

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 10th January 2018 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 6th December 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

Work has been undertaken on the blocked gulleys on Saite Lane that were leading to problems with water on the road and ice in cold weather. The problems with blocked gulleys on Hincombe Hill have also been reported. The Chairman to report on the response to his meeting at County Hall. As a result, Somerset Highways will provide an indication of the likely cost of pre-salting the road through Batcombe.

8. Allotments

Allotments rent were due on November 1st. Four allotment have been paid for and we now have four confirmed vacant allotments. The holders of the remaining two allotments have indicated that they wish to continue with their allotment but have not paid yet.

At the last meeting Justin Witcombe and Ian Sage volunteered to replace the rotten gatepost at the entrance to the allotments field.

9. Shindig Weekender May 2018 Licence Application

As a result of the representation made by the Parish Council, a hearing will be held on Monday 22nd January at 10.00am in the South Somerset District Council Offices in Yeovil. The Parish Council has been asked to give further details of the complaints received about 2017 and state what evidence we have that the noise levels were in excess of the limits imposed on the festival. The Chairman has volunteered to attend the hearing on behalf of the Parish Council.

10. Affordable Housing

We have not yet heard the whether the vacancy at Ash Tree Cottages has been filled and if so whether was by someone with a local connection. The Parish Council has decided to be more proactive in seeking land for affordable housing.

11. Playground - Maintenance Report.

At the last meeting it was agreed to come back for ideas for a larger project for the Tesco Bags of Help scheme (which involves shoppers at our local Tescos store voting for one of three projects). We need to ask for a particular amount (between £1,000 and £4,000) for a particular project. A new frame for the nest swing would cost around £1,200 and we have raised £572 from the Bingo Night. As the landowner we need to give approval for the installation of the nest swing.

The Chairman and Ian Sage have volunteered to organise specifications for the replacement of the legs of the multi-play apparatus. The seat around the tree stump is falling apart and the rotten wood needs to be replaced urgently.

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 extremely active in the Playing Field.

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

This item was overlooked at the last meeting. The Chairman would like the recording of thanks to a member of the public to include the writing of a letter to the person concerned.

13. Consultation on Mendip Local Plan Part II: Sites and Policies

The consultation on the Mendip Local Plan Part II and also on a Draft Supplementary Planning Document for Self and Custom Build Single-plot Exception Sites will take place between Tuesday 2nd January and Tuesday 12th February. The relevant documents can be found on the Mendip website at www.mendip.gov.uk/localplanpart2 The Local Plan Part II largely concerns the planned sites for development in Mendip, which does not concern Batcombe as there is no development in the smaller villages.

One item of relevance to Batcombe is the maps of Local Green Spaces. There are two of these in Batcombe. One is the churchyard and the other consists of the gardens of Batcombe House, Batch Orchard, Stockley Cottage and the Old Rectory. A Local Green Space is an area of local importance in which no development will be allowed. The Parish Council considered the proposed Local Green Spaces at its meeting in April 2017 and decided not to comment as these were identical to the Open Spaces of Visual Significance in the old Local Plan.

14. Planning Applications:

None at present.

Planning Updates.

The application for a single storey side extension at 10 Kale Street has been approved. The District Council had no objection to the various tree works at The Old Barn..

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

15. Budget and Precept 2018/19

At the last meeting it was agreed in principle to increase the precept by £500 to £9,450 to allow for the replacement of the legs of the multi-play equipment in the Playing Field. The final decision was left until this meeting when we would know the tax base for 2018/19 and the impact the increase in the precept will have on Council Tax. [The tax base is the number of Band D equivalent properties in Batcombe when taking into account the number of empty properties, various discounts (including 25% for single people) and the weighting of the different bands above and below Band D.]

Batcombe's tax base for 2018/19 is 205.70 which when revised for a 2% non collection rate becomes 201.59. The revised tax base for 2017/18 was 207.86. A smaller tax base means that the same increase in precept will produce a higher increase in Council Tax.

If the Parish Council were to leave its precept unchanged at £8,950, a Band D property with no discounts would have to pay £44.40 towards the precept in 2018/19 instead of £43.06 this year, an increase of 3.11%. If, as agreed in principle at the December meeting, the Council increases its precept by £500 to £9,450 (an increase of 5.59% in the precept), a Band D property with no discounts would have to pay £46.88 towards the precept, an increase of 8.87%. Please note that it is this figure that appears on Council Tax bills.

The tax base appears to be fluctuating from year to year – up one year and down the next. The Parish Council may therefore wish to increase the precept by less this year and more next year to even out the increases in Council Tax. An increase of £250 in the precept to £9,200 (an increase of 2.79% in the precept) would result in a Band D property with no discounts paying £45.64, an increase of 5.99%. A smaller increase in precept would not present a problem in 2018/19 but would require a larger increase in 2019/20.

16. Change of Bank Mandate – Additional Bank Signatories

The resignations of Lucinda Edgell and Iona FitzGerald mean that there are only two Councillors who are currently bank signatories – the Chairman and John Sommer. Ideally there should be four to ensure there are always two signatories at a meeting. A resolution needs to be passed to add new signatories to the bank mandate.

17. Authorisation of Payment

- £???.00 Gardens of Avalon – Grass cutting in December. (Invoice not yet received.)
- £977.25 The Clerk – Salary for 3rd Quarter. (See enclosed sheet.)
- £181.33 The Clerk – Expenses for 3rd Quarter. (See enclosed sheet.)

18. Other Business – matters of information only.

None at present.

19. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Wednesday 7th February 2018 at 7.30pm in the Old School, Batcombe.

Rob Sage