

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage

Tel: 01749 850934

e-mail: robsage@uwclub.net

You are Summoned to the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 7th December 2016 at 7.30pm 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 2nd November 2016 to be agreed and signed.
Enclosed.

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

None that do not appear on the Agenda below.

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. Allotments

I have received payment from the five continuing allotment holders (one of whom holds two allotments) and am organising tenancy agreements with the two new allotment holders, which leaves two vacant allotments.

8. Footpaths and Highways

Somerset Highways have not yet sent out their Winter Service leaflet, but the presalting map for 2016/17 is now available on the Snow and Ice page of the County Council's website at www.somerset.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/emergencies/snow-and-ice/ The map indicates that they will be salting the road from Evercreech to Westcombe (as far as the junction with the lane to Spargrove) but not through Westcombe or onto Batcombe. This will present problems for the residents of Batcombe if we have an icy winter. Ice has already caused a problem at Sunnyside where a blocked drain is causing water to flow over the road. We have had a request for a salt bin to be placed on the corner by Conduit Cottage and for a couple of the bags of de-icing material.

The County Council have informed us that Kale Street will be closed for two days from 12th December 2016 to allow the laying of BT ducting in this road.

The Chairman reports that another HGV has entered Back Lane after leaving the A361 at Leighton and coming down Cockpit Lane.

The Public Path Diversion Order for the Restricted Byway SM 2/1 away from the residential dwellings at Lodge Farm has been confirmed.

9. Playground

Maintenance Report – *The moles remains active. Philip Clarke offered to deal with the moles in the Playing Field at a price of £20 per mole. This compares with the previous molecatcher who charged £95 for 5 moles. Mr Clarke wanted an immediate response so the offer may no longer be available.*

I turned the water off in the Playing Field before the frosts earlier in November. Thanks to Justin for opening the drain on the pipes in the bus shelter. Another Coke bottle has been broken with glass left behind the bus shelter.

Mr Sparkes of Gardens of Avalon has provided a quote for cutting the grass in the Playing Field which is the same as this year - £50 a cut for the Playing Field and £9 for the area around the phone box. He is unable to do a cut every ten days as this would change the day for every visit, creating problems for his work diary. He would be willing to cut the Playing Field every Tuesday, just missing a week if it was raining heavily on the Tuesday. If the Council agreed to this he wouldn't charge for cutting the grass around the telephone box. Mr Sparkes was concerned that the repair of the fence took place on a day when he was cutting the Playing Field and would like the Council to agree to a condition that he is to be left alone to complete his work without intrusion from other works. Councillors should be aware that agreeing to a weekly cut to the Playing Field grass will add approximately £800 to the grass cutting bill.

I wrote to Anthony Greenhalgh from Mainstay Projects thanking him for the offer of remedial work in the Playing Field and confirming the points raised at the last meeting. I did ask him to let me know when the work would be undertaken but have not heard anything yet.

10. Removal of Batcombe Telephone Kiosk

The District Council have informed us that BT are proposing to remove the telephone kiosk in Batcombe as the phone has not been used for a year. Mendip would be grateful for the view of the Parish Council by December 31st. There is an option to adopt the kiosk, although unlike the traditional kiosk in Westcombe, this is a modern replacement. If we wish to object to the removal, we need to provide reasons to justify its continued presence in the village.

11. Planning Applications:

Planning Application No: 2016/2705/HSE – Extension to existing residential building.

Donegal Cottage, Kale Street, Batcombe. Householder Application.

Planning Application No: 2016/2706/LBC – Extension to existing residential building.

Donegal Cottage, Kale Street, Batcombe. Listed Building Consent.

No plans yet but the architect has indicated he would like to attend the meeting.

Planning Application Updates.

Confirmation has been received of the refusal of planning permission to convert and extend the stable at Crows Hill for use as holiday accommodation. The District Council had no objection to the felling of the Ash tree in the Village Hall car park. The demolition of the garage and retaining wall and erection of a utility room, cycle store and new retaining wall at The Cottage on Holly Hill has been approved.

12. Affordable Housing

To consider future steps following the parish meeting and the meeting the Chairman and Iona FitzGerald had with the Mendip Housing Officer.

13. Budget and Precept 2017/18

Details of the Budget for the year ending 31st March 2018 and a forecast for the years 2016-2020 were provided with the Agenda for last month's meeting. Please bring your copy of the budget and forecast to the meeting.

Most items in the budget were agreed at the last meeting. The exception being the cost of the grass cutting in the Playing Field. If the Council agree to a weekly cut this will cost an estimated additional £800 a year. As we are budgeting a surplus in 2017/18 this increase could be phased in over two years – with an extra £400 on the precept in each year. This would mean a precept of £9,150 for 2017/18 (an increase of £700 on 2016/17) and a forecast increase of £650 in 2018/19.

A decision on the level of the precept does not have to be made at this meeting - and Councillors may wish to wait until the tax base for 2017/18 has been determined so that we will know the impact any increase will have on Council Tax.

14. Authorisation of Payment

- £1,813.50 Community Council for Somerset – Housing Needs Survey – balance of payment.
- £135.48 Read Agriservices – Concrete posts and support struts for Playing Field fence.
- £104.20 Mendip Community Transport – Frome Bus Pilot (October).
- £71.17 The Parish News – Photocopying (November 2015 – November 2016).
- £????.00 Gardens of Avalon – Grass cutting in November. *(Invoice not yet received.)*

15. Other Business – matters of information only.

County Council elections will take place on 4th May 2017. Anyone interested in becoming a County Councillor can find out more by visiting www.somerset.gov.uk/elections or by contacting the Community Governance Team at Somerset County Council on 01823 357628 or by e-mailing democraticservices@somerset.gov.uk.

The Boundary Commission are reviewing the boundaries of parliamentary constituencies to come into effect in 2018. They have to reduce the number of constituencies in England from 533 to 501 and ensure that each constituency (apart from two) has a population between 71,031 and 78,507. Under initial proposals our constituency Somerton and Frome would be reduced in size by the removal of two wards to the north-west of Frome (Ammerdown and Coleford and Holcombe). This will reduce the population of the constituency from 77,797 to 72,417. The consultation on the initial proposals closes on December 5th. If you wish to comment visit the Boundary Commission website at www.bce2018.org.uk. The Parish Council has not been consulted as a body on these proposals.

Frome Bus Pilot - The cost of the four weeks in October was £104.20 compared to £52.19 for the two weeks in September. This means the total cost was £156.39 and the level of use appears to have remained fairly constant with a subsidy from the Councils supporting the scheme of 65% of the cost.

The organiser of the Shindig Weekender has informed us that this will be taking place again at Gilcombe Farm on the weekend of May 26th-28th 2017. They will be making a licence application to South Somerset District Council in late December and promise to send us a copy of the event management plan in due course.

16. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Wednesday 4th January 2017 at 7.30pm in the Old School Rooms, Batcombe.

Rob Sage