

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage

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Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 7th February 2018 in the Old School, Batcombe, commencing at 7.30pm.

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

Also Present: The Clerk – Rob Sage.

4461 – Apologies for Absence: Ian Sage and Nigel Hewitt-Cooper – County Councillor.

4462 – Declarations of Interest: None.

4463 – Public Participation: None.

4464 – Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 10th January 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4465 – Matters Arising: Shindig Weekender 2018 Premises Licence Application – The Chairman reported on the hearing held at the South Somerset District Council Offices. The premises licence had been granted but the times to which recorded and live music could be played until was changed from 4.00am to 2.00am. Mary Comley noted that there would be another music festival at Gilcombe Farm on the August bank holiday.

Precept for 2018/19 - The Clerk reported that the precept of £9,200 for 2018/19 had been submitted to Mendip District Council and acknowledged.

4466 – District and County Councillors' Reports: The County Councillor had submitted a written report on various aspects of County Council services which had been distributed to Councillors.

4467 – Footpaths and Highways: Following an incident with the school bus in January, the Chairman emailed the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Councillor Woodman, our County Councillor, Nigel Hewitt-Cooper, and copied our MP, David Warburton, advising them of the incident and asking that the pre-gritting be reinstated. A copy of this e-mail had been distributed with the Agenda and the Chairman provided Councillors with a copy of the response from Councillor Woodman at the meeting. This noted that the pre-salting of the road through Batcombe would be reviewed during the summer to ensure that it was undertaken in accordance with their policy. Justin Witcombe noted that the blocked gully on Hincombe Hill had been marked for attention.

The MP, David Warburton, had been invited to come to the parish for an open meeting to hear the concerns over the lack of gritting, but the first date he had available was Friday 9th March. The Clerk was asked to find out when during the day that would be. His Appointments Secretary had suggested that we could attend one of his planned surgeries or arrange a telephone call.

It was noted that the road name sign for Back Lane had been damaged in a collision and the Clerk was asked to report this to Charlie Higgins at Somerset Highways.

4468 – Allotments: The Clerk reported that the two allotment holders who had not paid their rent had promised to do so shortly. Justin Witcombe reported that Ian Sage had repaired the rotten gatepost at the entrance to the allotments field and thanks to Ian for doing this work voluntarily were recorded.

4469 – Affordable Housing: Mendip District Council would be holding a Rural Housing Seminar on Wednesday March 28th. The Chairman, Justin Witcombe and Jayne Cox all expressed an interest in attending.

4470 – Playing Field - Maintenance Report: The Councillors were asked to come to the next meeting with costed ideas in addition to the nest swing frame for an application to the Tesco Bags of Help scheme.

The Chairman and Ian Sage to organise specifications for the replacement of the legs of the multi-play apparatus. It was agreed to leave the application of the wood preservative for the time being.

4471 – Planning Applications: There were no applications to consider at this meeting. However, the Clerk reported receiving two applications that could be considered at the March meeting. One was for a proposed single story rear extension at 1 Alshilla Cottages in Westcombe and the other was for a proposed detached double garage with adjoining ground floor studio and further studio space on first floor over garage at Holly Hill House. In both cases extensions to the response deadline had been granted and confirmed by e-mail.

Planning Application Updates: The application for a two-storey building incorporating a garage at ground floor at Holly Cottage, Westcombe had been approved.

4472 – Annual Parish Meeting: The Annual Parish Meeting would take place on Wednesday April 4th at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Hall. Various options for a speaker were considered and the Clerk was asked to invite Sue Mountstevens, the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner.

4473 – Bank Reconciliation and Budget Update

The bank reconciliation for the third quarter to 31st December prepared by the Clerk was verified by John Sommer and reported to the Council.

An update on the budget as at the end of January for the current year had been enclosed with the Agenda. Receipts were projected to be approximately £450 more than the budgeted figure because of the £572 raised for new play equipment at the Bingo Evening less the uncollected rent on the four vacant allotments.

Additional cuts of the Playing Field had been undertaken, although not as many as budgeted for – but this saving was balanced by additional maintenance costs (including the anticipated repair of the seat around the tree stump) and the extra cost of attending the annual inspection.

Expenditure on Administration was projected to be £245 more than the budgeted figure because of the additional hours worked by the Clerk in 2016/17 that were paid for in current year; because two years of the Clerk's membership of the SLCC were paid in the current year and the cost of internet protection for the Parish Council laptop had not been budgeted for.

The expenditure on Other items was projected to be £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 money expected to be spent repairing the gate to the allotments field.

Although the projected surplus was £855 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 £6,800 – £1,000 better than expected when the budget was made. It was noted that approximately £720 of this figure would be earmarked for the allotments and £572 for play equipment.

4474 - Authorisation of payment: Councillors authorised the following payments:

- £84.00 Society of Local Council Clerks – Clerk’s membership.
- £19.99 SSE – Electricity bill for the Playing Field (October - January.)

4475 – Other Business - Matters of Information Only: The Clerk reported that there had been no request for a by-election and so the vacancy on the Parish Council could be filled by co-option at the next meeting.

The Chairman distributed a report on the Planning Training Session held at the Assembly Rooms in Frome to be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting. He noted a requirement for Parish Councils to respond within 21 days that would end the current practice of providing extensions to response deadlines. This would increase the need for extraordinary meetings of the Parish Council.

Justin Witcombe reported that the Village Hall’s Big Draw fundraiser would consist of a pig racing night on April 21st.

4476 – Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 7th March at 7.30pm in the Old School, Batcombe.

Chris Wildridge
7th March 2018