

Bere Ferrers Parish Council

At a meeting of the Footpaths and Environment Committee held in the Council Chambers on Tuesday 5th September 2023.

Present

Cllr. V. Grose	Chair of the Committee
Cllr. P. Crozier	Chair of the Council
Cllr. Maciejowska	Cllr. M. Patterson
Cllr. C. Shaw	

In Attendance : Cllr. Lamb

219. Apologies

Cllrs. Dennis and King sent their apologies. The Committee accepted their apologies.

220. Declaration of Interest

No interests were declared.

221. Items of Interest at the discretion of the Chairman. No action can be taken on these items.

Cllr. Grose:

1. Ros Davies, previously the Council's Parish Path Partnership Officer, is now the new Public Rights of Way Warden for the area.
2. Would like to welcome Cllr. Margret Patterson onto the Footpaths & Environment Committee.
3. On 15th September, Cllr. Grose is meeting with a few members of the Landulph Parish Council, for lunch and a walk of footpaths 87, 83 and 85 (the Coast-to-Coast footpaths) and asked if any other Councillor wished to join her. Cllrs. Lamb and Maciejowska expressed interest in attending.
4. Hornets have been reported on Footpath 7 and 10. Warning signs have been put up and it be mentioned in the next edition of Berelink. It is believed that they are native hornets, but it was discussed that Asian hornets should be reported. (Asian hornets have a black head and yellow face, smaller size than native hornets and legs have yellow tips).

222. Matters arising from the minutes from the 6th June 2023

Matters Arising

Minute 75

Concerns about the condition of the bridge/tunnel on Footpath 36 was reported to the Parish Paths Liaison Officer and the Clerk to follow up.

With regards to alerting walkers to livestock in fields, it is not a legal requirement for landowners to do so, although it was noted that some do have signs up. Information on what walkers should do when surrounded by livestock, especially cows, is listed on the Council's website.

Cllr. King continues to record the gradient of each footpath and once completed this information will be added to the Footpath Guide. The Coast-to-Coast guidebook does include the gradient walks, including footpath 87,83 and 85, which are part of the Coast-to-Coast Walk.

In references to crops growing in fields, it was noted at the last meeting that it was hoped walkers would walk around the crops, but landowners are required to ensure that there is a wide enough path for walkers. The Clerk to follow up with the Public Rights of Way Warden.

Minute 78

The Clerk to send a copy of the Footpaths & Environment Terms of Reference to Cllrs. Maciejowska and Patterson.

223. Organise the yearly Footpath Audit

Discussions took place on the footpath allocations for the annual audit. The Clerk to update the list and send out to all Committee members. The deadline for submitting the reports to Devon County Council will be approx. mid-February 2024.

224. Devon County Council's diversion proposals for Footpath 2

Devon County Council has received two separate applications to divert parts of Footpath No. 2. The first application's effect would be to divert the legally recorded line of the path onto the used route of the path which runs from a pedestrian gate across a field to a ladder stile. The second application's effect would be to divert the legally recorded line of the path, onto a route to the north of the legal line. The legally recorded line of the path runs across a plot of land, through an established plantation of trees, over a bank and through a small barn. The proposed route is currently in use on a permissive basis and runs around the perimeter of the landholding and then along a track. Pedestrian gates would be installed.

After discussions, Cllr. Grose proposed to accept with the proposal on the 1st application. Seconded by Cllr. Patterson. All in favour.

Cllr. Grose proposed to accept the proposal on the 2nd application, but request that a bridge be installed across the stream about half way down the footpath. Seconded by Cllr. Shaw. All in favour.

Cllr. Grose to check what the description of Footpath 2 in the Guide.

225. Update on Footpath 10, 28, 49, 56 and 83

Footpath 10 – the fallen trees have been reported to the Public Rights of Way Warden.

Footpath 28 – the ash dieback has been reported also. The Clerk to follow up.

Footpath 48 – walkers are unable to walk around/through the maize growing in the field. Devon County Council Public Rights of Way is investigating.

Footpath 56 – A diversion on the path has been put in place, but it officially path can not and has not been closed off as well.

Footpath 83 – It was discussed that a new bridge is required as the area is very boggy. The Clerk to report.

226. Update on electric car charging points

Cllr. Crozier updated the Committee on an online meeting he attended recently. Three proposals were discussed at the meeting and the general consensus was to explore a Devon County Council led concession proposal; 'DCC procures a supplier to install charge points across parish/community sites. The landowner enters into a 10-15 lease with the supplier and receives a share of the revenue funding. Installation and ongoing management of the contract would be by DCC'.

The plan to install car charging points in Pilgrim Drive is still ongoing, but at present there is no date on when this will be completed. The transformer in Bere Alston is overloaded and the installation of car charging points might cause black outs. Other proposed sites would be the Parish Hall in Bere Alston and the Bere Ferrers Social Club. There are now charging points in certain car parks in Okehampton and Tavistock.

227. Discussion on unclassified roads in the Parish and whether they could be changed to public footpaths.

After discussions, Cllr. Grose proposed creating a sub-committee to look at the unclassified roads. Seconded by Cllr. Patterson. Member for the Committee to be appointed at the next meeting.

228. Discussion on the lost footpaths in the Parish

After studying the map of the lost footpaths in the area, it was decided to explore the possibility of reinstating two paths. Cllr. Grose proposed herself and Cllr. Shaw explore further and report back at the next meeting. Seconded by Cllr. Maciejowska. All in favour.

229. Environmental Issues

Cllr. Grose raised the issue of light pollution. Currently the street lights turn off at 2 am or 1 am, depending on whether is GMT or BST time and could this be changed.

Cllr. Grose proposed a motion to investigate whether the street lights in the villages could be changed to midnight/1 am. Seconded by Cllr. Maciejowska. A vote was taken. 2 against. No vote for. Motion not carried.

230. Correspondence

1. Email from Tamar Valley:

This year's Tamar Valley AONB Annual Forum will be themed around Nature Recovery. The Forum will be held at Buckland Abbey, on Thursday 21 September, 2:45pm-7pm. Further details can be found here - <https://www.tamarvalley.org.uk/nature-recovery-in-the-tamar-valley-aonb-annual-forum-this-september/>. We hope you'll be able to join us.

A few members expressed interest in attending.

2. The Clerk read out an email from Tamara Landscape Partnership who are holding a Community Day in Bere Alston village on Saturday the 23rd of September to celebrate the nature in the village and to promote the new Nature Recovery Plan the Tamar Valley AONB has produced. We will also be promoting the Discovering Dormice project which the community has fundraised for, which you may be aware of. There will be lots of organisations attending with activities on tables for visitors to have a go at, as well as key timed activities which visitors can join. They wondered whether Councillors would like to come and represent the Parish Council with a stand? Invitations have been sent to the Bere Alston Nature Group, Bere Alston in Bloom, the Parish Council, the allotments, the Scouts group, Harlings Farm, the forest school in the Primary School.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would not require a stand, but Councillors, if they are able to, to attend as representatives of Parish Council.

3. An anonymous note from a member of the public regarding overhanging hedges.

It was discussed that the hedges at Whitehall Drive/Bedford Street has been cut back and it is householders' responsibility to cut their hedges back.

231. Items for agenda for next meeting

1. Update on annual Footpath Audit
2. Update on Lost Footpaths and Unclassified roads and finalise sub-committee members.
3. Electric car charging points.

The next Committee will be on 7th November 2023.

232. Questions from the public present at the meeting at the discretion of the Chair

There being no further business the Chair thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 9.10 pm.

Signed this date 26th September 2023

Signed by the Chair: