

Reports for Brightling Parish Council meeting

9th September 2026

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 15th July 2026.

Web site

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

The site continues to be hosted by Rother District Council, free of charge.

There was an obvious concern about what will happen when RDC ceases to exist. However, the “pausing” of Local Government Reorganisation in this area obviously reduces the pressure to do something about this. We should wait and see, and react when things become clearer. We can address the issue of accessibility requirements at this time.

I have spoken to the Dallington parish clerk to understand how the Dallington site is platformed, and I have learned that it is a managed Wordpress website, hosted by GoDaddy. It is better than the Brightling site in that it fully meets accessibility requirements. If or when it becomes necessary to move the Brightling site, I will recommend that we copy Dallington’s approach, but I don’t recommend doing anything until it becomes necessary. An important consideration is that the GoDaddy platform allows migration of existing content.

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 continues to be about 1 “post” per week to the website. Each post triggers an email to 180 subscribers.

Guidelines for people posting, can be seen at brightling.community/content-guidelines/ I would particularly like to draw attention to the recommendation to space posts out in time (the “Schedule” feature can help with this) and avoid having more than one post on a given day, except for emergency announcements.

Broadband

The date for the analog phone switch-off, remains at January 2027. It has been postponed in the past but I don’t think it will be postponed again.

The take-up rate for full-fibre broadband has levelled off at around 83% across the Brightling exchange (it is not possible to say what the exact percentage is for the parish of Brightling, but it is probably similar).

I think the parish council has already done all that reasonably should be done in terms of reaching out to people about the implications of the analog switch-off. If anyone in the parish has a problem with broadband or telephone service then of course they can ask the parish council for help and we will respond.

If you have a full-fibre connection then you can definitely get a digital voice service, although beware that not all providers offer it.

Turning to the Brightling Telephone Exchange area (which is much larger than Brightling parish), there are a number of properties that cannot get full fibre, in particular a cluster around the Ashburnham Forge area. These

people will still be able to get digital voice, so that's not a problem but they will be getting their broadband and voice service via the Brightling exchange building, which means that the exchange building is not yet redundant. The parish council might want to keep an eye on this, so as to be able to take action as and when the building does become redundant.

It is worth reiterating the following points from previous reports, all relating to the parish of Brightling:

- Based on the above numbers there are probably around 25 households in the parish who have not subscribed to full-fibre broadband. Some of these 25 may be telephone-only customers (not using broadband), and these telephone-only customers will find that their landline telephones stop working at the end of 2026. If there are any such people, they should have been contacted by their supplier to discuss options.
- 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 that is connected to the Burwash exchange, which is expected to get full fibre the end of 2026.
- If anyone else in Brightling is told that they cannot get full-fibre, this is likely due to an error in the Openreach database (it has plenty of errors!). This can be resolved and if necessary the parish council can help.

Environment: Solar panels at Coal Bridge (between the dam and Mountfield Lane

Back in July, I passed on the information, from Southern Water that installation was likely to start in "towards late Summer 2026" but that this was "subject to the procurement timelines"

As of now there is no evidence of work taking place on the ground. They have missed out on a very good summer from a sunshine point of view!

Environment – solar panels on the Village Hall roof

Solar panels are now visibly in place. I have not been given any details of the configuration that has actually been installed.

Messenger magazine

The AGM (billed as "Readers' Get-together") will be on Friday 20th November, starting at 7:00 pm in Brightling Village Hall. It is hoped that parish councillors will attend and encourage other villagers to come along.

Otherwise, little has changed since my last report. I continue to chair.

We could do with a new volunteer to distribute the magazine in the Willingford Lane / Worges area.

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.

Probably the main threat to the magazine is that it is dependent on a small number of people working quite hard, many of whom are not particularly young.

I will be appealing at the November AGM to get some new fresh blood on the committee.

Andrew Wedmore