**DRAFT**

**BERRY POMEROY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Berry Pomeroy Parish Council Meeting**

**held on Tuesday 7th January 2025 at Berry Pomeroy Parish Council**

**PRESENT:** Cllr. Graham Bennett (Chair),). Cllr. Marie Flay. Cllr. David Hooper. Cllr. Joy Harris. Cllr. Sam Penfold

District Cllr. Presswell. County Cllrs Hawkins & Hodgson

Clerk: Mrs S Watt

THERE WERE NO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT AND NO QUESTIONS HAD BEEN RECEIVED

Ward Report and District Reports were given and are available from the Clerk. However, Cllr Hawkins provided some detailed information regarding the Devon & Cornwall Devolution Deal and the inclusion of Cornwall. It was requested that Cllr. Hawkins provide a full update prior to the next meeting, in writing to The Clerk, who will put an item on the next Agenda for full discussion and a Q & A session for Cllrs as Cllr. Hawkins will have further updates by then together with a decision from Devon County Council as to whether they will be cancelling the May Elections.

There were no Police Reports.

**STANDING ORDERS**

**1. 07.01.25 Apologies:** Cllr. John Mills

**2. 07.01.25 Declarations of Interest**: None

**3. 07.01.25 Approve Minutes of:** The Parish Council meeting held 5th November 2024 – were agreed and signed on behalf of the Parish Council, by the Chair, as a true record of the meeting.

**4. 07.01.25 Meeting Protocol:** Cllr. Bennett & The Clerk explained the protocol & procedures for agreeing the Minutes. Any amendments must be requested prior to meeting and confirmed or rejected by the Clerk accordingly. If the Cllr who has requested an amendment requires a new copy of the Minutes prior to the meeting, they should request such from the Clerk, however, amended Minutes are published on the website immediately. The Minutes, if received by Cllrs prior to the meeting and amendments made are taken as read, should be signed off by the Chair on behalf of the Council with a note made of any amendments requested.

**5. 07.01.25 Cllr Responsibility:** Cllr Bennett & The Clerk requested that Cllrs who had not actioned their .gov.uk email, a public funded function, must do so with immediate effect. The email protocol for .gov.uk and for Cllrs to receive their Summons and other documentation was approved during a meeting in early 2024. Only one Cllr has been pardoned from this action as they do not have access to the internet or a mobile phone. Third parties should not have access to or knowledge of passwords to Cllrs .gov.uk email addresses to ensure confidentiality – this was also confirmed by an attending District Cllr. Note: it is to be noted that a Cllr blatantly accused the Clerk of providing them with the incorrect information. The Chair informed the Cllr that the Clerk did not produce the login or access information of a .gov.uk email address – it is produced and provided by our Internet & Website Company.

**6. 07.01.25 Budget Setting & Precept:** The Budget, distributed prior to the meeting, was discussed in full. The Clerk reminded Cllrs that last year they had discussed signage for the end of the footpath from the Village to True Street, also reminding Cllrs that Highways had refused to allow us to erect a Mirror stating that it would ‘distract drivers’. Cllr Hooper said that the footpath was not used much, to which the majority of the Members disagreed. The Clerk said that VAS systems were the option of choice, however, they did come out at around £3000 although no thorough research on costs had been carried out. It was agreed that £3000 would be allocated to fund a VAS system of which £1500 would be put on the Budget and £1500 would be sought from grants, however, the Clerk explained that the whole amount £3000 would have to be shown on the budget and then £1500 towards the purchase would be shown as income. Cllr.Bennett proposed the purchase of a VAS system, Seconded by Cllr. Flay. There was a 4 to 1 vote in favour of including the £3000 for a VAS system in the Budget. Cllr. Hooper objected.

The budget was finally concluded, approved and agreed: Proposed by Cllr. Bennett and Seconded by Cllr. Harris. The decision to accept the budget was unanimous.

The Precept, therefore, was agreed unanimously and set at £20,208.00 for the year 2025/26.

The Chair reminded Cllrs that the Parish Council was there to provide Services, Facilities and to ensure that within its remit, the safety of its Parishioners and to do so, it had been necessary to increase the budget for next year.

**7. 07.01.25 Clerk’s Report:**

1. Correspondence – The Chair of Bridgetown Alive, Richard O’Connell, had emailed to thank the Council for the grant of £250. Joanne Yeo, Chair of Food for Children Totnes had also sent in thanks and gratitude for the grant of £250 provided by the Parish Council and also stated that their AGM & Fundraiser Event had raised over £4,700.00.

2. P3 Funding was again available for the Parish Footpaths. It was agreed to ask our Lengthsman to carry out a survey and the Clerk will apply for the funding if required.

3. The Salt Marsh at Longmarsh was due for large environmental and ascetic safety and improvement work to commence this month. The Parish Council has been invited to attend the opening on 21 March 2025. It was agreed to submit who was attending at the next meeting. The Clerk also stated that it would be good if a member of the Council attended their meetings in the future as Longmarsh was within the Berry Pomeroy Parish although SHDC managed the area on the PCs behalf. We should however, as with all areas in our Parish be informed of any actions or visits with the Parish. Such as the current work to clear the verge in Dukes Road and Parkfield by Bridgetown Alive, as a courtesy we should have been informed and we could have offered our Lengthsman as he already works in our Parkfield Play Park area.

4. Wildlife Booklet : The Clerk had been contacted by the Clerk of Littlehempston and also our Ward Cllr. Sam Penfold. Cllr Penfold has funded the Wildlife Booklet between Berry Pomeroy and Littlehempston. Littlehempston has 125 books remaining. There was a long debate on how and who should have these booklets. It was finally agreed, that we would fund further copies and insert them into the Newsletter which is due to be produced in the coming months.

5. The Clerk informed the Council that the Signage just outside Keep Cottages was now hanging over the road. Highways had confirmed in writing that they would carry out repairs on the 6th December 2024 – this has not been done. Cllr. Hawkins to be asked to assist. The Clerk also informed the Council that the Grit bins in the Bridgetown Ward had been refilled as requested, however, there did not appear to be a grit bin the Village – Cllr. Hooper stated there was no need as the Council gritted the road, it was observed by Cllr Harris that the grit bins also served to grit the footpaths. The Clerk was requested to liaise with Cllr Hawkins for the placement of new grit bin the village.

6. Berry Pomeroy Village Hall status update:There were still ongoing problems. However, the Management Committee were working towards resolutions on all issues. Together with options to protect the future of the Village Hall and it was unanimously agreed to request the Clerk on behalf of the Trustees and the Principle Administrator, to forward the most appropriate action. The Management Committee are meeting on Friday 10th January 2025 to discuss further.

7. Cllr Hooper asked where the 2nd Debif was – the Clerk confirmed it was unopened and in her possession in the Office. Cllr Hooper asked if the battery life was still effective. The Clerk explained that defib had not been unwrapped or taken out of its box and, therefore, the Battery had not been fitted or activated.

There followed a discussion on who or where the defib could be sold to or if it should be placed somewhere else within the Parish. The problem was that it needed to be inside so as not to cause additional costs with buying a box as if placed outside, as within the telephone kiosk, it needed an electric supply to keep the defib at a constant temperature. If kept inside, the box was not required.

It was suggested that the Café at Berry Castle may be interested, Cllr. Hooper said that would not work as the lease provided was on a yearly basis that it would be waste of money if the lease was not renewed.

Cllr. Hooper did suggest the English Heritage Office might be interested. The Clerk was requested to enquire.

8. It was agreed that the additional costs to The Clerk for the Administrative work for the Village Hall Charity would be paid by monthly by Cheque as there was due to be a review at the March Meeting and it seemed pointless to set up a changed Standing Order for just 2 months.

9. The Monthly Finance Statement had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Cheque book had been left in the Office, there was only one cheque to be signed and it was agreed that The Clerk would go to Cllrs. Mills & Flay the next morning to get the cheque signed. The Monthly Finance Statement was unanimously agreed and signed by the Chair on behalf of the Council.

**BERRY POMEROY FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND PAYMENTS**

**5th November 2024 to 6th January 2025**

**Bank Account Balances as at : 24th December 2024**

Santander Main Account £39,003.65

Santander Reserve Account to 5th June 2024 £ 4,331.25

Berry Pomeroy Parish Council total balance as at 24.12.24: **£43,334.90**

**INCOME:**

January 2025: Repayment for Clerk’s Admin time from Berry Pomeroy Village Hall – November 2024. £227.08

Repayment for Clerk’s Admin time from Berry Pomeroy Village Hall – December 2024. £329.60

**EXPENDITURE:** Oct/Nov 2024

20.11.24 Clerk’s Monthly Salary paid by Standing Order £526.16

20.12.24 Clerk’s Monthly Salary paid by Standing Order £526.16

02.12.24 Chq No: 832 Clerk’s – V/Hall duties/BPPC stationery £580.90

02.12.24 Chq No: 833 BPPC new printer £250.00

07.01.25 Chq.No: 834 Clerk’s – V/Hall duties £252.04

10. There had been a late Planning Application for the removal of a Yew Tree in the closed Churchyard. There had been no approach to the Parish Council who manage the closed churchyard both financially and maintenance wise. The reason for the removal, requested by the Parochial Council was 1. The wrong Species and 2. In the wrong place. This was vehemently objected to by all Councillors present – the Yew had been there for decades and a Yew is an ancient traditional tree/hedge for a Churchyard. The Yew was also in a Conservation Area. The Clerk was requested to ensure the Planners were made aware of the Parish Council’s objections together with the fact that any requests, if ever required, would come via the Parish Council.

**8, 07.01.25 Date of Next Meeting:**

Tuesday 4th February 2025 at Berry Pomeroy Village Hall.

The Meeting Closed at 21:40hrs

Signed:………………………………………………….Date: 4th February 2025

Chair: Cllr. Graham Bennett