DRAFT

 **POMEROY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Berry Pomeroy Parish Council Meeting**

**held on Tuesday 7th October 2025 at Berry Pomeroy Village Hall**

**PRESENT:** Cllr. Graham Bennett (Chair) Cllr Mills (Vice Chair), Cllr. Marie Flay.

Cllr. David Hooper,

County Cllr. Hodgson. Cllr. Simon Rake. District Cllr. Anna Presswell

2 members of the Public

Clerk: Mrs S Watt

Public Forum: A question had been received from a Resident regarding the access by email direct to cllrs. It was explained by the Chair, that the Parish Council had voted unanimously at its June 2025 meeting to maintain the direct access from the website as it is – due to malicious and defamatory correspondence being sent to Cllrs. It was confirmed that the Clerk had not received any emails for the Attn of Cllrs via the website. Emails for Cllrs received into the Clerk’s email system, which is the Parish Councils main point of contact had always been forwarded to Cllrs. It was further confirmed that the decisions of Council could not be changed for six months and then only by the written request to the Clerk (the Proper Officer) for Review, by a minimum of two Cllrs. The Parish Council’s Communications Policy was amended and agreed at the June Meeting and is available on the Parish Council’s Website under Documents

Cllr. Hodgson gave a verbal report although a copy had been received and forwarded to Cllrs, who had not had time to read through. Cllr. Rake gave a shortened version of his Report, which had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the Meeting. Cllr. Presswell also gave a verbal overview of her report which had also been submitted and circulated to Cllrs prior to the Meeting. Cllr. Penfold’s Reports had been circulated to Cllrs. A copy of all reports are available from the Clerk and will be available on the Parish Council’s Website in due course, District & County Cllrs authorised their reports can be uploaded.

 **STANDING ORDERS .**

**1. 07.10.25 Apologies:** Cllr Annette Cuff. Cllr. Sam Penfold

**2. 07.10.25 Declaration of Interests:** NONE Declared.

**3. 07.10.25 Approval of the Minutes of BPPC Meeting held:**  Tuesday 5th August 2025 were agreed, approved and signed by the Chair on behalf of the Parish Council.

**4. 07.10.25 Communications Policy & Protocol:** The Chair stated that he did not want to receive every email sent to the Clerk, the Clerk is the first point of contact and the person who carries out the Parish Council’s day to day business. The Chair further stated that the Clerk forwards emails regularly and requests advice and information. Further, the amount of emails being sent smother urgent emails from the Clerk which do need to be addressed. Please refrain from doing so and further, as per our Communications, no round-robin emails should be sent unless specifically requested.

All emails have been monitored and report obtained, stating that members are opening emails but not responding as requested, not even to acknowledge receipt when requested to do so. This has impacted on the Parish Council not being present at invited meetings because the Clerk has been unable to respond due to the lack of response from Members. Please have the courtesy and indeed, your duty to respond. Members should be looking at their .gov.uk emails at least once a day and most definitely just before a Parish Council meeting.

County Cllr Hodgson interjected and stated that all Cllrs should have an email address – she was informed that every Cllr had had their own gov.uk emails for the last 2 yrs, all accounts were active and there was nothing stopping Members providing their emails addresses to others.

**5. 07.10.25 Bridgetown Ward Report:**  Cllr. Flay. Myself and the Clerk attended the Bridgetown Alive meeting on Tuesday 30th September. Richard O’Connell who has been Chair stood down and Bob Carpenter had put himself forward to be the new Chair of Bridgetown Alive. The Treasurer and Secretary agreed to carry on as did all the Trustees – this meeting was also their AGM. It was noted that there was no formal nominations, seconders or show of hands for any of the Officers.

We updated those present that the Noticeboards had now finally been installed and the keys for the Dukes Road Noticeboard had arrived the same day as this meeting.

Parkfield Playpark’s groundwork had been completed and the Parish Council would be making decisions on the play equipment installers at their next meeting. Hopefully the playpark is now well on its way to completion giving a lovely, safe little play area for the children of Bridgetown

The footpath along Dukes Road has been cut back and will continue to be maintained by our Lengthsman and we have also had the main road verge cut back, although this is taking a little longer to complete due to the lack of maintenance over the years. Note: it was not Berry Pomeroy’s responsibility but due to the lack of ownership of the maintenance, it has been completed by BPPC in the hope of creating good community relations.

Cllr. Hooper stated it was a waste of money and should have been flailed – no one had put this suggestion forward when the Clerk had emailed all Cllrs at the beginning of August with an update due to their being no August meeting. The verge was overgrown, cars were parking on the opposite side of the road making the road become narrow and cars being damaged from the brambles encroaching on the roadside by at least 3ft. The Chair stated that this highlighted and confirmed that emails had been opened but recipients had failed to respond !

Cllr.Flay went on to report that there had been a very long discussion regarding the potential for a Pedestrian Crossing at the top of Bridgetown hill linking the two bus stops one on the Blackpost lane side and one on the Jubilee road side. There had been a petition started by a resident in Jubilee road who was present at the meeting, it was suggested that that resident along with one other attend the HATOC meeting on 4th November to obtain the documentation and evidence which may be required to forward a proposal for such a crossing. There were many Pros & Cons to take on board.

**6. 07.10.25 Long Marsh Broadwalk Disabled extension:** Cllr. Presswell had initiated correspondence regarding the extension of the Broad Walk at Long Marsh. Members had been forwarded email trails of discussions. The basis of the proposal is to extend the current Broad Walk to allow disabled persons to access a section currently not accessible to them. Cllr. Presswell is awaiting costs and asked if BPPC would assist in funding. The project would not start, if accepted, until the Spring. Cllr. Hooper stated that the current quality of the wood used probably would not be durable and stated that a severe winter could unearth many problems and that we should wait until such time as to the durability of the wood was reported. The Clerk stated that the budget was being set for next year in the next couple of weeks and if the PC were to be agreeable to consider supporting, then she would need to know costs within the next 2 weeks. Cllr. Presswell agreed to inform the Clerk as soon as she had figures. The clerk stated that any allocation of funds for this project would be under a contingency and only agreeable if there was a favourable report in the Spring as to how the boards have weathered during the winter months. It was also reiterated that Members would still have to agree the budget in November before any commitment could be made.

**7. 07.10.25 Budget Setting:** The Clerk/RFO reported that no one had yet submitted any recommendations for the draft budget and requested any contributions to be made within the next two weeks to enable the draft budget to be completed and distributed to Members prior to the November meeting. The Clerk also stated that she had attended a NALC meeting ‘The Precept & Beyond’, which highlighted the need for all Town & Parish Councils to be aware of the need to substantially increase their Precepts to enable them to take on the new responsibilities to be given to them under the LGR. Clerk’s especially were going to be impacted with the volume of work which was going to be required, not only in creating Asset Registers, but Business Planning and extra duties. She also stated that Cllr. Flay & Cllr. Penfold and herself, were attending an LGR Clerk’s Cluster meeting at The Guildhall at Totnes Town Council on 15th October, where further information will be given although clarity across the board is lacking at the moment, the thrust of every meeting though, is that if we don’t do something now we will be left behind with no finances to carry out our legal obligations as a Parish Council. There were some objections and lack of understanding amongst those present, but realistically, we are all in the same boat, but we cannot just sit back and ‘see what happens’, this would show lack of foresight, planning and acceptance to the change which is coming.

**Clerk’s Report:**

There had been a request from English Heritage to assist with funding for new Brown Signs, these are signs for historical sites etc. The Clerk had informed the author that it was not within the PCs remit to fund and that they were best to approach our Ward Cllr and District Cllr.

There had been one application so far for our Grant Funding Scheme. This was from Bridgetown Alive for their Community Coffee Morning, which the PC had funded last year. It provided a warm meeting place for the elderly and lonely to meet on a regular basis. The PC had been thanked for their contribution last year and the request was for £250 to assist with the ongoing function of the Coffee morning. It was unanimously agreed to provide £250 to Bridgetown Alive for their Community Coffee Morning.

Other organisations had until 31st October 2025 to apply for the remaining three allocations of £250 each.

The Noticeboards had been removed and the old Noticeboard installed by the Defib kiosk in Berry Village and the New Noticeboard installed in Dukes Road. There had been a delay with using the Dukes Rd Noticeboard as the Suppliers sent the wrong keys. They have now been received. The Noticeboard in Berry Village could not be used until the new Perspex was put in, Cllr. Bennett apologised that he had not had time to get this sorted but would ensure it was done as soon as possible. The Clerk also stated that there had been a request from residents in the Village that the Noticeboards usage could be swapped, i.e. the Noticeboard by the Roundabout on the wall of the property to be used by the Community and the recently installed Noticeboard by the Kiosk the Parish Council’s Noticeboard. This was agreed and probably also as the safest option for Villagers looking to see what events were on.

**PLAYPARK CONTRACTORS SUBMITTED QUOTES:** Five Contractors had been contacted to submit quotes under £10,000 for new play equipment to be installed in the Parkfield Playpark. Three quotes had been received, one had not arrived in time and the fifth declined to quote in the end.

Members had received ‘blind’ quotes, i.e. no Contractor details were visible and all quotes were deliberately submitted in the same format. After discussions and questions regarding certain aspects of each submission, Quote No.1 was unanimously appointed as the preferred and winning Contractor. Proposed by Cllr. Bennett and seconded by Cllr. Flay. Each Cllr present was requested to confirm or otherwise their agreement and approval, all present unanimously agreed. The Clerk was asked to clarify a couple of points and if those points were acceptable, then the successful Contractor would be informed. The Clerk confirmed that due diligence had been carried out on all three submissions.

**MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT:**

**BERRY POMEROY PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND PAYMENTS**

**6 August 2025 to 7th October 2025**

**Bank Account Balances as at: 25th August 2025**

Santander Main Account £35,599.08

**Bank Account Balances as at: 24th September 2025**

 £44,388.28

\*Santander Reserve Account to 5th June 2024 £ 4.331.25

**Berry Pomeroy Parish Council total balance as at 24.09.25** **£48,930.33**

\*still awaiting 2025 Reserve A/C statement

**INCOME:** 16.09.25 Precept £10,104.00

**EXPENDITURE:**  Aug/Sept 2025

20.08.25 Clerk’s Monthly Salary paid by Standing Order £566.00

20.09.25 Clerk’s Monthly Salary paid by Standing Order £574.80

20.08.25 Chq. No. 858 N. Kirwin – Noticeboards installation £740.00

18.09.25 Chq.No. 859 N. Kirwin – Groundworks Playpark £6,956.00

**Total Expenditure via cheque payments – August/Sept 2025 £7,696.00**

**EXPENDITURE OCTOBER 2025**

7.10.25 Chq.No: 860 Lengthsman Duties Aug/Sept £397.75

7.10.25 Chq.No. 861 Chapter 8 Lengthsman – Dukes Road £400.00

7.10.25 Chq.No. 862 HMRC – PAYE £390.93

7.10.25 Chq.No. 863 Devon County Council – Internal Audit 2025 £416.40

7.10.25 Chq. No. 864 Heras Fencing Playpark, Printing & Stamps £156.00

**Total Expenditure via cheque payments – October 2025** **£1,761,08**

The Monthly Finance Sheet had been circulated to Members earlier. The Finance Sheet was unanimously agreed and signed by the Chair on behalf of the Parish Council.

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**8. 07.10.25 Date of Next Meeting:**  7.15pm Tuesday 4th November 2025 at Berry Pomeroy Village Hall

The Meeting Closed at 20:20hrs

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

Chair, Cllr. Graham Bennett