

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

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You are Summoned to the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 5th September 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 Meetings held on Wednesdays 4th July and 1st August 2018 to be agreed and signed. *Enclosed.*

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Unauthorised Camping – the two caravans camped at the gravel store on the Hedgestocks crossroads moved on again after ten days. The site was cleaned up by local volunteers and a small pile of gravel placed in the hole in the fence to prevent further unauthorised entry.

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. Allotments

The owners of the allotment field have agreed to extend the lease of the field for another five years. As it is ten years since the field was first leased the owners would like to increase the rent to £220 a year. There has been an inquiry about one of the vacant allotments from someone based in Bruton.

8. Footpaths and Highways

No news yet as to whether Batcombe has been re-instated on the presalting network, but this is normally published later in the autumn.

There has also been no response yet from Somerset Highways to the request for the provision of a No HGV sign at the Hedgestocks crossroads.

9. Emergency Plan

Justin Witcombe to report back on progress made by the Working Party. An open meeting has been organised for Saturday 15th September (2-4.00pm in the Jubilee Hall) for people to volunteer to help in an emergency. Justin has spoken to the landlord of The Three Horseshoes who would be happy for a defibrillator to be placed on the wall of the pub. There are also volunteers willing to fundraise for the costs of providing a defibrillator.

10. Playground - Maintenance Report.

The annual inspection of the Playing Field by RoSPA took place in July this year. Councillors have been sent a link to download the report. Paper copies will be available at the meeting. Most items in the Playing Field are considered low or very low risk. No item is high risk. Zip wire – low risk but we should monitor the timber rot and avoid strimming around the posts (which may accelerate the rot). Planting (i.e. the hedge) – medium risk as it needed cutting back but this has been done. Willow tunnel – low risk but we should monitor for broken, protruding branches. Overhead rings – low risk but we should monitor softness in the timber. [When we accompanied the inspector last year I asked about this “softness in the timber” and we were unable to find any evidence of it.] Multi-play – we should monitor splits in timber and replace rotten timber – decking and supports. Risk is considered medium at present but the inspection did not include timber below ground.

Molehills were much reduced but they are now making a comeback. Several appeared after the Fete.

The Playing Field was left in a good state after the Fete.

New Play Equipment – *The Playing Field Working Party have obtained a quote from a play equipment manufacturer for new play equipment coming to just over £50,000 and would like the Parish Council to apply for a Big Lottery Fund grant to pay for this. Details of the quote, drawings of the equipment and a plan of where it would go have been forwarded to Councillors. The quote is to replace the existing multi-play with a smaller multi-play and a swirl roundabout suitable for wheelchair use, and the additional of a basket seat swing and a pair of mini goals. A large part of the cost comes from the use of wet pour safety surfacing around the multi-play, roundabout and entrance to the Playing Field.*

As noted at the last meeting, the Council’s Financial Regulations require three quotations for work of this nature to be undertaken. I have contacted two other play equipment companies to see if they would be willing to provide a quote and there are other companies available. It would be helpful to have the Council’s views on the current quote when asking for other quotes. If funds were available would the Council wish to replace the existing multi-play or repair it? Does the Council want to use wet-pour safety surfacing in place of the current play bark and panels that allow grass to grow through? There is also the issue of whether the new equipment should encroach on the football pitch?

When it comes to applying for a large scale grant the Council has two options. One is the Big Lottery Fund; the other is Viridor Credits which provides funds from the landfill tax and which we can apply to due to our proximity to the Dimmer landfill site. Does the Council wish to explore either or both of these options? A grant from Viridor Credits is more likely as the potential applicants are more limited, but it does require a 3rd party contribution of 10% of the grant. So for a grant of £50,000 we would need a contribution of £5,000. Fundraising counts as a 3rd party contribution and we have £572 towards this. The Big Lottery Fund does not require the 3rd party contribution but does need evidence of community involvement. Both organisations require an initial application to check eligibility before making a full application so these can be made without committing the Council.

The Council has also been offered help from a fundraising consultant with connections to the village but as this is her occupation there would be a cost involved – 3.5% of the amount applied for for completing the application and 11.5% if successful.

11. Planning Applications:

None at present.

Planning Application Updates.

The application for the horse arena at Baileys Lane Farm (Ref: 2018/1668/FUL) has been granted planning permission with the conditions that no external lighting/floodlighting be erected and that the arena be for the private use of Baileys Lane Farm only.

12. 1918 Armistice Commemoration

To consider a Parish Council contribution to this event.

13. Review of Standing Orders

All Councillors should have a copy of the current Standing Orders that were adopted in February 2014 and are based on a model produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). A copy of the Standing Orders can be downloaded from the Parish Council website on the Parish Council Documents page – if any Councillor needs a paper copy, please inform the Clerk. Standing Orders were amended in 2016 to allow the electronic distribution of Agendas and papers to those Councillors who wished to receive them in this manner. The Council also suspended Standing Order 31 which only allowed recording with the Council's prior written consent as recording is now allowed under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014. I am not aware of any further amendments that need to be made to Standing Orders.

14. GDPR – Document Retention Policy

As noted at the June meeting the Parish Council requires a Document Retention Policy to comply with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) with regard to how long it keeps various categories of data before disposing of it. Included with the Agendas is a proposed Document Retention Policy based on a model produced by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). Also included is an Appendix giving details of the minimum retention periods and methods of disposal for the various documents the Council processes. This is also based on a model produced by the SLCC. In one variation from the model I suggest that the original Minutes of the Parish Council are kept in the Batcombe Heritage Room (where they are currently stored in a dehumidified fire-proof safe) rather than being deposited at the Taunton Heritage Centre – as this allows ease of access to pre-computerised Minutes.

15. Administration

Included at the request of the Chairman. A resolution to exclude the public for this item will need to be passed.

16. Bank Reconciliation and Budget Update

Our Financial Regulations require that every quarter a bank reconciliation is produced by the Clerk, checked by a member of the Council, and reported to the Council as soon as possible after the end of the quarter. As we only had a short meeting in August this will be the first opportunity to report on the bank reconciliation for the quarter to 30th June.

Financial Regulations also require the Clerk to provide an update on the budget each quarter. The enclosed sheet with four columns of figures shows the accounts for last year, the budget for this year, receipts and payments to date this year and a projection for this year based on expenditure to date.

Receipts are projected to be approximately £90 less than the budgeted figure because there will probably be two vacant allotments in November and the VAT reclaimed was less than expected when the budget was produced.

The projection for the Playing Field expenditure is roughly as budgeted. Grass cutting and trimming includes £110 for hedge cutting. This is likely to be around £200 more than budgeted due to the change of contractor. Maintenance consists of £60 for the molecatcher and £120 for the removal of

the stump. Overall maintenance is likely to be around £200 less than budgeted because no play bark was purchased this year. The £2,000 budgeted for repair of the multi-play may not be spent if it is decided to replace the play equipment. If undertaken the repairs might be deferred to next year.

The projection for the expenditure on Administration is likely to be £50 more than the budgeted figure because of the cost of two encrypted flash drives to back up the Council laptop, which had not been budgeted for.

The projection for the expenditure on Other items is £65 less than budgeted because the new contractor does not charge separately for cutting the grass around the telephone box. £400 has been budgeted for an Armistice 100 Commemoration, but we have no details of what this will involve as yet.

Overall the projected deficit of £990 is very close to the budgeted deficit of £1,005. However, the healthier position at the start of the year means that the projected funds at the end of the year are around £6,585 – £1,180 better than expected when the budget was made. This is partly due to the £572 raised for the new play equipment.

It should be noted that approximately £1,000 of the figure will be earmarked for the allotments and £572 for the new play equipment.

17. Authorisation of Payment

£???.00 Dominic Conway – Grass cutting in August. (*Invoice not yet received.*)

18. Other Business – matters of information only.

The next PACT meeting will take place at Wanstrow Village Hall on Wednesday September 11th at 7.30pm. This will be an opportunity to meet the new PCSO Ryan Mockridge.

19. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 3rd October 2018 at 8.00pm in the Old School.

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

30th August 2018