

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage

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You are Summoned to the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 3rd February 2016 at 7.30pm in the Old School, Batcombe

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety and Human Rights.

Agenda

1. Apologies and Acceptance of Reasons for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest and Granting of Dispensations

Councillors' Declaration of Interests forms have been sent to the Monitoring Officer at Mendip District Council. As they have not yet been published on the District Council website all interests should be declared at this meeting.

3. Public Participation – Open village meeting for fifteen minutes for any member of the public to raise any issue relevant to Batcombe Parish

The Chairman can invite members of the public to speak at this or at any other appropriate time.

4. Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 6th January 2016 to be agreed and signed. Enclosed.

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Budget and Precept for 2016/17 – Since the last meeting we have been informed that the Parish Council's Council Tax Support Grant will be £71.80 for 2016/17. This is an increase of 52p on this year's grant of £71.28. The District Council have been informed of the precept of £8,450 for 2016/17 agreed at the last meeting.

6. District and County Councillors' Reports

An opportunity for the District and County Councillors to report on matters relevant to the parish, either in person or in writing.

7. Allotments

The Chairman to report on the meeting with allotment holders. It was agreed that allotment holders should be responsible for the care of the common grassed area and the hedge adjacent to their allotment. The Parish Council to cut back the overhanging hedge – the field owner has agreed to bonfire to burn the branches cut back. The Parish Council to arrange removal of items left by previous allotment holders including a large refuse bin, notice board and large plastic bin lids. The rubbish dump in the corner to be sorted. The Parish Council has sufficient funds in the Allotment Fund to cover the expenses involved and this money can only be spent on the allotments.

The vacant allotment has been let to an existing allotment holder as no other interest was shown in it. He was charged £30 instead of the full £35 for the remaining ten months of the year.

8. Footpaths and Highways

Thanks to Justin for cleaning the HGV warning sign on the A359 junction. The production of the HGV direction signs to the Wild Beer brewery has been delayed as the County Council have not received confirmation on whether the cheese factory wish to be included on the signs.

9. Playing Field - Maintenance Report

The mole continues to be active in the Playing Field which is very wet from all the recent rain.

Vita Play will do the repair of the zip wire in February when they are undertaking a larger project in Frome.

10. Planning Applications

Planning Application No: 2016/0074/VRC – Variation of condition 3 of planning permission 2011/0075 to allow the development to be constructed to Level 4 in the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Carrot Hill Farmhouse, Spargrove Lane, Batcombe – Variation or Removal of Conditions.

Condition 3 of the planning permission requires the development to “be constructed to the approved Level 5 Code for Sustainable Homes and shall not be occupied until the final certificate confirming compliance with the approved Level 5 Code for Sustainable Homes has been issued”.

Iona FitzGerald has stated that Cutting Edge Tree Care have recently submitted two applications for tree works, one at The Forge and one at Boords Farm. It is possible that the Parish Council may be consulted on one or both of these applications by the time of the meeting.

Planning Application Updates.

Nothing to report at present.

11. Premises Licence – Gilcombe Farm

The Licensing Officer at South Somerset District Council informed the Parish Council of a premises licence application for a music event at Gilcombe Farm over the weekend of May 27th – 29th called the Shindig Weekender. As this was the day before the deadline, the Clerk responded as in previous cases with a request that the same conditions as had been applied to the Sunrise Festival and Farmfest be applied to any music festival at Gilcombe Farm. I have since heard from the local representative of the organisers who apologised for not informing the Parish Council beforehand and stated that the Senior Environmental Officer at South Somerset had requested similar conditions to those at previous festivals at Gilcombe Farm and that the organisers had been happy to agree to this. Following confirmation of this by the Licensing Officer, I have withdrawn the representation.

It would be helpful if the Parish Council can confirm instructions for the Clerk when the Council is informed of licence applications when there is no time to consider them at a meeting.

12. Affordable Housing

The Parish Council has been awarded the full cost of the Housing Needs Survey of £2,418 by Awards for All. We cannot start the project until the Big Lottery Fund have received our acceptance of the terms and conditions and confirmed the Award.

13. Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting is due to be held on Wednesday 6th April at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Hall. The Council needs to consider whether it wishes to invite a speaker to this meeting. The Chairman has suggested focussing on the Housing Needs Survey.

14. The Queen’s 90th Birthday

The Parochial Church Council have suggested celebrating the Queen’s Official Birthday in June with a church service and a street party by the Three Horseshoes as at the Diamond Jubilee. Most national celebrations will take place in June on the weekend of June 10th – 12th.

The National Association of Local Councils is encouraging Parish and Town Councils to take part in a national lighting of beacons on the Queen's actual birthday (April 21st).

Mendip District Council is promoting a Clean for the Queen campaign to take place on the weekend of March 4th – 6th. They have included their guidance on litter picks which states that highways and the roadside are high risk areas to be avoided.

15. Bank Reconciliation and Budget Update

The bank reconciliation for the third quarter to 31st December to be verified by the Vice Chairman before the meeting and reported to the Council.

An update on the budget as at the end of January for the current year is enclosed. The first column shows the actual accounts for last year. The second column is budget for this year as agreed in January last year. The third column is the receipts and payments to the end of December and the fourth column a projection of the position at the end of the year. The expected variations against budget (unchanged since the last budget update) are: i) a larger VAT refund (because of the VAT on the new picnic table purchased with the Health and Well-Being grant in the previous year); ii) the cost of the new fencing in the Playing Field (which had been expected to be part of last year's expenditure); iii) the Playing Field maintenance (due to the cost of the playbark and of repairing the zip wire); iv) the uncontested election (which means the estimated cost has been reduced from around £1,000 to £145); v) photocopying (larger than budgeted because no bill had been received since August last year; and vi) no money to be spent on Coney Wood.

In addition there is the cost of the Scribe 2000 Accounts (£145 + VAT) which was not budgeted. As a result there is a projected deficit of £85 on the year, instead of the surplus of £120 predicted at the last budget update. This leaves the Council with projected funds of £5,120 at the end of the year, of which approximately £950 will be earmarked for the allotments.

16. Administration

The Chairman would like the Council to adopt the electronic distribution of the Minutes and Agendas. The advantage of doing this would be to save time in the printing and distribution of the Minutes and Agendas each month. The disadvantage is that it transfers the costs of printing from the Council to Councillors and not all Councillors may have the facilities to download and print the papers required for each meeting.

This proposal would require an amendment of Standing Orders as SO15bi requires a signed Agenda to be delivered or posted to Councillors three working days before the meeting. Model Standing Orders suggest the following as the amended Standing Order:

- a The Proper Officer shall:
- i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee and a sub-committee serve on councillors, by delivery or post at their residences, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the agenda.**
OR
at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee and a sub-committee serve on councillors a summons, by email, confirming the time, place and the agenda provided any such email contains the electronic signature and title of the Proper Officer.

If the Council were to decide to allow the electronic distribution of Agendas and Minutes, it would be up to each individual Councillor as to whether they wished to receive the Agenda and Minutes electronically or on paper. Any Councillor wishing to receive the Agenda and Minutes electronically would need to sign an written declaration stating that they were happy for this to happen.

The Chairman has been informed by Justin Robinson of SALC that the Parish Council have been awarded a grant of £249.98 for the purchase of a laptop computer for the Clerk. This has not yet been confirmed. This was the price of a Lenovo B50-70 laptop computer at the time of the

application (The Council had to state which computer it was intending to buy in the grant application). It should be noted that the prices of computers on the internet vary considerably and it may be prudent to purchase a slightly different model if this is better value.

In addition to the computer the Council will need internet security software typically costing £40 [although there is currently a bundle package available on the internet of £276 for a B50-80 laptop (a better specification) with security software included.] The Chairman would also like the Council to purchase a Microsoft Business software package. Microsoft Home and Business 2016 costs £164. An alternative would be to use open source software which is free.

17. Notice Boards

As noted at the last meeting the Parish Council has received an estimate of the cost of repairing the Westcombe notice board. This would involve removing the notice board and moving it indoors to dry it out; treating the rotting wood to make good; waterproof the interior as well as possible; check and lubricate locks and hinges; replace polycarbonate window; replace pin board with 5mm cork panel; weatherproof the exterior and rehang in position. The price would be within £200.

It was suggested at the last meeting that the Council should consider replacing the notice board with a new one instead of repairing it. A good quality notice board of similar size would cost around £450.

18. Authorisation of Payment

- £174.00 Scribe 2000 Ltd – The Scribe 2000 Accounts package.
- £21.09 SSE – Electricity for the Playing Field – *amended bill not yet received.*
- £22.26 BWBSL – Water for the Playing Field – August to January.
- £88.00 The Society of Local Council Clerks – The Clerk’s subscription.

19. Other Business – matters of information only.

None at present.

20. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Wednesday 2nd March 2016 at 7.30pm in the Old School, Batcombe

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

27th January 2016