

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

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You are Summoned to the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 6th June 2018 at 8.00pm 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 9th May 2018 to be agreed and signed. *Enclosed.*

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Hire of Old School – the Village Hall Trust have been approached about increasing the payment that the Parish Council makes for its meetings and have responded that this is not necessary in light of the grant the Parish Council pays for other organisations to use the Old School for committee meetings. The Trust have also returned the £8 cheque for the hire of the Jubilee Hall for the meeting with the MP.

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. Affordable Housing – Proposed development in Westcombe

Following last month's meeting the Parish Council received a request from Lee Wright, a consultant acting on behalf of Pat Bridgeman, a developer who has expressed an interest in bringing forward a development for affordable housing on the site in Westcombe, for answers to a series of question. I responded to Mr Wright, informing him of the Council's efforts to find alternative sites and that none had been offered and stating that the Parish Council would welcome "in principle" an application to provide the affordable housing that the Housing Needs Survey had shown was needed, but had not considered or assessed the site in Westcombe.

Mr Bridgeman has provided a feasibility sketch (which will be on display at the meeting) and would welcome the Parish Council's comments on this. Mr Bridgeman is planning to be at the meeting to

answer any questions Councillors may have. It should be noted that this is not a planning consultation and any comments made will not prejudice the Parish Council's subsequent consideration of a planning application that would be determined on the merits of that application alone. It would however be helpful to Mr Bridgeman to know what the Council's initial thoughts are on the development as he is considering making an outline planning application.

8. Allotments

One of the vacant allotments has been taken. In line with previous practice, the rent was reduced to £20 for the remainder of the year until November. Thanks to Justin who has strimmed off the remaining vacant allotments. The owners of the allotments field expressed concern about the state of the field and as a result Gary Butler was asked to mow to the communal areas and with the strimming of the vacant allotments the field looks in a much better state. The rent for the field has been paid and the owners have been asked if they wish to renew the lease, which comes to an end next April. The owners have also expressed concern about the far corner of the field and the Council needs to consider paying for this area to be cleared

9. Footpaths and Highways

As noted last month, we have been informed that Quaperlake Street in Bruton is expected to be closed for two evenings (6.30pm to 11.30pm) from June 11th to allow resurfacing of the road. Closures of Quaperlake Street usually mean additional traffic through Batcombe but this may be less so in the evening. Quaperlake Street was closed in May for a couple of days due to a burst water pipe.

We wait to hear if our MP has made any progress in getting the presalting of the road through Batcombe re-instated.

Somerset Highways have stated that they will look into the provision of a No HGV sign at the Hedgestocks crossroads at some point in June. The Chairman would like the Parish Council to consider placing its own notice here similar to the one on the A359 junction.

10. Playground - Maintenance Report.

The annual inspection of the Playing Field by RoSPA will take place in June and Ian Sage has volunteered to add the remaining playbark from last year to the multi-play.

An open meeting for parents to suggest ideas of what they would like in the way of play equipment in the Playing Field took place in May. The Vice Chairman to report back.

Thanks to Ian Sage for removing the remains of the seat around the tree stump in the Playing Field. There was a delay in removing the tree stump from the Playing Field

Unfortunately Gardens of Avalon have withdrawn from the contract to cut the grass in the Playing Field (and around the telephone kiosk in Batcombe). This was due to the late payment (by a couple of days) of the invoice for the grass cutting in April. This was a result of the later than usual meeting date in May and of one of the two signatories being unavailable for a few days. It is also a result of there only being two Councillors how are currently signatories on the Parish Council bank account. Alternative contractors are being sought.

11. Planning Applications:

Planning Application No: 2018/0992/FUL Proposed conversion and change of use of redundant barn (sui generis) into a gym, games room and home office, ancillary to dwelling, with proposed detached garage, tennis court and greenhouse/potting shed.

Lower Eastcombe Farm, Eastcombe Lane, Batcombe – Full Application.

The Parish Council has been granted an extension to the consultation deadline to consider this application at this meeting. The barn being converted is the lower barn by the entrance from Eastcombe Lane. This will house a gym on the ground floor and a games room on the first floor. In

addition the existing log store attached to the barn will be replaced by a two story extension containing a home office on the ground floor and a party room on the first floor. The existing timber stable by the entrance from Eastcombe Lane will be replaced by a detached garage of similar size and footprint. The proposed greenhouse/potting shed will be of a similar size to the existing upper barn above the farmhouse and will be placed near to this barn. The tennis court will be placed beyond the farmhouse and upper barns and cut into the landscape to soften the visual impact. The route of the footpath that runs from Eastcombe Lane and up the track past the farmhouse will not be affected. The only neighbours have indicated that they have no objections to the proposals.

Planning Application No: 2018/0985/HSE Proposed single storey rear extension, new porch, single storey side infill extension. Netherlea, Back Lane, Batcombe – Householder Application.

The Parish Council has been granted an extension to the consultation deadline to consider this application at this meeting. The single storey rear extension is on the side of the house facing Ivy Wall House and will replace an existing conservatory to create a sun room. The new porch replaces the existing one on the front of the house and is slightly larger. The infill extension is between the house and the existing garage.

Plans for these applications can be viewed for half an hour before the meeting or online at the District Council's Planning <https://publicaccess.mendip.gov.uk/online-applications/> Just enter the planning application reference number in the search engine.

Planning Application Updates.

The District Council had no objection to the proposed tree works on the Cedar tree at Rockwells House.

12. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into effect on May 25th, and the legislation has been amended so Parish Councils do not have to appoint a Data Protection Officer. I have undertaken a data audit of the data the Parish Council holds and processes and the legal basis on which we do this (attached). This is based on a template provided by SLCC. I have also produced two Privacy Notices, one to go on the website and one for Councillors (attached). Again these are based on templates produced by SLCC.

There are other requirements of the GDPR which we still need to be implement. We have to review how we obtain consent which must be explicitly given. We also need to check that our processes meet individuals' new rights, which include the right to have data deleted and the right to know what data the Council holds on them, why it is being processed and whether it has been divulged to a third party. In particular, we need to adopt a Data Retention Policy, referred to in the Data Audit but not actually in place yet. As noted at the last meeting we do not have to have all this in place but do but do have to have a plan to implement it. I suggest aiming to have the Document Retention Policy in place by September.

13. Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control, Internal Auditor's Report and Certificate of Exemption from a Limited Assurance Review

Our Financial Regulations (1.5) require a review of the effectiveness of our system of internal control before approving the Annual Governance Statement which forms part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (see below). I believe our system of internal control to be more than sufficient for a small Parish Council. The details are given in the Financial Regulations. These include the budgetary process, the authorisation of all payments by the Council, the signing of cheques at Council meetings by two Councillors, who have to initial the cheque stubs and invoices, the quarterly bank reconciliations and the requirement for an internal audit.

This year our usual internal auditor was unable to complete the audit within the required timescale. Fortunately, the audit was taken on by Darren Powell of Fraser & Co Accountants at short notice –

thanks to Justin for arranging this. The Internal Audit Report will be available at the meeting. This will hopefully state that all the internal control objectives were achieved.

This year Parish Councils, whose income and expenditure are both less than £25,000, do not have to send the Annual Return to the external auditor provided they send the external auditor a certificate of exemption (copy enclosed) signed at this meeting and publish the Annual Return on their website by July 2nd.

14. Annual Return Section 1 – Approval of Annual Governance Statement 2017/18

Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is the Annual Governance Statement (copy enclosed). This has to be approved by the Council before the Council approves the Accounting Statements with a separate Minute reference. I believe the Council can agree all eight statements.

Notes: Statement 4 - The Parish Council's accounts have to be available for inspection for 30 working days that include the first ten working days in July.); Statement 7 – last year's external audit pointed out that the internal auditor had agreed that petty cash payments were properly supported by receipt when in fact there were no petty cash payments and so the correct response was "Not covered". This has been pointed out to the new internal auditor.

15. Annual Return Section 2 – Approval of Accounting Statements 2017/18

Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is the Statement of Accounts (copy enclosed) which has to be approved by the Council. The enclosed Financial Statements for last year show how the figures in the Statement of Accounts have been derived – the circled numbers refer to the boxes in the Statement of Accounts. There is a significant variation in boxes 6 between the figures for last year and those for the previous year. This is due to the money being spent on repairing the War Memorial wall and on the Housing Needs Survey in 2016/17. The value of fixed assets in box 9 is obtained from the Schedule of Assets and is unchanged.

The Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities requires that signed copies of the Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Statement and the Internal Auditor's Report have to be published on the Parish Council website no later than July 1st, along with a bank reconciliation and details of all items of expenditure over £100 and land assets.

16. Annual Grants from the Parish Council

The Parish Council has budgeted for a grant of £300 to the Village Hall (£100 for our own meetings, £150 for committee meetings of other village organisations and £50 to help with maintenance costs); for a grant of £200 to the Parochial Church Council for the maintenance of the churchyard and £200 for smaller grants to charities. Last year the Council gave two grants of £100 to Mendip Community Transport and Mendip Citizens Advice Bureau. In the past we have supported Victim Support Somerset; Mendip RELATE; the Bruton Carers Group; St Margaret's Somerset Hospice and Somerset Art Works.

The Council has the power to support the Village Hall Trust, to help maintain the churchyard, and to support the Citizens Advice Bureau, but grants to other charities must be made by a specific resolution under the section 137 power, which allows the Council to spend a limited sum on items in the interest of parishioners which it has no specific power to support.

17. Additional Bank Signatory

Mary Comley volunteered to be a bank signatory in January and is in the process of having her name added to the bank mandate. An additional signatory would be good in case of illness or absence and Justin Witcombe has volunteered to be a signatory. The Parish Council needs to pass a resolution adding his name to the mandate. Current signatories are the Chairman and John Sommer. The Clerk also has to be a signatory to receive bank statements etc but under Standing Orders cannot sign cheques.

18. Authorisation of Payment

The following are retrospective authorisations, payments have been already required:

Gardens of Avalon - £59.00 – Grass cutting in May.

SSE - £23.05 – Playing Field electricity – January to April.

Plus any grants approved under item 16.

19. Other Business – matters of information only.

Please note that the Parish Council cannot make decisions on items that do not appear on the Agenda – so matters raised under this item are for information only.

20. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 4th July 2018 at 8.00pm in the Old School.

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

30th May 2018