

# Reports for Brightling Parish Council meeting 9 July 2025

This report covers 3 topics:

- Web site
- Broadband
- Environment – jointly with Katrina

Katrina is reporting on the Environment Strategy generally.

This report covers the period since my previous report for the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

## Web site

The village website is at <https://brightling.community/>

As of now, web pages are retrievable with or without the “www” sub-domain prefix. For example [brightling.community/church-guide/](https://brightling.community/church-guide/) displays the same information as [www.brightling.community/church-guide/](http://www.brightling.community/church-guide/). This took some persistence to achieve, requiring Geoxphere to make some changes to the DNS records. My feedback is that Geoxphere have the necessary technical ability but are inclined to be slapdash.

The website gets around 30 – 40 views per day (a bit down on 2024).

There are 135 “subscribers” – people who have chosen to get an automatic email every time there is a new posting to the website. Some of those may be bots, but many of them are email addresses that I recognize.

The main contributors to the web site continue to be me, the Parish Clerk, the Village Hall representative, Jane Beard, and Parish Councillor Katrina Blench. Parish council chair Judy Petty has also started to make posts. Nicola Magill has a logon but has yet to make a post – I think she needs training.

If other contributors want to come forward I would be very happy to get them a logon and give any necessary training.

The site continues to be hosted by Rother District Council, free of charge (what will happen when RDC ceases to exist?)

## Broadband

About 15 people attended the “Digital voice” talk on Wednesday 11 June 2024, given by Chris Hockley, “Digital Voice Engagement Manager” for BT/EE/Plusnet plus some words from me on the subject of resilience planning particularly with regard to power cuts.

A full copy of the presentations can be viewed by following the links at <https://brightling.community/digital-voice/>

There was a lot of opportunity for questions and those who attended seemed satisfied that their questions had been answered and concerns addressed.

## Environment – Park Pale solar project

This refers to the proposal by Southern Water to install a 1.2 MWp solar farm between the Darwell reservoir dam and the road (Mountfield Lane).

Although there would appear to be nothing to stop the project going ahead, there has been no obvious work on site.

- **Reducing the impact on residents.** I'm not aware of any progress on this since my last report
- **Wider community benefits: establishing a circular off-road path round the reservoir.** The solar panel team were adamant that this was outside their scope, and referred us to a different team, namely the Commercial Property department. Cllr. Petty received an email from them on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025 suggesting that they had no resources to even look at the proposal, and concluded: "we can only suggest we may be able to re-consider looking again at your proposal perhaps during the summer of this year." We decided to play the long game" and take them at their word about "summer of this year". I understand that Cllr. Petty has attempted to do so.

## Environment – solar panels on the Village Hall roof

The planning application for roof replacement, which includes 12 solar panels, was approved by RDC on 26 February 2025.

I am not a member of the Village Hall committee but I attended a meeting of the committee on 30<sup>th</sup> April. The consensus that emerged during this meeting was that the VH committee was not in a position to proceed immediately with the roof work, and that therefore a decision on whether or not to go ahead with the solar panel installation could be made at a later date.

The financial returns on installing solar panels do depend on assumptions about future export rates (the amount paid per kWh for energy sent to the grid). Like anything in the future, this is subject to uncertainty! However, even with quite pessimistic assumptions there seems to be a good return on investment. This reflects the fact that solar panels are now historically cheap.

I have agreed to join a working party which will examine the case for installing solar panels, and I have agreed to review any proposals. The working party has not met as far as I know and I have not yet been sent any proposals to review.

## Environment – “Warmer Brightling #2”

This is a provisional title for the follow-up meeting to “Warmer Brightling” which was held on 29 February 2024. This meeting has been organized by Brightling Environment Group and will take place in the Village Hall on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October. Speakers will be Olivier Wall (who lives in Perrymans Lane and has installed a heat pump – in an older property - and is very happy with it) and Martin Turner of Energise Sussex Coast, who will talk on retrofitting older properties.

I am currently in discussions with Energise Sussex Coast to agree the scope and focus of Martin Turner's presentation.

Andrew Wedmore