



## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REVIEW RESPONSE

**Dorset Community Governance Review – Initial Submission Consultation Response Form (Deadline:  
Completed responses must be received not later than 28 October 2021)**

Name of person completing response:	Jim Basker	
Email Address:		
Organisation or Group (if applicable):	Bothenhampton & Walditch Parish Council	
In what capacity are you responding?	Chairman of Parish Council	

Question 1	Response
<p>Do you feel that any existing parish area should be altered or abolished?</p> <p>If yes, please provide details of the proposals including a map illustrating the proposed boundary changes, the reasons for the proposal and explain how the proposal will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and</li> <li>b be effective and convenient.</li> </ul>	<p><b>NO</b></p> <p>We understand a neighbouring parish wishes to take over Bothenhampton and Walditch Parish Council (BWPC), arguing for greater efficiency, effectiveness and convenience. Therefore, we take this opportunity to argue that this parish is efficient and effective because the Council limits its activities to those services that its residents require, while taking due regard to convenience.</p> <p>The Council takes its responsibilities relating to the climate emergency seriously and reflects these in its approach to planning applications, environmental change, road safety, healthy lifestyle, and community services.</p> <p>We have a Parish Plan for 2022-27, which was driven by the responses to a survey delivered to all households in 2020 (see below).</p> <p>BWPC is defined largely by the A35 and Burton Road, providing a convenient boundary with neighbouring parishes. Bothenhampton has a small historic core, in the form of the linear settlement along Main Street that is a designated Conservation Area. Each end is marked by a church – one dating from the late 19thC, the other from the 14thC. Walditch’s historic core and Conservation Area flanks Walditch Road to the east of the parish, separated by a nature reserve from the newer, built-up areas.</p>

**Question 1****Response**

Question 1 - Continued.

There has been a large suburban addition in the 20thC, most recently to the north-eastern flank of the parish. Crock Lane and Lower Walditch Lane provide the spine for housing. To the south, the Chestnut Drive/Valley Road/Wych Hill suburban estates give many residents pleasant views to hills and sea.

**There have been no significant demographic or housing changes in BWPC in recent times and therefore we see no reason why the Parish area should be altered or abolished.**

We note that the 2006 Local Government white paper *Strong and prosperous communities* asserted that 'existing parish councils are not to be abolished against the wishes of local people.'

Our residents would not benefit from the alternative plans proposed by others:

- They would pay more for a worse service
- The distinctive identities of Bothenhampton and Walditch would be lost, and this would be contrary to the principles of the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan (BANP).
- The more distant representatives are from those they serve, the worse the service

Our Survey responses collected in 2020 indicated:

- a) that the community sees itself as happy within its environment, taking comfort from neighbourly interaction and in quiet enjoyment of their property. The identity of most of the community outside the village cores is with their close neighbours; the identity of the village cores includes a sense of the history of their old streets and of the activities offered by their village halls. The BANP expresses their view clearly in its vision statement promise 'to preserve our rural setting [and]the individual characters of our town and parishes.'
- b) that planning issues are their greatest concern, followed by the environment and road safety.

As a final point under Question 1 we observe that the DCGR Consultation paper states (13.1): **"...that recommendations for the dissolution if PCs are undesirable unless they are cases of parishes with very low populations or where boundary changes are re-ordering the parish structure."**

**PLEASE ALSO SEE THE COMMENTARY UNDER 'ADDITIONAL COMMENTS' QUESTION 6 SPECIFICALLY: TASKS UNDERTAKEN IN RECENT YEARS**

Question 2	Response
<p>Do you feel that the name of an existing parish should be changed?</p> <p>If yes, please provide details of the proposal and explain your reasons for the proposal.</p>	<p><b>NO</b></p>

Question 3	Response
<p>Do you consider that any parish should be grouped with another parish or other parishes?</p> <p>If yes, please provide details of the proposals, the reasons for the proposal and explain how the proposal will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and</li> <li>b be effective and convenient.</li> </ul> <p>You should also include suggestions for a proposed name for the group, whether the group should have a council and what electoral arrangements should apply.</p>	<p><b>NO</b></p> <p>The identity of Bothenhampton and Walditch is linked to the presence of boundary defining green areas which surround parts of the parish, and for the most part establish it as a distinct rural community, and not just a suburb of an urban one.</p> <p>The old village centre cottages are predominantly Bridport Sandstone or Forest Marble.</p>

Question 4	Response
<p>Should the number of councillors on an existing council be changed?</p> <p>If yes, please indicate what the proposed number of councillors should be and the reasons for the proposal.</p>	<p><b>NO</b></p> <p>We already have six councillors, working hard to ensure good planning decisions are made: resident complaints, for example, about roads and footpaths are dealt with promptly by the appropriate authorities. We continue to seek volunteers in areas currently not represented on the Council, as well as young, female or more working-age councillors. Like the majority of English Parish Councils, we find co-option is necessary to ensure diversity.</p> <p>[NB residents are 93% white British].</p>

Question 5	Response
<p>Do you consider the parish should be divided into parish wards?</p>	<p>The Parish is already divided into wards</p>
<p>If yes, please provide details of the proposals including a map illustrating the proposed ward boundary, the reasons for the proposal and explain how the proposal will make the election of councillors more practicable and convenient.</p>	
<p>You should also include suggestions for proposed parish ward names and the number of councillors that should represent the electorate in each ward.</p>	<p>Bothenhampton Ward: 6 councillors Walditch Ward: 3 councillors</p>

## **Additional comments**

Please add any additional comments relevant to this Community Governance Review. Additional sheets may be supplied but please ensure these are clearly marked.

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#### **EFFECTIVENESS**

BWPC councillors are unpaid volunteers. Their only motivation is to preserve and improve the everyday living conditions of residents. The Parish Plan indicates the measures planned to do this up to 2027. Please note that the Plan integrates actions with those of the BANP of which the Council is an active member, and of Dorset Council's draft Climate Emergency Plan (CEE) and Local Plan. The implications of these for the council are clear from councillors' daily experience walking round the parish, observing roads, pavements footpaths, nature reserves and damage from storms and vandalism/litter.

#### **ECONOMIC CONVENIENCE**

Like other parish councils, BWPC purchases services from contractors including Bridport Town Council and regularly reviews them. It expects to pay a competitive rate and requires no special prices or subsidies. It recognises the specialist skills and experience of Bridport Town Council staff, where these work as agents of Dorset Council. While its residents benefit from public goods developed by Bridport Town Council (BTC), this is a benefit shared with all parishes within the hinterland of Bridport and is non-excludable.

Bridport residents benefit from the spending of BWPC residents through their use of shops and services during the lean times when tourists are absent. Bridport residents are welcome to use BWPC facilities (two village halls, three play areas) on the same terms as residents.

Working in partnership in Bridport Town Council and Dorset Council, BWPC is effective, though it has very few resources.

#### **SIGNIFICANT PARISH COUNCIL ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR 2019**

- Created bespoke Parish Council website: [www.bothenhamptonwalditchparishcouncil.com](http://www.bothenhamptonwalditchparishcouncil.com)
- Installed effective cash control and budgeting processes including robust risk management arrangements
- Reviewed and re-tendered grass-cutting contract
- Installed two defibrillators and appointed volunteer agents
- Reviewed legality of grants to churches

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#### **SIGNIFICANT PARISH COUNCIL ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR 2019 (CONTINUED)**

- Replaced the Walditch noticeboard
- Established improved parking arrangements for Walditch Village Hall
- Leafleted Howard Road residents about rewilding
- Worked with Dorset Highways, Flood Officer and Wessex Water to increase flood resilience at Spinners Lane, Walditch
- Lobbied Highways Agency to provide a proper crossing of A35 to Morrison's Supermarket
- Supported CAB, St Mary's Churchyard, Axe Valley Dial and Ride

#### **SIGNIFICANT PARISH COUNCIL ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR 2020**

- Declared a climate emergency
- Supported planning process protests regarding Homestead Farm, Bothenhampton
- Supported plans to provide a light-controlled crossing at Burton Road
- Supported BTOpenreach rural gigabyte fibre voucher scheme for Upper Walditch
- Negotiated new play area for Lower Walditch including liaising with a residents' group
- Negotiated with Bridport Town Council for transfer of two Nature Reserves from Dorset Council, with a maintenance commitment from BWPC
- Appointed a volunteer Footpaths Officer
- Leafleted all households to seek opinion on parish council priorities
- Refurbished play equipment at John Gundry Play Area, Walditch and felled 120 diseased and dying trees inside and on the periphery of the play area
- Repaired drystone wall and re-turfed goal area at John Holt Play Area, Bothenhampton
- Supported Old Church, Bothenhampton
- Appointed Bothenhampton and Walditch Floods Officer

## **Additional comments**

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#### **SIGNIFICANT PARISH COUNCIL ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR 2021**

- Completed installation of 30 mph limit throughout Walditch
- Extended clearing of footpaths and reduction of mud levels
- Installed five more dog waste bins
- Planted 30 saplings at Slades Green, Bothenhampton and 14 hazel plants at John Gundry play area, Walditch
- Completed Parish Plan 2022-27
- Supported, with Friends of the Earth, a tree planting and footpath creation plan at The Hyde Care Home.
- Funded the installation of a new window at Walditch Village Hall, Walditch
- Opened the Lower Walditch Play Area with a birthday party
- Instigated a “20’s plenty” vehicle speed limit campaign in Bothenhampton and Walditch.

## BOTHENHAMPTON & WALDITCH PARISH PLAN - ACTION POINTS

These are the actions that the Parish Council performs on an ongoing basis and intends to perform during the period 2022-27. They have been chosen carefully in the light of survey responses from residents, the Climate Emergency declared by the Parish Council in 2020, the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan (BANP) made in May 2020, and the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) and Local Plan documents issued by Dorset Council (DC Local Plan) in Spring 2021

### Planning (built environment)

Policy	Aim	Method	Timeline
P1	Vet planning applications with regard to the best interests of the community (BANP Objective 6) DC Local Plan Section 36.2.1)	Follow guidelines and process using material considerations guidance; with regard also, where relevant, to BANP, CEE and DC Local Plan policies	2020-23
P2	Provide guidance on website about criteria required for a planning application, including climate emergency and environmental protection policies (DC CEE Action Plan p30) (DC Local Plan policy DEV6, DEV 7, DEV8; ENV1, ENV2, ENV 3, ENV4; HOUS2-3, HOUS 7, HOUS 9))	Develop links on BWPC website to relevant Planning Department sites, together with links to AONB, BANP, CEE and Local Plan policies for biodiversity and decarbonisation.	2022-23
P3	Secure land in the parish for allotments (BANP Objective 9) (DC CEE Action Plan p35)	Identify land in the parish for allotments and enable by a Community Land Trust (BANP Objective 9) (DC CEE Action Plan p35)	2023-24
P4	Encourage Planning Dept to adopt standards of building that incorporate low carbon materials, high insulation standards, and non-fossil fuel heating. (DC CEE Action Plan p31) DC Local Plan policy ENV7, ENV8, ENV 9)	Work with DC councillors and residents to lobby for decarbonisation of rules for buildings	2022-2023



## Climate change (energy, recycling, decarbonisation)

Policy	Aim	Method	Timeline
E1	Decarbonisation of home energy consumption by retrofitting housing stock (DC CEE Action Plan p31)	Promote carbon reduction methods and explore programmes and grants available for retrofitting houses with non-fossil-fuel boilers and upgrading insulation. Run promotional events with local groups and other parishes.	2022-27
E2	Support DC's CEE plans to reduce waste, to recycle, and to influence consumers and producers. (DC CEE Action Plan p43)	Support local groups that are aware of and advocate better recycling methods and efficient waste management. Work with other parishes.	2022-27
E3	Eliminate single-use plastic in BWPC (DC CEE Action Plan p43)	Sponsor presentations by Dorset Waste Partnership and SAS. Provide links on website to practical advice based on agreed good practice	2022-27
E4	Participate in local partnerships for community action to reduce carbon production. (DC CEE Action Plan p27)	Evaluate and endorse initiatives based in neighbouring councils that undertake recycling and energy generation. Work with BLAP and BANP.	2022-27
E5	Reduce air pollution	cf. O4	
E6	Improve food security	cf. O3	

### Accessibility (transport, roads, footpaths, cycle tracks; safety)

Policy	Aim	Method	Timeline
A1	Ensure roads, cycle tracks and footpaths are safe to use. (BANP Objective 15) (DC CEE Action Plan p53)	Use DC portal to report potholes, broken street furniture, fallen trees and bushes, and broken stiles, bridges and steps via DC portal. Support residents to report issues directly. TT&F sub-committee and VFO to deal with minor issues.	Ongoing
A2	Raise levels of safety and security for pedestrians by improved public transport, and reduce car use (BANP Objective 13) (DC CEE Action Plan p53)	Work with WATAG and BLAP to modify routes so that there is a bus service to Bridport town centre from remotest houses in B&W parish. Lobby, via WATAG, to maintain bus links to trains to and from London, Exeter and Bristol. Investigate grants available.	Lobby from 2025; work with WATAG from 2022
A3	Support those who need to visit hospital who have no car (BANP Objective 13)	Identify local demand for affordable transport to Weymouth, Dorchester and other centres and consult current providers. Prepare to act if provision fails.	2023
A4	Complete cycle routes to encourage health and safety and reduce car use between B&W and Bridport. (BANP Objective 13) (DC CEE Action Plan p54)	Establishing safe cycle paths from Walditch and Bothenhampton to Bridport; from Sea Road South to Burton Road; between Walditch and Bothenhampton. Work with traffic safety and local cycle groups, as well as with BTC and BLAP. Talk to DC and Highways Agency, and the A35 Group as well as MP	2023-24

**Accessibility (transport, roads, footpaths, cycle tracks; safety) Cont:**

Policy	Aim	Method	Timeline
A5	Promote safe driving in B&W	<p>Identify ways to promote safe driving with campaign groups such as ROSPA and CPRE; consult DoT and police as well as community groups.</p> <p>Lobby, with other PCs, for an area-wide 20 mph zone policy with DC councillors, BANP. Support local campaigns for SLOW signs, for changes in speed limits on A35 and Burton Road, with DC and Highways Agency</p>	2022-27
A6	Support electric vehicles charging facilities (cf. O4) (DC CEE Action Plan p55)	<p>Identify affordable and standardised technology in a housing estate environment. Learn from early adopters, BTC and DC. Explore with BTC and BANP how charging facilities can be funded; and with residents, where they can be located within the parish</p>	2023-25

## Natural environment (open spaces)

Policy	Aim	Method	Timeline
O1	Ensure spaces and Nature Reserves are free of litter, to encourage use of dog waste bins, and discourage anti-social behaviour. (BANP Objective 4) (DC CEE Action Plan p51)	Promote pride in our environment by publicity and engage with local groups to report vandalism or fly-tipping incidents. Organise litter-picking as appropriate. Work alongside police, Environment Agency, DC and BTC. Review adequacy and location of waste and dog waste bins Pro-active use of advertising and discussion during public sessions	Ongoing
O2	Support health, community cohesion and sense of well-being by protecting and maintaining play areas and open spaces. (BANP Objectives 3, 8)	Pay for Independent inspection of play areas. Set aside funds for repair and replacement of equipment as necessary. Support and encourage a volunteer Friends group for each play area. A named Councillor to visit frequently and ensure repairs take place.	Ongoing
O3	Support the response to the Climate Emergency, maintain the biodiversity of JNR and BNR as havens for wildlife and people, and enhance the wellbeing of the community. (BANP Objectives 3, 4) (DC CEE Action Plan p53)	Work with BTC using the two ten-year Management Plans (available on the BTC website), providing an annual financial contribution. Providing volunteer effort to repair and improve walkways promptly and support biodiversity by removing alien species as advised.	2022-3
O4	Strengthen food security and community cohesion by seeking out spaces for allotments and support their development through a Community Land Trust (BANP Objective 9) (DC CEE Action Plan p35)	Develop a community interest group to drive a Trust application and investigate feasibility of Tony's Track and Duck Street, Bothenhampton	2022-24

## Natural environment (open spaces) Continued

Policy	Aim	Method	Timeline
O5	Sort community health by reducing air pollution and encourage biodiversity by growing plants in agreed open spaces. (BANP Objective 3) (DC CEE Action Plan p51) (DC Local Plan ENV12, ENV14)	Use Bridport Tree Survey project report to identify where pollution is heaviest and sponsor a planting scheme for trees and bushes in convenient places (subject to community involvement). Model to follow: tree development at Slades Green (2021). Work with Bridport Tree Planting Group. Suggestions: verge of Sea Road South, A35 East Road	2022-25

## Community support

Policy	Aim	Method	Timeline
C1	Recruit three new councillors from unrepresented groups	Canvass community groups, project the aims of the Parish Plan, improve the PC's media profile particularly in social media and The Bridge.	2021-2022
C2	To develop a stronger sense of community	Promote PC meetings by notices, on social media and by word of mouth. Run Councillor surgeries in the community. Support community groups in Bothenhampton and Walditch with funds to run meetings, invite guest speakers, and publicise their activities; support food security measures such as allotments (cf. O4); encourage public events; network with other parishes.	2022-27
C3	Promote climate emergency awareness (DC CEE Action plan p59)	Involve residents in discussion of climate emergency issues and initiatives, by multiple means. (cf. O3, O4)	2023
C4	Support community resilience	Ensure that vulnerable residents have support in times of social isolation, by supporting the system of 'buddies' [or similar] to cover all areas of the parish. Coordinate with village hall committees, Bridport Community Action, and other Bridport-centred charities	2023
C5	Develop community safety and security	Develop liaison with flood and emergency services. Liaise with police over Community Speed Watch, vandalism, and crime awareness. Support CAB and Bridport community services.	2023
C6	Support and encourage youth activities	Establish links with Bridport Youth Forum; appoint a Councillor to identify areas to sponsor or fund.	2023
C7	Improve Internet access, broadband and Wi-Fi throughout the Parish to support home-based enterprise, education, information, culture and entertainment. (BANP Objective 10) (DC CEE Action Plan p38)	PC to investigate and lobby for improvement in access up to full-fibre broadband to households in Lower Walditch and Bothenhampton	2024

END