

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage

Tel: 01749 850934

e-mail: clerk@batcombe-parish-council-somerset.org.uk

You are Summoned to the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 9th January 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 5th December and 19th December 2018 to be agreed and signed. *Enclosed. The Minutes of the meeting held on January 2nd will need to be agreed at our next meeting in February.*

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Shindig Weekender Licence Application – The representation has been made to the South Somerset Licensing Authority. Representations have also been made by the owner of the Batcombe Vale campsite and by residents at Higher Greenscombe.

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

Allotment rents were due on November 1st. So far I have only received the rent for three allotments. There are three vacant allotments and three allotment holders who have yet to pay for the four allotments they have. One has promised to pay but hasn't done so yet and the one who holds two allotments is considering whether to give these up. If he does this will mean we have five vacant allotments which brings into question the 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 four allotments rented this would bring in £140 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 £160 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.

8. Footpaths and Highways

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.

The No HGV signs have been placed at the Hedgestocks crossroads. Thanks to Mary Comley for following this up with Somerset Highways.

9. Playing Field

Maintenance Report – *No sign of molehills. The new electricity contract is now in place.*

Grass Cutting Contract – *Dominic Conway will let me have a quote in time for the meeting which is likely to be similar to last year's prices. I've not heard from Gary Butler yet. Greenways Grounds Maintenance have quoted £230 per cut for the Playing Field and £92 per cut for the grass around the telephone kiosk.*

New Play Equipment – *Members of the Working Party were unable to meet before Christmas, but hope to do so shortly.*

10. Planning Applications:

None at present.

Planning Application Updates.

A Tree Preservation Order has been placed on the tree on the site for affordable housing in Westcombe. There were no objections from the District Council for the proposed tree works at either Elm House on Kale Street or Little Court on Gold Hill.

The following alterations to the planning permission for the extension at Mole Cottage have been granted as non-material amendments: "alteration to the rear elevation to change a large picture window and separate external glazed door to an integrated steel framed glazed screen and double doors to the external courtyard"; and "proposed roof finishes including the green roof and standing seam zinc roofing is to be replaced with lead roofs". Approval of details reserved by conditions 4-7 on this permission has also been given.

11. Review of the Connection with External Bodies

Council's Membership of the Somerset Association of Local Councils

Clerk's Membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks

Membership of both of these bodies is very helpful in providing information and advice on matters relating to the work of the Parish Council and would make the Clerk's job more difficult if they were not available. Membership of SALC will cost around £110 in 2019 and paying for the Clerk's membership of the SLCC will cost a further £100.

12. Budget and Precept 2019/20

A copy of the proposed Budget for 2019/2020 is attached and details can be found on the last two month's Agendas. A decision on the precept was deferred from the last meeting to allow for the possibility of including expenditure on pre-salting the roads and so we would know what the tax base would be for 2019/20 and the impact the increase in the precept will have on Council Tax. [The tax base is the number of Band D equivalent properties in Batcombe when taking into account the number of empty properties, various discounts (including 25% for single people) and the weighting of the different bands above and below Band D.]

Batcombe's tax base for 2018/19 is 215.2 which when revised for a 2% non collection rate becomes 210.9. The revised tax base for 2018/19 was 201.59. A higher tax base means that the same increase in precept will produce a lower increase in Council Tax.

If the Parish Council were to leave its precept unchanged at £9,200, a Band D property with no discounts would have to pay £43-62 towards the precept in 2019/20 instead of £44-40 this year, an reduction of 1.75%. If, as suggested in the Budget, the Council increases its precept by £550 to £9,750 (an increase of 5.98% in the precept), a Band D property with no discounts would have to pay £46-23 towards the precept, an increase of 4.12%. Please note that it is this figure that appears on Council Tax bills.

13. Authorisation of Payment

£996.72 The Clerk – Salary for 3rd Quarter. (See enclosed sheet.)

£140.77 The Clerk – Expenses for 3rd Quarter. (See enclosed sheet. The total includes £41 for the poppy wreath laid at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday.)

14. Other Business – matters of information only.

A resident with links to Bruton Town Council tells me that the Council have considered an application for a hotel in Bruton High Street that proposed to deal with the issue of car parking by providing a valet car parking service with cars being parked at Batcombe. I understand that this was not considered to be a practical solution.

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

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

2nd January 2019