

BERE FERRERS PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held in the Council Chambers, Bere Alston on Tuesday 30th June 2026

Present

Cllr. R. Leithall	Chair of the Council
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	Cllr. E. Wager

127. Apologies

Cllr. P. Archer and Cllr. P. Dennis sent their apologies. Accepted by the Council.

128. Declaration of Interests

None.

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

Following her attendance at the Youth2Youth AGM, Cllr. Patterson reported that attendance has increased, the organisation's financial position has improved, and they are receiving a lot of support.

Cllr Grose reported that residents in Collytown remain very unhappy regarding an individual who is living full-time in a field. The matter has previously been reported to Planning Enforcement. However, following a site visit, the occupant advised that they were staying temporarily to care for sheep, and no further enforcement action was taken at that time. So what can residents do and try and get the authorities to deal with this? After discussion, Cllr Grose agreed to ask residents to provide all relevant information to the Parish Council and it would be discussed at the next Plans & Highways Committee meeting

Cllr Grose reported that concerns has also been raised regarding the housing association properties at Down View. The air source heat pumps are not working correctly, resulting in increased hot water and heating costs for residents. Cllr Leithall advised that the Parish Council has no direct authority in this matter. However, it was agreed that the Council should write to the housing association requesting what actions are being taken to resolve the issue.

130. Chair of the Council's Report

Cllr. Leithall's report:

The Committee's work has continued to progress well over the past month, with a number of projects moving forward alongside preparations for several important decisions before Council this evening.

The F & G.P Committee has completed its review of the Council's staffing governance arrangements following the discussion at last month's Full Council meeting. Members will recall that questions had arisen regarding the constitution and role of the HR Committee following the Annual Meeting. After reviewing the Council's Standing Orders, together with guidance from the DALC, recommendations have now been brought forward to clarify the Council's staffing governance framework, committee structure and associated procedures. These recommendations are before Members this evening for consideration and, if approved, should provide a clear and robust governance framework for the future.

The Committee has also recommended that the funds currently held within the Council's CCLA investment account should be earmarked towards the rebuilding of the new Sports Pavilion. This represents an important step in planning for one of the Council's most significant capital projects and demonstrates our continuing commitment to delivering improved sports facilities for the Parish.

The Open Spaces Committee has seen the successful relocation of the Council's storage container to the Cemetery site, with only the final finishing works now remaining. Members also began considering ways in which the appearance of the container might be enhanced in future, recognising the opportunity to improve what is now a much more prominent location within the Cemetery.

The Plans & Highways Committee received an update on the preparation of the new Joint Local Plan for West Devon and South Hams, with public consultation due to begin shortly. This will provide an important opportunity for the Council and local residents to help shape planning policy affecting our communities for many years to come.

Finally, Members will be aware that Bere Alston is once again taking part in this year's Britain in Bloom competition, with judging taking place on Friday 10 July. The Bere Alston in Bloom volunteers have already been working hard to prepare the village, and I would like to place on record the Council's appreciation for their continued enthusiasm and commitment.

I hope that, over the coming days, we can also play our part by ensuring that those areas for which the Parish Council is responsible—including the Village Hall surroundings, the War Memorial and other public spaces—are looking their very best. These are relatively small tasks, but collectively they help present the village at its best and demonstrate the pride we all take in our community.

Cllr. Leithall invited two members of the Bere Alston in Bloom group to talk with the Council:

Could the Council and the Council Workman please spare some of their time to assist with weeding, sweeping and general tidying of various areas around the village in preparation for the RHS judging on Friday 10 July? They highlighted the group's ongoing contribution to the maintenance of the village, including regularly cutting the grass at Quarry Corner, the three grassed areas at the top of Fore Street, The Down, and the grass verge at the junction of The Down and the Tavistock/Plymouth road. They also stated that the group regularly treats the village's wooden benches with wood preservative, and that one volunteer had replaced all the timber on the bench at the junction of Whitehall Drive and Broad Park Road. Despite repeated requests for residents to help maintain the areas outside their own properties, the group advised that a significant amount of work remains. They therefore requested that the Parish Council allocate a couple of days of the Council Workman's time to assist with weeding selected roads and public areas ahead of the judging.

Cllr Leithall confirmed that the Council would consider what assistance could be provided and advised that either the Workman or members of the Council would assist.

131. To receive a report from the County Councillor

Cllr. Fife-Cook's report:

- Is still chasing DCC on information on how many drains within the Parish run directly into a catchment area or into the estuary or rivers, without passing through a treatment plant.
- Parish Councils participating in the Road Warden Scheme may apply for disposal chits permitting the deposit of waste at Recycling Centres. Cllr. Cook Fife will send the details to the Clerk.
- The new Neighbourhood Highway Officer is Josh Scillitoe, and it is suggested that he be invited to attend a Parish Council meeting. The Clerk confirmed that a meeting is already scheduled with him and the outgoing Highways Officer to discuss the proposed solution to the drainage issue at the Bere Ferrers War Memorial.
- There is no further update on LGR at present; however, it is expected that by 10 July there will be greater clarity on the Government's proposals.
- After numerous months of chasing, is glad to finally hear that an outside light will be installed at Silver Street in Bere Ferrers and once installed, the ownership and maintenance will then be passed to the Parish Council.

Cllr Crozier reported that the estimated quotes received to date for the construction of the new sports pavilion are higher than anticipated and asked whether there are any larger funding grants within DCC Council to which the Council could apply. Cllr Fife Cook advised that he would investigate this.

With regard to the issue at Collytown, Cllr Fife Cook advised that residents should continue to pursue the matter and not give up.

132. To receive reports from the Borough Councillors

Cllr. Saxby had sent her apologies.

Cllr. Blackman sent her apologies and the following report:

- I have made contact with the grants department at WDBC regarding the Bere Gen grant application that was refused and am awaiting feedback.
- I have contacted Devon CC to see if they are able to assist with a disabled parking spot on the land at Chapel Street if a bid has been put in and granted by WDBC.
- Please keep me updated on the land in dispute for grass cutting if WDBC are not forthcoming with assistance.
- I have not heard anymore re the EV chargers and will chase in the coming weeks.
- Please ask Cllrs to email me with requests for assistance where possible.

133. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Full Council meeting held on 26th May 2026 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

All agreed to approve the minutes.

Matters Arising

Min 65 (694)

Cllr. Shaw and Cllr. Sutton have filled in the pot holes in the Parish Hall carpark.

Min 65 (699)

The Manager of the Doctors' Surgery will take the Council's proposed addendum to the Partners' meeting, which is scheduled for the beginning of July, and will respond thereafter.

Min 69(51)

Cllr Shaw has spoken to the Devon & Somerset Fire Safety Team, who confirmed that there is no legal requirement to have an evacuation chair. However, there is a requirement to have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) in place. To be discussed further at the next F & GP meeting.

Min 69 (52)

Discussions between the supplier and the Council regarding a requested amendment to the Parish Hall doors are ongoing.

Min 69 (54)

The situation regarding long-term vehicle parking in the Parish Hall car park will continue to be monitored.

Cllr. Leithall proposed adoption of the minutes, seconded by Cllr. Perry. All in favour.

SO, RESOLVED

134. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Plans & Highways Committee meeting held on 2nd June 2026 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

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

Matters Arising

Min 85 (713)

The vehicle parked on the corner of Pounds Park and Lockeridge Road has been reported as abandoned and a final notice has now been placed on the vehicle.

Min 88 (716)

A letter was sent to the Planning Department expressing the Parish Council's concern that greater weight appeared to have been given to the views of environmental and other organisations than to those of the Parish Council, which is also a statutory consultee and represents the residents of the parish. A response has now been received and will be considered at the next meeting of the Plans & Highways Committee.

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

SO, RESOLVED

135. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 9th June 2026 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

All agreed to approve the minutes.

Matters Arising

Min 97

Cllr Grose has erected notices stating that Footpath 89 will be closed for 21 days. However, it was noted that the original email from the Public Rights of Way Warden indicated that the closure would be for six months. On reviewing the email, it appears that the six-month closure notices will be issued shortly for display.

Min (98)33

Cllr Shaw and the Workman will undertake a review of the condition of certain pieces of play park equipment at The Down in due course.

Min 100

Cllr Patterson wished it be noted that she conducted the safety inspection of the playparks, rather than Cllr Archer as stated in the minutes.

Min 100

It was noted that the container looks good in its new location.

Min 102

Cllr Shaw and the Workman will undertake a site visit to determine whether scraping down the centre of the allotment track is the most appropriate option to improve the track.

Cllr. Shaw proposed adoption of the minutes, seconded by Cllr. Patterson. All in favour.

SO, RESOLVED

136. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Plans & Highways Committee meeting held on 16th June 2026 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

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

There were no matters arising.

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

137. To approve and adopt the minutes from the F & G.P meeting held on 23rd June 2026 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

All agreed to approve the minutes.

Matters Arising

Min 114

As stated earlier in the meeting, Cllr. Blackman has requested feedback on why the two grant applications submitted by Beregen were rejected. It was noted that 4 applications submitted to the West Devon Community Grant Fund had now been rejected.

Min 115 (53)

The Clerk confirmed that a solicitor has been instructed to act on behalf of the Council in relation to extending the Parish Hall lease with Beregen, and that progress towards the lease extension is now underway.

Min 116

The Clerk reported an error in the Accounts for Payment whereby a cheque issued to Crossman & Wager Ltd was for £70 (VAT only) rather than £420 (full amount). It was resolved that the incorrect cheque be voided and a replacement cheque be issued for the correct amount.

Min 120

The Committee had resolved not to submit a bid for the lease of the land at Chapel Street due to the short-term nature of the lease offered and the limited time available for consideration.

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

138. To approve the five recommendations proposed by the F & G.P Committee, as supported by Cllr. R. Leithall, Cllr. B. Lamb, Cllr. P. Crozier, Cllr. Grose, and Cllr. R. Maycock.

Following research and advice provided by DALC, Cllr. Lamb had presented a proposal for the replacement of the current Section 19(a), "Handling Staff Matters," and Section 19(b) of the Council's Standing Orders at the recent F & G.P Committee meeting. A summary of the proposed amendments is as follows:

There will be three separate committees:

- The HR Committee shall consist of three elected members of the F & G.P Committee, plus the Chair of the Council and be appointed at the first meeting of the F&GP Committee following the AGM.
- The Disciplinary & Grievance Committee, will be chaired by the Vice Chair of the Council, Chair of the F & G.P Committee and one other Councillor.
- 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 to the Disciplinary & Grievance and Appeals Committees at the AGM.
- The Clerk will draw up a Discipline & Grievance Policy in accordance with ACAS recommendations.

Cllr Lamb proposed that the above proposals be adopted by the Council, seconded by Cllr Crozier.

Following discussion, Cllr Sutton requested a diagram of the proposed structure be drawn up. Several other members also agreed and wished to see a clearer understanding of the structure being proposed before agreeing to it. It was also queried why members of the HR Committee should be drawn solely from members of the F & G.P Committee.

After further discussion, Cllr Patterson proposed that the decision be deferred until the next meeting and that a diagram be prepared and circulated to all members. This was seconded by Cllr Maciejowska. A vote was taken: 7 for, 4 against. The motion was carried.

Cllr Lamb then proposed that the matter be referred back to the Finance & General Purposes Committee for further discussion and refinement before being presented again to Full Council. This was seconded by Cllr Crozier. All were in favour.

139. Update from the Sports Development and Building Committees

Cllr. Grose – Chair of the Sport Development Committee:

The Committee recently held a very successful meeting and a few actions points were discussed.

- Further input is required from local football clubs to help establish the women's team. An attendee at the meeting provided helpful information.
- A member of the public has offered to act as Secretary and minute taker for the Committee.
- Two further individuals have volunteered to take on the roles of Welfare Officer, Chair, and Secretary for the Rounders Committee, enabling the group to join Rounders UK and benefit from insurance cover.
- It was agreed that all sport should be inclusive, enjoyable, and non-competitive in nature.
- Looking to perhaps arrange a softball cricket match at Bere Ferrers, and an assessment will be made as to whether the pitch is suitable.

- Setting up a dedicated website would be very expensive. The group is therefore considering using Facebook and possibly WhatsApp as alternative methods of communication. It was discussed that information on all sporting activities could be added to the Parish Council website; however, the group will continue to review the most effective way of advertising and sharing information.

Cllr. Grose confirmed that no outside sport can be played if the temperature is over 30c.

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

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

The Committee has reviewed the estimated quotations received and held further discussions with contractors. A further update will be provided at the next Council meeting.

140. Correspondence

1. Devon Road Warden Scheme - Letter received from Cllr Holly Greenberry-Pullen, West Devon Borough Councillor, encouraging parish councils across West Devon to promote the Devon County Council Road Warden Scheme and to seek volunteers interested in becoming trained Road Wardens within their communities. A Road Warden booklet was also received, outlining the operation of the scheme, including responsibilities and processes.

It was noted that the Parish Council is already participating in the Road Warden Scheme and that Cllr Shaw has received the necessary training. It was agreed that the matter would be discussed further at the next Plans & Highways Committee meeting.

141. items for the next agenda

1. HR Committee.

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

There being no further business, the Chair thanked members for attending and declared the meeting closed at 9.29 pm.

Signed by the Chair of the Council

Signed this date 28th July 2026