

BERE FERRERS PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held in the Bere Ferrers Church Hall on Tuesday 30th September 2025

Present

Cllr. R. Leithall	Chair of the Council
Cllr. P. Crozier	Cllr. B. Lamb
Cllr. R. Maycock	Cllr. M. Patterson
Cllr. R. Perry	Cllr. G. Sutton
Cllr. E. Wager	

In Attendance: Cllr. A. Blackman and Cllr. I. Saxby

248. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr. P. Archer, Cllr. P. Dennis, Cllr. J. Maciejowska and Cllr. C. Shaw. Accepted by the Council.

249. Declaration of Interests

None.

250. Notifications of items of interest as the discretion of the chair. No action can be taken on these items

Cllr. Wager reported that a creeper is growing on the mosaic tiles in the garden, which could cause damage. The Clerk is to contact Bere Alston in Bloom asking them to remove it.

Cllr. Dennis had sent his apologies but emailed a report from the Youth Worker following the meeting held with Sir Geoffrey Cox MP on 4th August at the Youth Club:

"The meeting went really well. Sir Geoffrey met some of our young people and they discussed some issues they have with him. They also spoke to him about our youth council. I discussed with him the importance of ensuring that rural youth clubs are included in the new national youth strategy being put together by the government. I discussed with him the different challenges we face which are not so prevalent in urban youth services (rural isolation, loneliness, lack of services, limited transport, etc). Sir Geoffrey was keen to raise this in parliament to ensure that our area and other rural areas get a fair deal when resources are distributed. I was disappointed that we did not have anyone from the parish council attend as they were all made aware and did say they would send a representative. A Tavistock Times reporter was present, and the article is available to view online if anyone wishes. We also had Caroline from Holsworthy Youth Club join us to reinforce the message to Sir Geoffrey that our rural youth clubs work differently to those in larger cities and this needs to be recognised when creating national policy."

251. Chair's Report

Cllr. Leithall noted that this is the first Full Council meeting since the summer recess, and that matters arising will be addressed under the relevant Committee agenda items.

The theft from the Cemetery Hut over the previous weekend was discussed. The Clerk confirmed that several items, including the trailer, were stolen and that the Police had been informed. The Clerk will place a notice on the Council's Facebook page providing details and asking if anyone saw anything suspicious. To be discussed further, including implicating additional security measures will be considered, at the next Open Spaces Committee meeting.

252. To receive reports from the District Councillors

Cllr. A. Blackman's report:

1. Continues to chase the installation date of the EV chargers for the Pilgrim Drive carpark.
2. Is trying to speak to West Devon Borough Council, who own a piece of disused land in Chapel Street and whether it could be converted into a disabled parking space for a resident living next door.
3. Updated the Council on the Government's devolution plan. It is likely the 4,5,1 proposal will be confirmed;

- 4 – combine South Hams, Teignbridge, West and Torbay into a single unitary authority.
- 5 – combine East Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon, Torridge, and Exeter into another unitary authority.
- 1 – Plymouth as a standalone unitary authority.

Deadline to submit proposals is November.

Cllr. A. Blackman said there would be a minimum of 66 councillors for our unitary, which on her calculation would be 50% less of what we currently have at the moment. After discussions, Cllr. Crozier noted that this devolution will not offer any savings and as previous cases show all went over budget.

Cllr. Leithall asked does the Parish Council have any significant role in this?

Cllr. Blackman commented that the Council is “just being given lip service” and expressed concern that the outcome may already be a foregone conclusion. Cllr. Crozier that the Council can send in their concerns.

Cllr. Lamb expressed concern that, as Torbay is already a unitary authority, West Devon could be absorbed into its governance structure. Following further discussion, Cllr. Lamb proposed that the Council formally decry any proposal to include West Devon in a scheme with Torbay, noting that such an arrangement would offer no meaningful local representation or powers. The proposal was unanimously agreed. A written statement reflecting this position will be sent to Devon County Council and West Devon Borough Council.

4. Reported that Chris Brook from West Devon Borough Council is leaving his post. The position will not be directly replaced; however, an Assistant Director role will be created and filled internally.
5. Lastly discussed the recent refusal of the planning application at Pounds Park, Bere Alston and the dismay that it was refused.

253. To receive a report from the County Councillor

Not present at the meeting.

254. Award of the Eاون Wager Allotment Cup for the best allotment at the Bere Alston site

For the best kept Bere Alston allotment for 2025, Cllr. Wager presented the cup to Mr. Ralph. Elmes.

255. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Full Council meeting held on 29th July 2025 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

All approved the minutes.

Matters Arising

Minute 198

Cllr. Lamb has secured £500 from Cllr. Fife Cook’s Locality Fund to support the planning application costs for the new Pavilion.

Minute 200 (126)

The Tavy & Tamar Apple Group has secured a grant to rejuvenate the Orchard, and work is now underway.

Minute 200 ((63 (758)

Cllr. Lamb confirmed that negotiations with West Devon Borough Council regarding the Section 106 funds from the Burrington Homes site are still ongoing. Burrington Homes has gone bankrupt; however, a new company, Burrington Homes Bere Alston, has been formed. West Devon Borough Council is currently attempting to contact the new company to discuss the matter further.

Minute 201 (146)

Arranging a meeting with other Parish/town Councils to discuss planning issues will be discussed at the next Plans & Highways meeting.

Minute 202(158)

Cllr. Perry reported that the issue he highlighted was the debris in the spring in Cornwall Street and it has been dealt with by Devon County Council.

Minute 204 (178)

West Devon Borough Council have confirmed that the leases for the EV chargers to be installed in the Pilgrim Drive carpark has been signed and are now waiting on the installation date.

Minute 204 (181)

It was agreed that as it is not mandatory to carry out an annual LG1 supplementary test on the Council office lift, the Council would not go ahead with it.

Cllr. Patterson proposed adoption of the minutes, seconded by Cllr. Lamb.

SO, RESOLVED

256. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Plans & Highways Committee meeting held on 5th August 2025 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

Cllr. Maycock proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr. Patterson.

Matters Arising

Minute 215

Cllr. Maycock proposed an amendment to the minute to clarify that, although Cllr. Patterson is aware of the school's wish to have a flashing 20 mph sign installed outside the school on Station Road, this initiative is not being driven or managed by the Parish Council. The Parish Council has no involvement in the project and has not been asked for comment by Devon County Council or Devon Highways. All agreed to approve.

The meeting scheduled for 2nd September 2025, was cancelled due to no planning applications to be discussed.

Cllr. Patterson proposed adoption of the minutes, seconded by Cllr. Crozier.

SO, RESOLVED

257. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Open Spaces meeting held on 9th September 2025 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

Cllr. Wager proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr. Patterson.

Matters Arising

Minute 222

The Clerk has contacted West Devon Borough Council to establish ownership of the land on which the Lime Kiln sits, but has not yet received a reply. Cllr. Wager suggested that it might be owned by English Heritage. The Clerk will investigate further and check with English Heritage.

Minute 223 (170)

The suggestion to close only half of the pathway down to Fore Street to allow painting while keeping the other half open, is unfeasible as there is only a handrail on one side. After discussion, it was agreed that the pathway must be fully closed while the work is being completed. All were in agreement.

Minute 226

The workman is to remove the old litter bin in Sarah Park, its concrete base, and the concrete bases of two removed benches. He raised a question about how to dispose of the concrete. It was discussed and agreed that all broken-up concrete should be piled together and will be removed when the old Pavilion is taken down.

Minute 227

The Clerk read out a reply from the Solicitor in regards to the ban on bonfire/incinerators at allotment sites: "Thank you for your email, and for confirming that our letter and client's concerns were discussed at the Open Spaces Committee meeting on 9 September. We are grateful to the Committee for passing a motion reflecting that the Parish Council has no intention of changing their bonfire or incinerator policy at the allotments at this

time. We are also glad to hear that a decision has been made to update the Clerk's working notes to reflect that no bonfires or incinerators are allowed at the allotments, so future Clerks and Councillors are aware of the position. We are grateful for your and the Committee's assistance in this matter. "

Cllr. Wager proposed adoption of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Patterson.

SO, RESOLVED

258. To approve and adopt the minutes from the F & G.P meeting held on 23rd September 2025 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

Cllr. Crozier proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr. Lamb.

Matters Arising

Minute 235

The contractor has completed the work on the Parish Hall. The Clerk was asked to check whether any of the Beregen Trustees have inspected the finished work.

Minute 245 (2)

Via email Cllr. Dennis asked:

'As to the HM Land Registry Correspondence referred to in the F&GP Minutes, please can you update Council with my email regarding the date of Commencement of the Y2Y Agreement. On reflection, this date should either be the date of when the document was signed or 1st April 2024. Please can we have this date confirmed by Full Council, so I can complete the reply to HM Land Registry.' It was agreed to amend the commencement date to 1st April 2024.

Cllr. Crozier proposed adoption of the minutes, seconded by Cllr. Lamb.

SO, RESOLVED

259. Review and approve the External Auditor's Audit report and certificate 2024/25

All agreed to approve the report and certificate.

260. Discuss and approve the F & G.P Committee' recommendation of a letter/notification to be sent to all residents regarding the Parish Hall car park

After discussions, Cllr. Leithall proposed that in principle the Council should send the letter to all residents and wanted to check the wording before sending it out.

261.To receive a report from the Sports Development Committee

Cllr. Lamb updated members on the cost of the planning application for the new pavilion. West Devon Borough Council advised that the car park and field track should be included in the application cost, which would therefore increase the cost to approximately £4,530; without them being included, the cost would be around £530.

After researching past minutes, Cllr. Lamb discovered that planning permission for the car park had already been submitted and approved. This information has been forwarded to West Devon, and Cllr. Lamb is still awaiting a response despite several follow-ups. He asked both Cllr. Blackman and Cllr. Saxby for assistance in securing a reply on behalf of the Parish Council.

Cllr. Leithall thanked Cllr. Lamb for his hard work in establishing this information.

262. Discuss late buses to Bere Alston on Friday and Saturday

The Peninsula Transport Sub-National Transport Body (STB) is offering organisations, charities, businesses, local authorities, and community groups the opportunity to secure up to £50,000 of funding to drive forward a transport scheme to help make harder-to-reach places more liveable communities. To be considered, schemes must address one or more of six challenges that rural communities face, such as sustainability, connectivity, decarbonisation, and accessibility and the deadline to submit is 5th October 2025.

Cllr. Lamb suggested the Parish Council submit an application to help fund a late bus from Tavistockk to Bere Alston on Friday and Saturday nights. After discussions, Cllr. Perry volunteered to lead on this.

263. Discussion on the coordination between the Bere Alston British legion and the Parish Council

Following a meeting with the Bere Alston Legion group, Cllr. Sutton proposed arranging a joint meeting between the Legion and members of the Council to discuss and agree on key matters, such as the removal of wreaths from the war memorials. After discussion, it was agreed to suggest a meeting with the Legion on Tuesday 7th October at 7.30 pm in the Council Chambers. Items for discussion to include:

- When poppies and wreaths should be removed from the memorials, and confirmation of who is responsible for their removal.
- Expectations and arrangements for the Remembrance Day service.
- Inclusion of the New Zealand soldiers in the Remembrance Day service.
- Confirmation of how many wreaths to order, who to order from, and who will invoice the Council.

Cllr. Sutton will liaise with the Chair of the Legion group.

264. Review and approve Social Media & Electronic Communication Policy

The policy had been sent to all Councillors for review prior to the meeting. All agreed to approve the policy.

265. Review and approve Scheme of Delegation

The policy had been sent to all Councillors for review prior to the meeting. All agreed to approve the policy.

266. Correspondence

1. Email from Cllr. M. Fife Cook:

"I thought you would all like to know that Devon County Council has backed the '20 is Plenty' motion, which is great news. However, as I had expected and had tried to fight against, the cost has to be borne by the town or parishes councils that want to put this in place. Personally, I feel that this is such an important issue that we should have got our heads together to find a way to pay for this centrally, but in fairness, finances are extremely tight, and at least those councils that feel they can afford to go ahead with a 20mph speed limit within their towns or villages will now be able to do so (subject to certain considerations). I am sorry that this means laying more burden at the feet of the town and parishes, you all have enough to carry, but you can at least now decide if you want this, and how you will be able fund".

Noted by the Council.

2. Email from Gregg Black:

"I am writing to you in your role as Chair of Bere Ferris Parish Council regarding the railway line that currently runs from Bere Ferris to Bere Alston. I am leading a community group with a Facebook presence that is campaigning for a Plymouth Metro railway connecting Tavistock and Plympton. A key part of this project would be extending the line from Bere Alston to Tavistock. This extension would help reduce carbon emissions, improve transport links, and create economic opportunities for the area. Importantly, it would also strengthen transport connections for Bere Ferris residents, making travel into Plymouth and Tavistock more accessible and sustainable. I already have the support of several councillors in Plymouth, and Plymouth City Council's Leader, Cllr Evans OBE, has confirmed his support. I have also contacted the Mayor of Tavistock and Luke Pollard MP regarding this project, and I would very much value your perspective and potential support from Bere Ferris. If this is of interest, I would love to arrange a meeting to discuss the project further and explore how we can build more community traction together."

It was agreed to extend an invitation for him to come and talk at the next Full Council meeting in October.

3. Cllr. Leithall proposed going into Part 2, seconded by Cllr. Maycock. Cllr. Leithall proposed coming out of Part 2, seconded by Cllr. Maycock.

A matter was discussed under Part 2.

267. Questions from any members of the public present, 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 and declared the meeting closed at 9.35 pm.

Signed by the Chair of the Council

Signed this date 28th October 2025