

## BERE FERRERS PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held in the Council Chambers on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 7.30 pm.

### **Present:**

Cllr. P. Crozier Chair of the Committee

Cllr. P. Dennis Cllr. B. Lamb

Cllr. R. Leithall Cllr. V. Grose

Cllr. C. Shaw

In Attendance: Cllr. Patterson and Cllr. Wager

### **601. Apologies**

None

### **602. Declaration of Interest**

Cllr. Dennis declared an interest in Parish Hall Lease extension.

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

Cllr. Lamb reported that, thanks to a locality grant from Cllr. Michael Fife Cook, a new life buoy at the Bere Ferrers Quay has been installed. Also wished to thank Cllr. Shaw for his assistance with the installation. Arrangements are currently being made for a photo opportunity with Cllr. Fife Cook at the life buoy.

Cllr. Wager confirmed that the phone line in the Weir Quay phone box has been removed; however, the phone box will remain.

Cllr. Dennis:

- raised concerns about a resident feeding seagulls around the Parish Hall. The Clerk confirmed that West Devon Environmental Health has been informed and will issue a further letter requesting that this activity stops, as there is now also a rat infestation in the Parish Hall garden.
- Following an inspection by the Fire Safety Inspector, the recommendation is either an evacuation chair be installed on the 2nd floor of the Council Office or adequate provisions be put in place to assist anyone needing to get down the stairs. To be placed on the agenda for further discussion at the next F & G.P. meeting.
- Beregen have organised a work party of volunteers to install the guttering around the Parish Hall.

### **604. Matters arising from the meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

The minutes have been adopted and approved at the Full Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026

#### Matters Arising

##### Min. 540 (471)

The Manager of the Doctor's Surgery confirmed that they are happy for the Council to add an addendum to the deed to include an update to the right of way allowing parishioners to cross the Council's car park to access the InPost locker service.

##### Min. 540 (471) (419))

At present no vans have been parking in the carpark long term.

Cllr. Shaw to organise a working party to fill in the pot holes the car park.

##### Min. 540 (477)

The new Parish Hall doors are on order. A local electrician has installed the required electrical power for the new doors. The Parish Council agreed to pay their invoice.

Min. 553

The Clerk reported that the Council's insurance provider has recorded the updated security measures installed. However, this will not result in any reduction to the current premium. Their explanation, premiums are calculated based on a range of factors, and improvements to security and associated risk assessments alone are insufficient to reduce the overall cost.

**605. To accept the March 2026 accounts for payment**

Cllr. Dennis proposed acceptance, seconded by Cllr. Lamb. All agreed.

**606. To accept the F & G.P Detailed Receipt and Payment report ending 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

Following review, Cllr. Leithall proposed that it be recorded that the report shows an increase in expenditure and that certain items were over budget, but that all additional costs had been approved. With these caveats, Cllr. Lamb proposed accepting the report, seconded by Cllr. Grose. All in agreement.

**607. To accept the bank reconciliation ending 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

All accepted.

**608. Review of Standing Orders**

The revised document had been sent to all prior to the meeting. Cllr. Lamb proposed approval, seconded by Cllr. Maycock. All in favour.

**609. Parish Hall Lease Extension – Confirmation of community benefit and statutory compliance**

It was noted that this Committee had recommended extending the Beregen's lease to 20 April 2056, and that this recommendation was subsequently adopted by Full Council on 19 December 2025. However, Cllr. Leithall explained that prior to instructing a solicitor to complete a deed of variation, the Council needs to formally records certain matters to ensure compliance with legal requirements and to support the due diligence process. Extending the term of a lease is treated in law as a disposal of an interest in land under the Local Government Act 1972 and Councils are normally required to obtain best consideration when disposing of land. However, under the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003, a council may dispose of land at less than market value where it considers that doing so promotes the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the area. In this case, the lease is at a peppercorn rent (£1 per annum), and the Council has already considered the community and financial benefits arising from the current arrangements.

Cllr. Leithall therefore proposed a recommendation that the Council formally confirms by adopting the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 9 December 2025, it approved the recommendation to extend the lease dated 1 April 2010 to 20 April 2056. The Council further confirms that this decision promotes the social wellbeing of the parish through the continued provision of community facilities and represents a justified disposal at less than best consideration in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 and the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003. All in agreement.

Councillors are reminded that any member with a connection to Beregen (for example, as a trustee or officer) should declare an interest in this matter in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and consider whether it is appropriate to withdraw from discussion and voting.

**610. To review grass cutting quotes for Parish land and agree the preferred quote**

Cllr. Maycock proposed going into Part 2, seconded by Cllr. Dennis.

Cllr. Dennis proposed coming out of Part 2, seconded by Cllr. Shaw

Under Part 2, the Committee agreed to engage Tavy Turf as the Council's grass cutter for this year. The Clerk to inform the contractor and raise a purchase order.

**611. To receive an update on Cemetery Hut security improvements and access arrangements. To be taken into Part 2.**

Cllr. Maycock proposed going into Part 2, seconded by Cllr. Dennis.

Cllr. Dennis proposed coming out of Part 2, seconded by Cllr. Shaw.

Under Part 2, the final arrangements for improved security measures were discussed and agreed. The Clerk to take the necessary action.

**612. Routine inspection of public toilets**

Cllr. Crozier proposed going into Part 2, seconded by Cllr. Grose.

Cllr. Dennis proposed coming out of Part 2, seconded by Cllr. Crozier

Under Part 2, as requested Councillors inspected the toilets.

**613. To agree on process for reviewing equipment inspections**

All agreed to defer to the next meeting.

**614. Correspondence**

1. Email from Senior Transport Co-ordinating Officer, Integrated Public Transport. Devon County Council confirming the 0910 journey on bus service 87 will be adjusted to run two minutes later from week commencing 5<sup>th</sup> April 2026 to help ensure it does not get to the Edgcombe stop until 0930. This will enable concessionary pass holders boarding at this stop to use them as opposed to paying.

2. The Youth Club had a fire in a firepit, which had resulted in residents calling out the Fire Brigade. The Young Worker confirmed, via email, that in future, the Council, residents, and the Fire Service will be notified in advance of any similar planned activities.

**615. Agenda items for the next meeting**

1. Review of CCTV Policy
4. Review of routine equipment inspections.

**616. Questions from the public, at the discretion of the Chair**

A member of the public wished to discuss the increasing amount of graffiti around Bere Alston, namely on the electrical substation building at the bottom of Pilgrim Drive next to the walkway down to Fore Street and distributed photos he had taken. More has been added recently and had hoped the Council would quickly get rid of it, but no they had not. More has been added recently. Can the Council organise their removal.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked members for attending the meeting and declared the meeting closed at 9.33 pm

Signed by the Chair

Dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026