

BERE FERRERS PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held in the Council Chambers on Tuesday 21st October 2025 at 7.30 pm.

Present:

Cllr. B. Lamb Vice Chair of the Committee
Cllr. P. Dennis Cllr. R. Leithall
Cllr. R. Maycock Cllr. C. Shaw

In Attendance: Cllr. M. Patterson

304. Apologies

Cllr. P. Crozier and Cllr. V. Grose sent their apologies. Accepted by the Committee.

305. Declaration of Interest

None.

306. Notification of items for information at the discretion of the Chair. No action can be taken on these items

Cllr. Leithall:

1. Has received correspondence from the Head of Land & Planning at Bunny Homes, who have recently purchased the Woolacombe Road housing site, previously owned by Burrington Homes. The company has submitted a variation to the existing planning permission to substitute their own house types and would welcome the opportunity to introduce themselves to the Council and present their proposals. They have suggested attending the next Plans & Highways Committee meeting on 4th November.

After discussion, it was agreed that as many Councillors as possible should be able to attend to hear their proposals. The Clerk to invite Bunny Homes to attend the Full Council meeting on 28th October 2025, as the 4th November Plans & Highways meeting would not be suitable due to three Committee members being unable to attend.

2. Following their gold medal win at the South West regional of the RHS Britian in Bloom competition, an invitation to had been extended to members of the Bere Alston in Bloom group to attend the Full Council and receive the Chairman's Commendation Award for services to the Community and Parish.

Cllr. Dennis:

1. Expressed his disappointment that no members of the Parish Council attended Beregen's recent AGM. It was noted that Cllr. Crozier is the Council's representative and was unable to attend as he is currently away.
2. The Contractor who replaced the gutters and facias on the Parish Hall, noticed a lot of defects on the slates and hinted that the roof may need replacing. It was noted that a Roofer should review to give their opinion.

Cllr. Lamb update members on key points following his attendance at Devon County Council's presentation on their proposal for Devolution plan:

Devon County Council intends to submit a proposal for a new structure referred to as "New Devon" or "9:1:1", under which Plymouth and Torbay Councils would remain unchanged, while the County and District Councils would merge to form a new unitary authority.

The proposal includes the creation of Neighbourhood Area Committees, which would meet monthly and include representation from Parish Councils. However, there was no mention on how they would deal with planning. The deadline for submitting the proposal is 28 November 2025, and the Government is expected to announce its decision in July 2026.

307. Matters arising from the meeting held on the 23rd September

The minutes have been adopted and approved at the Full Council meeting held on 30th September 2025.

Matters Arising

Minute 236 (178)

No further update from West Devon Borough Council on the installation date for the Electric Car Charging Points for Pilgrim Drive.

Minute 236 (185)

It was noted that the Council's solicitors are still awaiting a response from the owners' solicitors regarding the transfer of land at Bedford Villas. The owner to be informed again.

Minute 241

Cllr. Dennis stated that, unfortunately, the application to West Devon Borough Council's Community Halls Capital Grant had not been successful. He asked whether the Council, as the landowner, who had also previously agreed on the Parish Hall doors be replaced with glass, would now pay for the installation of the new doors, the replacement is now urgent and has been pending for several years. He therefore requested that the Council proceed with placing the order. Cllr. Lamb asked whether Beregen could contribute any funding towards the cost. Cllr. Dennis will discuss with the Trustees.

Cllr. Dennis also noted that he is working with Devon Communities, who are helping in identifying suitable grants for further Parish Hall works required, including the lowering of the ceiling and new infer red heating system. The Clerk to investigate other potential grant opportunities.

Members acknowledged that the cost to replace the doors will need to be considered when finalising the budget and precept for the next financial year.

Minute 245 (1)

The Clerk is in process of putting a grant application together requesting funds to install a CCTV system around the Cemetery Hut and upgrade of the system around the Parish Hall.

Minute 245 (2)

Cllr. Dennis reported that the amendments requested by the Land Registry had been completed and submitted.

308. To accept the October 2025 accounts for payment

Cllr. Maycock proposed acceptance of the accounts, seconded by Cllr. Dennis.

309. To accept the F & G.P Detailed Receipt and Payment report ending 30th September 2025

Cllr. Maycock proposed acceptance of the report, seconded by Cllr. Shaw.

310. To accept the bank reconciliation ending 30th September 2025

Cllr. Lamb proposed acceptance of the report, seconded by Cllr. Maycock.

311. Discuss and consider list of capital items for future Parish projects

Previous capital items/future project discussed at the last meeting:

- Resurfacing of the car park at Pilgrim Drive
- Replacement of benches

- Purchase of a larger mower
- Installation of new field gates for both Bere Alston and Bere Ferrers recreation parks
- Purchase of a projector for use in the Parish Hall during meetings

Other items to be added to the list:

- Putting Bere Ferrers Parish Council signs on all assets.
- Parish Hall maintenance – including replacement of main door, windows and roof
- New trailer
- New mower

The Clerk was asked to draw up a list of approx. costings.

312. Update regarding the Parish Hall carpark

After discussions, Cllr. Lamb to resend the letter to Cllr. Leithall for him to review and amend.

The letter will then be placed on cars parked in the car park at a suitable time. Their vehicle registration will be recorded on each letter.

313. Discussion on introducing a wayleave fee for the Doctor's Surgery to access the Parish Hall carpark, due to the InPost lockers located in their car park

Cllr. Dennis stated that the deeds for the Doctors' Surgery allow a right of way only for patients attending the surgery, not for any other use. Cllr. Leithall noted that, if this is correct, the Council may have grounds to take action. It was discussed that the placement of the InPost box could be affecting local couriers and businesses.

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he Clerk and Cllr. Leithall will review the deeds. Cllr. Lamb proposed that, subject to the outcome of this review, the Council write to the Doctors' Surgery to inform them of the unauthorised use of their easement without the Council's permission. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. Maycock. All in favour.

314. Discuss and consider a resident's request to purchase and install a sparrow bird box at the Parish Hall

Cllr. Patterson reported that a resident had requested permission from the Council to purchase and install a bird box, as the recent work on the Parish Hall has left the local sparrows homeless.

After discussion, it was agreed that the bird box could be installed on the following conditions: it is placed on the apex of the roof, installed by a professional, and only one box is allowed.

315. Correspondence

1. Cllrs Lamb, Shaw, and the Clerk updated members on the meeting held with the Workman. During the meeting, further security measures to be implemented at the Cemetery Hut were discussed and agreed upon.

Cllr. Lamb proposed that a recommendation be made to Full Council to approve the contractor's quote for reinforcing the Cemetery Hut doors. All agreed. Cllr. Lamb will also look to seek the paperwork on when the stolen trailer was given/brought by the Council.

2. Email from a resident asking if the Devonshire flag would be flown as a permanent fixture on the flagpole in the Memorial garden, except for special occasions such as the Remembrance Day service.

It was agreed that this should be discussed at the full council meeting next week.

316. Agenda items for the next meeting

Aside from the usual items, no additional items were put forward at this time.

318. Questions from the public, at the discretion of the Chair

There were no members of the public present.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked members for attending the meeting and declared the meeting closed at 9 pm.

Signed by the Chair

Dated 28th October 2025