

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 6th February 2019 in the Old School, Batcombe, commencing at 7.30pm.

Present - Councillors: John Sommer – Chairman, Mary Comley, Jayne Cox, Wiff Cox and Chris Wildridge.

Also Present: The Clerk – Rob Sage, PCSO Ryan Mockridge and three members of the public.

4671 – Apologies for Absence: Justin Witcombe and Dick Skidmore – District Councillor.

4672 – Declarations of Interest: None.

4673 – Public Participation: PCSO Ryan Mockridge asked if anyone had any questions. He noted that the Frome Rural South Beat now had three Police Community Support Officers so they were likely to be seen more often in the villages.

4674 – Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesdays 2nd January and 9th January 2019. Chris Wildridge proposed that the following statement be added to the Minute 4654 in the Minutes of the meeting on January 2nd:

“In response to a call for clarification from a member of the public Mr Wright then addressed the meeting and stated that a new full application would be submitted by his client on the basis of 3 three-bedroom houses and 2 two-bedroom houses and it would include a full consultation period. Councillor Skidmore then confirmed that statement.”

After a discussion of whether Mr Wright had been referring to a new application or an amendment to the existing application it was agreed to add the following statement to Minute 4654:

“In response to a call for clarification from a member of the public Mr Wright then addressed the meeting and stated that an amended application would be submitted by his client on the basis of 3 three-bedroom houses and 2 two-bedroom houses and it would include a full consultation period. Councillor Skidmore then confirmed that statement.”

The amended Minutes for January 2nd and the Minutes for January 9th were agreed then as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4675 – Defibrillators for Batcombe and Westcombe: It was noted that the Batcombe and Westcombe Defibrillator Group had changed their mind and wished to come under the umbrella of the Parish Council. Patrick Taylor spoke on behalf of the Group stating that they were prepared to raise funds of around £4,000 for two defibrillators – one in Westcombe and one in Batcombe – and that these could be the difference between life and death. However, the Group did not wish to be involved in the regular maintenance of the defibrillators which needed to be checked every month and felt it was better for the Parish Council to take this on along with the ongoing costs estimated at £100 a year for each machine.

Parish Councillors were concerned at how effective a defibrillator would be, noting that you would have to have someone performed CPR on the victim while someone else went to find

the defibrillator. It was also noted that Wanstrow had had a defibrillator for eight years and it had never been used. Councillors were also concerned that the maintenance of the defibrillators would be one more thing for the Parish Council to deal with to when they had other priorities such as the salting of the roads. Consequently, the Parish Council felt that it could not take on the ongoing maintenance of the defibrillators but encouraged the Defibrillator Group to continue.

4676 – Matters Arising: Shindig Weekender Licence Application – South Somerset District Council had refused permission for this premises licence due to the late submission of health and safety documents, failure to agree conditions with the police until the morning of the hearing, concerns over a 50% increase in the size of the festival to 10,000 people and the impact of playing music until 4.00am on local residents. Chris Wildridge reported on the hearing to consider the licence application which he had attended on the Parish Council's behalf. The organisers of Shindig had the right to appeal, but Chris felt that they would have difficulty in complying with the timescale required by the conditions laid down by the police. It was noted that since the decision had been made there had been a campaign on Facebook in support of the music festival.

4677 – District and County Councillors' Reports: None.

4678 – Allotments: The Clerk reported that only four allotment rents had been paid, although one other allotment holder had promised to pay. This meant that there could be five vacant allotments which raised a question about the long-term viability of the allotments. The Clerk to contact the owners of the field and see if they would be willing to lease the field for a period of two years which would allow the Parish Council to give the existing allotment holders a year's notice before returning the field to its original condition. The vacant allotments to be considered at the next meeting.

4679 – Footpaths and Highways: The Parish Council had been informed that Kale Street would be closed for five days from February 18th for water connections works.

The promised options available to the Parish Council regarding our paying for the pre-salting of the road still had not been received from Somerset Highways and the Clerk was asked to chase this up with the officer concerned and if nothing was heard to report this to the County Councillor. Justin Witcombe, Wiff Cox, Antony Slocombe and Scrump were thanked for their help in opening the road out of Batcombe after the snow. The Clerk to write a letter of thanks to those not on the Council.

It was noted that there was water flowing on Back Lane and Hincombe Hill. A blocked gully at the bottom of Mill Lane had been reported to Somerset Highways, who were unable to deal with it because their jetting lorry could not get down Mill Lane. It was also noted that there was water on the road at Burts Hill in Wanstrow.

4680 – Playing Field - Maintenance Report: There were still no signs of molehills in the Playing Field.

New Play Equipment – The Working Party was planning to meet the following Saturday.

4681 – 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 and the proposal was to add two single storey rear extensions, one at either end of the rear elevation of the cottage. There were

no objections to the proposed extensions which were not considered to have a significant visual impact on the Conservation Area and so the Parish Council recommended approval.

The Clerk reported that notification of two planning applications had been received too late to be included on the Agenda and it was hoped to obtain extensions to consider these at the next meeting. The applications were for Listed Building Consent for the revised alterations at Mole Cottage on Kale Street and for tree works on land behind Paddock House on Mill Lane.

Planning Application Updates: The Chairman declared an interest in the following planning application and it was noted that the application for five social rented 3-bedroom dwellings and one market housing 3-bedroom dwelling on land at Westcombe Stables Lane had been withdrawn.

4682 – Review of Risk Management Policy - A copy of the Risk Assessment and Management Policy had been distributed with the Agendas. The Clerk reported that he had added the risk of needing to replace the Parish Council laptop, which would eventually need replacing. Otherwise there were no changes to the Risk Assessment from previous years.

4683 – Review of Insurance Cover - The Clerk noted that the 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. The Playing Field equipment, the notice board opposite Church Farm and the Westcombe Telephone Kiosk are also insured. The Parish Council was coming to the end of the three-year long-term agreement and it was agreed that alternative quotes to those provided by Came & Co should be obtained.

4684 – Bank Reconciliation and Budget Update: Mary Comley reported to the meeting that she had checked the bank reconciliation prepared by the Clerk for the quarter to 31st December 2018.

An update on the budget had been enclosed with the Agendas, and this showed the accounts for the previous year, the budget for the current year, receipts and payments to date in the current year and a projection for this year based on the receipts and payment to date.

The Clerk reported that total receipts for the year were 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 was a result of several allotments that were 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 was likely to be £2,267 less than budgeted, largely because the £2,000 budgeted for repair of the multi-play was unlikely to be spent in the current financial year. Grass cutting and trimming included £110 for hedge cutting, and was likely to be 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 was 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 was £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 was not spent this year, there would 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 meant that the projected funds at the end of the year were around £10,845 – £5,445 better than expected when the budget was made. However, this was only because nothing was likely to be spent on the play equipment this year – but it would be needed next year. The Clerk noted that around £1,000 of the figure would be earmarked for the allotments and £2,248 for new play equipment.

4685 - Authorisation of payment: Councillors authorised the following payments:

- £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).

4686 – Other Business - Matters of Information Only: Jayne Cox noted that there was a report in the Bruton magazine, The Dove, stating that the Town Council had not objected to the proposal for the hotel noted at the last meeting, for which there had apparently been a suggestion of valet parking at Batcombe.

The PCSO was informed of a car left parked next to the junction by the Church. In answer to a question the PCSO noted that there had been an assault on a woman walking her dog in Batcombe a couple of weeks previously. The attacker had run off after grabbing both her arms. Enquiries were ongoing but it was believed to be a one-off attack and there would be patrols in the evenings to reassure residents.

4687 – Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 6th March 2019 at 7.30pm in the Old School Rooms, Batcombe.

John Sommer
6/3/19