

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 6th August 2014 in the Jubilee Hall, Batcombe, commencing at 8.00pm.

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

Also Present: The Clerk – Rob Sage, the District Councillor – David Stevens, and fifteen members of the public.

3736 – Apologies for Absence: Iona FitzGerald, John Sommer and the County Councillor – Nigel Woollcombe-Adams.

3737 – Declarations of Interest: None.

3738 – Public Participation: Sam Pick reported that he had been cutting the grass in the War Memorial for many years and would not be able to do so anymore. He also stated that there was a milestone on Walter's Lane that had lost its face and asked that the Parish Council remove it and keep it safe with the aim of relocating it after restoring it with a new face.

Dick Skidmore expressed his concerns about the proposed wind turbine at Gilcombe Farm, which the Parish Council would be considering at its next meeting.

Neville Cox expressed concerns at the "20s Plenty for Us" signs a resident had encouraged people to place on their wheelie bins, feeling this would encourage people to leave out their wheelie bins. Liz Hollis noted that people in Wanstrow had signs on their wheelie bins but only put them out on the day of the rubbish collection.

Richard Calver noted the proposed closure of the road from Stoney Stratton to Westcombe for 40 days for repairs and asked if the Parish Council could ask for the working hours to be restricted as there was no other way of reaching Westcombe Dairy. The District Councillor promised to take up his concerns with the County Council.

3739 – Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 2nd July 2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3740 – Matters Arising: None.

3741 – Planning Applications: Planning Application No: 2014/1193/FUL Convert and extend stables to a single dwelling and install ground mounted solar panels. The Stables, Crows Hill, Batcombe – Full Application. The Clerk summarised the history of multiple applications for a dwelling on this site and stated that when the recent appeal to convert the stables to a residential dwelling had been dismissed the Planning Inspector had noted that the National Planning Policy Framework stated that planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there were special circumstances, none of which applied in this case. Mr Nigel Salmon, a planning consultant, then spoke in favour of the application, suggesting that the Planning Inspector had not taken into account the existing building. Sam Pick indicated his support for the application, but Dick Skidmore noted that the stables were a relatively new build in a prominent position. After careful discussion the Parish Council decided by a vote of four to one to recommend refusal as approval would encourage

others to build stables on prominent sites in the countryside with the intention of converting them a few years later into residential dwellings.

Planning Application No: 2014/1119/HSE Demolition of existing conservatory and proposed erection of single storey side extensions. Church Bridge Lodge, Westcombe Hill, Batcombe – Householder Application. Ian Sage reported that the District Council’s website indicated that the application had already been approved. The Clerk stated that he had spoken to the case officer who had agreed an extension to allow the Parish Council to consider the application at this meeting. The Chairman asked the District Council to take the matter up with the head of the planning department at Mendip and the Clerk was asked to write expressing the Council’s dismay that a decision had been made before the Council could consider it.

Planning Application No: 2014/1300/HSE Solar panels installed to a flat “green” roof, (not in accordance with permitted development guidelines for solar panels). Ash Tree House, Chapel Row, Batcombe – Householder Application. The Clerk noted that as part of the enforcement process against the solar panels the applicant was entitled to apply for planning permission for them and that the application should be considered on the merits or otherwise of the solar panels – not on concerns about the house as a whole. Henrietta Worthington and Alan Fox expressed their concerns at the impact of the solar panels on them as immediate neighbours. It was noted that the panels were actually erected at a much greater angle than shown in the application. Francis Self noted that the height and angle of the panels considerably increased the weight of the building. Adrian Hamilton expressed concern that the panels had already been in place for eighteen months and that submitting a planning application was merely a tactic to delay the enforcement action. The District Councillor noted that if the planning application was refused the applicant could appeal and then the enforcement officer would need to consider whether to continue with the enforcement action. After consideration, the Parish Council decided to recommend refusal.

Planning Application No: 2014/0918/FUL Construction of a cheese cave for the storage of cheese during the maturing process. Westcombe Dairy, Lower Westcombe Farm, Westcombe – Full Application. The Clerk noted that the Parish Council had considered a similar application for a cheese cave in January 2008 and recommended approval. The proposal was granted planning permission but because work had not commenced within the three year period of the permission, the applicants were re-applying for permission. Richard Calver spoke in favour of his application, noting that the economic situation had not been good enough to proceed with the cheese cave earlier, but now the Wild Beer Company were wishing expand and the cave would provide a location where cheese could mature at a constant temperature regulated by the stream flowing through the cave. Sam Pick asked if he had considered the impact that fracking might have on the water supply to the spring. The Parish Council agreed to recommend approval as this would support a local business, would have minimal impact as the cave would be covered in soil, and could generate additional local employment.

Planning Application No: 2014/1445/HSE Proposed single storey rear extension. Proposed demolition of existing porches and replaced with open fronted storm porch. Proposed render and timber cladding to all existing masonry on dwelling. Proposed replacement of concrete tiles with natural slate. Proposed new windows and doors. Associated internal alterations. Ivy Wall House, Back Lane, Batcombe – Householder Application. The Clerk noted that there were some minor alterations from the previous application considered at the May meeting which had been granted planning permission. The Parish Council agreed to recommend approval.

3742 – Possible Lease of Coney Wood: A paper on the possible lease of Coney Wood prepared by the Chairman had been distributed to Councillors with the Agendas. The Chairman noted that the Parish Council had been approached by Oliver Moberly the grandson of the original owner to consider leasing the wood from the Woodland Trust and a Working Party had been set up to consider this. It was noted that the trees were in good health and that the Wood would be an asset for the community, but that there would be costs involved in setting up a lease and in maintaining the wood. (David Stevens noted that it could cost £1,000 to draw up a lease.) The Chairman asked the Parish Council to approve the calling of a public meeting to determine whether there would be support in the parish for the taking on of the lease and the maintaining of the wood. This was agreed.

3743 – Allotments: Following the Council’s decision at the previous meeting to advertise the allotment that would be vacated at the end of October, a complaint had been received from Francis Self, the head of the allotment holders group. Francis and another allotment holder had been sharing the allotment that was being given up and had hoped to continue cultivating it. Francis was unhappy at what he saw as a change of policy by the Parish Council, given that other allotment holders had been allowed to rent more than one allotment (although the Clerk noted that this was on the understanding that they would give the extra allotment up if other people were wanting one). After listening to Francis’ concerns the Council decided to advertise in the September parish magazine to determine if there was anyone wanting an allotment and then make a decision at the October meeting.

3744 – Dogs and Dog Mess: Justin Witcombe reported that he had received a complaint from the person who mowed the Village Hall grass and who had been splattered with dog mess while strimming. It was noted that dogs were still roaming freely around the village, and so it was agreed to contact the dog warden. Olivia Spencer asked if dogs had to be on a lead, and it was noted that dogs had to be under close control which did not necessarily mean a lead. Richard Calver noted that dog mess contained the neospora parasite that caused cattle to abort and asked the Parish Council to consider installing dog mess bins. The Chairman noted that the Council had considered bins but there were concerns over the emptying of them and urged dog walkers to take their dog mess home.

3745 - Authorisation of payment: Councillors authorised the following payments:

£46.20	The Parish News – Photocopying.
£183.00	Gardens of Avalon – Grass cutting for July and Playing Field hedge trimming.
£81.60	Playsafety Ltd – Annual safety inspection of the Playing Field.
£120.00	Grant Thornton UK LLP – Audit fee.
£36.93	BWBSL – Water supply to Playing Field (Bristol Water).
£21.01	Southern Electric – Electricity supply to Playing Field.

3746 - Matters of Information or for the next Agenda: The Clerk noted that the Playing Field safety inspection report had been received and would be considered at the next meeting. There were no items requiring immediate attention.

The Clerk also noted that the external auditor’s report had been received and there were no matters that gave cause for concern or which they wished to draw to the Council’s attention. The report would also be considered at the next meeting.

Ian Sage had suggested the Council consider changing the time of its meetings to avoid clashing with the District Council’s Planning Board meeting. To be considered at the next

meeting, although the Clerk noted that recent meetings of the Planning Board had not been on the first Wednesday when the Council met.

The Clerk noted that the PCSO Declan Quinn would be leaving in August and his replacement was called Callum Davis.

3747 – Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 3rd September 2014 at 8.00pm in the Old School, Batcombe.

Chris Wildridge
3rd September 2014