

# BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

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## Minutes of a Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 in the Village Hall Car Park, commencing at 8.00pm.

**Present - Councillors:** Janet Jones – Vice Chairman, Mary Comley, Jayne Cox, Peter Glaisher and Ian Sage.

**Also Present:** The Clerk – Rob Sage, and one member of the public.

**5070 – Apologies for Absence and Acceptance of Reasons for Absence:** David Stevens. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman chaired the meeting. For the benefit of the member of the public present it was noted that this was a short meeting to conduct business that had to be done by the Council meeting in person and that the meeting was being held outside due to the current coronavirus restrictions.

**5071 – Declarations of Interest:** None.

**5072 – Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control, Internal Auditor’s Report and Certificate of Exemption from a Limited Assurance Review:** The Clerk reported his belief that the Council’s system of internal control was more than sufficient for a small Parish Council. The details were given in the Financial Regulations and included 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 internal audit.

Griff Williams was thanked for undertaking the role of Internal Auditor. Copies of the Internal Auditor’s Report had been enclosed with the Agendas. The Internal Auditor had no recommendations to make to the Council, but had noted that changes to the regulations meant that there would be additional requirements for next year’s internal audit.

Parish Councils whose annual income and expenditure were both less than £25,000 no longer had to send the Annual Return to the external auditor provided that they sent a certificate of exemption and published the Annual Return on their website by July 1<sup>st</sup>. It was agreed that the Parish Council met the requirements for exemption and the certificate was signed by the Vice Chairman and the Clerk as the Responsible Financial Officer.

**5073 – Annual Return Section 1 – Approval of Annual Governance Statement 2020/21:** Copies of Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return - the Annual Governance Statement - had been enclosed with the Agendas. Approval of the Annual Governance Statement was agreed and the Statement was signed by the Vice Chairman and the Clerk.

**5074 – Annual Return Section 2 – Approval of Accounting Statements 2020/21:** Copies of Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return – the Statement of Accounts – had been enclosed with the Agendas, along with a copy of the Financial Statements, considered at the previous meeting, showing how the figures in the Statement of Accounts had been derived. Approval of the Statement of Accounts was agreed and this was signed by the Vice Chairman, having previously been signed by the Clerk as the Responsible Financial Officer. It was noted that there were significant variations (of more than 15%) in boxes 3, 6 and 9 between the figures for last year and those for the previous year. In box 3

this was due to the money raised for the new play equipment being £8,405 in 2019/20 compared to £910 in 2020/21. In box 6 this was due to the payment of the Contributing Third Party payment of £5,898 towards the play equipment grant in 2020/21. In box 9 this was due to the removal of the zip-wire (purchase value £5,000) from the Schedule of Assets when it was removed from the Playing Field.

**5075 - Authorisation of Payments:** Councillors authorised the following payments:

Somerset Playing Fields Association - £15.00 – Subscription.

Dominic Conway - £160.00 – Grass cutting in May.

The Clerk - £463.71 – Reimbursement of the Insurance Premium paid by bank transfer.

Sutcliffe Play (South West) Limited - £8,605 – The difference between the grant from Viridor Credits and the cost of the new play equipment (£3,357) plus the VAT on the remaining play equipment invoices (£5,248 – to be reclaimed).

**5076 – Extension of the Business Continuity Motion:** A Business Continuity Motion delegating the authority to make decisions to the Clerk in consultation with the Parish Councillors had been passed at the Annual Parish Council Meeting on May 5<sup>th</sup> and originally intended to last until the coronavirus restrictions were lifted on June 21<sup>st</sup>. Given the extension of the coronavirus restrictions until July 19<sup>th</sup>, it was agreed to extend the authority delegated to the Clerk to July 19<sup>th</sup>.

**5077 – Date and Time of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021 at 8.00pm in the Jubilee Hall. This was a change to the previously planned meeting on July 14<sup>th</sup> on the basis that the current restrictions would end on July 19<sup>th</sup>.