

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage

Tel: 01749 850934

e-mail: robsage@uwclub.net

You are Summoned to the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 1st June 2016 at 8.00pm 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

It is the Councillors' responsibility to declare any interests they may have in any item on the Agenda. If you are uncertain please ask the Clerk before the 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 point in the meeting.

4. Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 11th May 2016 to be agreed and signed. *Enclosed.*

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Nothing that does not appear on the Agenda below.

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. Housing Needs Survey

A revised version of the Housing Needs Survey for Batcombe has been distributed electronically by the Chairman and includes an introductory paragraph from the Chairman. The Parish Council needs to agree the final form of the Survey so that it can be distributed in June.

8. Broadband Provision

A company called Truespeed Communications Ltd are apparently offering a guaranteed 100Mb upload and 100Mb download for a connection fee of £120 and a monthly subscription of £47.50 that includes line rental. And Connecting Devon and Somerset are offering a voucher of £500 towards these costs if your current speed is around 2Mb. There is more information about Truespeed on their website www.truespeed.com They are building an ultrafast broadband network from Bath into the Chew valley. However Batcombe would appear to be outside the immediate area they are seeking to expand this network to.

9. Allotments

There is an issue with the water supply to the allotments from which a local farmer takes water with the permission of the owner of the supply. The Chairman to report.

10. Footpaths and Highways

We have received a copy of the County Council's Environmental Maintenance Information Sheet. The verges on C and unclassified roads will be cut between June 13th and August 5th.

11. Playground - Maintenance Report and Preparation for RoSPA Inspection.

The annual inspection of the Playing Field by RoSPA will take place in June. The treating of the wood on the multi-play apparatus and the addition of the new playbark should take place before this. The mole continues to be active. The Chairman to report on a conversation with the contractor for cutting the grass.

12. Planning Applications:

None at present.

Planning Application Updates.

Nothing to report at present.

13. Application for Premises Licence by The Wild Beer Company

The Wild Beer Company have made an application for a premises licence "for on sales from the brewery. The place of consumption will be in the cheese and beer shop, the tasting room at the brewery and the external yard outside the brewery, dairy and shop. We plan to hold no more than 5 events per year to promote the brewery and dairy businesses. This will take place in the farmyard and involve regulated entertainment which will be regularly monitored, upholding the licensing objectives."

The application is for a licence to play live and recorded music on no more than 5 occasions per year from 12.00pm (presumably they mean 12 noon) to 10.00pm on Saturdays. The application for the supply of alcohol is all week 9.00am to 10.00pm Sundays to Thursdays and 9.00am to 11.00pm Fridays and Saturdays. These hours would be for no more than five occasions in the year. The rest of the year, they would correspond to the opening hours of the shop which are 9.00am to 5.30pm Mondays to Fridays and 10.30am to 3.00pm on Saturdays. We have until June 9th to make a representation on the application if we wish to do so.

14. Review of Financial Regulations

Our Financial Regulations were adopted in June 2014 and are based on a model produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), with some amendments agreed by the Council where the model was not appropriate for a small Parish Council. Certain figures in the Regulations are set by the Council and should be reviewed annually. These are:

1.14 – ii) The suggested figure in the model was £5,000 (presumably based on a large town council with committees that have delegated powers to spend up to this amount.) The Council agreed £100 to cover items paid for by the Clerk and then reclaimed such as stamps. The same figure is used in Regulation 4.1.

4.5 - £500 is the figure recommended in the model regulations. This would allow for emergency safety work to be carried out in the Playing Field.

4.8 – The recommended figures for reporting variances against budget (£100 or 15% of the budget) seem appropriate.

5.5 c) – The figure of £10,000 allows the Clerk to transfer the precept to the reserve bank account (at the same bank) to earn interest.

6.18 – *The limit for transactions on a debit card issued to the Clerk is academic as no such card has been issued.*

11.1 – *The figure of £60,000 is the EU Procurement threshold.*

12.2 – *The figure in the model was £250. £25 means that the sale of any moveable property would need to be authorised by the Council.*

All Councillors should have a copy of the Financial Regulations. If any Councillor does not have a copy, please inform the Clerk.

15. Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control

Our Financial Regulations (1.5) require a review of the effectiveness of our system of internal control before approving the Annual Governance Statement which forms part of the Annual Return to the external auditor below. I believe our system of internal control to be more than sufficient for a small Parish Council. The details are given in the Financial Regulations. These include the budgetary process, the authorisation of all payments by the Council, the signing of cheques at Council meetings by two Councillors, who have to initial the cheque stubs and invoices, the quarterly bank reconciliations and the internal audit undertaken by Griff Williams, who is both competent and independent of the Council.

16. Annual Return for the Year Ended 31st March 2016

The External Auditor has set the submission date for sending the Annual Return as 17th June 2016, which means the Annual Return needs to be considered at this meeting. The Annual Return consists of four sections. Section 1 is the Annual Governance Statement (copy enclosed). This now has to be approved by the Council before the Council approves the Accounting Statements. I believe the Council can answer “yes” to all eight questions. (The Parish Council’s accounts now have to be available for inspection for 30 working days that include the first ten working days in July.) Section 2 is the Statement of Accounts (also enclosed) which has to be approved by the Council. The enclosed Financial Statements for last year show how the figures in the Statement of Accounts have been derived – the numbers refer to the boxes in the Statement of Accounts. There is a significant variation in boxes 3 between the figures for last year and those for the previous year. This is because of the grants received for the Housing Needs Survey, the new notice board and the computer. The significant variation in boxes 6 is due to the money being spent on the new fencing in the Playing Field, the new computer and the deposit for the Housing Needs Survey. The value of fixed assets in box 9 is obtained from the Schedule of Assets.

Section 3 (not enclosed) is the External Auditor’s Certificate. Section 4 is the Internal Auditor’s Report (enclosed) which has been completed by Griff Williams.

The Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities requires that signed copies of the Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Statement and the Internal Auditor’s Report have to be published on the Parish Council website no later than July 1st, along with a bank reconciliation and details of all items of expenditure and land assets.

17. Clerk’s Salary 2016 - 2018

The National Joint Council for Local Government Services has reached agreement on new pay scales for 2016/17 to be backdated to 1st April 2016 and for 2017/18 to be implemented from 1st April 2017. The National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks jointly recommend these salary scales for all Clerks with the standard contract of employment. Under the new pay scales the Clerk’s salary will increase to £10.632 from £10.527 for this year and rise to £10.739 from April 1st 2017. This is a 1% increase each year.

18. Annual Grants from the Parish Council

The Parish Council has budgeted for a grant of £300 to the Village Hall (£100 for our own meetings, £150 for committee meetings of other village organisations and £50 to help with maintenance costs); for a grant of £200 to the Parochial Church Council for the maintenance of the churchyard and £200 for smaller grants to charities. Last year the Council gave two grants of £100 to Mendip Community Transport and Mendip Citizens Advice Bureau. In the past we have supported Victim Support Somerset; Mendip RELATE; the Bruton Carers Group; St Margaret's Somerset Hospice and Somerset Art Works.

The Council has the power to support the Village Hall Trust, to help maintain the churchyard, and to support the Citizens Advice Bureau, but grants to other charities must be made by a specific resolution under the section 137 power, which allows the Council to spend a limited sum on items in the interest of parishioners which it has no specific power to support.

19. Authorisation of Payment

Gardens of Avalon - £???.00 – Grass cutting in May. *Invoice not yet received.*

Somerset Playing Fields Association - £15.00 – Annual subscription.

Plus any grants approved under the previous item.

20. Other Business – matters of information only.

Nothing at present.

21. Dates of Future Meetings - Next Meeting: Wednesday 6th July 2016 at 8.00pm in the Old School.

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

25th May 2016