

BERE FERRERS PARISH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held in the Council Chambers, Bere Alston on Tuesday 28th July 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. E. Wager

190. Apologies

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

191. Declaration of Interests

None.

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

Cllr. Patterson requested that the faded yellow lines on Fore Street be repainted. The Clerk to submit a request to Devon Highways.

Cllr. Shaw reported a broken piece of fitness equipment at the Down playpark. The Clerk confirmed that the Workman had already cornered off the piece of equipment and was due to repair it the following day.

Cllr. Grose reported that a tree had fallen across a public footpath. She has already notified the Public Rights of Way Warden, who would arrange for a local contractor to remove the tree. The Warden requested that the cost of the work be reclaimed from the maintenance grant awarded by DCC to the Parish Council.

Cllr. Maciejowska updated Members on the poor condition of the quay and mooring adjacent to footpaths 64 and 65, which are owned by the Mt Edgcumbe Estate. She advised that she and her husband had submitted a proposal to the Estate to lease the land and undertake the necessary repair works and they intend to seek external grant funding to finance the project. Cllr. Maciejowska asked that any Members aware of suitable funding opportunities to let her know.

Cllr. Lamb updated members on information received regarding the Devon Cultural Assets Mapping Project and noted that responses are required by 14 August. It was agreed that Members would forward details of any assets they considered should be included within the survey to Cllr. Lamb for him to collate and submit.

193. Chair of the Council's Report

Cllr. Leithall's report:

Committee work has continued over the past month, with a number of matters progressing that are reflected in the minutes before Council this evening.

The Plans & Highways Committee has begun preparing the Council's response to the forthcoming Joint Local Plan consultation, and a small working group has been established to ensure the Council submits a considered response.

I would like to thank Cllr. Geoff Sutton for his initiative in introducing a digital playground inspection app, which has the potential to improve how we record inspections and monitor maintenance.

Following the discussion at last month's Full Council meeting, the F & G.P Committee has reviewed the Council's staffing governance arrangements and has brought forward recommendations, supported by an organisational chart, for Members' consideration under the relevant agenda item this evening.

Finally, I had the pleasure, in my capacity as Chair of the Council, of attending the Britain in Bloom judging day, where I joined the Bere Alston in Bloom team—Jeanette Englefield, Liz McQueen and Frances Howard—in welcoming the three Britain in Bloom judges. After hearing an impressive presentation on the group's environmental and community work, the judges toured the village to see the displays for themselves.

I would like to place on record the Council's sincere thanks to all the volunteers involved with Bere Alston in Bloom for the tremendous amount of work they put into making the village look so welcoming. Thanks are also due to the many parishioners who took pride in their own gardens and floral displays, and to everyone who entered this year's Scarecrow and Gnome Competition, which once again brought colour, creativity and community spirit to the village. The winning entry, "Rescuing the Cat up the Tree" at Maynard's Park was particularly impressive, and all the entries helped make the judges' tour of the village both enjoyable and memorable.

I would also like to thank our Council Workman, Steve, for the additional effort he put into tidying the Village Hall surroundings and carrying out weeding around the village in readiness for judging, assisted and facilitated by Cllrs Colin Shaw and Ray Perry. These collective efforts by volunteers, residents and the Council helped present Bere Alston at its very best.

As is our usual practice, there will be no Parish Council meetings during August, with the exception of the Plans & Highways Committee, and then only if necessary to meet the Local Planning Authority's deadline for submitting the Council's planning comments. Caroline, our Clerk, will be on annual leave from 4 August to 27 August inclusive, returning to the office on 28 August. If a Plans & Highways Committee meeting proves necessary during this period, arrangements are in place for Cllr. Crozier to take the minutes. Our Clerk will retain the Council laptop, enabling planning comments to be submitted and minutes to be prepared afterwards, and will continue to monitor emails and deal with urgent matters such as burials.

194. To receive a report from the County Councillor

Cllr. Fife Cook had sent his apologies.

195. To receive reports from the Borough Councillors

Cllr. Saxby had sent her apologies.

196. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Full Council meeting held on 30th June 2026 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

All agreed to approve the minutes.

Matters Arising

Min 131

The Council is still awaiting on further information from Cllr. Michael Fife Cook regarding the reported scheme under which Parish Councils may be able to apply for disposal permits for use at DCC's local recycling centres.

Min 133 (65)

The Doctor's Surgery have agreed to the proposed wayleave free.

Min 134 (85)

The vehicle previously parked at the corner of Pounds Park and Lockeridge Road has now been moved, enabling DCC to complete the painting of the yellow lines.

Min 135 (97)

Notices advising of the six-month closure of Footpath 89 have been issued and displayed.

All agreed to adopt the minutes.

SO, RESOLVED

197. To approve and adopt the minutes from the Plans & Highways Committee meeting held on 7th July 2026 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

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

Matters Arising

Min 146 (88)

Members noted WDBC Planning Department's response to the Parish Council's concerns regarding the weight given to its comments. The Committee considered their response to be too generic and felt that it did not address the specific issues that had been raised. A reply to that effect has been sent and awaiting a response.

Min 148

The Committee could not understand why the planning application for 21 Bedford Street had been refused by WDBC. Members discussed the options available to the applicant, including the possibility of submitting an appeal or a revised planning application. It was noted that any decision on how to proceed rests solely with the applicant, and that the Parish Council has no formal role in that process other than the support it has already expressed for the application.

Min 151

Cllr. Lamb reported that the current West Devon/South Hams Joint Local Plan consultation relates to the proposed consultation process and structure, rather than the content of the Local Plan itself. He advised that he would keep members informed as further information becomes available.

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

SO, RESOLVED

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

All agreed to approve the minutes.

Matters Arising

Min 160

The removal of weeds from Shelley Well and the adjacent drain has been added to the Council's maintenance list.

Min 161 (100)

It was suggested that the Council hire the necessary equipment to remove surplus concrete from around the parish. The proposal will be discussed further at the next meeting of the Open Spaces Committee.

Min 164

Following concerns regarding corrosion beneath the platform of the zip wire in Sarah Park, the equipment had been temporarily closed. After a review, it was advised the corrosion was superficial and that the equipment remained structurally safe. However, a minor repair is required, consisting of fitting a smooth coach bolt and applying a suitable metal filler to the affected area. Once completed, the zip wire could be reopened.

The fence and the surround of the playpark will be replaced by the Workman in due course, with the assistance of Councillors, if required.

The damaged dinosaur spring rocker has been removed from the play area.

It was identified that the Pavilion's electricity supply had been switched off by the Football Club, preventing the hand dryer in the public toilet from operating. It was agreed to ask the Football Club to leave the power switched on during the period that the public toilets are open to the public. It was also noted that the cistern in the Pavilion toilet needs replacing.

Following reports of rats at both allotment sites, the Council's Workman will lay rat bait as required. Members agreed that responsibility for laying and monitoring the rat bait should remain with the Council's trained

Workman, as the work requires appropriate records to be maintained and regular monitoring of the bait stations.

An update was received regarding the overgrown vegetation on a piece of land at Maythorne Road. DCC has advised that it will only undertake vegetation clearance where there is a proven highway visibility issue. However, it confirmed that should a local resident wish to cut the vegetation themselves, it would have no objection.

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

SO, RESOLVED

199. To approve and adopt the minutes from the F & G.P meeting held on 21st July 2026 as a true meeting and taken as read, to deal with matters arising.

All agreed to approve the minutes.

Matters Arising

Min 171 (115 (52))

An update was received regarding the new Parish Hall doors. Members noted that the Council is awaiting responses from the supplier as the Council had requested the installation of a push bar system instead of the current system. The supplier has provided a quote to make this change, but the Council has rejected this quote on the basis that it is not what was originally specified and is awaiting a response from the supplier. There is also a fault with the push paddle and lock. It was agreed that these issues should be rectified under the original contract. Cllr. Leithall agreed to review the correspondence and, if necessary, draft a formal letter to the supplier.

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

SO RESOLVED

200. 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.

The Council considered the recommendations of the Finance & General Purposes Committee regarding the HR Committee Structure and the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders. Members reviewed the Council's Committee structure chart.

It was confirmed that members of the HR Sub-Committee would be elected annually at the first meeting of the F & G.P Committee following the AGM. It was further confirmed that the members of the Discipline & Grievance Committee and the Appeals Committee would be elected at the AGM, and that those appointed should undertake appropriate training where required.

Following discussion, Cllr. Lamb proposed approval of the revised committee structure and the amendments to the Standing Orders. Seconded by Cllr. Maycock. A vote was taken. 8 for, 2 astrain. Motion carried.

It was further agreed and resolved that, for the current year only, members of the Discipline & Grievance Committee and the Appeals Committee would be elected at the Full Council meeting in September, rather than waiting until the next AGM, to ensure the committees are constituted should they be required.

201. Discussion on the proposed removal of the disabled parking bay in Fore Street, Bere Alston

Cllr. Dennis, via email, requested that the Parish Council object to the proposed removal of, and support the retention of, the disabled parking bay on Fore Street, Bere Alston. DCC had undertaken a review of disabled parking bays and had proposed removing the bay and reinstating the space as a standard parking bay. Although the bay had originally been installed for a resident who has since sadly passed away, it continues to be regularly used by Blue Badge holders visiting the village shops. There is still a significant need for accessible parking within the village. Fore Street is a fair way from the Parish Hall car park, which requires users to negotiate a steep hill, whilst the Pilgrim Drive car park is also some distance away and accessed via steps.

Cllr. Dennis further noted that, Blue Badge Holders are permitted to park on single and double yellow lines, providing it is safe to do so and they are not obstructing any other road users, or parked opposite a road junction, for instance Fore Street/Cornwall Street Junction.

A member of the public present also spoke in support of retaining the disabled parking bay, stating that accessible parking within the village is limited. As a former firefighter, he expressed concern that the removal of the designated bay could encourage Blue Badge holders to park on nearby double yellow lines, which could obstruct larger vehicles, including buses and emergency service vehicles.

It was proposed, seconded and resolved that the Parish Council write to DCC copying in Cllr. Fife Cook, requesting that the disabled parking bay on Fore Street be retained.

202. Update from the Sports Development and Building Committees

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

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

Members received an update on the Sports Pavilion project, including progress with the procurement process and future development of sporting activities within the parish.

It was also reported that a set of cricket equipment has been found and passed onto the Resident who is keen to introduce softball cricket within the Parish.

203. Consider and approve the contractor's quotation for repairs to the zip wire platform at Sarah Park

This had already been discussed and resolved under min: 198

204. To note the Government's decision on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Devon

The Council noted the Government's announcement regarding Local Government Reorganisation and discussed the potential implications for the area. It was agreed to continue monitoring developments as further information becomes available.

205. Consider Bere Alston in Bloom's request to install a IBC water container adjacent to the Memorial Garden

Members considered a request from Bere Alston in Bloom to install a 1,000-litre IBC water container adjacent to the Mosaic Garden to assist with watering the floral displays.

Following discussion, Cllr. Lamb proposed the Council had no objection, as long as the location is agreed with the Parish Council, the container being suitably screened from public view and the installation causing no damage to the surrounding area. Seconded by Cllr. Maciejowska. A vote was taken. 5 for, 4 against. 2 abstain. Motion carried.

206. Correspondence

None

207. items for the next agenda

1. Nomination for members for the Disciplinary & Grievance Committee and Appeals Committees.

It was noted that the next Council Meeting will be held in the Bere Ferrers Church Hall.

208. To note the Council Office closure from 4 August to 26 August 2026

A notice of the Office closure will be placed on the door and contact numbers of the Chair and Vice-Chair displayed for residents to contact in an emergency.

209. 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 9.05 pm.

Signed by the Chair of the Council.

Signed this date 29th September 2026