



Bradninch Together

Community Interest Company Annual Report 2022

Introduction

This report covers the second 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. At present, the organisation has five voluntary Directors, known informally as the Steering Group. 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.

These objectives are deliberately broad-based, and we actively welcome approaches from individuals and groups for their community projects and ideas to sit under their umbrella. In affiliating 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: while we can offer advice and support, our desire is to use our learning and networks to help folk in the community who have ideas and energy to bring their projects to life.

Sometimes, it may be the case that a project originates within the BradTog Steering Group and is led by one of the Directors.

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

At the end of 2022, the BradTog Directors were Kate Beith, Sue Eakers (Secretary for 2022), Sally Livsey (Treasurer for 2022), Anthony Richards (Chair for 2022) and Sophie West. During the year, we bid farewell to Glenn Roberts as Director, but are pleased to receive his ongoing support on an informal basis. For the 2023 year, Sophie West takes on the role of Chair, while Sue Eakers continues as Secretary and Sally Livsey continues as Treasurer.

Activities during 2022

'Door-Step' Support

Thankfully, the demand for community support directly related to the covid-19 pandemic was reduced in 2022, with no lockdown measures being in place during the year. The offer of 'doorstep' help with shopping and prescriptions etc. for those unable to leave home easily – whether due to covid self-isolation or for other reasons – remained in place, and there was some take-up.

Our network of volunteers remains in place and is to be looped in with the Bradninch Emergency Plan (see below). If you're interested in adding your name to our volunteers list, please contact **chair@bradtog.org.uk**

BradAid

The BradAid hardship fund was set up in April 2020 to offer modest grants of £50 to members of the community in need of short-term help to meet essential costs, such as food and bills. Anybody living in the parish of Bradninch (which includes Hele and outlying areas) is eligible to apply, and individuals may apply for up to four grants (i.e. £200) per year. The application process is straightforward, with applications processed quickly. Information on how the scheme operates and the application process can be found at **<https://www.bradninchtogether.org.uk/bradaid>**

The BradAid fund exists entirely thanks to donations made from within the community; there is therefore no guarantee that it will exist indefinitely, but applications will remain open on an ongoing basis until all funds have been distributed. We, and those who have benefited, are grateful to all who have donated. Information on how to donate to BradAid can also be found by visiting the above webpage.

At 31st December 2022, a total of 194 BradAid grants had been made to 61 individuals since the scheme's inception, totalling a value of £9,700. Of these, 82 (totalling £4,100) were made during the 2022 calendar year, with 15 new individuals having benefitted from support during that time.

Storm Eunice and the Bradninch Emergency Plan

On Friday 17th February 2022, Bradninch – along with communities across the country – was hit by Storm Eunice, taking out power to a large number of homes across town, including some known to be occupied by elderly and vulnerable residents. BradTog connected with the Town Council to instigate a plan to support the community. The Guildhall was opened early on Saturday 18th February by the Town Council as the town's designated 'emergency hub' and, fortunately, there was power available to enable the provision of a warm space and the heating of food and hot water. At BradTog's instigation, Tesco kindly donated £50 to support the provision of refreshments. Leaflets were distributed to homes and notices put on social media, and teams of volunteers distributed hot water, hot drinks and food to folk unable to leave their homes. In the meantime, other households came along to the Guildhall to enjoy warmth, refreshments and company, as well as to charge mobile phones. In the middle of the day, it became clear that power was returning to most households, and BradTog and Council members gathered to discuss a further plan should this be needed, which in the event was not the case.

While the storm response was effective, it became clear during the course of events and conversations that the town's Emergency Plan (EP) did not offer adequate guidance on matters such as leadership, decision making, asset control and collaboration. The inadequacy of the EP was an issue that had previously been identified by Sue Eakers, independently of her role as BradTog Director; and in May 2022 she offered to attend on Bradninch Town Council's behalf a training event hosted by the Devon Communities Resilience Forum (DCRF). Following the training, she reported back to the Town Council and – when it became clear that capacity among the councillors was limited – offered to coordinate the development of a new EP. Sue secured grant funding from the DCRF to support this work; it was hoped initially that it would take the form of a collaborative community project, but in the end participation from the wider community was limited, and the new EP was written by Sue Eakers with support from Councillor Jim Porteous.

Sue sought the agreement of the BradTog Steering Group for a working relationship between Bradninch Town Council and BradTog to be written into the EP and so within the draft (to be ratified by the Council following the May elections), the Community Response Team includes both Town Councillors and nominated Directors from BradTog, while the BradTog zone-based network may be called upon to help with the provision of community support. Particular thanks are due to Sue Eakers and Councillor Jim Porteous for their work in driving the Emergency Plan forward.

Murder Mystery Project

In April 2022, BradTog successfully secured funds from the National Lottery Community Fund for the development of a community Murder Mystery project to mark Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee. It was initially intended for the event to take place in early September 2022 but, for logistical reasons, it was put on hold, with the intention of rescheduling in the spring of 2023. Following the Queen's death, it was felt inappropriate to continue with the original plan and so the grant has been returned. Discussion is currently taking place about the possibility of an alternative community-wide activity in celebration of Bradninch's heritage as a Duchy town.

Bradninch Town Fair

The second 21st century iteration of the Bradninch Town Fair took place on 24th September 2022 at the Kensham Club. The day's activity was coordinated by a small steering group, with BradTog offering particular support with communications and the pulling together of the final programme. Among the many highlights were the second Bradninch Bolt Fun Run/Walk, with over 50 participants, the introduction of a Town Fair Produce Show and a performance from the Red Barrows.

The Fair will return on 16th September 2023, and we really encourage and welcome participation from individuals and groups in the community. We are keen to emphasise that the Fair is run not by committee but by community: while the steering group will manage the logistics required to pull everything together, the activities and events forming part of the day are down to the wider community. The ethos of the Fair is first and foremost putting on a day of activities and events that are accessible to the whole community; and second, creating an opportunity for local groups and organisations to raise some funds. If you are interested in finding out more – perhaps having a stall or running/coordinating an activity or event – please contact sophie@bradtog.org.uk

Bradninch Winter Project

A further point of collaboration between the Town Council and Bradninch Together came in the form of the Bradninch Winter Project, coordinated by the Town Council with funds secured by Councillor Jim Porteous from the Devon Council Growing Communities Fund. The project started in October 2022 (ending in March 2023), and comprised two key strands: the promotion of existing community activities in the town and support for the establishment of new activities under the auspices of the Bradninch Winter Project.

BradTog's key role was in communications. Bradninch Town Council and BradTog jointly funded two short-term casual paid roles, the first concerning simple redevelopment of the BradTog website; and the second concerning the procurement and presentation of information on local activities and events. The monthly Winter Project programme was hosted on the BradTog website and promoted via our social media, while support was given to the design and production of posters and other materials. Members of the BradTog Steering Group were involved in some of the new initiatives, notably a Monday morning 'Reading Lounge' in West End Hall and a monthly Family Film Screening at the Guildhall.

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>

Excluding the aforementioned National Lottery Community Fund Grant, there was £3,277.40 in the BradTog account at the beginning of January 2023. This can be broken down as follows:

General Funds: 411.01

BradAid: £1911.94

Town Fair: 954.45

We are always glad to hear from folk in the community who are interested in working with BradTog in some way. Contact details for specific areas of work 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 2023