heavy rain. Sue Eakers assisted the Town Council with an application to Devon Communities Resilience Fund for funding to assist with flood prevention works.

Bradninch Town Fair

The 2023 Bradninch Town Fair, which sits under the BradTog umbrella, took place on 16th September. As in previous years, the programme and logistics for the day were coordinated by an informal Steering Group, with support from a number of other organisations, notably the Bradninch & Kentisbeare Cricket Club, Bradninch Scout Group and Bradninch Town Council. Many local organisations and individuals ran stalls and activities on the day, promoting their activities and raising funds to support them.

The Fair saw the return of several events from the previous two years, including the Bradninch Bolt Fun Run and Walk, the Bradninch Produce Show and Scarecrow Competition, the Community Picnic, apple pressing and a performance from the fabled Red Barrows. Activities new for 2023 included the inaugural Bradninch Wildlife Photography Competition, organised by Sustainable Bradninch, an Artisan Market Space and a Circus Skills Workshop, the latter made possible by generous funding from the Town Council. A good day was had by all, in spite of somewhat uncertain weather: thank you to all who helped to make it to happen!

BradAid

The BradAid Hardship Fund was set up in April 2020 to offer modest grants to members of the community in need of immediate help to meet essential costs. It has always relied entirely on donations made from within our community.

Between January and September 2023, 46 BradAid grants were made, bringing the total since the Scheme's inception to 241 – equating to £12,037 – distributed to a total of 69 individuals or households within the parish. In September 2023, the decision was made to suspend BradAid due to lack of available funds. Prior to this decision being taken, an appeal for donations had been published in the community magazines and on social media, and a

number of local MPs and Councillors had been approached for information on any potential sources of funding.

At present, there remains a small balance in the BradAid pot; and the BradTog infrastructure would enable the scheme's reopening should funds become available for distribution in the future.

We would like to express thanks to all those individuals and community groups who have donated to BradAid, which we know has supported many people during tough times, and has helped them to feel part of a caring community.

Other Points of Note

- We have started to collate the stories of the projects with which BradTog has been engaged since its inception. These can be found at <https://www.bradtog.org.uk/bradtog-stories>
- We continue to network with other organisations in our area; for example, in November 2023 we became a member of the Devon Communities Trust.
- BradTog Policies and Guidance have been fully reviewed and updated where necessary.

Looking Ahead

- In light of the approval of the new Bradninch and Hele Emergency Plan, we have reviewed and updated the list of local folk willing to offer help to neighbours in emergency situations. The list currently includes over 90 people. If you are interested in joining the list, please email sophie@bradtog.org.uk We are also keen to have some more Coordinators to oversee volunteers in the different areas or 'zones' of the parish. Again, do get in touch if you are interested.
- The 2024 Town Fair takes place on Saturday 21st September. Favourites such as the Bolt, Produce Show and Scarecrow Trail, Artisan Market Space and Wildlife Photography Competition will be returning, and we are anticipating some new activities, too – so save the date and watch this space! If your community group would like to have a stall or run an activity, you have an idea for some new event or activity or you would like to be part of the team that sets up, takes down and manages the logistics, do get in touch with sophie@bradtog.org.uk – it is great fun to be part of it all!
- We are pleased to welcome Bradninch Twelfth Night under the BradTog umbrella – which will enable the team organising that fantastic town event to make use of our legal structure, financial accountability and communications network.

Financial Report

The legal accounts for the year can be accessed at: <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/13111125/filing-history>

In January 2024, there was a balance of £1,999.65 in the BradTog account, comprising
General Funds: 729.26

BradAid: 141.94

Bradninch Town Fair: £1128.45

Find Out More

Our website, <https://bradtog.org.uk>, provides information about BradTog, its people and projects. For a concise introduction, see <https://bradtog.org.uk/about>. You can also follow Bradninch Together on Facebook and Instagram.

We are always glad to hear from folk in the community who are interested in engaging with BradTog in some way. Contact details for specific areas of activity can be found in the relevant sections of this report. For all other enquiries, please contact secretary@bradtog.org.uk or chair@bradtog.org.uk

Sophie West

Chair

April 2024