

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 1st November 2017 in the Jubilee Hall, Batcombe, commencing at 7.30pm.

Present - Councillors: Chris Wildridge – Chairman, Mary Comley, Jayne Cox, Ian Sage and Justin Witcombe.

Also Present: The Clerk – Rob Sage, and seven members of the public.

4406 – Apologies for Absence: John Sommer and Dick Skidmore – District Councillor.

4407 – Filling of Parish Council Vacancy by Co-option and Acceptance of Office: The Clerk reported that three people had expressed an interest in serving on the Council, but two of these had since withdrawn. The Chairman asked for nominations and Kaveh Javvi was nominated by Justin Witcombe. A vote to co-opt Kav was taken by a show of hands and he signed his Acceptance of Office and took part in the remainder of the meeting.

4408 – Declarations of Interest: Ian Sage declared an interest in the repair of the seat in the Playing Field.

4409 – Public Participation: None.

4410 – Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 4th October 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4411 – Matters Arising: None that were not covered by items on the Agenda.

4412 – Shindig Weekender May 2018 at Gilcombe Farm: Two of the four directors of the Shindig Weekender attended the meeting and spoke about their premises licence application for the festival in May 2018. They stated that Shindig was a family music festival which had been held at Gilcombe Farm for four years during which time the attendance had increased from 1,000 to 5,000. They acknowledged that there had been noise issues this year, which they attributed to wind conditions. They planned to address this by moving the music venues into the valley and promised to offer tickets to Batcombe residents for the weekend. They were also addressing the problem of parking in lanes with a new traffic management company. They stated that attendance would increase to 7,500 in 2018 but would not get any higher. They would monitor the noise levels in Batcombe High Street and on Copplesbury Lane and would issue a number for residents to ring to resolve any issues.

4413 – Planning Applications: Planning Application No: 2017/2569/HSE Construction of a new detached single storey garage and construction of a new stairwell following demolition of part of existing lean-to. Chatley Barn, Linch Lane, Batcombe – Householder Application. The Parish Council decided to recommend approval as there were no objections to the proposed garage or stairwell.

Planning Application No: 2017/2606/HSE Extension to existing residential dwelling, associated demolition works and associated internal alterations. Donegal Cottage, Kale

Street, Batcombe – Householder Application. The Parish Council decided to recommend approval as there were no objections to the proposed extension and alterations.

Planning Application No: 2017/2607/LBC Extension to existing residential dwelling, associated demolition works and associated internal alterations. Donegal Cottage, Kale Street, Batcombe – Listed Building Consent. The Parish Council decided to recommend approval as there were no objections to the proposed extension and alterations.

Planning Application No: 2017/2764/TCA Proposed works to trees in a conservation area including the felling of Norway Maple (NM), Goat Willow (GW) and Ash (A), clearance of Cherry Laurel (CL), reduce three Monterey Cypress (MC) to 4m, thinning of two groups of Beech (BG1 & BG2) and possible felling of a pear tree (P) if it can't be saved. The Old Barn, Batcombe – Works/Felling Trees in a CA. The Parish Council decided to recommend approval as there were no objections to the proposed tree works.

The Clerk reported that he had been notified of an application for an extension at 10 Kale Street that was too late to be considered at this meeting, but the case officer had given an extension of the deadline for the consultation to the next Parish Council meeting on December 6th.

Planning Application Updates: None.

4414 – District and County Councillors Reports: The County Councillor had passed on details of a consultation on the school bus service.

4415 – Footpaths and Highways: As noted at the previous month's meeting, Somerset Highways stated that they would attempt to grit for five runs from Evercreech as far as the Old Rectory on Gold Hill, but would terminate this route if cars were parked inappropriately. The Chairman stated that he had organised a meeting of the residents of Kale Street to consider what can be done to keep the road there clear for the gritting lorry. Justin Witcombe reported that the primary school at Upton Noble had requested that the road from the A359 to the school is gritted. The Chairman to ask the school for catchment area and numbers of attending the school. Somerset Highways were offering 10kg bags of de-icing material and the Chairman volunteered to collect it. Water running down the road on Hincombe Hill had been reported to Somerset Highways.

It was noted that a number of HGVs had come off the main road at Creech Hill and were then getting stuck at the top of Crows Hill. The Clerk to request that Somerset Highways place a no HGV sign at the Creech Hill junction. The Chairman noted that the proposal for signage to the Wild Beer brewery at Westcombe had not come to anything.

Jayne Cox noted that roadworks at Churchbridge Lodge had severely constricted the road with an impact on agricultural use and no one had been notified of these works. Jayne also noted that someone with a vehicle was still using the bridleway at Honeycliff, but the posts would soon be erected.

The Clerk reported that the white lines have been reinstated at the junctions around the Round House, following the reporting of a complaint at the last Parish Council meeting.

4416 – Allotments: The Clerk reported that the allotment rents were due that day and one allotment holder had paid in advance. He also reported that there were now three vacant allotments as two allotment holders had indicated that they wished to give up their allotment.

The gatepost at the entrance to the allotments field was reported to be rotten and in need of replacing. As the Parish Council installed this gate when taking on the allotments it was the

Council's responsibility to replace it rather than the landowners. A decision was deferred until the budget had been considered.

4417 – Affordable Housing: Following a discussion the Parish Council agreed to be more proactive in seeking land for affordable housing.

4418 – Batcombe War Memorial: The Parish Council, as custodian of the Batcombe War Memorial, had previously agreed in principle for repairs to be undertaken to the Memorial and to the addition of the name of William Newman. Mr Newman, who had lived in Westcombe as a child, was a member of the Somerset Light Infantry killed at the Battle of Le Cateau in August 1914. Having noted that the work had been done to a high standard, in keeping with the existing inscriptions and in time for the Act of Remembrance on Remembrance Sunday, the Parish Council gave its approval to the work done and asked the Clerk to record its grateful thanks to Rob Jones for organising the addition of Mr Newman's name to the Memorial.

4419 – Playing Field - Maintenance Report: A report from the Chairman and Ian Sage on the condition of the play equipment had been distributed with the Agendas. It was noted that the legs of the multi-play apparatus were rotten and would soon not be strong enough to support the weight of the apparatus. It was agreed in principle to replace the legs and to obtain quotes for replacing some or all of the legs.

It was noted that the willow tunnel was well liked by children but that the top growth was beyond the ability of volunteers to deal with. It was agreed to obtain a quote for cutting off the growth above the tunnel.

Ian Sage had volunteered to replace the rotten wood in the seat around the tree stump and to provide the wood at the purchase price of £250. Unfortunately, Ian did not have an invoice for the wood and the advice from the Somerset Association of Local Councils was that as a Councillor he could not be paid for the wood. It was agreed to get two quotes for the wood.

The mole continued to be very active in the Playing Field.

4420 – Bank Reconciliation and Budget Update 2017/18: There was a short break while Mary Comley verified the bank reconciliation for the 2nd Quarter that had been prepared by the Clerk; and this was then reported to the Council.

An update on the budget for the current year as at the end of October had been enclosed with the Agendas. Receipts were projected to be approximately £100 less than the budgeted figure because of the three vacant allotments.

The projection for the Playing Field expenditure was £120 less than budgeted because additional cuts of the Playing Field had been budgeted for but not undertaken. This saving was balanced by expected additional maintenance costs (repairing the seat around the tree stump) and the extra cost of attending the annual inspection.

The projection for the expenditure on Administration was £260 more than the budgeted figure because additional hours worked by the Clerk in 2016/17 were paid for in the current year. In addition, two years of the Clerk's membership of the SLCC had been paid for in the current year and the cost of internet protection for the Parish Council laptop had not been budgeted for.

The projection for the expenditure on Other items was £600 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 and the anticipated money to be spent repairing the gate to the allotments field.

Although the projected surplus was £450 compared to a budgeted surplus of £1,276, the healthier position at the start of the year meant that the projected funds at the end of the year were around £6,400 – £630 better than expected when the budget was made. It was noted that approximately £750 of this figure would be earmarked for the allotments.

4421 – Budget and Precept 2018/19: A budget for the year ending 31st March 2019 and a forecast for the years 2017-2021 had been enclosed with the Agendas. The Clerk noted that the next Parish Council election would take place in 2019 and the Council needed to budget to have sufficient reserves to pay for a contested election as well as other contingencies such as a by-election. The figure of £1,200 for the cost of the election was an estimate based on the fact that the last contested election ten years previously cost £933.

Details of the various items in the budget for 2018/19 were included in the Agenda notes for the meeting, where the Clerk noted that the figure for Playing Field equipment maintenance had been increased to £750 and that while this figure would cover the cost of the playpark and small repairs, major repairs or replacement of equipment should be budgeted separately. It was also noted that the Chairman would like the Council to review the level of its grants. The Chairman also suggested the purchase of two 64GB data sticks to back up the Parish Council laptop and annual maintenance of the laptop.

It was decided to look at the budget in detail at the December meeting and to make a final decision on the precept at the January meeting when the tax base should be known.

4422 - Authorisation of payment: Councillors authorised the following payments.

- £109.00 Gardens of Avalon – Grass cutting in October.
- £102.85 Somerset Association of Local Councils – Affiliation fees.
- £22.42 SSE – Electricity in the Playing Field, July to October.

The Clerk noted that the Data Protection Registration fee of £35 had been paid by Direct Debit to the Information Commissioner's Office.

4423 – Other Business - Matters of Information Only: The Clerk noted that the Frome Rural South Beat, which included Batcombe, had a new PCSO Olga Hapova, who had provided a crime report for September that had been distributed to Councillors.

Justin Witcombe offered to speak to the landowner of the field next to the Playing Field to see if the mole repellents could be placed in that field away from children in the Playing Field.

4424 – Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 6th December at 7.30pm in the Old School, Batcombe.

Chris Wildridge
6th December 2017