Beer Parish Council - Minutes

The Parish Council Meeting was held on Wednesday 9th September 2026, copies of minutes and reports are available on request.

Present:	**Cllr M Shobbrook**	**Cllr K Stevens**	**Cllr T Stevens**
	Cllr M Westlake	**Cllr S Whitelock**	**Cllr J Heath**
	Cllr C Arnold		

Minutes were taken by the acting Clerk: Cllr M Shobbrook in the absence of Mrs Tess Nishino

1. **Apologies and reasons for absence:** Cllr M. Finney due to an injury.

2. **Members to declare any interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the adopted Code of Conduct.** (N.B. this does not preclude any later declarations). To consider dispensation requests: none declared

3. **To agree any items to be dealt with after the public, including the press, have been excluded:** None

4. **Public Participation:** None

5. **To consider and approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 8th July 2026:** The Council agreed the minutes were a true reflection of the meeting. Proposed Cllr M Westlake, seconded Cllr K Stevens, resolved all in favour. The minutes were signed and initialled on each page by the Chair.

6. **EDDC and DCC Cllrs: to discuss reports already submitted and consider matters for the attention of EDDC/DCC Reps:** No report received from DCC Cllr P Arnott . Cllr J Heath read from his report, available on request. As an addendum to that report Cllr J Heath reported that he has written a letter in support of the preservation and continuance of Branscombe School which is under the threat of closure. He also reported that Streetscene employees have now cleared various paths in Beer of vegetation as he had requested. Roxy Drew, head of Streetscene EDDC, is arranging a site meeting at the closed Cemetery in Clapps Lane to discuss the badger problem it has. That meeting is likely to occur whilst Cll Heath will be on holiday. It was agreed that when the Clerk is notified of this meeting, Cllr K Stevens and Cllr S Whitelock will attend in his absence. Lastly, Cllr J Heath said he was still awaiting a response from EDDC regarding the sale-off of this property which he opposes.

7. **To discuss and consider the Council's position regarding repairs to the wall behind the Mariners' Hall :** Cllr T Stevens reported that he had received an email from Mr Martin Ball (Chairman of the MHMC) in which Mr Ball incorrectly stated that he had declined attending a meeting at the Hall with a surveyor, to inspect the condition of the wall. Cllr T Stevens will be responding to that email correcting Mr Ball's misstatement. He will also point out that the responsibility for dealing with the repairs to the wall is the sole responsibility of the MHMC, not the PC. He will further emphasis that the PC has not disengaged from negotiations with the MHMC over the wall repairs and that the two Trustee Councillors who attend the meetings of the MHMC (in an observatory role only- non voting) cannot be excluded from attending. The next meeting scheduled for Monday 14th September 2026 will be attended by Cllr J Heath and Cllr M Shobbrook as usual.

8. To note the addition of Beer Memories Museum to the website and consider the request to edit the contact details at the bottom of the page. As the Clerk, Mrs T Nishino was unable to attend the meeting, this matter was deferred to the next PC meeting in October 2026.

9. To consider the situation regarding the shared valley gutter at the Workman's store, Clapps Lane: Cllr S Whitelock advised that he has been in close contact with the Clerk regarding this matter and in an attempt to avoid bombarding the Councillors with a large number of emails, he had dealt directly with Mrs T Nishino rather than the full list of councillors. His recent inspection of the site revealed that the lower guttering belonging to the Council was clear of all debris whereas the higher guttering belonging to the adjacent owners was blocked. It was agreed that the Clerk will be asked to respond to the insurance company reporting this and to say that Cllr S Whitelock is willing to attend at the site with the Insurers surveyor, if this is necessary.

10. To receive an update on the fence between the land adjacent to the Coach Park and 1 Townsend: Cllr S Whitelock advised the meeting that a study of the Freehold title to the triangular piece of land at this location had revealed that the PC is under no obligation to maintain any of its boundary fences. A review of the Freehold title to the coach car park land had revealed the PC is responsible to maintain its boundary fences. It was agreed that the Clerk will be asked to write to Mr Mrs Lawrence advising them that the PC will not be attending to any of the boundaries of the triangular land at this location.

11. To receive an update on the registration of the MH with Land Registry: Cllr M Shobbrook said that Messrs Milford & Dormer (the PC's solicitors) are now attending to the first registration of the PC's title to the MH with the Land Registry. The next event he is anticipating is the request for payment of the Land Registration fees due to the Registry. Whilst Milford & Dormer have agreed to undertake the necessary work for free, they will expect the PC to pay for all disbursements.

12. To discuss ideas for Little Hemphay and consider renewing the lease: Cllr T Stevens reported that the present lease expires in April 2027. He has been in negotiations with Mrs Clare James (Clinton Devon Estate) regarding the possibility of the PC renewing its lease for a further period. This was dependent upon BPC being able to generate its own income from the land to justify its renewal. One way of doing this might be for BPC to sub-let parts of the land (with the consent of CDE ltd.) for storage facilities in repurposed shipping containers. Alternatively, the land could be used for storing boats over the winter period of each year. Both would be subject to compliance with the measures in place for the protection of bats in the area. A purpose built bat house is located on this land and no disruption of the flight paths of resident bats would be permitted. Since BPC will be facing an increase of at least 3.5% in its annual expenditure next year, any renewal of this lease must be financially viable to the Council. Otherwise, the lease might be surrendered in April 2027. This matter will be reviewed by the full council again early next year.

13. Financial Report:

13.1. **To approve the monthly bank reconciliations to the end of August 2026.** Proposal for adoption made by Cllr K Stevens and seconded by Cllr J heath. Unanimously approved, by all councillors.

13.2. **To receive monthly Alpha software reports for July and August 2026**. Unanimously approved, by all councillors.

13.3 **To approve the schedule of payments for July and August 2026. Where the certification of invoices is done as a batch, this shall include a statement by the RFO that all invoices listed have been 'examined, verified and certified' by the RFO. All invoices to be checked and initialled by the Chairman.** Proposal for adoption made by Cllr K Stevens and seconded by Cllr J heath. Unanimously approved, by all councillors.

13.4 **Clerk's report on Urgent Decisions since the last meeting.** In the absence of Mrs T Nishino, this matter was deferred until the next PC meeting.
13.5. **To note the National Joint Council for Local Government Services has reached an agreement on rates of pay applicable from April 1 2026 to March 31 2027 – a 3.3% raise (slightly above budgeted 3%)** Cllr T Stevens recommended to implementation of this decision for the two BPC employees to be back dated to April 1st 2026. Proposed by Cllr M Westlake and seconded by Cllr C Arnold. Unanimously approved, by all councillors.

14. **Policies and Procedures to review the Environmental and Community Portfolio Terms of Reference.** As the Clerk, Mrs T Nishino was unable to attend the meeting, this matter was deferred to the next PC meeting in October 2026.

15. Environment and Community

15.1. **To receive an update from the Baroness Rolle Trust.** Cllr C Arnold reported that the Trustees of the Trust have a very busy workload in dealing with the high number of illnesses and deaths in the village and that the Trust is a very valuable asset to the community.
15.2. **To receive an update on the Old Chapel, Beer**. Cllr S Whitelock reported that the trees needing felling in the cemetery have been dealt with. Negotiations with Nicola Burleigh for the construction of a toilet block and the installation of an electricity supply continue and the essential repairs to the roof have been concluded. The application for Charitable status is on-going and will take a lot longer to be achieved.
15.3**. To discuss progress of survey on drains, potholes, and infrastructure in Beer**. Cllr S Whitelock updated the council on the progress made since the last meeting. He is still awaiting a reply from SW Water regarding the problems outside the MH. The collapse of a sewer has been identified but the responsibly for its repair has net been established and agreed.
15.4. **To receive an update on Ashill Play Park Bottom gate**. Cllr T Stevens will shortly collect the new gate from Blamphaynes and install it.
15.5. **To receive an update on actions taken at Ash Hill Playpark following the annual safety inspection report, and consider next steps.** Cllr T Stevens reported that a production problem has delayed the installation of the new signage, but it will be completed shortly.
15.6. **To receive an update from the inter-Parish working group for the potential nutrient reprocessing plan**. Cllr T Stevens reported that no further action regarding any aspect of the planning application has occurred. His latest discussion with the Chairman of Branscombe PC (Mike Pellatt) has revealed that the matter has stalled with no news being available.
15.7. **To receive an update from BERT regarding the insurance coverage**. Cllr T Stevens will attempt to locate suitable Risk Assessment Survey template to be adopted for this scheme and he will report any progress in the next PC meeting.

16. To discuss future Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the impact it may have on the Parish Council. In the light of the very recent developments outlined by the government on Monday 7th September, (to defer any further action regarding the LGR), this matter was not discussed.

17. Correspondence – See word document for full list of correspondence: noted.

18. Police: Link to the police page shared prior to the meeting : noted
19. **To note next date of tabletop sale on 19th September followed by 24th October 2026:** noted.

Date of next meetings: Full Council Wednesday 7pm 14th October 2026.