

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 September 2017 at 8.00pm in the Jubilee Hall, 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

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 5th July 2017 to be agreed and signed. Enclosed.

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Westcombe War Memorial – The war memorial is now a Grade II Listed Building.

6. SSE Networks Stakeholder Engagement Day

Following a personal complaint made the Chairman after the power cuts in June, SSE Networks have offered to come to the Jubilee Hall for a "Stakeholder Engagement Day" to address concerns about the maintenance of their network. This should take about 30 minutes including an opportunity for questions. This item may be dealt with before any other business.

7. Field Trip Music Festival at Gilcombe Farm

The Field Trip Festival, described as an electronic dance festival, took place over the bank holiday weekend. It was of a similar size to the Shindig Festival in May and accepted similar conditions regarding noise management. Following the problems with Shindig this year concerns were raised about this festival by several local residents. It should be noted that the licence for this festival was granted before the problems with the Shindig festival this year and there had been no complaints about the Shindig festival in 2016. There appear to have been no problems with noise during this festival.

8. 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.

9. Footpaths and Highways

Our County Councillor, Nigel Hewitt-Cooper, reports that Somerset Highways are planning to only pre-salt the road from Evercreech as far as the edge of Westcombe (as last winter). Nigel is planning to attend this meeting and hopes to have some compromises to put to the Parish Council. He is also proposing to bring one or more of the County Council's Highways staff to our October meeting.

10. Affordable Housing

A response has been received from the Diocesan Board of Finance stating that the glebe field is currently subject to a tenancy and that the Board is not minded to sell. They add that the Endowments and Glebe Measure and the Charities Act require the Board to obtain best value in the disposal of any asset and so preclude a gift of glebe land. However the Board does state that they would be prepared to consider an enquiry from a developer promoting affordable housing, where the disposal of glebe land meets the requirements of the Endowments and Glebe Measure.

In July the Parish Council decided that it would consider at this meeting whether it should be more proactive in seeking land for affordable housing.

11. Playground - Maintenance Report.

The Parish Council had a request from a local resident to allow a small children's party to take place in the Playing Field with a bouncy castle. After checking with the insurers and the Chairman I allowed the request on condition that the resident confirmed that the bouncy castle provider was insured and that she signed a disclaimer.

The concrete slab covering the stopcock by the bus shelter has been broken. The amount of graffiti in the bus shelter is increasing with some in pen as well as in chalk. The lock to the electricity cabinet in the bus shelter was broken some years ago but the second lock opened by a standard meter key prevented access. This has now been forced open on a number of occasions so the keyed lock needs to be replaced if possible. No electricity has been used but there is a danger of electrocution to those vandalising the cabinet.

Mainstay Projects have undertaken some of the repairs they offered to make to the multiplay apparatus. The broken upright has been replaced with a new timber and a supporting timber has been attached to the corner post that was rotting. Volunteers are needed to apply the wood preservative to the play apparatus in the Playing Field.

The Annual Fete – *The Playing Field was left in a good state after the Fete, although it took Rob Jones a little longer than anticipated to clear up the Field. Thanks to Ian Sage for replacing the tap in the bus shelter prior to the Fete (it had been removed to prevent it being left on). The Clerk purchased a new chain to immobilise the zip wire during the Fete. The metal frame attached to the bottom of one of the goals has broken in two places and become buckled. It is a trip hazard and needs replacing or removing. (The frame allows the goal net to be lift up so the grass can be cut.)*

12. Planning Applications:

Planning Application No: 2017/2086/FUL

The construction of an agricultural building to be used for the accommodation and feeding of dairy cows, with associated external concrete aprons, slurry reception pit and hedge and tree planting.

Lower Farm, Horsehill Lane, Batcombe – Full Application.

Planning Application No: 2017/2087/FUL

The construction of an agricultural building to be used for the accommodation and feeding of dairy cows, with associated external concrete aprons, slurry reception pit and hedge and tree planting.

Lower Farm, Horsehill Lane, Batcombe – Full Application.

This is one building submitted as two applications (each for half the building) to save on costs. The deadline for comments on these applications is September 5th. The case officer has agreed an extension and confirmed this by e-mail. The new building will allow the applicant to keep all his dairy cows at Lower Farm and will be situated behind the existing farm buildings using the existing access from Horsehill Lane. The new building will be adjacent to the footpath running through Lower Farm but will not affect the route of the footpath.

Planning Updates.

Listed Building Consent has been granted for the masonry works to the elevations at Batcombe Lodge. Planning Permission has been granted for the alterations to Spring Cottage.

13. Administration

The Parish Council has a new dedicated e-mail address - clerk@batcombe-parish-council-somerset.org.uk - e-mails sent to this address will go directly to the Parish Council's laptop. This e-mail account is as part of the hosting package for the Parish Council website. The Chairman has also activated a new e-mail address for Parish Council business chairman@batcombe-parish-council-somerset.org.uk and this e-mail should be used in place of the previous one.

At the request of the Chairman the Clerk has produced a record of hours worked over the year to 31st March 2017 (enclosed). The normal pattern is that the first quarter of the year (April to June) is very busy – as a result of the two annual meetings, the end of year accounts, internal and external audits and transparency code requirements. This means that the Clerk works extra hours during this period, which are then made up over the rest of the year, which tends to be less busy. However, in 2016/17 there were also extra meetings in July and August which meant that the Clerk worked 17½ extra hours over the year as a whole. Given that there have been no meetings in August this year and the Clerk has not worked as many hours in the first half of this year, the Clerk requests that the extra hours from 2016/17 can be taken as time in lieu in 2017/18. Alternatively, the Parish Council could pay the Clerk for the extra hours at the 2016/17 hourly rate, although there is no obligation to do either as the extra hours were not agreed beforehand.

Issues regarding e-mail communication to Councillors to be addressed.

14. Bank Reconciliation and Budget Update

Our Financial Regulations require that every quarter a bank reconciliation is produced by the Clerk, checked by a member of the Council, and reported to the Council as soon as possible after the end of the quarter. As we had no meeting in August this will be the first opportunity to report on the bank reconciliation for the quarter to 30th June.

Financial Regulations also require the Clerk to provide an update on the budget each quarter. The enclosed sheet with four columns of figures shows the accounts for last year, the budget for this year, receipts and payments to date this year and a projection for this year based on expenditure to date.

Receipts are projected to be approximately £60 less than the budgeted figure because there will be two vacant allotments in November.

The projection for the Playing Field expenditure is £50 more than budgeted because of the extra cost of attending the annual inspection.

The projection for the expenditure on Administration is £90 more than the budgeted figure because two years of the Clerk's membership of the SLCC were paid in the current year and because the cost of internet protection for the Parish Council laptop had not been budgeted.

The projection for the expenditure on Other items is £395 more than budgeted because of the money received as the Health and Well-being grant in 2015/16 that was spent on a new notice board.

Although the projected surplus is £685 compared to a budgeted surplus of £1,276, the healthier position at the start of the year means that the projected funds at the end of the year are around £6,640 – £860 better than expected when the budget was made.

It should be noted that approximately £1,200 of the figure will be earmarked for the allotments.

15. Authorisation of Payment

£109.00 Gardens of Avalon – Grass cutting in July.

£60.00 Gary Butler – Hedge cutting in allotments field.

£22.99 water2business – Water supply to the Playing Field (January to July).

£19.29 SSE – Electricity supply to the Playing Field (April to July).

The above are retrospective authorisations as payment was required in August.

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

16. Other Business – matters of information only.

Nothing at present.

17. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Wednesday 4th October at 8.00pm in the Old School, Batcombe.

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

31st August 2017