

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 5th October 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 and Granting of Dispensations

Councillors' Register of Interests forms have now been published on the Mendip District Council website. This means that Councillors need only declare interests that have not been disclosed in the Register of Interests. However, it would be good practice to declare any interests.

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 the Meeting held on Wednesday 7th September 2016 to be agreed and signed.
Enclosed.

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.
None that are not included in the Agenda below.

6. Housing Needs Survey

Matt Day from the Community Council for Somerset will present the results of the Housing Needs Survey, answer any questions and discuss the options for moving forward. The report on the Housing Needs Survey has been distributed to Councillors prior to the meeting. Arrangements need to be made for a possible public meeting to present the results to the parish – and for the delivery of the prize hamper to the winning entry.

7. 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.

8. Footpaths and Highways

A leaflet on the necessity for considerate parking in Kale Street has been prepared by the Chairman. He is waiting for confirmation from our County Councillor that Batcombe will be re-instated on the salting network before asking Councillors to distribute the leaflets.

Proposed Public Path Diversion Order – Restricted Byway SM 2/1 past Lodge Farm. The County Council's Rights of Way team have now sent a revised plan for the proposed diversion away from the residential dwellings at Lodge Farm. The new route is slightly further from Lodge Farm than the proposed diversion considered by the Parish Council in December 2014. At that time the Parish Council had no objections to the proposed diversion and no Councillor indicated a wish to discuss the amended route before the deadline of October 3rd.

9. Pilot Market Day Bus to Frome

The Chairman to update on developments for the pilot market day bus which began service on Wednesday September 21st.

10. NHS Health Check

Somerset County Council and an organisation called ToHealth have invited us to host a free NHS Health Check event in the parish. The free health check is available to parishioners who are aged 40-74 and who have not had a health check in the last five years. They suggest combining the health check with a community event such as a coffee morning. We need to respond by October 31st.

11. Dog Poo Bins

A resident has asked that the Parish Council reconsider its decision not to install dog poo bins in the parish in the hope that this would reduce the amount of dog faeces left around the parish.

12. Playground

Maintenance Report – *Thanks to Ian Sage for repairing the fence that was damaged when the heifers broke into the Playing Field and for replacing the missing supporting strut for the gap at the corner of the fence. Also thanks to Ian for liaising with a local plumber to repair the drinking fountain and to Justin Witcombe for connecting a drain to the drinking fountain that empties to the rear of the bus shelter. Unfortunately the tap in the bus shelter has been left on again. As a temporary measure I have placed padlocked cap on the tap.*

Play Safety Ltd who undertake the annual RoSPA inspection of the Playing Field will undertake an additional inspection of the play equipment at a cost of £225. For this price we can be present at the inspection and ask the inspector for advice on the equipment. We are asked to state what advice we would like when confirming the inspection by e-mail. However, the inspector can only inspect what he can see and does not offer a below ground inspection, which is what Ian asked the inspection to include at the last meeting. Anthony Greenhalgh from Mainstay Projects has made some proposals for repairs to the zip wire and multi-play which can be considered at the meeting.

Rob Jones has provided a copy of the risk assessment for the use of the bale tossing equipment at the Annual Fete. This was necessary to satisfy the PCC's insurers now that the PCC own the equipment.

The Playing Field waste bin was left overflowing for several days after the Fete until emptied by Justin. I have spoken to the District Council and have asked for the bin to be emptied shortly after the Fete in future years. The District Council were slightly reluctant as the Fete organisers are responsible for removing their own litter.

13. Planning Applications:

Planning Application No: 2016/1811/FUL – Retrospective: Erection of replacement dwelling (amended from that approved under permission 2011/0075) to include retention of plantroom outbuilding and alterations to main roof to include the installation of roof lights.

Carrot Hill Farmhouse, Batcombe. Full Application.

The original planning permission (2011/0075) has a condition that does not allow any additional outbuildings to be built without prior planning permission. (The justification for the large size of the house was combining the footprint of the previous modest house with that of the various outbuildings). The statement in support of this application states that a ground source heat pump

and water tanks are required to achieve Code Level 4 for Sustainable Homes (which is the level the house now needs to meet). It was originally planned to house these in the attic space of the house but noise issues led to the decision to site the equipment in a new timber clad building. This is a small building (height 2.7m at the roof apex) that is situated under the road hedge and so not visible. This building has already been constructed and is being used, so this is a retrospective application.

Planning Application Updates.

Listed Building Consent has been granted for the rebuilding of the boundary garden wall at Laburnum Cottage as per existing.

14. Precept Capping Consultation

The Government is running a consultation on the 2017/18 Local Government Finance Settlement with a closing date of October 28th. The Government is proposing that for 2017/18 the precept capping principle is extended to the largest town and parish councils – those with a Band D precept higher than that of the smallest district council's precept for 2016/17 (£75.46) or more than £500,000 in total. This is only likely to apply to the 120 largest parish councils (out of 8,800 in the country).

However, depending on the response to the consultation the Government is prepared to extend the precept capping principle to all parish councils. The proposed level of the cap for the large parish councils is 2% or £5 (on a Band D precept) whichever is the larger. For 2016/17 the Parish Council increased its precept by 6.3% which resulted in a £3.43 increase in the Band D precept. Thus the increase would have been under the cap. However, the consultation is also asking at what level the cap should be set, so a lower figure could be set for smaller parish councils.

Setting a precept above the cap triggers a referendum, which the parish council has to pay for and the cost is likely to be similar to that of a contested parish council election. Thus if the cap was set at the proposed level and the Parish Council (for example) decided to increase its precept by £1,000 to pay for repairs to the play equipment the Band D precept would increase by around £7 triggering a referendum. The cost of the referendum would at least double the increase and if the Parish Council lost the referendum a significant portion of its reserves would also be lost. The consultation asks for views on the practical implications of imposition of referendum principles to smaller parish councils.

A copy of the relevant pages of the consultation is enclosed. For Councillors receiving this Agenda electronically a copy of the full consultation paper is attached. The relevant section is 3.3 on pages 13 and 14. SALC feel it is imperative that as many parish councils as possible respond to the consultation. NALC will be issuing a guidance note but this has not yet been received.

15. Accounts Software

A copy of an evaluation of the Scribe 2000 Accounts Software by the Clerk is attached. The Clerk concludes that any time savings from using the software are likely to be minimal and therefore the cost of the licence for the software (£195 a year) does not represent good value for money.

16. Clerk's Contract of Employment

The Clerk's Contract of Employment states that the Clerk is to be paid "by cheque at quarterly intervals at the next Council meeting after the last working day of the [sic] June, September, December and March." This creates the possibility of two quarterly payments in the same tax quarter with consequent problems with HMRC's online PAYE system. I recommend the relevant section of the Clerk's contract is amended to state that the Clerk is to be paid "by cheque at quarterly intervals at the next Council meeting after the last working day of June, September, December and March or on the 6th day of the following month, whichever is the later".

17. Authorisation of Payment

- £???.00 Gardens of Avalon – Grass cutting in September. (*Invoice not yet received.*)
- £120.00 Grant Thornton UK LLP – Audit Fee.
- £1,083.48 The Clerk – Salary for 2nd Quarter. *See enclosed sheet.*
- £98.12 The Clerk – Expenses for 2nd Quarter. *See enclosed sheet.*

18. Other Business – matters of information only.

Nothing at present.

19. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 2nd November at **7.30pm** in the Old School Rooms, Batcombe.

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

28th September 2016