

Notes of the Bothenhampton & Walditch Ward Partnership (BWWP) Public Engagement Session held in Bothenhampton Village Hall on Tuesday 12th February 2026 at 11.00am

Present: Cllr Anne Rickard - *Bridport Town Councillor, Bothenhampton & Walditch Ward*
Jo Hughes - *Ward Clerk, Bridport Town Council*

8 members of public

Apologies: Cllr Bridget Bolwell - *Bridport Town Councillor, Bothenhampton & Walditch Ward*
Cllr Andy Holdridge - *Bridport Town Councillor, Bothenhampton & Walditch Ward*

Cllr Rickard welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported the positive news that the Hollow Way high pavement has re-opened following extensive repairs by Dorset Council which have been well received by residents. The Ward Clerk commented that Dorset Council is responsible for the pavement and advised that any future maintenance issues should be reported either through the Dorset Council online portal or directly to the Ward Clerk.

A resident asked that their thanks be conveyed to the Town Council Surveyor and his team for providing waste bags and arranging their collection after volunteers cleared overgrown vegetation along Tony's Track.

New 60mph – 40mph Speed Limits

Residents present at the meeting welcomed the introduction of the new 60mph to 40mph speed limit coming into effect on the A35 between the Howard Road junction and Firch Lane on the approach to Bridport. They commented, however, that the 40mph zone should begin further from the Firch Lane junction to provide adequate time for drivers to reduce speed. A resident with contacts in National Highways' Road Safety Division offered to seek clarification on the positioning of the 40mph signs in relation to the junction.

Action: Ward Clerk to receive update from resident regarding positioning of 40mph signs.

UPDATE: The resident has received confirmation from the Head of Technical Services, Road Safety Division, Safety Engineering & Standards, National Highways, Bristol that the 40mph signs will be positioned at "a point 52 metres east of the centre of the junction with Firch Lane".

Sea Road South – Pedestrian Crossing

Residents also welcomed the reduction of the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph coming into effect along Sea Road South. They also stressed the urgent need for a pedestrian crossing on Sea Road South and requested an update on this matter indicating a preference for a crossing at Pasture Way rather than Hollow Way.

Action: Ward Clerk to get the latest update on a pedestrian crossing.

UPDATE: The Town Surveyor is due to meet with relevant Councillors and will provide an update following that meeting.

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Bridport Town Council Website

A resident commented on the lack of information provided on the Town Council website suggesting that the Town Council needs to be more proactive in sharing information. They advised that details regarding the National Highways A35 improvements were instead obtained from a neighbouring parish council's website.

Action: Ward Clerk to bring this matter to the attention of Bridport Town Council.

UPDATE: Bridport Town Council Officers to discuss a way forward regarding this matter.

20mph Update

The Clerk informed residents that the Dorset Council 20mph Panel had been expected to meet in February to approve the progression of Phase 4 schemes, including Bothenhampton & Walditch, to formal public consultation. However, Dorset Police have requested additional time to provide their views on some of the proposed schemes, resulting in the meeting being rescheduled for March.

Trees along Walditch Road

A resident requested to know which trees along Walditch Road (both the avenue and fields either side) have a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) advising that the Ward Clerk has previously confirmed that there is an obligation on a landowner to replace a tree that falls. Under regulation 14 of the association planning legislation for tree protection, the landowner should report the failed tree to Dorset Council who will then officially respond to advise if a replant is necessary. The resident commented that the tree landscape has deteriorated significantly and yet is detailed in the 2007 Conservation Area Appraisal as having historic heritage value.

Action: Ward Clerk to look into.

UPDATE: An email from a Dorset Council Arboricultural Officer in May 2025 regarding the trees along Walditch Road advised the following *'the trees have protection by means of a TPO and they are located within a Conservation Area so any work (tree removal or pruning) would need consent from the Tree Team in Planning prior to being undertaken.*

Other Issues/Comments Raised by Residents

- Concerns were raised by a resident about issues when reporting problems through the Dorset Council online portal. The resident commented that the system appears to generate automated responses. Clarification was requested on whether the portal uses AI. The resident also noted ongoing resourcing challenges within Dorset Council, including reduced staffing levels on the ground. It was suggested that these matters be raised with the local MP.

Action: Ward Clerk to investigate Dorset Council online portal query regarding use of AI.

UPDATE: Dorset Council have responded to advise that the reports received via the online portal are sent to the Highways officers for the area, and the officers then respond to the reports.

- A resident commented that Bothenhampton & Walditch currently have no public transport because the Community Bus is unable to access the villages due to access issues along Crock Lane including parked cars and overhanging vegetation. It was however noted by another resident that a bookable ring-and-ride service is available and operates on Wednesdays.

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- It was reported that following all the heavy rain, there is a new flooding issue along the road of Walditch village green which will become an issue if it freezes.
Action: Ward Clerk to report to Dorset Council.
UPDATE: The Ward Clerk has reported the issue to Dorset Council - enquiry reference number: 1313143.
- A resident requested that thanks be passed to Bridport Town Council for the repair work completed on the Asker Meadows riverbank and bridge. It was also noted that gravel has washed away and requires replacement.
Action: Ward Clerk to follow up with the Town Council Surveyor.
UPDATE: The Town Surveyor has confirmed that there are works coming up in Asker Meadow and the team will try to tie in any path repairs with this.
- Another resident asked whether the former Parish Council volunteer footpath officer has been engaged by Bridport Town Council.
Action: Ward Clerk to follow up with the Town Surveyor.
UPDATE: The Town Surveyor made contact with the volunteer footpath officer in April 2024 to confirm the Town Council would be happy for them to remain as the Volunteer Footpath Officer for the Bothenhampton and Walditch ward and this arrangement is working well.

Meeting closed 12.15pm

Date of next meeting: The meeting will take place at Bothenhampton Village Hall in April, date and time to be confirmed.

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