

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage

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Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 6th July 2016 in the Old School, Batcombe, commencing at 8.00pm.

Present - Councillors: John Sommer – Vice Chairman, Jayne Cox, Iona FitzGerald and Ian Sage.

Also Present: The Clerk – Rob Sage, and one member of the public.

4137 – Apologies for Absence: Chris Wildridge – Chairman, Lucinda Edgell and Dick Skidmore – District Councillor. In the absence of the Chairman the meeting was chaired by the Vice Chairman.

4138 – Declarations of Interest: Ian Sage and Jayne Cox declared an interest in item 4149 - the authorisation of the payment of the Clerk - as relatives of the Clerk.

4139 – Public Participation: None.

4140 – Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 1st June 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Vice Chairman.

4141 – Matters Arising: Annual Grants - The Clerk reported that thanks for the grants provided by the Parish Council had been received from the Village Hall Trust, Mendip Citizens' Advice Bureau and Mendip Community Transport.

Housing Needs Survey - The Survey forms had been distributed by Councillors to every household in the village and an online version was available on the Parish Council website. The deadline for completing the Survey was July 15th and the Community Council had reported having received 42 forms to date. It was noted that some parishioners appeared to have misunderstood the nature of the Survey.

4142 – District and County Councillors' Reports: None.

4143 – Footpaths and Highways: The provision of brown direction signs to guide HGVs along the best route to the cheese factory and the Wild Beer brewery was awaiting confirmation from both companies that they were willing to share in the cost.

Somerset Highways had reported that Cuckoo Hill in Bruton would be closed for 12 days from August 1st for drainage works. This was likely to result in increased traffic through Batcombe.

In his absence, the Chairman had proposed that “the Parish Council agrees to write to our County Councillor, Nigel Woollcombe-Adams who is responsible, together with his colleagues, for the budget of the County Council. The letter should express the Parish Council’s concern at the cuts in the County Council’s budget for highway [including bridleway] maintenance and to invite him to join the Chairman and Clerk to examine the state of the roads in the parish. The Parish Council also asks him to report back to his colleagues its concerns of the impact of this prolonged period of austerity on basic infrastructure”. The Clerk noted comments made by the District Councillor that the County Councillor was aware of the state of the roads across his division. The Parish Council decided to ask the Clerk to

contact the County Councillor, inviting him to look at the state of the roads in Batcombe when convenient for him.

Jayne Cox reported that barbed wire with a temporary style had been placed across the footpath running from Mill Farm to Bailey's Lane and that this had subsequently been cut. Jayne had contacted Clare Haskins the footpaths officer at the County Council, asking her to investigate the situation.

4144 – Defibrillator for Batcombe: In the absence of three Councillors, including Justin Witcombe who had asked for this item to be included on the Agenda, it was agreed to defer discussion to the next full meeting of the Council.

4145 – Playing Field – Maintenance Report: The Parish Council had been informed that heifers in the field next to the Playing Field had got into the Playing Field twice in the previous week. They appeared to have burst through the fence next to the gap behind the goal at the west end of the Playing Field, and there was some slight damage to the surface of the Playing Field from hoof prints. Under the terms of the conveyance of the land forming the Playing Field to the Parish Council in 1937, the Parish Council is required to maintain a stock-proof fence between the Playing Field and the surrounding field. Either the owner of the field or the owner of the heifers had placed a barbed wire fence beyond the Playing Field fence where the heifers broke through and the Chairman had expressed concern that the barbed wire had been wrapped around the post by the gap in the fence with a potential risk of injury to a child going through the gap to retrieve a ball.

It was noted that several of the concrete posts in this section of the fence had cracked and would need to be replaced along with the concrete stays holding the posts by the gaps in the fence vertical. Ian Sage volunteered to undertake this work with help at a date to be arranged by Ian, who would also obtain the concrete posts. The Clerk to contact the owner of the field to inform him of the proposed repair to the fence. It was hoped to undertake the repair before the school holidays began.

Annual Safety Inspection Report: An electronic copy of the Inspection Report had been distributed to Councillors before the meeting. All the items in the Playing Field were considered to medium, low or very low risk. It was noted that inspection had been carried out before Ian Sage had added the extra play bark under the multi-play equipment and replaced the swing chains. As agreed by the Council, Ian had put two junior swings in the dual frame and the toddler swing back in the frame that had housed the nest swing.

Although not an immediate risk, the rot in the legs of the multi-play equipment was serious and needed to be treated as quickly as possible. Ian Sage volunteered to obtain the appropriate treatment which could be undertaken at the same time as the fence was repaired. It was agreed to ask Mainstay Projects for options in repairing this equipment and Iona FitzGerald volunteered to do this. It was noted that any repairs would need to comply with safety standards for play equipment.

It was also noted that the end supports of the zip wire were moving in the ground and this needed to be addressed. The Clerk had spoken to Vita Play who were coming back to re-tension the zip wire. It was felt that the timber in the zip wire would also need to be treated and this should be considered at a future meeting. It was noted that the wood on the seat around the stump of the Horse Chestnut tree was rotting and needed replacing.

The Annual Fete. On behalf of the PCC Rob Jones had requested the use of the Playing Field for the annual village fete on the August Bank Holiday Monday on broadly the same basis as in previous years, but suggesting that the Playing Field be closed on the Saturday as well as the Sunday and Tuesday morning to allow the preparation and clearing up after the

fete to be done safely. The Parish Council felt that it was important to allow children the use of the Playing Field during the height of the summer and so agreed to close the Playing Field from 8.00pm on the Saturday evening as in previous years, but to allow the PCC to erect two storage tents provided these did not interfere with the use of the play equipment. The PCC had also requested that the Playing Field grass and hedge inside the Playing Field were cut back prior to the Fete and the Clerk would ask Geoff Sparkes of Gardens of Avalon to do this. During the Fete weekend the zip wire would be immobilised with a padlock and chain and an inspection of the Playing Field by the Clerk and Rob Jones on the Tuesday afternoon would ensure the Playing Field had been left in a safe condition for children to use.

4146 – Planning Applications: Planning Application No: 2016/1343/HSE – Erection of garage side extension. Beeches Farm, Batcombe. Householder Application. The Council decided to recommend approval as there were no objections to the proposed garage side extension.

Planning Application Updates: The District Council had decided that prior approval was not required for a hay and straw barn at Beeches Farm. Planning permission had been granted for the installation of the new window at Cherry Cottage, Westcombe.

4129 – Review of Standing Orders: It was agreed to amend Standing Orders to allow the electronic distribution of Agendas and papers to those Councillors who wished to receive them in this manner by the addition of the underlined words (taken from the model Standing Orders) to Standing Order 15 b i as follows:

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.

See standing order 3(b) above for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 3 (c) above for a meeting of a committee.

As *The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014* allowed the recording of Council meetings, the Council agreed to suspend Standing Order 3 1 which only allowed recording with the Council's prior written consent. No other amendments to Standing Orders were considered necessary.

4148 – War Memorial Wall: The repairs to the War Memorial wall had been completed by Kicko Cox to his usual high standard, and the cost was as his estimate of £1,675. The Parish Council had received a donation of £451 towards the cost of this work from the proceeds of the Street Party to celebrate the 90th Birthday of HM The Queen; with the promise of further donations from the Batcombe branch of the Royal British Legion and from the proceeds of a clay pigeon shoot and the Somme Breakfast on July 1st. It was agreed to send thanks to Nigel Humphries and to Kav Javvi for their part in raising the money, but to defer the sending of thanks to the next meeting when all the donations had been received, so that no one who had contributed would be overlooked.

4149 - Authorisation of payment: Councillors authorised the following payments:

- £1,675.00 Christopher M Cox – Repairs to the War Memorial wall. This was a retrospective authorisation as payment had been requested on the completion of the work.
- £159.00 Gardens of Avalon – Grass cutting in June.
- £88.20 Playsafety Limited – Annual RoSPA safety inspection of the Playing Field.
- £967.51 The Clerk – Salary for 1st Quarter.
- £99.46 The Clerk – Expenses for 1st Quarter.

4150 - Other Business - Matters of Information: Allotments – Ian Sage was thanked for removing the large items of rubbish from the allotments field. The Clerk reported that one of the allotment holders had given notice that they would be giving up their allotment at the end of the current season. The vacancy would be advertised in the parish magazine.

The death at the beginning of June of Mrs Carol Hall at the age of 97 was noted. Carol had been a member of the Parish Council for over 30 years (1960-1991) and was Parish Council Chairman from 1974 to 1977, from 1980 to 1983 and from 1989 to 1991. She was reportedly one of the first female Parish Council Chairmen in Somerset.

The Chairman had forwarded an e-mail from a member of Wanstrow Parish Council stating that they hoped to have in place for September a six week pilot for a Wednesday Market bus scheme and asking if Batcombe would be interested in the scheme. There might be a financial implication – Wanstrow PC had agreed to underwrite the scheme up to a cost of £600 – but no other details of the scheme were available at the time of this meeting.

4151 – Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 3rd August 2016 - if required to consider planning applications - otherwise Wednesday 7th September at 8.00pm in the Old School Rooms, Batcombe.

Chris Willdridge
3rd August 2016