

## **Bere Ferrers Parish Council**

At a meeting of the Footpaths and Environment Committee held in the Council Chambers on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

### Present

Cllr. V. Grose	Chair of the Committee
Cllr. R. Leithall	Cllr. J. Maciejowska
Cllr. C. Shaw	Cllr. Sutton

In Attendance: Cllr. P. Crozier, Cllr. Lamb and Cllr. Patterson.

### **649. Apologies**

Cllr. Dennis sent his apology.

### **650. Declaration of Interest**

None.

### **651. Items of Interest at the discretion of the Chair. No action can be taken on these items.**

Cllr Grose advised that coloured plastic plant pots can now be placed in the white recycling bag, black plastic plant pots cannot.

### **652. Matters arising from the minutes from the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026**

#### Matters Arising

#### Min 527

It could not be confirmed whether the cut-down beer can flower pots reported at the previous meeting had been removed.  
To be checked.

#### Min 528 (283 (155)

The fallen tree on the bridleway at Leigh Farm has been removed.

#### Minute 530

The P3 forms have been submitted.

#### Min 532

A representative of the Tamar Energy Community had attended the Full Council meeting on 31st March to provide information on their Warmer Healthier Homes Scheme.

### **653. Public Rights of Way Update – discussion with Public Rights of Way Warden**

Ros Davies, Public Rights of Way Warden provided the following update:

Footpath 2 – The diversion order is progressing, with the proposed route now running through the field rather than across the garden. The Inspector has undertaken a site visit as part of the written representations process to determine the Diversion Order.

Footpath 89 – A contractor will be engaged to repair the partially collapsed stile.

Footpath 89 – The issue of sewerage spilling on the footpath continues but is in hand. West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) Environmental Health Officers have visited the site and consider it not to be a major issue. The tenant has widened the footpath, and from the Warden's perspective, the route is now passable from a public access point of view. However, a longer-term resolution remains under discussion between the relevant parties and Environmental Health, with a six-month timeframe for completion. Members expressed concern regarding potential health implications and asked that it continues to be monitored.

A large number of trees were brought down due to recent storms and three different contractors have been engaged to remove these. The fallen tree at Halliwell Woods has yet to be removed; however, walkers are able to safely pass around it.

Footpath 63 – there is a reported wire across a stile and a broken boardwalk. The boardwalk has been repaired and the wire is being cut down.

Footpath 65 – Cllr Maciejowska reported that a section on the edge of the wood is very wet, due to a small stream running down from the woods. The area is on a slope and is currently very difficult to walk on. Could something be built to improve access? The Warden will visit the site.

Footpath 60 – The route can become very muddy but it passable. However it is not accessible for disabled users.

Ms Davies, reported that fallen trees reported are dealt with accordingly. She noted the Parish Council may engage its own contractor to remove trees using their P3 funding. Devon County Council (DCC) is required to use its approved contractors for such work.

Footpath 37 – Cllr Grose reported that a section of the path which had previously subsided and was considered dangerous to walk has now significantly improved. However, it was noted that it took several months for the issue to be resolved. A query was raised regarding the response time from reporting issues to resolution. Ms Davis advised that where a tree is on the ground and obstructing a path, it is the responsibility of DCC to remove it. However, if a tree is hanging down, it is the responsibility of the landowner. DCC will though sometimes arrange for a contractor to carry out, for health and safety reasons.

Lopwell Dam - The unclassified road remains closed to vehicles, with road closed signage in place. However, it was noted that some vehicles continue to use the route. The road remains open for pedestrian access. Members will be kept informed of any further developments.

#### **654. To discuss including a grading system for local footpaths, assessing levels of difficulty and accessibility**

Cllr Patterson asked whether it would be possible to indicate on the footpath guide the suitability of each footpath for those with accessibility issues, with appropriate information included for users.

Cllr. Grose stated that she cannot think of a single footpath that is not on the road that are suitable for accessibility. Most of the parish footpaths are not suitable for wheelchair users or those with significant mobility difficulties, and even users with walking aids may find many routes challenging due to terrain, stiles, slopes, mud, and surface conditions.

The Warden explained that public rights of way were established under the 1949 Act, which provides the legal basis for the public walking access. However, the Discrimination Act does not include footpaths. She suggested that if the Parish were to introduce a grading system, they would need to be careful, as what may be considered easy for one person may not be the same for another. Concerns were also raised regarding the potential liability implications of assigning formal grades to public rights of way, particularly as conditions can vary along individual routes and may change over time due to weather or land use.

Cllr Sutton referred to systems used by Walking Britain and Walk Highlands, which apply a classification scale ranging from Easy to Severe. After discussion, it was suggested that, rather than assigning formal grades, a descriptive approach may be more appropriate and provide clear information on distance, terrain, gradients, and potential hazards to enable users to make informed decisions. It was noted that the current footpath guide already provides descriptions, but that it is missing some of the above information.

It was agreed that further research should be undertaken into what system Cornwall, or other parishes, may have adopted and discussed at the next meeting.

#### **655. Update on Pilgrims Drive electric car charging points**

The two electric vehicle charging points have still not been installed. Cllr Blackman, West Devon Borough Councillor, is continuing to chase this matter.

The Clerk advised that the Electric Vehicles / Highways Intelligence Group at Devon County Council had been informed that the Parish did not wish to install charging points in the Parish Hall car park. In response, they asked whether the Parish would consider remaining involved in the process, noting that the charging points being proposed may differ in type from those already installed at Pilgrim Drive. It was noted that members of Beregen did not wish for parking spaces to be taken up by charging points. Cllr Maciejowska stated that additional charging points are needed and suggested that the Parish may wish to consider alternative locations elsewhere within the parish.

#### **656. Environmental Issues**

There was nothing new to note.

#### **657. Correspondence**

None.

#### **658. Items for agenda for next meeting**

Aside from the usual items, no additional items were requested to be added.

It was agreed to hold the next meeting on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2026, after the Plans & Highways Committee Meeting.

**659. Questions from the public present at the meeting at the discretion of the Chair**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting. Cllr. Grose thanked Ros Davies for attending the meeting. There being no further business the Chair thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 8.54 pm.

Signed by the Chair

Signed this date 28<sup>th</sup> April 2026