

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage

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Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 8th April 2015 in the Jubilee Hall, Batcombe, commencing at 6.45pm.

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

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

3876 – Apologies for Absence: Iona FitzGerald and David Stevens – District Councillor.

3877 – Declarations of Interest: Ian Sage Ian Sage and Jayne Cox declared an interest in the authorisation of payment of the Clerk’s salary and expenses – item 3886 – as relatives of the Clerk.

3878 – Public Participation: Richard and Susie Mitchell thanked everyone for the help over the problems caused by the branch falling from their beech tree. They noted that the rest of the tree would have to come down and asked what could be done about restoring the finger post that had been knocked down by the branch. Charlie Higgins at Somerset Highways to be contacted for advice.

3879 – Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 4th March 2015 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3880 – Matters Arising: Justin Witcombe noted that the litter pick would be postponed until the Autumn.

3881 – Footpaths and Highways: A complaint had been received about the skip opposite Church Farm. This had been raised with Somerset Highways who own the land it was on, and they would inspect the site and act accordingly – a licence was required to place a skip on land owned by Highways.

A Public Path Diversion Order had been made to divert the footpath at Lower Eastcombe Farm away from the house. Members of the public had until April 30th to make representations or objections to the order.

Concerns were expressed about a cycle race that passed through the village on the weekend of March 22nd/23rd with cyclists riding two abreast at high speed.

A complaint had been received about the trees opposite Church Farm which were forcing high-sided vehicles close the wall around Church Farm. The complaint had been passed onto Somerset Highways as the trees were on their land.

3882 – Coney Wood: The Clerk reported that the Woodland Trust had sent a draft 25 year lease and that the main clauses were as expected. The Chairman had asked David Stevens, who was a solicitor, to look at the lease. He had done this free of charge, but with the caveat that he could not accept any responsibility or liability for the Parish Council entering into the lease. As there was not time to consider the lease and David Stevens’ comments fully at this meeting, it was decided to defer discussion until after the election.

3883 – Playing Field – Maintenance Report: Moles continued to be a problem in the Playing Field. All those who helped with the work in the Playing Field installing the new fencing were thanked, especially Ian Sage and Justin Witcombe. Ian Sage was also thanked for collecting the playbark, which saved the Parish Council the cost of delivery.

3884 – Planning Applications: There were no applications to consider at this meeting. The Clerk noted that there was likely to be an application for The Old Forge in Westcombe that would require an extraordinary meeting to consider.

Planning Updates

The application for the demolition of the existing playroom and construction of a single storey extension at Lower Eastcombe Farm had been approved. The application to fell the Monterey Cypress with a Tree Preservation Order at Fir Tree Cottage had been approved on condition that a replacement tree be planted following the felling. Reserved matters on the planning permission for the replacement outbuilding at Laburnam Cottage had been approved.

3885 – Emergency Plan: The Parish Council formally adopted the Emergency Plan that had been distributed to Councillors before the previous meeting. It was noted that the Plan would need to be updated after the Parish Council election. The Clerk reported that Somerset Local Authorities' Civil Contingencies Unit would like the Parish Council to nominate three or more Emergency Community Contacts to be a point of contact between the community and the authorities. It was agreed that these Emergency Community Contacts should be the members of Community Emergency Management Team outlining in the Emergency Plan, but the membership of the Management Team would need to be confirmed after the election.

3886 - Authorisation of payment: Councillors authorised the following payments:

- £40.00 Community Council – Annual Subscription for 2015/16. Payment of this subscription was made by resolution under the s.137 power.
- £433.74 Read Agriservices – Fencing and associated materials.
- £213.60 Oaktree Garden Products – Playbark.
- £957.96 The Clerk – Salary for 4th Quarter.
- £108.44 The Clerk – Expenses for 4th Quarter.

3887 – Other Business - matters of information only: Following a report that one of the tenants in the parish's affordable housing might be moving, Hastoe Housing and the District Council's Housing Options Manager were asked to ensure that any vacancy be filled in accordance with the Section 106 agreement.

The Clerk reported that new legislation required all employers to provide an automatic pension scheme for their employees. However, the level of the Clerk's salary meant that the Council would only have to provide a scheme if the Clerk requested it and would not have to make any contributions.

The Clerk also reported that the precept had been paid by the District Council.

The Chairman thanked the other Councillors for their contributions over the last four years. Liz Hollis noted that she would not be standing in the coming election and the Chairman thanked her for all her work as the Vice Chairman.

3888 – Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 13th May 2015 at 7.30pm in the Old School, Batcombe. This would be the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

Chris Wildridge
13th May 2015