

Reports for Brightling Parish Council meeting 12 November 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 10th September 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. If other contributors want to come forward I would be very happy to get them a logon and give any necessary training.

There continue to be about 1 “post” per week to the website. Each post triggers an email to 140 subscribers.

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.

Broadband

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 Burwash exchange (I mistakenly said the Etchingham exchange in my previous report).

BT Openreach has now announced a date for the conversion of the Burwash (and Ninfield) exchanges to full fibre: by the end of 2026. The announcement can be seen at [https://www.openreach.com/content/dam/openreach/openreach-dam-files/new-dam-\(not-in-use-yet\)/documents/where-and-when/FF-Build-Programme-October-2025-online.pdf](https://www.openreach.com/content/dam/openreach/openreach-dam-files/new-dam-(not-in-use-yet)/documents/where-and-when/FF-Build-Programme-October-2025-online.pdf)

77.5% of the eligible premises on the Brightling exchange have now upgraded to full fibre. It is not easy to be sure of the exact percentage for Brightling parish, but it is probably similar.

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).

A new entrance way has been constructed to the field where the solar panels will be. Having been away, I am not up to date with the latest development on site.

Wider community benefits: establishing a circular off-road path round the reservoir. An on-site meeting was held with Southern Water on 17th September. It emerged that a “low-key” approach would be acceptable to Southern Water, meaning that in practice it would be mostly local residents who would be permitted to use it. However it was also clear that Southern Water would much prefer to do nothing at all and maintain the status quo.

The steering group met subsequently and agreed to try and obtain more details of the existing leases of land round the reservoir before deciding next steps. This is on-going..

Environment – solar panels on the Village Hall roof

I have not had any response since I submitted some comments to Phil Garbutt on 12th August.

Environment – “Warmer Brightling: practical steps for householders”

This took place in the Village Hall on Tuesday 14th October. The speakers were Martin Turner of Energise Sussex Coast, who talked on retrofitting older properties and local resident Olivier Wall (who lives in Perrymans Lane and has installed a heat pump – in an older property - and is very happy with it. Olivier heats his whole house with electricity at an average cost of 7p per kWh by using a heat pump and batteries to time-shift his consumption to cheap tariff times.

Messenger magazine

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

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.

Andrew Wedmore