BERE FERRERS PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held in the Council Chambers on Tuesday 23rd June 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. R. Maycock	

In Attendance: Cllr. A. Blackman

112. Apologies

Cllr. C. Shaw sent his apologies. Accepted by the Committee.

113. Declaration of Interest

none

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

Cllr. Dennis reported that the two applications he had submitted on behalf of Beregen to West Devon Borough Council's Community Grant Fund—one for the installation of a suspended ceiling and the other for the purchase of 62 new chairs for the Hall—had been unsuccessful. He asked Cllr. Blackman to make enquiries as to the reasons for their rejection. Cllr. Blackman agreed to do so.

Cllr. Grose reported that the footpath to and from Bere Ferrers and Lopwell Dam footpath has been closed for a further 12 months. The closure is necessary in the interest of public safety following a landslide and partial collapse of the path.

And the work to correct the line of path on Footpath 2 is planned to be done in the Autumn. The diversion notice will be posted on site at the beginning of July.

115. Matters arising from the meeting held on the 19th May 2026

The minutes have been adopted and approved at the Full Council meeting held on 26th May 2026

Matters Arising

Min 45 (65)

The Clerk to follow up on the email sent to the Doctor's Surgery regarding the addendum to the right of way deed previously sent to them.

Min 45 (477)

The outstanding wayleave fee has been paid.

Min 50

Following research and advice provided by DALC, Cllr. Lamb proposed the replacement of the current Section 19(a), "Handling Staff Matters," and Section 19(b) of the Council's Standing Orders. A summary of the proposed amendments is as follows:
There will be three separate committees:

- The HR Committee shall consist of members elected at the first meeting of the F&GP Committee following the AGM. The Committee shall appoint three members to serve on the HR Committee, together with the Chair of the Council, who shall chair the sub-committee.
- The Disciplinary & Grievance Committee, will be chaired by the Vice Chair of the Council, Chair of the F & G.P Committee and one other member.
- The Appeals Committee, will be chaired by the Chair of the Council, the Vice-chair of the F & G.P and one other
- Councillor.

- The other Councillors will be elected at the AGM or at a subsequent meeting of the Council and it is proposed that an election shall take place to elect the two separate Councillors on the Discipline & Grievance Committee and the Appeals Committee.
- It is therefore proposed that the decision regarding Section 6 of the AGM of 5th May 2026 will be overruled by the above
  proposals.
  That the Clerk will draw up a Discipline & Grievance Policy in accordance with ACAS recommendations.

It was noted that members of any of the above Committees should at undertake the relevant training.

Following discussion, it was agreed that this Committee should recommend the proposals to Full Council for adoption at its next meeting, to be held on 30 June 2026. In accordance with Section 26(b) of the Standing Orders, a motion to add to, vary, or revoke one or more of the Council's Standing Orders—except where such amendments incorporate mandatory statutory or legal requirements—must be proposed by special motion. Written notice of such a motion must be given to the Proper Officer by at least five councillors, in accordance with Standing Order 9.

Min 47
Beregen confirmed that the refuse collection charge had increased by £100, and that no advance notice of this had been provided.

Min 51
Confirmation has not yet been received from the local Fire Station as to whether an evacuation chair is required for the Council Office. The Clerk will follow this up.

Min 52
The Clerk and Cllr. Dennis are in correspondence with the Supplier of the Parish Hall doors regarding the 'dogging exit device" which requires using a cylinder key. It has been requested that a more convenient dogging feature be installed instead.

Min 53
The Trustees of Beregen confirmed that they will not be engaging a solicitor to act on their behalf in relation to the extension of the lease and are content to review and sign the deed of variation to the lease. Following correspondence with the solicitor already acting on behalf of the Council on another matter, they have quoted £750 to draft the deed of variation. Cllr Leithall proposed accepting the quotation, seconded by Cllr Crozier. All were in favour.

Min 56
More graffiti has been reported around Bere Alston, including the public toilets; the toilet cleaner was able to remove it. It was noted that all need to be reported to the Police.

116. To accept the June 2026 accounts for payment
Cllr. Maycock proposed accepting the accounts, seconded by Cllr. Lamb.

117. To review Council's Direct Debits
Currently direct debits are set up for the following accounts:
EDF – paid monthly
Nest (pension) – paid monthly
West Devon Borough Council (business rates) – paid monthly.
Microsoft –(laptop cloud storage) – monthly
ICO – annually

The Clerk requested that Source for Business (water) accounts be made direct debit payments. This was agreed by all. The Clerk to action

<u>118. To accept the F & G.P Detailed Receipt and Payment report ending 31st May 2026</u>

It was noted that all the training budget had been spent for the year. If any Councillors wished to attend any courses to request via the Clerk.

<u>119. To accept the bank reconciliation ending 31st May 2026</u>

All agreed to accept the report.

<u>120. To discuss and consider whether to submit a bid for the lease of land at Chapel Street, Bere Alston</u>

The deadline to submit a bid is 24th June midnight.

It was noted that West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) appears to be deferring a longer-term decision regarding this piece of land in light of the ongoing local government reorganisation, effectively leaving the matter for the new authority to consider in due course. Members also expressed concern about the short timescale available for submitting a bid and the limited lease term of three years.

It was unanimously agreed that the Parish Council would not submit a bid due to the short lease term being offered and the limited time available for consideration. Members noted that other assets being offered by WDBC are available on a 999-year leases and questioned why a similar arrangement was not being offered for this asset.
Members agreed that, had a more reasonable lease term been offered, the Parish Council may have given the proposal further consideration. It was suggested that local residents should submit a bid if they wish to pursue the opportunity.

<u>121. To discuss Devon Highway's proposal for light by footpath on Fore Street, Bere Ferrers</u>

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had sent all members details of Devon Highways proposal. Their suggestion is they arrange for the installation of a new bulkhead light mounted on the external wall of the public toilets, at their expense and following installation, ownership and ongoing maintenance responsibilities for the asset would be transferred to Bere Ferrers Parish Council. All members agreed to Highway's proposal.

<u>122. To consider and recommend to Full Council that the funds held in the CCLA account be allocated towards the rebuilding of the Pavilion</u>

Although this had been discussed and suggested at previous Finance & General Purposes Committee meetings, the Committee had not formally agreed to it. Cllr Lamb proposed that funds from the CCLA account be allocated to the rebuild of the Pavilion, seconded by Cllr Maycock. All were in agreement.

<u>123. HR Matters – increase in HMRC mileage rates & Clerk's contracted hours. To be taken into Part 2</u>

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

Cllr. Maycock proposed coming out of Part 2, seconded by Cllr. Lamb

The Clerk reported that, on 21 May 2026, the Chancellor announced an increase in the HMRC approved mileage rate from 45p per mile to 55p per mile, backdated to 1 April 2026. Following discussion, all members agreed to increase the mileage rate payable to staff in line with the revised HMRC rate, with effect from 1 April 2026.

After discussions under Part 2, all members agreed to the Clerk's contracted weekly hours being permanently made 20 hours a week.

124. Correspondence

1. Letter from the Land Registry – In relation to the Y2Y lease of the Y2Y premises "The Hut", there is an outstanding fee of £35. All agreed to pay the fee.

125. Agenda items for the next meeting

Aside from the usual items, no other matters were raised at this time.

126. Questions from the public, 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 the meeting and declared the meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Signed by the Chair

Dated 30th June n2026