

Bere Ferrers Parish Council

At the Annual Parish Meeting, held in the Bere Ferrers Church Hall, Bere Ferrers on Tuesday 30th April 2024.

Present

Cllr. P. Crozier	Chair of the Council
Cllr. P. Archer	Cllr. V. Grose
Cllr. D. King	Cllr. B. Lamb
Cllr. Leithall	Cllr. R. Maycock
Cllr. J. Maciejowska	Cllr. M. Patterson
Cllr. D. Pengelly	Cllr. C. Shaw
Cllr. E. Wager	

709. Apologies and welcome from the Chair of the Council, Cllr. Peter Crozier

Cllr. Crozier welcomed members of the public to the annual parish meeting. There were no apologies received.

710. Chair's Report

Last year the Council were looking into car parking provision in Bere Alston. It is now three years since we approached West Devon Borough Council about the land at the bottom of Pilgrim Drive and they have just agreed to transfer the land to the Council. The Council will need planning permission and an agreement with Livewest to access the site over their land from the public highway.

Following the Sport Development Consultation response forms, which Cllr. Lamb will discuss in more detail later in the meeting, was a request for a public toilet at the recreational field, therefore the outside toilet at the Pavilion is going to have a makeover, so it can be opened during the day.

Residents often remark that our public spaces are a credit to our workman Steve Hingston who works hard cutting the grass and making sure our green spaces are special to the village. I also thank Jane Poulton and Luke McLean, who look after the public toilets and look after the litter bins, when Steve is on annual leave. I have to thank my fellow Councillors for their energy given to their committee work and their thoughtfulness in the pride they have for the Parish. A thank you to the Bere Ferrers Villagers Group for raising £7k for repairs to the Bere Ferrers War Memorial. A final thank you to Caroline Metcalf, our Clerk, for the excellent way she taken on and has tackled the challenges of wrestling with the budgets.

It has been mentioned to me that our precept went by 6% this year, this is mainly due to inflation and the previous year, it only went up just under 1%.

711. Reports from the Council's Committees:

1) Footpaths & Environment

Cllr. Virginia Grose, Chair of the Committee:

Since the new Tamara Coast to Coast Way open last year, we have experienced very wet and windy weather, which has turned some of the footpaths into obstacle courses. I would like to thank all the Committee members for all their work in completing the annual Parish Paths Partnership forms and reporting any issues with footpaths. Members of the public can now report issues via the Public Right of Ways website (www.devon.gov.uk/prow/). The footpath guide, produced by the Council, is available to buy in the Bere Alston Post Office and Margaret Willmott.

With regards to environment issues, the Council have logged their interest with West Devon Borough Council to install two electric car charging points in both villages.

Whilst Denham Bridge has been closed, I would like to particularly thank Cllr. Colin Shaw for collecting rubbish around that area. Wish to also thank the Clerk and the Workman for all their work carried out this year. And finally thank you to parishioners and landowners, especially those who highlight there is livestock the field and even hornets. It is important that dogs are kept on the lead on footpaths and there are free signs which farmers can obtain from the NFU (national farmers union) that indicate if livestock are in their fields.

2) Open Spaces

Cllr. Dave Pengelly, Chair of the Committee:

Firstly I'd like to introduce the rest of the Open Spaces group which is Dotty King, the Vice Chair, Cllrs. Richard Leithall, Colin Shaw, Virginia Grose and Eoan Wager. I would like to thank them for their help and support over the last 12 months.

I think the biggest problem we have had this year has been the Rat infestation at Bere Alston allotments, which rolled over from last year. This has been costly and time consuming, but I think we've now got on top of the situation. People who keep Poultry are now being a bit more careful with their food, but this is an ongoing problem and one that we have to keep in check.

Other work planned for the allotments are that the road will be extended right down to the bottom of the field and the bottom area is planned to be tidied up and to make more allotments, as and when required. Quotes for that work have been accepted.

Money has been set aside to repair the entrance to the Bere Ferrers recreation field and that should be carried out in the near future.

At the cemetery, another area been opened up and this is now in use. The memorial garden has been tidied up.

The Council have £15,500 to spend on improvements of the Bere Alston Play Parks, £10,000 came from the National Lottery AWARDS FOR ALL fund and five and a half thousand from the final donation from the charity BARP, which has now unfortunately closed. The plan is to install a traversing wall with a bench nearby in Sarah Park, and a fence along the Northern hedge by the doctor's surgery. Two items of outdoor fitness equipment, which can be used by the older children and adults, will be installed at the recreation field and depending on usage it might be possible to install more later. It was hoped to spend the rest of the money on safety surface improvement by installing bonded rubber, but a quote of over £30,000 has made us look at an alternative. I believe the lottery grant Awards for all has now increased from £10,000 to £20,000 and we will be eligible to apply again in November.

The recreation field and Pavilion improvements is headed up by Cllr Lamb and he will update us on that later.

3) Plans & Highways

Cllr. Ralph Maycock Chair of the Committee:

The Committee usually meets on the first Tuesday of the month with extra meetings fitted into the calendar where necessary, we also undertake some site visits, if it's required to get a better understanding of a planning application.

We look at applications from tree felling/pollarding, conservatory erection, building of extensions, change of use, new builds and new estates.

We report back to West Devon on agreement, our recommendations or rejection of any applications we receive. We view all applications with a sympathy to what we already have in the villages and surrounding areas and in accordance with details laid out in our Neighbourhood Plan.

However, a major policy of our plan – Policy H2 on the development of the North Woolacombe road site for 31 Burrington homes has been breached by the District Council Planning Committee ignoring the advice of the Planning Inspectorate, who stated that the entrance should be on to the B3257 unless the applicant had "DEMONSTRATED it wasn't FEASIBLE." We sent evidence to the Planners that this process was not carried out, but the Committee received advice that it was not relevant and approved the use of the Woolacombe road entrance, which will generate huge road safety problems.

There is a mandate from Council for us to oppose this decision and the Parish Council will now request the Secretary of State to call in this application to review the decision.

This year the committee has been working with West Devon, Devon County Highways and others to move the 30-mph speed restriction closer to Quarry Corner enabling a safer zone for the entrance to the proposed Coop and preferred entrance to the

North Woolacombe road site. This has been a long arduous task and I would like to thank the Chair and Vice Chair of council for their persistence in this matter achieving the outcome required for our parishioner's safety.

Our Neighbourhood plan has been in place for 5.5 years and has been instrumental in planning decisions for the peninsula since the referendum in September 2018 The Neighbourhood plan subcommittee is currently

undergoing its five-year review. We are now working through our second draft, this is a refreshment of text and terminology to keep it up to date, however this does not change the tenure and policies of the plan! As a committee we will always look to needs of the community as a whole and make our recommendations for the benefit of all and will continue to do so over the next 12 months. Finally I would like to thank the committee and our clerk for their support over the last year

4) Finance & General Purposes

Cllr. Leithall, Chair of the Finance & General-Purpose Committee:

The F&GP (Finance & General Purposes) Committee holds a meeting nearly even month, one week before the Full Council's meeting. Routine business has always included a review and sign-off of the Parish Council's:-

- Accounts payable
- Spend vs budget
- Bank Reconciliation statement

I am pleased to report, that the Parish Council's spend in this financial year 2023-2024 is expected to be within financial budget set by Council last year.

Looking forward and comprehensively helped by the Council's Clerk, the committee formulated a draft budget for this next financial year 2024/25 and consequential precept, which was presented to and approved by Full Council. This has resulted in a consequential precept of £82,380

The committee have initiated and/or directed a number of ad-hoc tasks and small projects which include:-

- Voluntary 1st Land Registration with His Majesty's Land Registry, of Parish owned land comprising of the Parish Hall and carpark, & The Down Recreation Field. This action will enable parishioners and other members of the public to see Summary Title and Title Plans
- Motorcycle stands installed that are now available for use beside Parish Hall car park
- External safety and security lighting installed around the outside of the Parish Hall
- Reviewed the status of the Council's historic and dormant Playground and Pleasure Ground Charity. Arranged to appointed new trustees who are now: Cllr. Brian Lamb, Cllr. Richard Leithall and Cllr. Peter Crozier. This has been done in readiness for future use for charitable transactions if needed associated with improvements to Parish open recreational spaces.
- Obtained approval from Full Council so that from January 10th this year, parishioners and other members of the public may visit the Clerk during drop-in sessions, limited to Wednesdays from 10am to 12pm.
- Following the annual inspection the Bus Shelters owned by the Parish, all were found to be in good condition apart from one. Consequently, our thanks to Cllr. Lamb who is in the progress of obtaining a new replacement bus shelter donated from Devon County Council for Station Road/Drakes Road.

We have also conducted an annual review of a number of necessary Council Standing Orders, Regulations, Policies and legal agreements, which have included:-

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Risk Management Scheme
- Publication Scheme
- Statement of Internal Control
- Anti-Corruption Policy
- Training & Development Policy for Staff and Councillors
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- Beregen Agreement Parish Hall: signed by Council and Beregen Trustees

712. Report from the Sports Development Committee

For some years the Council have been concerned about the structural state and facilities in the Sports Pavilion at the Down, Bere Alston. An Architects inspection confirmed that it should be replaced and only urgent repairs should take place. The Parish Council were also concerned about the lack of facilities for women's sport and other sports that no longer use the field but did so in the past.

We decided to consult with the Public about the Pavilion, the Field, and Children's Play Park. A questionnaire was circulated and a public meeting held in the Parish Hall on 17 February.

We had 164 responses with a huge majority to a replacement pavilion and additional play park facilities and in addition the provision of a metre track around the field and the provision of a public toilet.

The Play Park is going ahead as Head of Open Spaces has secured grant money for that provision. We are investigating the costing for a toilet and the and the field track. We believe that the Pavilion can only be provided when the usage of the field provides for both sexes and other sports.

The second part of the questionnaire identified the number of people who wished to participate in sport and we have decided to investigate and promote the five most popular which are:

Women's Football	62 (73%)
Cricket	52 (57.8%)
Rounder's	51 (56.7%)
Rugby	41 (45.6%)
Hockey	26 (28.9%)

We need coaches and leaders, equipment and support from National Governing Bodies. Members of my Committee have now taken on the responsibility for a sport and you will hear more in the coming months as we call participants together in moving forward.

In due course the new pavilion will have to be designed, costed and funded and at that stage we may well have another consultation.

713. Questions from the public

There was only one question from the public regarding theirs and approx. 12 other properties who are still waiting for full fibre broadband to be installed. They have contacted the local MP and asks is there anything the Parish can do? Cllr. Crozier stated that yes, the Parish Council could help and will speak directly to them after the meeting and give them contacts at West Devon Borough Council.

714. Commemorating D-Day: some records and memories of the Second World War on the Bere Peninsula and around, a talk by Mr. Clive Charlton.

Clive Charlton gave a talk and slide show on the memories and records of D-Day and the WWII in the peninsula and the wider area.

After his talk, Cllr. Crozier thanked Mr. Charlton for his talk.

Signed by the Chair

Date 28th May 2024