

## BERE FERRERS PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held in the Council Chambers, Bere Alston on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

### Present

Cllr. R. Leithall	Chair of the Council
Cllr. P. Archer	Cllr. P. Crozier
Cllr. V. Grose	Cllr. B. Lamb
Cllr. J. Maciejowska	Cllr. R. Maycock
Cllr. M. Patterson	Cllr. R. Perry
Cllr. C. Shaw	
Cllr. G. Sutton	

### 617. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr. P. Dennis and Cllr. E. Wager. Accepted by the Council.

### 618. Declaration of Interests

None.

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

Cllr. Maycock highlighted that a resident of Cornwall Street is undertaking a 100 km trek across the Moroccan Sahara to raise funds for Papyrus, a charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide.

Following discussion, Cllr. Crozier proposed that the Council provide sponsorship of £100. All agreed.

Cllr. Maycock also asked all Councillors to share this information with other organisations within the Parish.

Cllr. Shaw reported that the graffiti on the Open Reaches boxes, raised in the previous week's F & G.P meeting, had now been painted over. Also reported was graffiti on the 30mph sign coming into Bere Alston and on a litter bin on the way down to Sleep garage.

Cllr. Patterson reported that he has received several emails from a resident who has been instructed by West Devon Borough Council's Environmental Health to cease feeding seagulls, stating that they have seen no evidence of rats. The Clerk advised that she has been asked to forward any available evidence to Environmental Health.

Cllr. Lamb reported that the Tavy & Tamar Apple Group will be holding an open day at the orchard in Bere Ferrers on 26th April from 2.00 pm. The Chair of the Tamar National Landscape will officially open the event, and all Councillors are invited to attend.

### 620. Chair's Report

The Open Spaces Committee: It's good to note that the security improvements at the Cemetery Hut are now in place. The Committee also considered the grass cutting arrangements for the coming year, reviewed the quotes, and referred the matter on for a final decision.

That decision was then taken by the Finance & General Purposes Committee, which agreed the grass cutting contract for the year ahead. F&GP also reconsidered the Parish Hall lease extension for compliance with regulations – something we will discuss when the F&GP minutes are presented for approval and adoption tonight.

We also held a Special Full Council meeting last week to consider the Local Government Reorganisation consultation. Members had a good discussion and agreed that we would support the Devon County Council proposal and submit a formal response.

More broadly, work is continuing on some of our key projects—particularly the Parish Hall improvements and the Sports Pavilion—and these will continue to move forward over the coming months.

On broadband and telephone connectivity, Members will have seen the latest update I circulated from Sir Geoffrey Cox.

For clarity, CDS is Connecting Devon & Somerset, the local body managing broadband rollout contracts, and BDUK is the Government's Building Digital UK programme, which oversees national gigabit broadband delivery and funding.

It's clear we are still in something of a holding position while CDS and BDUK resolve data issues and confirm which properties fall within future rollout plans. In the meantime, there may be opportunities through voucher schemes, but these will depend on provider decisions.

The key message for us is that engagement will be important—both with providers such as Airband and Bush Broadband, and through the MP's office as more detail emerges. The concerns we've previously raised around mobile coverage, resilience, and the telephone switchover remain very much in play and will need to stay on our agenda.

And finally, we're starting to look ahead to the Annual Parish Meeting in May, which we're hoping to develop into more of a community-focused event this year.

#### **621. To receive a report from the County Councillor**

Cllr. Fife-Cook's report:

- Through his Locality Grant, he has provided in the last year funding for a new gate at the Bere Ferrers Recreational Field and a life buoy at Bere Ferrers Quay.
- The timetable for the 89 bus has been successfully scheduled back to its original time and will again arrive at the Mount Edgcombe Pub at 09:30, allowing residents to use their bus passes. This was a good example of we are all stronger when we work together.
- With regards to Local government reorganisation (LGR) no one knows what is going to happen, but feels that the Government will look at it politically rather than looking at the numbers. The rural community will, he feels, lose out.

#### **622. To receive reports from the Borough Councillors**

Cllr. Blackman's report:

- The LGR public consultation deadline was 26th March. West Devon Borough Council supported their proposal of 5-4-1. We all now await the Government's decision.
- Her Locality Budget has been reset for the year. Previous schemes supported include the Bere Alston History Group archives, Weir Quay, Gulworthy Parish Hall, and St. Paul's Church.
- Expressed frustration that the electric car charging points in Pilgrim Drive, originally scheduled to start being installed in January and later postponed to the end of March, work has still not started. Have requested a meeting with the relevant parties to progress this matter urgently.
- WDBC is currently collating data on households that may be eligible for oil heating payments. The scheme will be means-tested.
- Is attending the Overview & Scrutiny meeting on 14th April and invited Councillors to let her know if there is anything they would like her to raise at the meeting.

#### **623. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Full Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.**

All agreed to approve the minutes.

#### **Matters Arising**

##### **Min 559**

The Clerk to draft a letter to the local MP, highlighting that, given the increase in housing development in the area, it is important that the Tavistock line be reconsidered to be reopened.

##### **Minute 562 (501 (430))**

The Manager of the Doctor's Surgery has replied, stating that he is happy for the Council to draw up a wayleave document allowing the InPost Lockers' service to be in place for patients and parishioners. Cllr. Leithall and the Clerk to prepare the document and forward it to the Surgery for approval and signing.

##### **Min 656 (529)**

WDBC are now emptying the Hope Cottage litter bin.

##### **Min 567**

A quote has been accepted to replace 16 broken/blown window panes at the Parish Hall. A site visit with the contractor is scheduled for 8th April.

All proposed adoption of the minutes.

**SO, RESOLVED**

**624. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Plans & Highways Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.**

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

Matters Arising

Min 582

Cllr Lamb attended an online meeting with WDBC and confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan is now considered redundant, as it is over five years old. It was noted of the many hours of work by Councillors and volunteers put into the plan and that the plan had served as a template for other parishes.

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

**SO, RESOLVED**

**625. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.**

All agreed to approve the minutes.

Matters Arising

Min 588 (530)

Pascoes & Son have confirmed they are able to remove the concrete around the Parish. To be discussed at the next Open Spaces meeting.

A site meeting between Cllr Wager and an allotment holder to review the track is to be scheduled.

All approved adoption on the minutes.

**SO, RESOLVED**

**626. To approve and adopt he minutes from the Special Full Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.**

All approved adoption on the minutes.

There were no matters arising.

All approved adoption on the minutes.

**SO, RESOLVED**

**627. To approve and adopt he minutes from the F & G.P meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.**

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

Matters Arising

Minute 604 (540 (477))

The drawings for the new Parish Hall doors have been approved for sign-off and the colour of the doors will be silver.

Min 608

All approved to adopt the revised Standing Orders

#### Min 609

Cllr Leithall stated that it is important to ensure the Council's actions are clear and carried out correctly and the relevant minute was read out. Cllr. Leithall therefore proposed that the Council formally confirms by the adopting the minutes, it approves the recommendation to extend the Parish Hall lease dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 to 20<sup>th</sup> April 2056 and this 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. Seconded by Cllr. Crozier. All in favour.

#### Min 610

The contractor for grass cutting will commence work this week. It was agreed that Cllr Shaw, with Cllr Perry as backup, will oversee the grass cutting.

#### Min 612

The toilet cleaner informed the Clerk that the disabled toilet in Bere Alston had been vandalised and was subsequently closed until repairs and cleaning could be completed. The Clerk had observed two individuals in the toilet for a period of time on CCTV. The Clerk was instructed to report the incident to the police.

#### Min 616

Some of the graffiti reported has already been covered up. The Clerk to report the graffiti in the blue shelter to Youth2Youth.

Any graffiti on traffic signs should be reported via the Devon "Report a Problem" website page.

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

### **SO, RESOLVED**

#### **628. To review the assets held by West Devon Borough Council within the Parish and consider whether to submit requests for the transfer of specific assets.**

The assets held by WDBC within the Parish were reviewed. It was noted that any legal fees would need to be paid by the Parish, and the Parish would also assume responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of any transferred assets.

The transfer of the land at Pilgrim Drive will be honoured and continue to proceed.

The piece of land at Chapel Street and subsequent actions was discussed under questions from the public.

After further discussion, it was agreed not to take any other action at present and to review the matter at the next Full Council meeting. The deadline to submit requests to WDBC is 8th May 2026.

#### **629. Update from the Sports Development Committee**

Cllr Lamb stated that the committee has now been split into two:

1. Pavilion Building Subcommittee – consisting of four members who will focus on fundraising.
2. Sports Development Committee – which will concentrate on the development of sport, including rugby and women's football. Cllr Grose is looking into organising fun football sessions.

The architect's contract for the Pavilion concluded when planning permission was granted. Cllr Lamb has received an estimate for their work required going forward, which will be discussed at the next F & G.P. meeting. He requested a meeting between himself, Cllr. Leithall, Cllr. Crozier and Cllr. Perry to go through the document before the meeting.

The Head of Development Management at West Devon Borough Council confirmed that Section 106 contributions arising from the Woolacombe Road housing development may be allocated towards the Pavilion rebuild project.

#### **630. Update on discussion on this year's Annual Parish Meeting, Bere Parish Celebration**

The meeting is confirmed for Saturday 9th May 2026 at 7 pm in the Parish Hall. Forty-eight organisations have been approached, and responses confirming their attendance at the meeting are being received. Further details on the meeting will be given at the next Full Council meeting.

**631. Review and re-adopt Data Protection Policy**

The policy had been sent out prior to the meeting. All agreed to readopt the policy

**632. Review and re-adopt Privacy Notice for Staff, Councillors and Role Holders policy**

The policy had been sent out prior to the meeting. All agreed to readopt the policy

**633. Confirmation of date for removal of poppy wreaths from the War Memorials**

After discussion, Cllr. Leithall proposed that wreaths be removed by the end of April. The Clerk is to first consult with the Bere Ferrers Villagers Group (who maintain the war memorial in Bere Ferrers), before the wreaths are removed from Bere Ferrers. Seconded by Cllr. Patterson. All in favour.

**634. Correspondence**

None.

**635. items for the next agenda**

1. Update on Annual Parish Meeting.
2. Review of WDBC's Assets within Parish.
3. Sports Development Committee/ Pavilion Building Subcommittee.

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

A member of the public asked what the plan was with the disused piece of land on Chapel Street. The land is owned by West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) and was up for auction in May. Cllr. Blackman, along with the assistance of Sir Geoffrey Cox MP, has managed to get WDBC to postpone the auction. WDBC deemed it as land of value, therefore not do an asset to transfer to the Parish Council. It was discussed and agreed that the land should be deemed as a community asset that could become much needed car parking spaces for Chapel Street.

It was reported that the Parish Council has been in discussions with WDBC regarding the transfer of a parcel of land on Pilgrim Drive for the purpose of creating additional car parking. The Clerk confirmed that, having previously been advised that the transfer was on hold, has now received email confirming that the application will proceed as a priority and that the previously agreed terms and conditions will be honoured.

Cllr Crozier proposed that the Council should object to the land on Chapel Street being classified as a valuable asset and instead seek for it to become a community asset, with a view to developing it into additional parking spaces for residents. Seconded by Cllr Patterson. Cllr Lamb advised that the Council should proceed with caution, noting that planning permission would be required and that the Council would need to invest in the necessary studies and reports. The proposal was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

Cllr Leithall confirmed to the member of the public who raised the question that the Council will make a formal representation to WDBC on this basis and, together with Cllr Blackman and with the assistance of Sir Geoffrey Cox MP, will continue to pursue the matter.

Kate Royston, representing Tamar Energy Community, addressed the Council regarding their Warmer, Healthier Homes programme, which aims to tackle fuel poverty and improve unhealthy homes across the area, including Bere Alston. She explained that the group is seeking the Council's assistance in identifying and engaging low-income and vulnerable households within the village, noting Bere Alston as a key location due to the suitable properties that fit the criteria. She asked whether the Council could assist with distributing leaflets to help generate interest and also suggested that a further public event be arranged to promote their thermal imaging scheme. It was agreed that flyers could be displayed at the Annual Parish Meeting on 7th May, and Cllr Leithall confirmed that he would be happy to make a statement about the programme at the meeting. Mrs Royston also requested that anyone aware of qualifying properties should inform the group. Cllr

Grose added that, following discussions with the Headteacher at Bere Alston Primary School, the school would be willing to host a talk for parents about the programme.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked members for attending and declared the meeting closed at 9.32 pm.

Signed by the Chair of the Council

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