

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 1st March 2017 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 1st February 2017 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. Footpaths and Highways

We have been informed that the road through Westcombe will be closed for 1 day (8.00am to 4.00pm) from March 12th. The road will be closed from the junction with Small Down Lane to the junction with the lane to Westcombe Stables. This is to allow fibre cabling and jointing works in existing BT apparatus in this road.

***Presalting of the Road through Batcombe.** The Chairman to report on the latest response from the County Council to the concerns raised over the removal of Batcombe from the pre-salting network. A resident has reported problems with ice on Crows Hill, due to water flowing down the road.*

8. Playground

***Maintenance Report** – The moles remain active – the action to be undertaken to be considered at this meeting. It is proposed that the Playing Field should be rolled.*

No more broken glass from drinks bottles has been found in the Playing Field to date.

Gardens of Avalon will begin cutting the grass in the Playing Field on Tuesday March 7th and fortnightly thereafter. We have agreed with Mr Sparkes that no work will take place while he is cutting the grass, and so need to bear this in mind when planning the rolling.

Mainstay Projects have not yet undertaken the promised remedial works to the play equipment.

9. Planning Applications:

Planning Application No: 2017/0220/TCA

T1 Pine Fell to ground level. Reduce T2 and T3 Acers to 2m and shape.

Neatherlea, Back Lane, Batcombe – Works/Felling Trees in a CA.

The Pine is a “high water demand tree growing on highly shrinkable clay soil, and too close to neighbouring property. It will not be able to reach full mature height in this location. The owners intend to replace this tree with a more suitable ornamental garden tree.”

Planning Application No: 2017/0221/TCA T1 Willow Fell to ground level.

Pastoral, Kale Street [Millards Hill], Batcombe – Works/Felling Trees in a CA.

“Applicant feels this tree has grown too large for the garden and is poorly situated. They are intending to plant something more suitable in its place.”

Planning Application No: 2017/0227/LBC

Conversion of barn for residential accommodation, re-instatement of adjacent shed (part-demolished) to provide a kitchen, and opening a blocked doorway to link the two buildings.

Elm House, Kale Street, Batcombe – Listed Building Consent.

No plans as yet, but should be available for the meeting. It is not clear whether a full planning application will follow and I wasn't able to speak to the case officer before sending out the Agendas.

Planning Application Updates.

The District Council had no objection to the felling of the Beech Tree at Batch Orchard. Although we have not been formally notified yet the tree officer has stated that he has no objections to the proposed works to the Horse Chestnut at Batch Orchard, which is similar to previous works on the tree. He responded to our concern about the identity of the applicant by noting that, as with other planning applications, you do not have to own the property to make an application.

10. Annual Parish Meeting

Iona FitzGerald to report back on whether a speaker from the Somerset Wildlife Trust is able to come to the Annual Parish Meeting on Wednesday 5th April.

11. Notice Boards

Following the discussion regarding notice boards at the last meeting Mr Peter Glaisher from Westcombe has volunteered to repair the notice board at Westcombe for the cost of a new piece of Perspex, estimated at £30. The notice board needs new Perspex, a new back and a new pinboard but the main body of the notice board is hardwood and serviceable. As this would save the Council around £200, it is appropriate for the Council to consider this offer. As the original decision was made more than six months ago there is no need for a special resolution if the Council were to decide to accept Mr Glaisher's offer. It should be noted that when the Council decided to purchase a new notice board the estimated cost of repairing the old notice board was £200.

Regarding, the notice board on the churchyard wall I have contacted to the Churchwarden, Mr Nigel Humphries who feels the PCC would be happy with a black notice board. He also urges the Parish Council to accept Mr Glaisher's offer and suggests that the Parish Council might like to donate some of the money saved to the Church Roof Appeal. The Parish Council has no power to make a grant towards the repair of the Church roof, so any grant would have to be made under the Section 137 power which allows the Parish Council to make payments on items where it does not have the power to do so, provided the payment is commensurate with the benefit to local residents.

12. Administration

Parish Council's e-mail address. This item was deferred from last month when the following options were listed:

- i. continue using the Clerk's private e-mail address robsage@uwclub.net. This has proved satisfactory for the last fourteen years. Advantages – free and easy to use. Disadvantages – it is a private address and would need to be changed at a change of Clerk. Not a problem at the last change of Clerk, but potentially more so with the greater use of e-mail today.
- ii. use a separate address provided by the Clerk's e-mail provider batcombepc@uwclub.net. Advantages – free and a dedicated address for the Parish Council, allowing easy separation of Parish Council e-mails from other e-mails addressed to the Clerk. Disadvantages – while it allows continuity as a new Clerk can be provided with the password to access the account and use the e-mail, the address would eventually need to be changed in case the previous Clerk changed e-mail provider.
- iii. use a "free" g-mail address batcombepc@gmail.com. Advantages – free and a dedicated address for the Parish Council. Disadvantages – only personal g-mail addresses are free, meaning it would still be a personal account of the Clerk.
- iv. use an e-mail address provided by the Parish Council website, e.g. clerk@batcombe-parish-council-somerset.org.uk. Advantages – no additional cost (included with website hosting) and a dedicated address for the Parish Council that can be transferred to a new Clerk. Disadvantages – e-mails are sent to the Clerk's private e-mail address and responses come back from that address. In addition the 1&1 website has to be paid for by the Clerk and re-imbursed, which may create issues during the transfer to a new Clerk. (And the address is a bit cumbersome.)
- v. create a business mail account with 1&1, the providers of the Parish Council website at a cost of £4.99 a month per mailbox. Advantages – dedicated "real" e-mail address for the Parish Council that can be transferred to a new Clerk. Disadvantages – cost and from previous experience with 1&1, payment will need to be paid for by the Clerk and re-imbursed, creating issues with the transfer to a new Clerk.
- vi. create an e-mail account with another provider that will take payment from the Parish Council rather than the Clerk, with the option of a .gov.uk address, e.g. clerk@batcombepc.gov.uk. Advantages – professional, dedicated address for the Parish Council that can easily be transferred to a new Clerk. Disadvantages – cost. I hope to have a quote in time for the meeting. I expect the cost will be higher than 1&1.

A further option has been proposed would allow e-mails to be set up under a domain name such as clerk@batcombepc.org.uk. It is not clear yet how this would be done or how much it would cost. The Chairman to provide further details at the meeting.

13. Authorisation of Payments - None at present

14. Other Business – matters of information only.

Allotments – one of the vacant allotments has been rented out and a tenancy agreement signed. Interest has been expressed in one of the two vacant allotments.

NHS Health Check – to confirm a date for the coffee morning.

15. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Wednesday 5th April 2017 at 6.45pm in the Jubilee Hall, Batcombe
to be followed by the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.30pm

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

22nd February 2017