

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 6th July 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

The Chairman has given his apologies. In his absence the meeting will be chaired by the Vice-Chairman. Lucinda Edgell has also given her apologies. Three Councillors need to be present for the Council to be quorate. Under current Standing Orders should the Council be inquorate, any outstanding business on the Agenda is automatically delegated to the Clerk in consultation with such members as may be available.

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 1st June 2016 to be agreed and signed. Enclosed.

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Annual Grants from the Parish Council – Letters of thanks have been received from the Village Hall Trust, Mendip Community Transport and Mendip Citizens Advice Bureau for the grants agreed at the last meeting.

Housing Needs Survey – The forms will have been distributed by Councillors to every household in the village and an online version is available on the Parish Council website. The deadline for completing the Survey is July 15th. To judge from e-mails addressed to the Parish Council Chairman some parishioners appear to have misunderstood the nature of the Survey.

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. Footpaths and Highways

The signage to Westcombe Dairy/Wild Beer Company for HGVs is awaiting confirmation from both companies that they are willing to share the cost.

The Chairman would like to propose 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”.

8. Defibrillator for Batcombe

At the last meeting it was agreed to put this item on this month’s Agenda, following the report of a campaign for a defibrillator in the parish on social media. In the past it has been suggested that a defibrillator be placed in the unused telephone kiosk in Westcombe. In his discussions on the Emergency Plan with the Village Hall Trust, the Chairman suggested placing a defibrillator at the Village Hall, although the Trust felt that the Three Horseshoes would be a better location.

To provide a defibrillator, a location would have to be agreed, funds raised and volunteers found to maintain the defibrillator and to take training in resuscitation. A defibrillator costs between £1,000 - £1,500, an external cabinet £600 and there will other costs of installation – the defibrillator has to have an power supply to remain charged. Grants may be available towards these costs. A group would need to be formed to undertake fundraising, organise training and looking after the equipment once installed. This group does not have to be under the direction of the Parish Council, but the Council could decide to take a lead if it wished.

9. Playground

Maintenance Report – *The Parish Council have been informed that heifers in the field next to the Playing Field got into the Playing Field twice last week. They appear to have burst through the fence next to the gap behind the goal at the west end of the Playing Field. There is some damage to the surface of the Playing Field from hoof prints, but this does not appear serious. 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 stockproof fence between the Playing Field and the field it is in. In the longer term, it would appear the current fence is no longer stockproof and may need replacing.*

In the short term, either the owner of the field or the owner of the heifers has placed a barbed wire fence beyond the Playing Field fence where the heifers broke through and an electric fence beyond that, so it is unlikely that the animals will get into the Playing Field again. The Chairman is concerned that the barbed wire has 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.

RoSPA Inspection Report - *An electronic copy of the annual inspection of the Playing Field by RoSPA has been distributed to Councillors. All the items in the Playing Field are medium, low or very low risk. The monkey bars and goalposts are medium risk by nature and no remedial work is required, although the inspector recommends that the worn areas in front of the goals are made good and the wood in the monkey bars frame is monitored.*

Unfortunately, the inspection was carried out just before Ian Sage added the extra play bark to the multiplay and replaced the swing chains. As agreed by the Council, Ian has put two junior swings in the dual frame and the toddler swing back in the frame that housed the nest swing.

The inspector notes the rot in the multiplay (which is now much worse) and recommends that the damaged wood is replaced. There is also an issue with a lack of tension in the zip wire. Our insurers will not allow us to deal with this, so we will have to get a play equipment company to deal with it. I will be contacting the company that repaired the zip wire earlier this year.

The Chairman reports that he has not been able to obtain an appropriate wood treatment product for the multiplay equipment and feels that someone else with the skills to identify an appropriate product should do this. He is happy to help apply what it obtained.

The Annual Fete - *The PCC via Rob Jones have requested the use of the Playing Field for the annual village fete on the August Bank Holiday Monday (August 29th). Rob Jones initially indicated that he would like the “handover” of the Playing Field to take place on the Friday instead of the Saturday as in previous years to allow more time for preparation and in particular for the erection of the bale tossing frame. The Parish Council has previously agreed to close the Playing Field from 8.00pm on the Saturday evening and on the Sunday and the Tuesday morning to allow the preparation and clearing up after the fete to be done safely. [The Parish Council cannot close the Playing Field on the Monday as it is a bank holiday, but in practice this does not make a significant difference.] When I informed Rob Jones that the Parish Council might not be willing to close the Playing Field for an extra day, he indicated that he would be happy for the “handover” to take place on the Saturday but the PCC did need to erect some storage tents on the Saturday. (I understand that this year there will not be a Songs of Praise service in the Playing Field on the Sunday evening.)*

In the past the PCC have also requested that the Playing Field grass and hedge inside the Playing Field are cut back prior to the Fete. Geoff Sparkes of Gardens of Avalon is happy to do this each year and I will remind him when I next send him his cheque for last month’s work. (The cutting of the hedge is an extra which Geoff charges at his hourly rate – last year it cost £36.) During previous Fete weekends the zip wire has been immobilised with a padlock and chain and an inspection of the Playing Field on the Tuesday afternoon ensured the Playing Field was been left in a safe condition for children to use.

10. Planning Applications:

Planning Application No: 2016/1343/HSE – Erection of garage side extension.
Beeches Farm, Batcombe. Householder Application.

Planning Application Updates.

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

11. Review of Standing Orders

All Councillors should have a copy of the current Standing Orders that were adopted in February 2014 and are based on a model produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). If any Councillor does not possess a copy of Standing Orders, please inform the Clerk.

In February 2016 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. This can be done by adding 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.

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 allows the recording of Council meetings. Consequently the Council should suspend Standing Order 3 1 which which only allows recording with the Council's prior written consent. I am not aware of any other amendments needed to our existing Standing Orders.

12. War Memorial Wall

The repairs to the War Memorial wall has been completed by Kicko Cox to his usual high standard. The cost was as his estimate of £1,675. The Parish Council has 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 pidgeon shoot and the Somme Breakfast on July 1st that should total around £1,000 in all.

13. Authorisation of Payment

£1,675.00 Christopher M Cox – Repairs to the War Memorial wall.

This is a retrospective authorisation as payment was requested on the completion of the work.

£???.00 Gardens of Avalon – Grass cutting in June. *(Invoice not yet received.)*

£88.20 Playsafety Limited – Annual RoSPA safety inspection of the Playing Field.

£967.51 The Clerk – Salary for 1st Quarter. *See enclosed sheet.*

£99.46 The Clerk – Expenses for 1st Quarter. *See enclosed sheet.*

14. Other Business – matters of information only.

Allotments – Thanks to Ian Sage for removing the large items of rubbish from the allotments field.

To note the death at the beginning of June of Mrs Carol Hall at the age of 97. Carol was 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 apparently one of the first female Parish Council Chairmen in Somerset.

The Chairman has forwarded an e-mail from a member of Wanstrow Parish Council stating that they hope 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 may be a financial implication – Wanstrow PC have agreed to underwrite the scheme up to a cost of £600. We do not have any other details of the scheme at present.

15. 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.

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

1st July 2016