

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 20th July 2016 in the Old School, Batcombe, commencing at 8.00pm.

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

Also Present: The Clerk – Rob Sage, and Michael Gay from Wanstrow Parish Council.

4152 – Apologies for Absence: None.

4153 – Declarations of Interest: None.

4154 – Proposed Community Market Day (Wednesday) Bus to Frome

Mr Michael Gay of Wanstrow Parish Council presented a proposal for a community market day bus to Frome on a Wednesday to be operated by Mendip Community Transport (MCT) in September 2016 for an initial period of six weeks. Mr Gay noted that a survey had revealed up to 23 people in Wanstrow interested in re-instating a bus route to Frome, which had been made possible by a grant to MCT that had been used to purchase an extra bus.

The bus would cost between £170 and £200 a day to run and as MCT could not afford to make a loss it would need to be underwritten by the Parish Councils on the route. Wanstrow, Witham Friary and Trudoxhill had agreed to underwrite the six week pilot and so the maximum cost to Batcombe if it joined the scheme and nobody used the bus during the pilot would be £300. The return fare would be £7 and MCT could reclaim the fares of bus pass holders from Somerset County Council. It had yet to be decided whether there would be one route through all the villages that would run twice or two routes, one of which would run through Batcombe and Wanstrow. If the pilot was successful it would be followed by a three month pilot and if that was successful the route would be established.

Councillors were not aware of anyone likely to use the bus and noted that people in Batcombe looked to Shepton Mallet and Wincanton as well as Frome. There was not time to undertake a survey to see if there was any interest as the pilot would be starting in September. It was noted that there would need to be a stop in Westcombe as well as Batcombe. The times of the bus had to be decided but was likely to be between 9.30 and 10.30am with 2½ hours in Frome. Mr Gay noted that if there was a loss it would be shared equally among the parishes, so Batcombe would not bear the full cost even if no one took the bus from Batcombe. If that was the case Batcombe could leave the scheme after the six week pilot.

Councillors voted to join the pilot by five votes to two. Mr Gay noted that he would be approaching Frome Town Council in the hope that they would also underwrite the scheme. He would then contact MCT to agree routes and times. He would keep Councillors informed of progress. It was agreed to authorise the Chairman to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with MCT that would be required for the service to commence.

4155 – 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 Wildridge
3rd August 2016