

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 December 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

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 November 2017 to be agreed and signed. *Enclosed.*

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Nothing at present.

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

Somerset Highways have attempted to grit for five runs from Evercreech as far as the Old Rectory on Gold Hill, but have been prevented from doing so on four occasions by a parked car on the road from the Round House past Boords Farm. On one occasion they were able to grit as the parked car wasn't present. They have stated that if they are unsuccessful on five occasions they will revert to only gritting as far as Spargrove Lane on the edge of Westcombe, which is the published route. Somerset Highways have stated that they need a clearance of 3.5m for the gritting lorry to pass, although the Chairman has argued that on this basis the lorry would be unable to pass the Round House with its projecting window.

Thanks to the Chairman for collecting the 10kg bags of deicing materials offered by Somerset Highways. Highways have put additional bags of deicing materials at various points on the road verges around the parish.

We have been notified that Chapel Lane in Upton Noble (the road past the school) will be closed from one day to allow BT to undertake cabling works. The order comes into effect on December 17th and remains in effect for 18 months.

8. Allotments

Allotments rent were due on November 1st. So far three allotment holders have paid, one for two allotments. With three vacant allotments this leaves three allotments to be paid for. I have asked the allotment holders to pay by the date of this meeting.

The gatepost at the entrance to the allotments field is reported to be rotten and in need of replacing. As the Parish Council installed this gate when taking on the allotments it our responsibility to replace it rather than the landowners. The allotments rent is earmarked for use on the allotments and there are sufficient funds for this work and to restore the allotment field to its original condition at the end of the lease. (Currently £758.38 but with £245 in rent due on November 1st.) A decision on the gatepost was deferred at the last meeting.

9. Shindig Weekender May 2018 Licence Application

As indicated by the directors of the festival at the last meeting, a Premises Licence Application for the Shindig Weekender in May 2018 has been made. The Parish Council has until December 21st to make a representation to the South Somerset Licensing Department.

10. Affordable Housing

At the last meeting the Parish Council decided to be more proactive in seeking land for affordable housing.

11. Playground - Maintenance Report.

The Parish Council should record its thanks to Clare Kingston, whose Bingo Evening raised £572 for a new frame for the nest swing. A standard nest swing including seat will cost around £1,700 and a typical seat would cost around £500, so a frame should be around £1,200. Clare suggested applying to the Tesco Bags of Help scheme for additional funding and we are in the process of making an application. The scheme involves shoppers at our local Tesco's store (Shepton Mallet) voting for one of three projects. We need to ask for a particular amount (between £1,000 and £4,000) for a particular project. If approved, our project will appear in the store in about six months. If unsuccessful we can reapply again for this or another project. As the landowner we also need to give approval for the installation of the next swing.

At the last meeting it was agreed to obtain quotes for the replacement of the rotting legs of the multi-play apparatus in the Playing Field. It was also agreed to obtain quotes for the purchase of the wood needed to replace the rotten wood in the seat around the tree stump that is rotten.

To discuss the application of wood preservative to the play apparatus in the Playing Field. The Clerk has purchased the wood treatment. Iona FitzGerald has offered to help.

The mole continues to be very active in the Playing Field. At the last meeting Justin Witcombe volunteering to approach the neighbouring landowner to see if mole repellents could be installed on his land next to the Playing Field.

12. Procedural Item – Expressions of Thanks to Members of the Public

The Chairman has asked for this item to be included on the Agenda. He would like the recording of thanks to a member of the public to include the writing of a letter to the person concerned.

13. Planning Application:

Note: the plans for the following application will be on display for half an hour before the Council meeting. They can also be viewed online by following the link to the District Council's Planning

Application Search that can be found on the Planning Applications page on the Parish Council website and entering the reference number.

Planning Application No: 2017/2824/HSE

Proposed single storey side extension and re-siting oil tank.

10 Kale Street, Batcombe – Householder Application.

10 Kale Street is an end of terrace house (at the farther end of the second of two terraces of former Council Houses in Kale Street). The proposed side extension would replace a smaller existing side extension and storage buildings.

Planning Updates.

The applications for the construction of an agricultural building for the accommodation and feeding of dairy cows at Lower Farm and for the construction of a new single storey garage and a new stairwell at Chatley Barn have been approved by the District Council.

The District Council have organised training sessions on planning. Unfortunately the first of these in the Council Chamber at Shepton Mallet is on the same evening as this meeting. There will be further sessions on Tuesday February 6th in the Assembly Rooms in Frome and on Thursday March 15th in the Town Hall at Glastonbury, both at 6.30pm. If you wish to attend either of these please let Claire Dicken at Mendip DC know. E-mail Claire.dicken@mendip.gov.uk

14. Budget and Precept 2018/19

The Chairman has requested that two additional items be added to the budget for next year that was distributed with the Agendas for last month's meeting. One is a figure for repairs to the multi-play equipment agreed at the last meeting (Minute 4419). We do not have any quotes for this work yet, but the Chairman suggests a figure of £4,000 spread over two years. The other item is a contribution towards the cost of commemorating 100 years since the end of the First World War. There are no firm plans for this yet, but the Chairman suggests a budget of £400.

Enclosed are a revised budget for the year ending 31st March 2019 and a revised forecast for the years 2017-2021, which include these items. Other items remain as in the budget produced last month – details can be found in last month's Agenda. (If needed, copies can be downloaded from the Parish Council website www.batcombe-parish-council-somerset.org.uk/parish-council-documents/meeting-papers/) An additional £2,400 on next year's budget and £2,000 the year after will produce significant deficits. These can be alleviated by increasing the precept by £500 each year. This would result in a £750 deficit next year and a £1,800 deficit in 2019/20 (assuming a contested election) leaving funds of £3,846 at the end of that year. Thereafter the forecast shows a surplus and it is likely the precept could be reduced.

The Parish Council needs to decide if it feels the suggested cost of the repairs to the multi-play is realistic, and whether it wishes to budget for the centenary of the end of the war. The Chairman would also like to review the level of the grants given by the Parish Council and there is a possibility that Mr Sparkes may undertake some additional cuts of the Playing Field next year. The Parish Council then needs to decide on what level of reserve it wants to keep, bearing in mind that the cost of the multiplay repairs and a contested election are very rough estimates and that there is always a possibility of by-election. (A third of the precept is the recommended minimum reserve.)

A final decision on the precept can be left until January when we should know the tax base for 2018/19 (which affects the impact of increases in the precept on Council Tax). However, it is advisable that decisions are made in principle at this meeting (just in case we cannot meet in January).

15. Authorisation of Payment

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

£120.00 Grant Thornton UK LLP – Audit Fee.

The last is a retrospective authorisation as the bill has already been paid.

16. Other Business – matters of information only.

None at present.

17. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Wednesday 10th January 2018 at 7.30pm in the Old School, Batcombe.

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

30th November 2017