

BERE FERRERS PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held in the Council Chambers, Bere Alston on Tuesday 28th April 2026.

Present

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

692. Apologies

None.

693. Declaration of Interests

None.

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

Cllr. Maycock, on behalf of a local resident undertaking a 100 km trek across the Moroccan Sahara to raise funds for the Papyrus charity, wished to pass on their thanks to the Council for their donation.

Cllr. Dennis reported that residents are becoming concerned about the potholes in the Parish Hall car park. Cllr. Shaw confirmed that the potholes will be filled in shortly.

Cllr. Patterson reported that he has spoken to those drinking in the Mosaic Garden, and they indicated they would be willing to stop if a sign stating that no drinking is allowed were to be installed. It was noted that this matter had been discussed at the last F&GP meeting.

Cllr. Archer reported that a member of the public has raised concerns about a white van consistently parking in the marked bay near Sarah Park, which makes it difficult for vehicles to manoeuvre in the turning area. It was suggested that a letter be placed on the vehicle requesting that it not be parked there.

Cllr. Lamb is attending a meeting of the Tavistock Travel group and one of the items to be discussed is bus timings in the area. Does the Parish Council have any issues they wish to pass on? Cllr. Lamb stated there is an issue of the buses not meeting train arrival. It was also brought up that the Mt. Edgumbe is no longer a timed stop.

Cllr. Maciejowska has received a letter from a parishioner saying they were disappointed at the Parish Council's comment regarding a recent planning application. The Parishioner has written also to West Devon Borough Council.

Cllr. Lamb introduced Mr John Gallagher, who had produced a model of the proposed new Sports Pavilion. Mr Gallagher then talked Members through the model and explained its design and layout. The Chair and all Members thanked Mr Gallagher for the time and effort he had put into creating the model and for presenting it to the Council.

695. Chair of the Council's Report

Cllr. Leithall's report:

Committee work over the past month has progressed well, with several practical matters moving forward across the Parish.

The Open Spaces Committee has overseen the start of the grass-cutting season, with the contractor now in operation and early feedback being reviewed to ensure standards are met. A range of routine maintenance

issues across play areas and recreation sites continue to be addressed, and Members will note that tree works at the Cemetery have now been completed, enabling the final phase of the agreed security improvements to proceed.

The Committee has also begun reviewing future management arrangements with the Bere Ferrers Villagers Group in respect of the playpark, to ensure clarity over roles and responsibilities going forward.

The Finance & General Purposes Committee has completed its year-end financial processes, including accounts, bank reconciliation, reserves, and the asset register, which is this evening's agenda for Full Council approval. Members also adopted an updated CCTV policy reflecting the systems installed at the Cemetery Hut. Members will also note that new glass front entrance doors for the Bere Alston Parish Hall are scheduled for installation on 7th and 8th May, which should see them in place just in time for the Annual Parish Meeting.

The Plans & Highways Committee have agreed to progress a textual update to the Neighbourhood Plan, recognising that it is now over five years old and requires updating to remain effective.

The Footpaths & Environment Committee received a detailed update from the Public Rights of Way Warden, Ros Davies. Members also discussed how best to improve the information available to users of local footpaths. There has also been continued discussion around electric vehicle charging provision, with delays still affecting delivery at Pilgrim Drive.

Looking ahead, preparations are well underway for the Annual Parish Meeting in May, which we are aiming to develop further as a community-focused event – with thanks to Councillors Brian Lamb, Margaret Patterson and Judy Maciejowska for planning this event and engaging with local clubs and societies to encourage their participation, with positive indication that up to twenty will attend. A full update will be given under the relevant agenda item this evening.

Members will also be aware that the Council's Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday 5th May, at which the Chair and Vice Chair for the forthcoming year will be elected. Nominations should be submitted in advance to the Clerk, Caroline Metcalf. I have indicated my willingness to stand again as Chair, should Members wish to nominate me; however, the process remains open.

I should note that, due to a prior commitment, I will be unable to attend either the Annual General Meeting or the Annual Parish Meeting. In my absence, the Annual Parish Meeting will be supported by the Vice Chair, Cllr. Ralph Maycock, who has kindly agreed to present my Annual Report on my behalf.

In relation to the Annual General Meeting, appropriate arrangements will need to be made to enable the election of Chair at the start of the meeting in line with normal procedure.

Finally, it was encouraging to see strong community engagement at the Tavy & Tamar Apple Group's Apple Blossom Day at the Bere Ferrers orchard. The event was officially opened by Mr Philip Hygate, Chair of Tamar Valley Natural England, and was well attended, with around 70 people present, reflecting the positive use of the site and wider community interest in this local initiative.

696. Presentation from members of the Port of Plymouth Marine Liaison Committee (PPMLC) providing an overview of TECF, the work of the PPMLC, and the Marine Protected Area.

Ms Amelia Sturgeon, the Coordinator of the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum (TECF), was present at the meeting and delivered a slide presentation which outlined the marine protected area surrounding Plymouth Sound and the Tamar estuaries. The presentation highlighted the national and international importance of the area, its habitats and species, and explained that it is considered one of the best examples of estuarine habitat in the UK. The presentation also covered the relevant legislation, authorities and their functions.

It was explained that TECF was formed in 1995 as a partnership to enable relevant authorities and organisations to work together and discuss issues affecting the estuaries. There are currently 17 organisations involved, the majority of which contribute financially to the partnership.

The role of the PPMLC was also explained. Its primary purpose is to advise TECF on matters affecting the management of the Tamar Estuaries. Its secondary purpose is to exchange information, represent ideas and proposals for discussion between water users, improve co-ordination and understanding, and assist in delivering the Tamar Estuaries Management Plan. Copies of the latest Water User Guide were also circulated, and current projects were highlighted.

The following process was outlined in the presentation in regards how TECF and PPMLC can work with Parish Councils:

1. The community identifies an environmental or safety issue.
2. The issue is raised with the PPMLC representative.
3. PPMLC records the action and refers it to TECF.
4. TECF discusses and reviews the issue.
5. TECF implements action where appropriate.
6. Feedback is then provided to PPMLC and the community.

Questions were asked by Councillors, including what are the key changes affecting the estuaries? - Water usage and climate change.

Any interventions to help prevent pollution entering rivers and waterways? A programme they run called Yellow Fish marks drains with stickers to indicate where surface water drains directly into rivers or the sea. It was advised that any pollution concerns or incidents should be reported directly to Environmental Health.

Cllr. Leithall thanked Ms Sturgeon for her presentation and attending the meeting.

697. To receive a report from the County Councillor

Cllr. Fife-Cook's report:

Has brought with him Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service "Dead End" leaflets for Councillors to distribute to residents. If additional leaflets are required, members were asked to let him know.

Following Ms Sturgeon's presentation, he advised that he would be more than willing to contact officers at Devon County Council who may be able to help identify which drains within the Parish go directly into the river. Members welcomed this offer.

Gave an update regarding a recent meeting he organised between representatives of Devon Highways and four Parish Councils. Discussed was the challenges facing Devon County Council (DCC) and the difficulties of maintaining the road network within their existing budgets. The purpose of the meeting was to allow all parties to better understand each other's concerns and the issues currently being faced. Members were advised that the Highways service has been underfunded for many decades and that Devon's 8,000-plus miles of roads would require an estimated £385 million to bring them up to the required standard, together with a further estimated £120 million or more each year for ongoing maintenance. It was acknowledged that, without significant financial restructuring, achieving this level of investment is unlikely. Despite the challenges discussed, the meeting was considered positive and constructive. The Road Warden Schemes were highly praised, and Members were informed of a new software package which could potentially improve the identification and management of highways issues, help reduce costs and improve efficiency going forward.

The Devon Highway Maintenance Community Enhancement Fund is open and will send on other funding opportunities as and when he receives them.

698. To receive reports from the Borough Councillors

Cllr. Blackman had sent her apologies.

699. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Full Council meeting held on 31st March 2026 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

All agreed to approve the minutes.

Matters Arising

Min 623 (559)

The Clerk has drafted 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 623 (562)

The Doctor's Surgery was happy for the Council to prepare a wayleave document to allow the InPost Locker service to be installed for the benefit of patients and parishioners. Cllr. Leithall to prepare the document and

the Clerk to forward it to the Surgery for approval and signing. The Clerk was also asked to contact WDBC to ask whether planning permission is required for the installation of the lockers.

Min 623 (567)

14 Parish hall window panes will be replaced on 1st May.

Min 627 (604)

The new Parish hall doors are to be installed on 7th & 8th May.

Min 627 (612)

Cllr. Dennis stated that it should be stated it is a accessible public toilet, not disabled. The Clerk is arranging for a carpenter to come and quote to repair/replace its door frame.

All proposed adoption of the minutes.

SO, RESOLVED

700. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Plans & Highways Committee meeting held on 7th April 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.

There were no matters arising.

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

SO, RESOLVED

701. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Footpaths & Environment Committee meeting held on 7th April 2026 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

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

Min 653

The stile on fp. 89 has been repaired.

Cllr. Grose said she had walked fp. 89 and it did smell of human sewage and asked that a letter be sent to the WD's Environmental Health Agency asking for an update.

Fp.65 - It was noted that the footpath is currently drier; however, the Clerk was asked to obtain an update on improving the access from the Public Rights of Way Warden.

Min 654

Cllr. Sutton stated that he would circulate to the Committee the research he had in relation to grading the footpaths. It was also agreed to review any grading systems that may have been implemented by Cornwall Council for their public footpaths.

Min 655

The Clerk has been informed via WDBC that the project to install electric charging points is severely and at present it looks like Pilgrims Drive installation will be in the 3rd batch of installation which will be into 2027. WDBC are not happy with this delay, and meetings with contractor are continuing to address the installation programme.

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

SO, RESOLVED

702. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 14th April 2026 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

All agreed to approve the minutes.

Matters Arising

Min 662

Cllr. Perry is compiling a list of all potholes requiring repair and will then report these to Devon Highways.

Min 665

Discussion on the management agreement between the Bere Ferrers Villagers Group and the Parish Council will be deferred to the June Committee meeting, as representatives are unable to attend the May meeting.

All approved adoption on the minutes.

SO, RESOLVED

703. To approve and adopt the minutes from the F & G.P meeting held on 21st April 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

Min 687

The Committee had agreed to donate £150 to the primary school, subject to a possible donation from the Maynard Trust.

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

SO, RESOLVED

704. 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.

Following on discussed held at the last Committee meeting, it was agreed by all that the Parish Council should submit a request to WDBC for the transfer of the piece of land at Chapel Street as a community asset for the village. The Clerk to action.

705. Approve Asset Register for 2025-26

The Asset Register had been discussed and approved at the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 21st April 2026. Cllr. Lamb proposed that the Council accept the Committee's recommendation and approve the Asset Register at a total value of £1,902,262.06. Seconded by Cllr. Crozier.

706. Update from the Sports Development Committee

Cllrs. Lamb, Perry and Leithall are currently preparing the relevant documents to issue to potential contractors in order to begin obtaining quotations for the construction of the new Pavilion.

Cllr. Grose confirmed that the Rounders group will start up again on Wednesday 29th April at the Bere Alston recreational field from 7 pm.

707. Update on discussion on this year's Annual Parish Meeting, Bere Parish Celebration

The preparation for the meeting are progressing and the agenda/programme is being finalised. Cllr. Leithall as Chair of the Council is unable to attend, but Cllr. Maycock, as Vice-Chair will read out the Cahir's report in his absence. Councillors were asked to come along Saturday to help set up the Hall, if they are available.

708. Correspondence

1. Invoice from ABC Services – printing of A5 leaflets for Annual Parish Meeting – 9th May. Total: £32.41
2. Invoice from Lynher Training – Fee for Workman to attend the Safe of Use of Pesticides and Safe Application of Pesticides Using Hand Held Equipment Refresher course. Total: £155.

All approved payments.

709. items for the next agenda

1. AGAR 2025-26 financial forms.

710. 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 9.25 pm.

Signed by the Chair of the Council

Signed this date 26th May 2026