

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 1st June 2016 in the Old School, Batcombe, commencing at 8.00pm.

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

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

4116 – Apologies for Absence: Iona FitzGerald and Dick Skidmore – District Councillor.

4117 – Declarations of Interest: John Sommer declared a pecuniary interest in the Housing Needs Survey – item 4123.

4118 – Public Participation: None.

4119 – Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 11th May 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, after two amendments proposed by the Chairmen were agreed. In Minute 4096 – Election of Vice Chairman the words “Having agreed previously to his nomination” were added to the record of the election of John Sommer in his absence. And in Minute 4111 – Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st March 2016 the words “who were asked if they had any questions for the Clerk” were added to the sentence “The following notes were taken as having been read by Councillors.”

4120 – Matters Arising: None.

4121 – Application for Premises Licence by the Wild Beer Company: The application was for a licence to play live and recorded music on no more than 5 occasions per year from 12 to 10.00pm on Saturdays and to supply of alcohol all week 9.00am to 10.00pm Sundays to Thursdays and 9.00am to 11.00pm Fridays and Saturdays. The hours for supplying alcohol would also be for no more than five occasions in the year and for the rest of the year would correspond to the opening hours of the cheese and beer shop which are currently 9.00am to 5.30pm Mondays to Fridays and 10.30am to 3.00pm on Saturdays.

Andrew Cooper from the Wild Beer Company explained that they currently had two licences, one for the shop and one for the tasting room and needed a Temporary Event Notice for the annual Cheese and Beer Festival. The new application was for one licence to cover all of the Westcombe Dairy site. Mr Cooper also stated that there were no plans to change the way they ran their business. Ian Sage raised a concern about traffic and parking during the Cheese and Beer Festival and Andrew Cooper replied that extra parking was being provided and that tickets would be sold for the next Festival so that numbers could be monitored. The Council agreed not to make a representation concerning the application.

4122 – District and County Councillors’ Reports: The District Councillor had stated that he saw no difficulties with the Wild Beer Company application.

4123 – Housing Needs Survey: John Sommer left the meeting for this item. A draft Housing Needs Survey for Batcombe incorporating the recommendations made at the last meeting and an introduction by the Chairman had been distributed to Councillors electronically before the

meeting and was approved by the Parish Council. It was agreed to offer a surprise hamper worth £50 as a prize for those completing the Survey. The Clerk noted two small corrections to the Survey that were agreed.

4124 – Broadband Provision: It was reported that company called Truespeed Communications Ltd were offering a guaranteed 100Mb upload and 100Mb download, although Batcombe appeared to be outside the immediate area that they were seeking to expand their fibre network from Bath to. The Chairman reported that there were other companies offering high speed broadband and that BT had quoted £42,000 to connect Batcombe to high speed broadband. He would be attending a meeting with BT at Wanstrow on July 11th.

4125 – Allotments: The Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk had inspected the water supply to the allotments. A local farmer had taken temporary measures to stop a leak in the water supply to the allotments that had been affecting the pressure of the supply to his farm and an allotment holder had then repaired the leak after consulting the Clerk. The Chairman concluded that all involved had acted diligently in resolving the matter.

4126 – Footpaths and Highways: The Chairman had met with the Chairman of Evercreech Parish Council who was happy to support the provision of brown direction signs to guide HGVs along the best route to the cheese factory and the Wild Beer brewery.

The Clerk reported that the verges on unclassified roads would be cut by the County Council between June 13th and August 5th.

4127 – Playing Field – Maintenance Report and Preparation for RoSPA Inspection: The annual inspection by RoSPA would take place in June. The Chairman had purchased a sample of wood preserver for use on the multi-play equipment.

The Chairman had spoken to the contractor for the grass cutting in the Playing Field who was happy not to cut the verge outside the Playing Field until the daffodils had died back.

4128 – Planning Applications: None.

Planning Application Updates: Nothing to report.

4129 – Review of Financial Regulations: Standing Orders require that the Parish Council's Financial Regulations are reviewed annually. It was agreed that no changes were needed to the Financial Regulations or to the various figures in the Regulations that were set by the Parish Council.

4130 – Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control: The Clerk reported his belief that the Council's system of internal control was more than sufficient for a small Parish Council. The details were given in the Financial Regulations and included 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 was both competent and independent of the Council.

4131 – Annual Return for the Year Ended 31st March 2016: Copies of Section 1 of the Annual Return - the Annual Governance Statement - had been enclosed with the Agendas, together with copies of the Internal Auditor's Report completed by Mr Griff Williams.

Approval of the Annual Governance Statement was agreed and the Statement was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

Copies of Section 2 of the Annual Return - the Statement of Accounts – had also been enclosed with the Agendas, together with a copy of the Financial Statements, considered at the previous meeting, showing how the figures in the Statement of Accounts had been derived. Approval of the Statement of Accounts was agreed and this was signed by the Chairman. It was noted that the large variation in boxes 3 (Total other receipts) was due to the grants received for the Housing Needs Survey, the new notice board and the computer and the variation in boxes 6 (All other payments) was due to the money spent on the new fencing in the Playing Field, the new computer and the deposit for the Housing Needs Survey.

The Clerk reported that the Internal Auditor had no recommendations to make to the Council, but noted that under the new Transparency Code for Small Authorities signed copies of the Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Statement and the Internal Auditor's Report would have to be published on the Parish Council's website.

4132 – Clerk's Salary 2016-2018: The Clerk reported that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services had 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 recommended these salary scales for all Clerks with the standard contract of employment. Under the new pay scales the Clerk's salary would increase by 1% for 2016/17 and by another 1% for 2017/18 and this was agreed.

4133 – Annual Grants from the Parish Council: It was agreed to provide the budgeted grants 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) and £200 to the Parochial Church Council for the maintenance of the churchyard. It was also agreed to give two grants of £100 (as budgeted) to Mendip Community Transport under the section 137 power, and to the Mendip Citizen's Advice Bureau. The Chairman asked that the level of grants provided be considered when the budget for the following year was determined.

4134 - Authorisation of payment: Councillors authorised the following payments:

£109.00 Gardens of Avalon – Grass cutting for May.

£15.00 Somerset Playing Fields Association – Annual subscription.

4135 - Other Business - Matters of Information: The Clerk reported that the District Council would be withdrawing the Council Tax Support grant from the next financial year as the Government were no longer providing funding for this. This year's grant to the Parish Council was £71.80.

Justin Witcombe reported that there was a campaign for a defibrillator in the village on social media and it was agreed to place this on the Agenda for next month's meeting.

John Sommer reported that there was a problem in getting the strimmer from Wanstrow. The Chairman would speak to the Chairman of Wanstrow Parish Council. John also stated that no one had reported footpaths that needed strimming. Jayne Cox stated that she would place an article in the parish magazine asking people to report footpath styles that needed repairing.

4136 – Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 6th July at 8.00pm in the Old School Rooms, Batcombe. The Chairman and Lucinda Edgell gave their apologies ahead of the meeting.

John Sommer
06/07/2016