

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Manor Hall, Berrynarbor on  
Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 7.00pm.**

Present: Cllr A Stanbury as Chairman of the meeting.  
7 Electors, Mrs V Woodhouse – Parish Clerk

**1. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023 were accepted and signed as a correct record.

**2. Matters arising from the Minutes**

No matters were raised.

**3. Chairman's Report**

The Chairman's Report was circulated and is attached as Appendix A.

**4. Berry In Bloom Report**

No report received.

**5. Primary School Report**

No report received.

**6. Manor Hall Report**

No report received.

**7. Berrynarbor Pre-School Report**

No report received.

**8. Berrynarbor Community Shop Report**

The Chairman's Report was circulated and is attached as Appendix B.

**9. Boules Club Report**

The Representative from the Boules Club presented an overview of the first few months of the club. It was noted that some sets for hire in the shop or pub for a small deposit would be helpful. The aim of the club is to build a community and increase community spirit, the pavilion is part of this aim. It was noted that the club was growing in numbers with 124 and 12 teams and competitions of singles and pairs, the representative thanked the Parish Council and Chairman for the support.

**10. Comments and Questions from Members of the Public**

None.

**11. Matters Raised at the Discretion of the Chairman**

None.

The meeting closed at 7.14pm.

Signed .....

Dated .....

## Berrynarbor Parish Council Chairman's Report 2024

We started the year with three Councillors but we were fortunate to co-opt three in May, Diana Norman, Liz Clarke and Kelly Young. Adam was elected Chairman and Gemma Vice-Chairman. We were very grateful to our longstanding Clerk, Vicki, who offered to continue in her position after resigning in the previous Autumn.

District Councillor Julie Hunt joined us in May after the retirement of Councillor Joe Tucker who has served our parish well for several years. Claire Boxall was also co-opted earlier this year.

Various maintenance projects were completed including repairs to the fencing in the Recreation Field/Dog walking field and the Play Area next to the Manor Hall. The Boules pitch was completed and is enjoying plenty of use and has over 100 members. A request for a pavilion to compliment the Boules Pitch alongside serving as a general shelter and an outdoor classroom has been agreed and match funded by the Parish Council, work is underway to bring this forward.

An agreement to lease the car park and take ownership of the public toilets has finally been agreed and the Parish Council awaits the legal agreement documents from the North Devon Council.

Various donations have been made this year to local groups including the pre-school and community shop. This year the Council agreed to a modest increase in the Precept.

My thanks go to all Councillors for their continued support and free time given to the Parish Council. Thank you to Vicki for Clerking and keeping us up together!

## **Berrynarbor Community Shop and Post Office**

### **Activity report 2023/24**

We live in interesting times, as the saying goes. I think those of us passionate about Berrynarbor's Community Shop would probably add 'and challenging' to that.

The shop served its grateful community well during the worst of the pandemic (it still hasn't gone away) and most people have not forgotten that. Since then, however, our major wholesale supplier has ceased trading, we've seen rampant inflation on just about everything, our wages bill has risen significantly and energy costs are going through the roof.

It is difficult to describe just how hard Karen and her team are having to work to keep our prices as competitive as we possibly can, constantly scouring local outlets to find those bargains. But the fact that we remain open and doing 'okay' is a testament to them. We are extremely grateful to them and our small but willing band of volunteers. During a 'smarten up the shop' day in May of last year over 30 villagers turned up to help out.

Our focus today is on growing our sales where we can, managing our controllable expenses and weathering the storm of those outwith our control. Fundraising, which has always been a 'nice to have' is now an essential part of our business plan.

One of our biggest challenges today is the Post Office operation. Many people assume that using the Post Office benefits the shop. It does not. It's because we have a shop that we can offer PO services. If the shop doesn't survive, the PO will go as well.

It is therefore important that those who use our Post Office also use our shop. We try to emphasise this to all who use it albeit with mixed success.

Recently, because of the closure of the Combe Martin PO facility, and the inconsistency of the Ilfracombe branch opening times, we have been inundated with their users. And while we are happy to serve them it can tie up our staff, lead to lengthy queues and distract from essential shop activities. Occasionally our storage capacity also becomes overwhelmed by the amount of parcels we now have to handle.

The community shop has been open at its current site since 2007 when it was granted a 125 year lease by North Devon District Council. On the whole, they have been good landlords and, should the transfer take place, we look forward to having the Parish Council as our new landlord.

When the transfer does happen, we would welcome a discussion on the 'ownership' of and responsibility for the public toilet's sewage treatment plant. As bizarre as the concept was that our shop should be responsible for this (and the sewage from a neighbouring property) and brutal in its effect on our costs, we believe that a review of the situation is long overdue. That said, we have been extremely grateful to the Parish Council for their contributions towards the ongoing running costs of the treatment plant.

**Paul Weston, Chairman, Berrynarbor Community Enterprise.**