

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

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You are Summoned to the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 6th February 2019 at 7.30pm 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 the Meetings held on Wednesdays 2nd January and 9th January 2019 to be agreed and signed. *Enclosed.*

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Shindig Weekender Licence Application – Chris Wildridge to report on the hearing concerning this application.

Precept for 2019/20 – The precept of £9,750 for 2019/20 has been submitted to Mendip District Council and acknowledged.

6. Defibrillators for Batcombe and Westcombe

The Batcombe and Westcombe Defibrillator Group have changed their mind and decided that they do want to come under the umbrella of the Parish Council. For the Group to become a Working Party of the Parish Council, the Council will need to agree to this and set terms of reference. Draft terms of reference are attached. It will need to be pointed out to the Group that while a Working Party can make recommendations, it is the Parish Council that makes decisions such as which defibrillator provider to use and where they are to be located. The advantage of being a Working Party is that the Parish Council can claim the VAT back on the purchase of the defibrillator – but to do this the Parish Council has to own and take responsibility for the defibrillators. The Group estimates that maintenance of each defibrillator will cost an average of £100 a year. Members of the Defibrillator Group are planning to attend the meeting.

7. 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.

8. Allotments

Allotment rents were due on November 1st. So far I have only received the rent for four allotments, and another may have paid by bank transfer. The allotment holder who holds two allotments and is concerned about the water supply has not yet decided whether to give these up. If he does give up, this means we may have five vacant allotments which brings into question the long viability of the allotments.

We have not yet signed a new lease for the allotments field, but would need to give the existing allotment holders twelve months notice from next November. This means that if we decided to end the provision of the allotments we would need to agree a new lease for the next two years with the owners of the field. The alternative is to continue leasing the field for the next five years to see if demand for allotments does increase again. If we only had five allotments rented this would bring in £175 a year. The rent for the field is £220 a year and maintenance will cost around another £80 a year, meaning the allotments would be running at a deficit of £125 a year. While we have £900 earmarked for the allotments, a large part of this will be needed to restore the field to its original condition at the end of the lease.

9. Footpaths and Highways

We have been notified of a temporary closure of Kale Street to allow Kier for Bristol Water to carry out connection works. The Closure Order becomes effective from February 18th and will remain in force for eighteen months. The works are expected to last for five days. The works will be at the Back Lane end of Kale Street.

We have not yet received from Somerset Highways the promised details of the options available to the Parish Council regarding our paying for pre-salting of the roads. I have received a response to our query about gully emptying. Somerset Highways have a planned maintenance programme where gulleys in non-flood susceptible rural areas are emptied every two years. Any specific sites where drains are blocked can be reported to Somerset Highways via Somerset Direct (0300 123 2224) or via the Clerk.

10. Playing Field

Maintenance Report – *Still no sign of molehills.*

New Play Equipment – *Members of the Working Party were unable to meet in January but hope to do so in February.*

11. Planning Applications:

Planning Application 2019/0040/HSE - Two single storey rear extensions

Giles Cottage, Batcombe – Householder Application

Giles Cottage was converted into a single dwelling from two cottages in 2014. The proposal is to add two single storey rear extensions, one at either end of the rear elevation of the cottage. There is a small two storey extension in the middle of the rear elevation that was added in 2014 to contain the stairs for the cottage. The cottage is in the Conservation Area and there are a number of trees to the rear of Giles Cottage. The proposal includes the removal of one tree in the rear garden and a protection plan for the remaining trees.

Planning Application Updates.

The application for five social rented 3 bedroom dwellings and one market housing 3 bedroom dwelling on land at Westcombe Stables Lane has been withdrawn.

12. Review of Risk Management Policy

The Risk Management Policy should be reviewed annually before the independent examination. Enclosed is a copy of the Risk Assessment and Management document. This is largely unchanged from last year. I've included an item for the eventual replacement of the laptop. As with all computers this sooner or later wear out and need replacing and we need to assure we have sufficient reserves to cover this. I'm not anticipated this will need to be done for several years yet.

13. Review of Insurance Policy

The Insurance Policy should be reviewed annually before the independent examination and before it is due for renewal in June. We are coming to the end of the three-year binding agreement with Came & Co. and so can consider alternative arrangements if we wish. Our insurance cover arranged by Came & Co cost £290 a year and included Public Liability and Employers Liability of £10 million each and Fraud and Dishonesty Cover of £150,000 (in case the Clerk runs off with the precept). The Playing Field equipment, the notice board opposite Church Farm and the Westcombe Telephone Kiosk are also insured. We need to decide if we wish to obtain alternative quotes to those provided by Came & Co.

14. Bank Reconciliation and Budget Update

The bank reconciliation for the third quarter to 31st December to be verified by a Councillor before the meeting and reported to the Council. (The cheque for the £100 grant to Mendip Citizens Advice Bureau that had not been banked at the last quarter's reconciliation has now been presented.)

An update on the budget as at the end of January for the current year is enclosed. The first column shows the actual accounts for last year. The second column is budget for this year as agreed last January. The third column is the receipts and payments to the end of January and the fourth column a projection of the position at the end of the year.

Receipts are projected to be approximately £1,500 more than the budgeted figure because of the £1,676 raised for the new play equipment. The difference between these two figures is a result of several allotments that are likely to be vacant at the end of the year and the fact that the VAT reclaimed was less than expected when the budget was produced.

The projection for the Playing Field expenditure is likely to be £2,267 less than budgeted, largely because the £2,000 budgeted for repair of the multi-play is unlikely to be spent this year. Grass cutting and trimming includes £110 for hedge cutting, and is likely slightly less than the budgeted figure despite the change of contractor resulting in an increased price per cut. Maintenance up to 31st January consisted of £160 for the molecatcher, £120 for the removal of the stump and £75 for cutting back the willow. Overall maintenance is likely to be around £250 less than budgeted because no play bark was purchased this year.

The projection for the expenditure on Administration is likely to be roughly in line with the budgeted figure. The extra cost of two encrypted flash drives to back up the Council laptop were balanced by the Clerk's salary and expenses being slightly less than budgeted.

The projection for the expenditure on Other items is £475 less than budgeted because only £50 is likely to be spent on the allotments; the new contractor does not charge separately for cutting the grass around the telephone box; and £400 was budgeted for the Armistice 100 Commemoration but the Council only spent £41.

If the £2,000 budgeted for the repair of the multi-play is not spent this year, there will be a surplus of £3,270 instead of the budgeted deficit of £1,005 – with £1,676 of this surplus being the money raised for the new play equipment. Together with the healthier position at the start of the year this means that the projected funds at the end of the year are around £10,845 – £5,445 better than expected when the budget was made. However, this is only because nothing is likely to be spent on the play equipment this year – but it will be needed next year.

It should be noted that approximately £1,000 of the figure will be earmarked for the allotments and £2,248 for the new play equipment.

15. Authorisation of Payment

- £35.00 Information Commissioner's Office – Registration (paid by Direct Debit).
- £25.00 NatWest Bank – Safe Custody Fee (bank charges paid directly from the bank account).
- £89.00 Society of Local Council Clerks - Clerk's Membership.
- £21.48 water2business – Water bill for the Playing Field (July – January).

16. Other Business – matters of information only.

Nothing at present.

17. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 6th March 2019 at 7.30pm in the Old School.

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

30th January 2019