

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage

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Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 10th January 2018 in the Old School, Batcombe, commencing at 7.30pm.

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

Also Present: The Clerk – Rob Sage, Dick Skidmore – District Councillor and one member of the public.

4442 – Apologies for Absence: Justin Witcombe. The Chairman noted the resignation of Kaveh Javvi from the Council as he felt unable to commit the time and effort needed to do justice to the role of Parish Councillor. The Clerk stated that a notice of vacancy would be published and that if no one claimed a by-election the vacancy could be filled by co-option at the March Parish Council meeting.

4443 – Declarations of Interest: Ian Sage and Jayne Cox declared an interest in the authorisation of the Clerk's salary as relatives of the Clerk.

4444 – Public Participation: None.

4445 – Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 6th December 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4446 – Matters Arising: None that were not covered by items on the Agenda.

4447 – District and County Councillors' Reports: The Clerk reported that in light of recent news reports the County Councillor had noted that the County Council had the facility to collect coffee cups for recycling.

4448 – Footpaths and Highways: Work had 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 had also been reported to Somerset Highways. It was reported that the bags of salt left on Hincombe Hill had prevented a car from dropping into Pugh's Bottom Farm when the hill was covered with ice.

Ginnie Jones stated that the Honeycliffe Bridleway was a bridleway according to the definitive map of rights of way which meant that motorised vehicles were not allowed on it unless local landowners had an accommodation for access to fields. She added that around £9,000 had been spent by the MBBA and the County Council on repairing the bridleway and it was vital that motorised vehicles did not use it. Posts had been placed to prevent vehicles using the bridleway but these had been moved. Ian Sage noted that one of the neighbouring landowners had won the right to access a field at the top of the bridleway and this had led to confusion as others thought this gave them a right to use the bridleway for vehicles. People would only have this right if it was in the deeds of their property.

The Chairman reported that following his meeting at County Hall with Councillor John Woodman, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, and Alyn Jones, Operations

Director for Highways and Transport, he had requested details of the cost of providing pre-salting and details of the continuous bad weather winter maintenance programme. The Chairman had received a response from Mr Jones stating that the cost of the County Council's contractors pre-salting Batcombe would be a stand-by fee of £450 a week and a cost of £415 per gritting operation. Mr Jones also noted that some Parish Councils employed their own contractors to undertake gritting, and the Chairman had asked for details of which Councils. The Chairman stated that he had spoken to the police regarding the obstruction that was preventing gritting taking place in Batcombe.

The Chairman reported that he had sent a personal e-mail to our MP, David Warburton, asking if he would be willing to attend a meeting in Batcombe regarding the gritting issue and had received a positive response. The Clerk was asked to invite Mr Warburton to a meeting at a date and time to be arranged.

4449 – Allotments: The Clerk reported that four allotments were now vacant, the rent for four allotments had been received and the remaining two allotment holders had promised to pay shortly. If they had not paid by February the Clerk was instructed to write to the allotment holders who had not paid.

4450 – Shindig Weekender May 2018 Licence Application: As a result of the representation made by the Parish Council, a hearing would be held on January 18th in the South Somerset District Council Offices and it was agreed that the Chairman should represent the Parish Council at the hearing. Copies of the representation and a response from the local organiser of the Shindig festival were distributed to Councillors along with details of the complaints received. Concerns were expressed that the directors of the Shindig festival had not informed the Parish Council about the extra day for the 2018 festival when making their presentation to the Council. The Council felt that it was unnecessary for music to be played until 4.00am in the morning and that there needed to be more effective monitoring of noise that was independent of the festival organisers. Mary Comley noted that there would be another festival at Gilcombe Farm on the August Bank Holiday weekend.

4451 – Affordable Housing: The vacancy in the two-bedroomed house at Ash Tree Cottages had been filled by a local couple with connections to Batcombe and a genuine housing need.

4452 – Playing Field - Maintenance Report: The Clerk reported that Gary Butler had removed the top growth on the willow tunnel and the willow arch over the seat in the Playing Field.

Councillors were asked to contact the Clerk with ideas for a larger project than just a new nest swing frame that could be used as the basis for an application to the Tesco Bags of Help scheme. Jayne Cox volunteered to speak to the toddlers' mums.

The Chairman and Ian Sage to organise specifications for the replacement of the legs of the multi-play apparatus.

4453 – Procedural Item – Expressions of Thanks to Members of the Public: It was agreed that the recording of thanks to a member of the public would automatically include the writing of a letter to the person concerned need.

4454 – Consultation on Mendip Local Plan Part II: Sites and Policies: As the Local Plan Part II was largely concerned with planned sites for development in Mendip, it was decided not to respond as there was no planned development in Batcombe. One item of relevance was the proposed Local Green Spaces of which there were two in Batcombe – one being the

churchyard and the other consisting of the gardens of Batcombe House, Batch Orchard, Stockley Cottage and the Old Rectory. As these were identical to the Open Spaces of Visual Significance in the old Local Plan, the Parish Council had previously decided not to comment.

4455 – Planning Applications: None.

Planning Application Updates: The application for a single storey extension at 10 Kale Street had been approved and the District Council had no objection to the tree works at The Old Barn.

The Chairman, Mary Comley, Ian Sage and Jayne Cox all indicated a willingness to attend the training session on planning at Frome in February organised by the District Council.

4456 – Budget and Precept 2018/19: The Clerk reported that Batcombe’s revised tax base for 2018/19 was 201.59 compared to 207.87 for 2017/18. This meant that the £500 increase in precept to £9,450 agreed in principle at the last meeting (an increase of 5.59% in the precept) would result in 8.87% in the Council Tax resulting from the precept, and it would be this figure that would appear on Council Tax bills.

As a result the Parish Council agreed an increase of £250 in the precept to £9,200 (an increase of 2.79% in the precept) which would result in an increase of 5.99% in the Council Tax resulting from the precept.

4457 – Change of Bank Mandate – Additional Bank Signatories: Two of the current signatories had resigned from the Council during the previous year, leaving only two Councillors as signatories. Mary Comley volunteered to be an additional signatory and a resolution to change the bank mandate accordingly was agreed.

4458 - Authorisation of payment: Councillors authorised the following payments:

£75.00	Gary Butler – Cutting back of willow structures in the Playing Field.
£977.25	The Clerk – Salary for 3 rd Quarter.
£181.33	The Clerk – Expenses for 3 rd Quarter.

4459 – Other Business - Matters of Information Only: The Clerk noted that the Parish Council’s external auditor would be PKF Littlejohn LLP.

4460 – Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 7th February at 7.30pm in the Old School, Batcombe.

Chris Wildridge
7th February 2018