

Bere Ferrers Parish Council

At a meeting of the Open Spaces Committee held in the Council Chambers on Tuesday 15th September 2026.

Present:

Cllr. E. Wager	Vice-Chair of the Committee
Cllr. R. Leithall	Cllr. M. Patterson

In Attendance: Cllr. P. Crozier, Cllr. V. Grose

225. Apologies

Cllr. Shaw, Cllr. Perry and Cllr. Sutton.

226. Declarations of interest

Cllr. Grose as a member of the Bere Ferrers Villagers Group, declared and interest.

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

Cllr. Grose reported that the organiser of the local cricket group had requested that a short strip of grass be prepared for use as a wicket for softball cricket. It was suggested that the matter be revisited when outdoor cricket resumes next year. In the meantime, cricket practice will continue indoors at the Parish Hall.

228. Matters arising from the meeting held on 14th July 2026

The minutes have been approved and adopted at the Full Council meeting held on 28th July 2026.

Matters Arising

Min 160

The recent clearance of vegetation around Shelley's Well was discussed. Residents expressed upset that plants they had voluntarily planted had been removed without prior consultation. Cllr. Leithall and the Clerk acknowledged that residents should have been informed and apologised. It was also acknowledged that the removal could have been delayed to allow the Virginia creeper to flower.

Cllr. Leithall reported that, following research he had undertaken, Virginia creeper can be considered as an invasive plant in some circumstances and by default maybe should not be allowed to be grown in public spaces. Differing views were expressed regarding its impact on the Well. It was agreed that the Council should further consider the suitability of this plant be growing on or around Shelley's Well and the War Memorial. Cllr. Wager expressed the view that vegetation should not be grown on the Well.

It was confirmed that Shelley's Well and the War Memorial are Council-owned and remain the Council's responsibility to maintain. Members agreed that, where practicable, local residents and the Bere Ferrers Villagers Group should be consulted before future maintenance affecting planting in this area, with consideration given to the timing of vegetation cutting.

Residents also requested that the brambles on the tennis court banks be cut back regularly, noting that the Tennis Group had recently paid for clearance but further work was now required.

Min 160 (97)

Following the reported damaged road sign at Pentillie Road, the Clerk had contacted Devon Highways to ask whether the sign could be relocated to a less vulnerable position. They advised that relocation may be difficult but agreed to consider the available options.

Concerns were raised that a second road sign within the Parish had also been destroyed recently, as a result of careless driving and noted the cost implications of replacements for all these signs. The Clerk advised that Cllr. Shaw had reported this latest damage to Devon Highways through its online reporting system.

Min 160 (100)

It had been agreed that the Council will hire the relevant equipment to remove the surplus concrete from various locations around the Parish. A date for the work to be undertaken to be arranged.

Min 160 (101)

Cllr. Saxby has agreed to donate £200 from her Locality Fund towards the purchase of beech trees for the proposed hedge at the Cemetery.

Min 162

Cllr. Wager stated the Contractor would not clear the banks around the Bere Ferrers football pitch and he had previously done it but noted it might need doing again.

Min 167

The Clerk reported that Cllr. Fife-Cook had confirmed that the chits he had understood Parish Councils could request for the disposal of waste at recycling centres were limited to green waste only.

229. Routine annual inspection of benches, cycle stands, gates and trees

Cllr. Patterson confirmed that, with the exception of the cycle stands, the monthly inspections undertaken by herself and Cllr. Archer also include the benches and gates. The Clerk confirmed that the Workman continues to monitor the trees as part of his routine duties.

It was agreed that these checks should be incorporated into the Council's routine safety inspections for the fields, play areas and fitness equipment.

230. Routine safety inspection reports for the Parish recreation, play areas and fitness equipment

No new matters were reported that were not already included on the current work and maintenance list.

Members reviewed the list. The Clerk confirmed that the Workman is currently replacing the fence at Sarah Park. Once this work is completed, he will continue with grass cutting before moving on to repair the fence at Bere Ferrers playpark.

231. Routine inspection of allotments, Bere Alston (including track) and Bere Ferrers

Bere Ferrers

Due to a water pipe running through the allotments, a section of one of the plots has sunk. The Clerk advised that she had investigated the matter but had been unable to establish who was responsible for maintaining the pipe. Devon County Council had previously confirmed that it was not their responsibility. The Clerk agreed to look into the matter again.

It was noted that there are vacant plots and currently no one on the waiting list.

The Clerk reported approx. £148 remains from funds previously transferred by the former Allotment Association. Cllr. Grose to pass this information on to the allotment holders, as these funds could be used towards a system to collect water coming off the Social Club.

Bere Alston

The condition of the allotment track had again been raised with the Council. A possible solution involving the use of 803 material was discussed but considered unsuitable due to concerns that it would just be washed away. Measures to divert surface water from the track were also discussed but were not considered suitable.

It was agreed that a concrete strip at the top of the track should be completed as the first stage of the works. Once completed, the condition of the track would be reviewed and consideration given to any further works required.

It was also agreed that a sign should be erected asking drivers to drive slowly down the track.

The Clerk also reported that an allotment had recently been broken into and that a wheelbarrow and tools had been stolen. The allotment holder had been advised to report the matter to the Police. Members also suggested that allotment holders mark tools and equipment with a suitable security marking system and report any incidents to the Council.

231. To consider and authorise the purchase of a generator

The Workman wished the Council to consider purchasing a generator at an estimated cost of approx. £400.

Members discussed the cost of purchasing a generator compared with continuing to hire one, together with the likely future use of it. It was noted that the generator would need to be of a suitable specification to provide sufficient power while remaining

practical to transport. It was agreed that Cllr. Leithall will discuss further with the Workman on the appropriate specification required before any decision to purchase would be made.

232. Agenda items for next meeting

1. Open Spaces Committee 6th Month Financial Report.

It was noted that the Best Allotment Cup for 2026 would be presented at the September Full Council meeting.

233. Correspondence

1. The Clerk reported that an Ecologist Consultant carrying out work locally had contacted the Council regarding the possible relocation of slow worms and lizards anywhere in/around Bere Alston.

Possible locations were discussed, including the bottom right-hand side of the Bere Alston allotment the Bere Ferrers Orchard. Members raised no objection in principle to them being place there.

2. The Clerk reported that a request had been received to install a small memorial plaque in the ground at Weir Quay in memory of a resident's late wife.

Members discussed the proposal and raised concerns regarding the potential for a trip hazard. It was agreed that further information should be obtained from the applicant before the request was considered further.

3. A request had been received from a resident for yellow lines to be painted on the path leading from Pilgrim Drive car park to Fore Street, Bere Alston as it was unwalkable for non-sighted people.

It was noted that this had been requested previously and was already included on the Council's work list, to be completed when resources permit.

Cllr. Crozier asked that the Parish Council send letter to residential houses in Bedford Street requesting that ragwort growing on their properties be removed.

234. Questions from members of the public present at the meeting at the discretion of the chair

The members of the public who had asked their questions under matters arising, had already left the meeting.

There being no other business, the Chair thanked the members for attending and closed the meeting at 8.33 pm.

Signed by the Chair of the Committee:

Dated: 29th September 2026