

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage

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Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 9th January 2013 in the Old School, Batcombe, commencing at 7.30pm.

Present - Councillors: Chris Wildridge – Chairman, Jayne Cox, Iona FitzGerald, Liz Hollis, Ian Sage and Justin Witcombe.

Also Present: The Clerk – Rob Sage and three members of the public.

3433 – Apologies for Absence: Yvonne Sommer who was in hospital, David Stevens – District Councillor, who was at a planning meeting, and Gloria Cawood – County Councillor, who was at returning from a meeting in London.

3434 – Declarations of Interest and Granting of Dispensations: Ian Sage declared an interest in item 3438, the planning application for Hedgestocks as the owner of neighbouring land and in item 3443, the payment of the Clerk's salary and expenses as the Clerk's brother. Jayne Cox declared an interest in the two previous items as the partner of Ian Sage.

3435 – Public Participation: None.

3436 – Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 5th December 2012 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3437 – Matters Arising: Allotments – The Clerk reported that the rent had now been paid on all the allotments. Precept – The Clerk reported that the District Council had been informed of the Parish Council's precept for 2013/14. Highways – The Chairman had spoken to Mike James and Colin Pool who were willing to store half of the de-icing materials each. Ian Sage suggested that some of the bags should be stored near the Church or Village Hall where they could be used on the paths.

3438 – Planning Applications: It was agreed to bring this item forward on the Agenda.

Planning Application Ref: 2012/2428. Demolition of dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling and change of use of agricultural land to residential curtilage. Hedgestocks, Batcombe (Full Planning Permission). The Clerk read a letter from the applicant's agent in favour of the application and the applicant, Donald Sage, spoke briefly in favour of his application. The Council decided to recommend approval of the application, as there were no objections to the proposed replacement dwelling which would be an improvement on the existing bungalow.

Planning Application Ref: 2012/2902. Restoration of the Old Cider House and conversion to annexe. The Weavers House, Kale Street, Batcombe (Listed Building Consent). The Clerk reported that he had been notified of an application for Householder Planning Permission for this proposed restoration and conversion (Ref: 2012/3059) the previous day. Given that the application for Listed Building Consent was on the Agenda and its consideration had been publicised, it was felt that the Parish Council could consider the Householder Planning Permission at this meeting without needing to call an additional meeting. The applicant, Joanna Webber, noted that Householder Planning Permission had been deemed necessary because none of the original roof of the Old Cider House still present, and spoke in favour of

the application, reporting that the number of rooflights had been reduced to two on the recommendation of the Conservation Officer. The Council decided to recommend approval of both Listed Building Consent and Householder Planning Permission as it was pleased to see the restoration of a listed building that was currently at risk.

Planning Application Ref: 2012/3001. The works comprise additions to an existing dwelling and the removal of a flat roofed garage. The proposals show a single storey lean-to on the rear elevation and a single storey addition with lean-to on the north elevation. Churchbridge Lodge, Westcombe Hill, Westcombe (Householder Planning Permission). The Council decided to recommend approval as the additions were largely hidden from view and would have no significant visual impact.

Planning Application Updates: The application for a lawful development certificate for the existing use of the attic space at Church Farm as two flats had been approved.

3439 – Footpaths and Highways: It was noted that the closure of the A359 at Cuckoo Hill in Bruton for drainage works had been delayed until January 15th. Somerset Highways had also informed the Council the A359 would be closed at the railway bridge in Wanstrow from February 4th for 2 weeks to lay a drainage pipeline.

The Clerk had contacted Somerset Highways about the state of the road from Westcombe to Stoney Stratton. The loose gravel had been removed before Christmas, but the road surface was in a poor state. It was noted that Saite Lane was closed for repairs and concerns about the damage caused by oversize farm vehicles were raised.

The Chairman commended Justin Witcombe for doing a great job in unblocking drains around the parish before Christmas. Justin asked that the help of Colin Pool, Nick Langridge, Kav Javvi and Bob Jessop should also be recognised. The Chairman suggested asking Somerset Highways for a list of the drains in the parish so it could be reported when they were blocked.

It was noted that there were problems with water flowing down Walter's Lane, washing stones onto the road and threatening to flood the Three Horseshoes, and with water flowing down Frys Lane and threatening to flood The Round House. Drains had been unblocked but were soon filled with more debris washed down the lanes. There were also problems with water flowing off the fields and down the bridleway at Honeycliff, damaging the surface and with water from the footpath at the bottom of Back Lane that was flowing down Back Lane and along the road opposite Sunnyside. The Clerk was asked to write to Charlie Higgins at Somerset Highways and ask him to suggest some dates when he could visit Batcombe and discuss possible solutions to these problems with some of the Parish Council. It was noted that the MBBA might be willing to help fund a solution to the problem with the bridleway.

Jayne Cox reported that there had been another problem on Portway Hill during the recent icy weather and that the piles of grit left by Somerset Highways had frozen solid which made them difficult to use when needed.

3440 – Playing Field – Maintenance Report: The Clerk had received a quote from the molecatcher of £65 for the first mole and £25 for each further mole caught. It was likely that there were two, possibly three moles in the Playing Field. The molecatcher would use humane traps. Given the increased activity of the mole or moles, it was agreed to accept the quote.

The Clerk reported that a cheque for £750 had been received from the County Councillor for the Playing Field project out of her Health and Well-being Budget. Iona FitzGerald passed on a cheque for £60 from Michael and Anne Page. The Clerk was asked to write and thank them.

Iona FitzGerald presented plans for the replacement of the fort in the Playing Field. The new piece of equipment would include a fort with a “Wendy House” below it, a bridge to a platform, and monkey hoops, scramble net and climbing wall and incorporating the cradle swing and the slide from the old fort. Richard La Trobe Bateman had offered to design the bridge and Arish Turle had offered wood for the structure. The providers of the new fort would be asked to work with the Working Party on the design and ensure that everything provided was in line with current health and safety requirements.

3441 – County Councillor’s Report: There was no report to consider.

3442 – Mendip District Local Plan 2006-2028: The consultation on the draft Local Plan (formerly known as the Local Development Framework Core Strategy) would run until January 24th. The Clerk had distributed copies of those parts of the Local Plan that were likely to be relevant to Batcombe. There was concern that no development would be permitted in Batcombe under the Plan, apart from affordable housing, but it was noted that the Parish Council had already expressed its concerns about this part of the Plan. The Chairman expressed his concern that there were no proposals within the plan for the development of broadband in rural areas.

3443 – Annual Parish Meeting: It was thought it would be good to have an update of what was happening with the Playing Field – on display boards rather than a verbal presentation. Suggestions for a speaker were considered and Iona FitzGerald volunteered to follow up the idea of asking Chris Sperring who was promoting a project to place owl boxes in every parish to speak on owls.

3444 - Authorisation of payment: Councillors authorised the following payments:

- £636.24 The Clerk – Salary for the 3rd Quarter.
- £159.20 Post Office Ltd – PAYE on Clerk’s salary for HMRC.
- £89.52 The Clerk – Expenses for the 3rd Quarter.

3445 - Other Business - Matters of Information: None.

3446 – Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 6th February 2013 at 7.30pm in the Old School, Batcombe.

Chris Wildridge

6/2/13