

Reports for Brightling Parish Council meeting 10 September 2025

This report covers 4 topics:

- Web site
- Broadband
- Environment – jointly with Katrina
- Messenger magazine

Katrina is reporting on the Environment Strategy generally.

This report covers the period since my previous report for the meeting on 9th July 2025.

Web site

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

The main contributors to the web site continue to be me, the Parish Clerk, Jane Beard, Chris Wing, Katrina Blench, and Judy Petty. Nicola Magill has a logon but has yet to make a post – I have contacted her to offer training. If other contributors want to come forward I would be very happy to get them a logon and give any necessary training.

There have been 17 “posts” to the site in the two months since the last Parish Council meeting – approximately one per week, which I think is about right.

I have written some guidelines for people posting, which can be seen at brightling.community/content-guidelines/

The site continues to be hosted by Rother District Council, free of charge. There is an obvious concern about what will happen when RDC ceases to exist but it is probably much too early to raise this, because the details of the reorganization are a long way from being finalized.

Broadband

Little has changed since my last report. Every house in the parish except one now has access to full fibre broadband, with speeds of up to 900 Mbps. The exception is one house in Fontridge Lane, which is connected to the Etchingham exchange. There was a previously announced date of December 2026 for this house to get full fibre, but Openreach now say: “We’re planning to build in this area in the future....Your exchange area is part of our major plans but we can’t give you a firm date yet.”

There are houses that are (a) connected to the Brightling telephone exchange (b) outside the parish of Brightling and (c) don’t yet have access to full-fibre broadband. For this reason, the telephone exchange building (which is close to the Village Hall) is not yet redundant, but it will become so at some point in the next few years. Perhaps Brightling Parish Council should express an interest in acquiring the building, or the plot?

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).

I have heard indirectly that work is planned to start in October this year, and that the road between Brightling and Mountfield (Mountfield Lane) will be closed to through traffic for 5 days. I have also heard that the promised tree and hedge planting in mitigation will be carried out in February 2026.

Wider community benefits: establishing a circular off-road path round the reservoir. Thanks to the persistence of Parish Council Chair Cllr. Petty, we now have a meeting to discuss this with Southern Water representatives arranged for 17th September. A “pre-meeting” was held on 4th September at which it emerged

that some residents near the proposed path were concerned about possible negative impacts of such a path, particularly if it becomes popular and well-known. It was therefore proposed to explore more low-key methods of establishing the path, so that in practice it would be mostly local residents who would be permitted to use it. It remains to be seen whether this can be made to work in practice, or would be acceptable to Southern Water.

Environment – solar panels on the Village Hall roof

I received a document “Quotation for Solar PV Installation” – a requirement specification – on 9th August, and responded with some comments to Phil Garbutt on 12th August.

Environment – “Warmer Brightling: practical steps for householders”

This is 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 14th 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.

Admission is free but we are asking people to book tickets at warmer-brightling-2025.eventbrite.com so that we can control numbers. It is very much hoped that some parish councillors will attend!

Messenger magazine

The magazine is in good heart, with about 96 subscribers in Brightling.

Jane Beard continues to do an excellent job collating the copy for the Brightling village pages, and Brightling resident Tom Bourne is the overall editor for the village pages and village news.

The AGM of the magazine is on 26th November, in MOUNTFIELD village hall. It is very much hoped that some parish councillors will attend!

Andrew Wedmore