

Bere Ferrers Parish Council

At the Annual Parish Meeting, held in the Bere Ferrers Church Hall on Tuesday 10th May 2022.

Present

Cllr. P. Crozier	Chair of the Council
Cllr. B. Lamb	Cllr. R. Maycock
Cllr. J. Maciejowska	Cllr. H. Peace
Cllr. D. Pengelly	Cllr. H. Rogers

508. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Dennis, Leithall, King, Russell and Shaw. The Council accepted their apologies.

509. Chair's welcome

Cllr. Crozier welcomed members of the public to the first Annual Parish meeting to be held since 2019.

510. An update on the restoration of the Tavistock – Bere Alston line' a talk from our guest speaker, Richard Searight, Chair of the Peninsula Rail Group

Cllr. Lamb introduced Mr Richard Searight, Chair of the Peninsula Rail Group and gave a brief background. The group started approx. 10 years ago and are first Rail Group to have successfully brought back a closed railway line, the Okehampton to Exeter line, which was brought in under budget and above their target date. The group are now turning their attention to restoring the Bere Alston to Tavistock line.

Mr Searight gave the members and public a brief background on why stations were closed in the 1960s and as the only main line in and out of Devon and Cornwall, runs along a beach, it is necessary to bring railways lines back.

The Okehampton to Exeter line has been a great success, it was delivered two years earlier, £10 million under budget and already has up to 3000 people use it each week.

For the Bere Alston to Tavistock line there are no houses on the line, so no compulsory purchases are required, the rail line will run at the end of people's garden, but train engines are a lot quieter these days.

The plan is trains will stop at Tavistock, Bere Alston, St Budeaux and Plymouth.

There are no plans for a cycle track to run alongside the rail track, due to the narrow track, but Devon County Council are working on another track for cyclists.

It is anticipated the rail line will be up and running within 5 years and the new Tavistock station will be located on Callington Road, near the new housing estate.

Cllr. Lamb thanked Mr Searight for attending the meeting and asked that members of the public write to the local MP, Devon County Council to give their support to this project.

511. Presentation to Paul Gentle, outgoing Chair of the Bere Alston Regeneration Partnership

Cllr. Crozier introduced Paul Gentle who had recently retired as a Trustee and Chair of the Bere Alston Regeneration Partnership after 21 years. Cllr. Crozier thanked Paul for his all the work he has done with Beregen and in recognition of this, the Council would like to publicly thank him for his long service.

Paul Gentle thanked Cllr. Crozier for the lovely gift. He also wanted to thank you Cllr. Lamb, who was the only surviving Councillor from when the partnership was set up and the Parish Council for their support. Thanked members of the community and thanked his wife Caroline for her support.

512. Reports from the Committees:

1) Plans & Highways

Cllr. Maycock, Chair of the Plans & Highways Committee, gave his report:

The committee meets on the first Tuesday of the month with extra meetings fitted into the calendar where necessary, we also undertake some site visits, if it's required, to get a better understanding of a planning application.

We look at applications from tree felling/pollarding, conservatory erection, building of extensions, change of use, new builds and new estates. We report back to West Devon on agreement, our recommendations or rejection of any applications we receive. We view all applications with a sympathy to what we already have in the villages and surrounding areas and in accordance with details laid out in our Neighbourhood Plan.

Our Neighbourhood plan has been in place for 3.5 years and has been instrumental in planning decisions for the peninsula since the referendum in September 2018. Applications have had to be modified and rejected on the back of the wishes of our community. It has played and continues to play key role in the expansion of the Woolacombe road development. The plan has also been sighted in applications put forward in neighbouring parishes who are still working on their own plans.

As a committee we will always look to needs of the community as a whole and make our recommendations for the benefit of all and will continue to do so over the next 12 months.

2) Open Spaces

Cllr. Pengelly, Chair of the Open Spaces Committee gave his report:

It has been quite a busy year with some unexpected issues. A major project was undertaken to utilize the west side of the cemetery. This involved a new road(the Mary Taylor Crescent) through the centre which linked up with the entrance between the dog exercise field and the cemetery. The next phase will be to replace the entrance gates to the dog field which is now underway, the entrance has been widened to increase visibility splays and the gates have been purchased which will be set back into the field to allow vehicles to leave the road before opening the gates. The final phase will be to lay a new tarmac road across the field linking with the new cemetery entrance. Thanks to Cllrs. Leithall and Lamb for their work in this project.

Another major project has been the replacement of the water pipe between the Down and the Pavilion which had sprung a leak. On investigation it was decided the pipe needed complete replacement which was carried out by our workman.

A new grass machine has been purchased and some old unused machines which were cluttering up the workshop were sold with the money raised to offset some of the cost of the new machine.

A number of new allotments have been created at Bere Alston. At the last count all the allotments at both sites were let. An unsightly allotment at BF has been taken on and slowly being put back into use. The zip wire at the Bere Ferrers play park has been replaced by the Bere Ferrers Villagers Group, who have done a great job raising the money and purchasing the equipment, this will be officially opened on Sunday 22 May.

On the down side, we have seen a massive increase in vandalism, which has cost us a lot of money, (public money). Which means that money that could have been used for improvements, has had to be used to make essential repairs. Vandalism acts include damage to the pavilion roof (we should thank BARP for a £500 donation towards the repair), the main entrance, although to be fair they were in need of replacement, also a side door was kicked in which had to be replaced £620. The workman's hut, parish hall roof, two picnic tables, donated by the Britain in bloom group were damaged and have been returned. CCTV has been installed around the parish hall, which is another unnecessary expense. What the answer is, I don't know, but it is costing a lot of time and money.

Finally, I am quite pleased with what has been achieved this past year and I thank my committee and all the councillors for their help and support over this past year.

3) Footpath & Environment

Cllr. Dennis, Chair of the Committee, was unable to attend the meeting, therefore Cllr. Peace, vice-chair of the Committee read out his report:

The Footpaths & Environment Committee have been very proactive around the Peninsula and have walked all of our Footpaths and made notes of any issues to be reported back to the Clerk.

The Committee are supportive of the concept to have Electrical Charging Points installed in the Village to encourage visitors and walkers whereby reducing the Parishes Carbon Footprint. These electrical points should be installed in the Pilgrim Drive Car Park in due course and other areas will be considered in due time.

The Committee were all encouraged by a local initiative and in favour of putting up peg signs at the sides of roads to warn motorists that hedgehogs were around in these areas, whereby would be removed when the hedgehogs were not around. The Committee has also been hard at work to produce an updated Footpaths Guide to include photos of various styles and interesting points for walkers to look out for whilst enjoying the countryside. Posters were produced to promote the sale of the guide from various outlets within the Parish. We are pleased how well these publications have gone and will be ordering some more from the printers when any updates have been done to the draft. We would also like to thank those local businesses who supported this guide by purchasing advertising spaces and with the minimal charge for the guides makes them self-financing by covering the printing costs.

The Committee have also re numbered all of the Footpaths to make their location easier for visitors and locals to follow. Whereby 127 numbered discs were purchases and placed on the Footpath signposts.

The next project for the Committee is to research the possibility of making a few footpaths accessible for disabled people to use and enjoy.

The Parish Council and this committee are very keen to work with the land owner to overcome any issues with Footpaths whereby reporting maintenance requirements and issues to the County Council.

On a local level our Parish Workman has been working very hard around the Parish keeping our footpaths and bridleways in good condition. Any problems found should be reported to the Parish Clerk in the normal way.

I'd like to sum up but thanking the dedicated team on the Footpaths and Environment Committee and our Parish Clerk for all the hard and time-consuming work which has been done to maintain our Parish Footpaths.

4) Finance & General Purpose

Cllr. Leithall, Chair of the Finance & General-Purpose meeting was unable to attend the meeting, therefore Cllr. Crozier read out his report:

F&GP Committee facilitated the preparation of a draft budget presented to Full Council for approval, and then monitored spend with satisfactory outcome at year end. The Council's Financial Regulations and Risk Management Plan were also subject to an annual review and updated as necessary.

Other business matters included the following:-

Cemetery new Road Project

Following competitive tender, a contract was awarded and a new tarmac road extension added to the Cemetery at Bere Alston, with work completed by April last year.

Cycle Stands

Cllrs. Maciejowska and Shaw have selected suitable sites in Bere Alston, Bere Ferrers and Weir Quay, after consultation with Bere Ferrers Villagers Group and the Weir Quay Group and. . The final site at Weir Quay, a location was still to be confirmed, but conversations with owners on suitable sites are taking place. There will be two stands at each site, which will be enough for 8 bikes to be parked. All "planning" permissions, except West Devon Borough Council have been received. Parish Council are now waiting on the delivery of the stands.

Parish Office Computer and Printer/Photocopier

The Parish Clerk's old computer has been replaced with a new laptop, and a new Printer/Photocopier leased.

Toilets

Following the lifting of Covid restrictions the Toilets have been re-opened. Recently due to recent vandalism involving setting fire to toilet roll dispenser, the Toilets in Bere Alston they were closed early in an attempt to prevent re-occurrence. However,

following a Council review, normal opening hours have been re-instated and the situation will be monitored. The Bere Alston Easy-Access (Disabled Toilet) had deteriorated with age, and so has had restoration repairs made to.

Platform Lift Bere Alston Parish Hall

After much administrative and purchasing effort, the broken platform lift in the Bere Alston Parish Hall was finally replaced with a new one last December. Some financial compensation was finally won from the Council's insurers thanks primarily to the untiring efforts of Councillor Brian Lamb.

Update of the Parish Emergency Plan

Cllr. D. King and Mr. Stuart McQueen are continuing to update the Parish's Emergency Plan. It is envisaged that two versions of the Emergency Plan will be completed, possibly one to be sent to all residents, whilst a more detailed plan may be kept in the Parish Council office at the parish Hall.

George V1 Coronation Clock Repair (outside wall Clock on the Parish Hall)

A crowd funding page for the Parish Clock repair was arranged which successfully raised funds to have the outside wall Clock on the Parish Hall repaired.

CCTV Cameras installed

To both deter and detect vandalism in and around the Bere Alston Parish Hall, 11-off CCTV cameras have been installed and are now in operation. A CCTV usage and recordings access policy has also been prepared and approved by Council.

Electric Car charging point at Pilgrim Drive

Western Power are yet to conduct their survey and this should be done by end of the year.

Finally, a hearing loop has now been installed in the Council Chambers.

513. Chair of the Council's report

Firstly, we remember the loss of Mary Taylor who served as Clerk to the Council for over 40 years. We took the opportunity to commemorate her in the naming of the new road in the cemetery, Mary Taylor Crescent.

During the Covid outbreak I have to thank members of the community who stepped up to help those who could not leave their home. We had over 50 volunteers. During this period, myself and Cllr. Brian Lam manned the office and took the opportunity to clear excess records from the office which we were not required to keep. In February this year Caroline Metcalf, who joined us as the Assistant Clerk in October 2019, passed her CiCLA examination and is now fully qualified Clerk and we have every confidence in her abilities.

Plans for the Platinum jubilee are well advanced and members of the community have rallied together to arrange a varied programme of events.

I also have to thank all Parish Councillors who have given their time freely and served over the last 3 years and especially mention to Eason Wager who served for nearly 30 years as a Councillor. Special mention also to Cllrs. Brian Lamb and Richard Leithall who have served over many years and have been invaluable to myself and the new Clerk, to guide us in the business of the Council.

514. Parishioners' feedback and Chair's summing up

A question was asked regarding the state of part of Station Road which didn't get any maintenance. Members of the public asked to contact Devon Highways and bring it to their attention.

The question of introducing 20 mph speed was discussed. Cllr. Crozier stated that a lot of people are for this, but the big issue is enforcing it, therefore it would be up to individuals to respect it. Cllr. Maycock commented that during a zoom meeting he attended it was noted that there had not been a lot of take up in Devon, therefore if people are keen to join the campaign the better. An application has been made to Devon County Council for Bere Alston and a case for roads in Bere Ferrers will be submitted in the future.

The Chair thanked the member for attending the meeting and closed the meeting at 8.13 pm.

Signed by the Chair

Date: