

BERE FERRERS PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held in the Council Chambers, Bere Alston on Tuesday 28th October 2025

Present

Cllr. R. Leithall	Chair of the Council
Cllr. P. Crozier	Cllr. B. Lamb
Cllr. V. Grose	Cllr. R. Maycock
Cllr. M. Patterson	Cllr. G. Sutton
Cllr. C. Shaw	Cllr. E. Wager

319. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr. P. Archer, Cllr. P. Dennis, and Cllr. R. Perry. Accepted by the Council.

320. Declaration of Interests

None.

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

Cllr Lamb enquired about Devon County Council's proposed parking restrictions Lockeridge Road/Station Road/Pound Parks Road. The Clerk confirmed it will be discussed at the next Plans & Highways meeting.

322. Chair's Report

Cllr. Leithall:

- The success of the Bere Alston in Bloom Group is an agenda item.
- Members of the Council recently met with Eddie Ember, Chair of the Bere Alston British Legion, to discuss and agree on matters that had arisen.
- Members of the Open Spaces Committee have put forward ideas to improve the security of Open Spaces assets.
- The Council is currently reviewing its budget for the next financial year.
- Unfortunately, the joint Parish Council/Beregen application for funding to carry out Parish Hall repairs, including the installation of new outer doors, was not successful. The Parish Council is now exploring alternative funding opportunities.

323. To present the Chair's Commendation Award to the Bere Alston in Bloom Group in recognition of their Gold Medal win in the South West regional round of the RHS Britain in Bloom competition.

Cllr. Leithall:

The Britain in Bloom competition recognises the most beautiful, tidy, horticulturally impressive, and environmentally friendly villages, towns, and cities in the country, with proven community involvement. Bere Alston has won Gold in the Champion of Champions Large Village category, South West region, Britain in Bloom, along with four outstanding awards for Quarry Corner, Mosaic Garden, the Station, and the Allotment. Thank you to the Bere Alston in Bloom Committee, their volunteers, and everyone who helped the village achieve this incredible success.

It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the Parish Council, to present the Chairman's Award to the Bere Alston in Bloom Group. This award recognises not only their tremendous hard work and dedication, but also the way they have inspired and brought the community together.

Through their efforts, they have encouraged so many people in Bere Alston, making our village brighter and truly a place we can all be proud to call home.

Cllr. Leithall then presented the award to Mrs. Jeanette Englefield, who, upon receiving it, stated that this achievement could not have been possible without the support of the members of the public present at the meeting.

Cllr. Richard Leithall recently presented the Silver Gilt Small Business Award from Britain in Bloom South West to Mr. Will Richardson of Harling Farm, who was unable to attend the earlier presentation. It was also noted that Harling Farm was the only business in Devon to receive this award.

324. Presentation from the Head of Land & Planning at Bunny Homes regarding their submitted variation to the planning permission for Land At Sx 453 669, Bere Alston - 2435/23/FUL (previously owned by Burrington Homes)

Mr. Will Morris, Head of Land & Planning at Bunny Homes, attended the meeting.

Bunny Homes is a family-run company based in Bodmin, who had recently purchased the site from Burrington Homes, who went into administration.

A variation to the existing planning permission has been submitted to replace the original Burrington Homes designs with Bunny Homes' own. The revised plans include a greater number of two- and three-bedroom properties. They will adhere as closely as possible to the previously approved application, including maintaining the existing footpath and estate's entry/exit point. Bunny Homes have also reached out to the Bowling Club to discuss their plans.

They understand that the current access is a key issue, but confirmed there are currently no plans to change the access route. However, they are exploring whether construction traffic could be routed differently to minimise disruption.

Discussions are ongoing with a local housing association, and around one-third (30%) of the homes will remain affordable housing, consistent with the original plan.

If the variation application is approved, work is expected to begin in 2–3 months, with an estimated build period of 20–24 months, i.e. starting in Spring 2026 and completing by Christmas 2028.

Footpath access will be maintained throughout the construction period wherever possible, though there may be temporary closures for health and safety reasons. Bunny Homes will liaise with Devon County Council regarding any such closures.

Questions and Comments from Councillors:

Cllr. Sutton noted that the number of bedrooms in the revised plans appeared to be fewer than in Burrington Homes' original plan and asked for the exact number. Mr. Morris did not have this information to hand but confirmed he would forward it on after the meeting.

Cllr. Grose asked about the inclusion of solar panels. Mr. Morris confirmed that solar panels would not be installed, but heat pumps would be included, and all required environmental and energy criteria would be met.

Local Housing Priority: It was asked whether the housing association would prioritise local residents. Mr. Morris confirmed that homes would be allocated to those with a local connection.

Cllr. Lamb highlighted that the Neighbourhood Plan specifies the entry and exit point should be off the main road. He therefore requested a separate discussion regarding this issue and the potential variation of the Section 106 agreement. This was agreed too.

Cllr. Maycock asked if Bunny Homes were aware of the second site earmarked for housing development. Mr. Morris confirmed they were and would review that site as well.

Cllr. Leithall thanked Mr Morris for attending the meeting.

325. To receive a report from the County Councillor

Not present at the meeting.

326. To receive reports from the Borough Councillors

Cllr. I Saxby had sent her apologies. Cllr. Blackman was not present at the meeting.

327. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Full Council meeting held on 30th September 2025 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

There was no matters arising.

All agreed to approve and adopt the minutes.

SO, RESOLVED

328. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Plans & Highways Committee meeting held on 7th October 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 270

Cllr. Maycock has investigated the InPost locker by the Doctors' Surgery and noted that they are normally subject to a minimum five-year contract.

Cllr. Leithall reported that, after reviewing the deeds, it appears to align with what Cllr. Dennis stated at the F & G.P. meeting on 21st October 2025, in that the right of way is intended solely for the use of patients accessing the Doctors' Surgery and no other purpose.

If correct, the Parish Council should, in the first instance, write to the Doctors' Surgery to ask whether they recognise that the locker may not be permitted under the terms of the deeds.

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

SO, RESOLVED

329. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Footpaths & Environment Committee meeting held on 14th October 2025 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

Cllr. Grose proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Cllr. Shaw.

There were no matters arising

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

SO, RESOLVED

330. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Open Spaces meeting held on 14th October 2025 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

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

Matters Arising

Minute 296

Cllr. Leithall proposed going into Part 2, seconded by Cllr. Patterson.

Cllr. Leithall proposed coming out of Part 2, seconded by Cllr. Wager

Further implementation of security measures on Council's assets were discussed under Part 2. Cllr. Lamb has found details on the cost of the stolen trailer and when it was purchased.

Minute 302

There is no further update from Cllr. Blackman regarding the piece of land in Chapel Street.

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

SO, RESOLVED

331. To approve and adopt the minutes from the F & G.P meeting held on 21st October 2025 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

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

Matters Arising

Minute 307(241)

Unfortunately, the Parish Council's application for the West Devon Borough Council Community Grant was not successful. Cllr. Lamb asked whether the two Borough Councillors had supported the grant application. Cllr. Dennis was unsure.

Minute 314

At the meeting, the Committee had agreed that a bird box could be installed on the apex part of the Parish Hall. Cllr. Lamb now suggested this wasn't an ideal place and it should go on the north side of the building.

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

SO, RESOLVED

332. To discuss the F & G.P Committee's recommendation to approve the contractor's quote for the update of the Cemetery Hut doors

After discussions, Cllr. Lamb proposed acceptance of the revised quote, on the condition that it did not exceed £3,000 including VAT. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Wager. All were in favour.

333.To receive a report from the Sports Development Committee

Cllr. Lamb confirmed that the cost of the planning application will be £588 and the application, along with all the required reports is about ready to be submitted.

334.To consider a parishioner's request for the Devonshire flag to be flown on the Mosaic garden flagpole

A resident, via email, asked whether the Council would consider flying the Devonshire flag as a permanent fixture on the flagpole in the Mosaic Garden, except for special occasions such as the Remembrance Day service.

After discussion, Cllr. Lamb proposed that the flag be allowed to be flown, seconded by Cllr. Wager. The Clerk will ask the resident to consider purchasing the flag and to inform the Bere Alston Royal British Legion.

335. Correspondence

1. The Carnival Committee requested that the Parish Hall car park be closed to vehicles on Saturday 6th December for the Victorian Evening and to allow stall setup. Permission was granted.
2. Following a visit from the West Devon Borough Council Locality Officer with the Clerk, they are continuing to monitor the recreational fields and will take action against those who do not pick up after their dogs. The Clerk was also informed that West Devon Borough Council is in the process of granting their officers powers to issue on-the-spot fines (£100) for offences including fly-tipping, dog fouling, and nuisance behaviour.

336. items for the next agenda

No additional items was given.

337. Questions from any members of the public present, at the discretion of the Chair.

Members of the public who had attended the meeting, had already left. There being no further business, the Chair thanked members for attending and declared the meeting closed at 9.03 pm.

Signed by the Chair of the Council

Signed this date 25th November 2025

DRAFT