

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

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You are Summoned to the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 4th September 2019 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 the Meetings held on Wednesdays 3rd July and 7th August 2019 to be agreed and signed. *Enclosed.*

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Annual Grants – Thanks have been received for the grants to the Village Hall Trust and to Mendip Community Transport.

Tree Plaque at Batcombe House – David Stevens has spoken to the owner of Batcombe House and reports that there is a concern over the tree commemorated by the plaque (the 100th tree planted to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee) due to its closeness to the wall of Batcombe House garden.

Sewage Treatment Plant at Ash Tree Cottages – The Chairman has been in contact with Hastoes and will update the Parish Council on the lack of progress with the repair/replacement of the defective plant.

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. Our District Council has provided a written report which is enclosed.

7. Allotments

The tap on the water tank is dripping and needs to be repaired before it becomes a problem. Earlier in the summer the water supply to the farm from which the allotments water is taken ran low and the water to the allotments had to be turned off. Fortunately on each occasion there was sufficient water in the tank to last until the water was turned on again.

As all the allotments are now taken the Parish Council does not need to consider given notice to the remaining allotment holders. A new lease with the landowner will need to be drawn up in due course.

8. Footpaths and Highways

Somerset Highways have informed the Parish Council that the road at the railway bridge in Wanstrow will be closed on the evening of September 7th from 11.00pm to 5.00am. This is to allow Network Rail to fit missing bridge chevrons to both elevations of the bridge.

We have had a response from David Peake, the Highway Service Manager, to the request for the options the Parish Council has with regard to salting the roads. He states that Batcombe has not been included in the precautionary salting network for the coming winter. He adds that the highway arrangements for the coming winter includes a Community Snow Warden Scheme aimed to encourage self-help within communities in winter weather with some support from the County Council. The details of this scheme are being developed and the County Council will be contacting parish councils with more information shortly. He suggests that we discuss the situation in Batcombe with him once this information has been sent out.

9. Playground.

Maintenance Report: *The Playing Field was left in a very good condition after the Fete. However inspection of the multi-play apparatus showed that the support for part of the bridge has cracked and is no longer safe. I've put warning signs on the equipment stating that it should not be used and hopefully this supporting beam can be replaced relatively easily. The section of the decking that has rotted is now significant and needs to be covered with a board before being used again.*

The Fete Committee have raised a number of issues which they would like the Parish Council to address. One is the tap in the bus shelter and whether this could be reinstated for the Fete. (Perhaps we could install a tap with a removable handle.) The second was that they had problems with the electricity tripping. (This may be an issue with overloading.) And the third is that the anchor point for the picnic table presents a trip hazard when the table is moved for the Fete.

The inside of the Playing Field hedge was cut by Gary Butler. Gary notes that the hedge is encroaching onto the Playing Field, particularly behind the willow structure. The hedge can be cut back more but would leave bare branches until it starts growing back. The outside of the hedge was cut by John Wiltshire and the verge outside the Playing Field cut by Justin Witcombe.

Annual Safety Inspection: *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 – medium risk but we should monitor the timber rot and avoid strimming around the posts (which may accelerate the rot). Willow tunnel – low risk but we should monitor for broken, protruding branches. Overhead rings – medium risk but no practical action apart from avoiding strimmer damage. Multi-play – risk is still considered medium but the risk score has increased from 8 last year to 12 this year (Scores between 8 and 14 on a scale of 1 to 25 are considered medium risk - scores of 15 and over are considered high risk when urgent action is needed).*

New Play Equipment: *Thank you to Councillors who have distributed copies of the letter donations/sponsorship for the new play equipment. We have received £500 in sponsorship from Westcombe Dairy and Peter Glaisher reports receiving a donation of £500. We have also received £450 in cheques and £20 in cash. In addition six people have asked for bank details to make a bank transfer. I won't know a total until I get the next bank statement but two have said they've donated £150 each. We can check at the meeting if there are any areas of the parish that have not received the letter.*

10. Planning Applications:

Planning Application No: 2019/2093/TCA – T1 - walnut - reduce crown by 30% - severe damage at base – Millards Hill House, Kale Street, Batcombe.

Planning Application Updates.

The application to convert the garage at Little Court to a ceramics studio for own use and to replace the garage roller door with glazed doors has been approved.

The application to remove the existing derelict building at the Lower Farm orchard and replace it with a new agricultural store has been approved.

The application for a lawful development certificate for the siting of a log cabin (mobile home) in the garden of 5 Kale Street to provide ancillary accommodation has been approved. As permitted development the Parish Council is not consulted on this application.

11. Application for the Diversion of Public Right of Way at Greenscombe Farm, Milton Clevedon

Jayne Cox has asked that the Parish Council consider this application for the diversion of Public Right of Way SM15/16 at Greenscombe Farm. This is not within the parish and so the Parish Council has not been consulted, but this is a bridleway used by several horseriders from our parish. There have been several objections on the grounds that the alternative proposed route is unsuitable. The application is linked to Planning Permission 2019/0962/FUL and Listed Building Consent 2019/0963/LBC for the “Erection of a link between the farmhouse and a barn with alterations to these buildings. Conversion and adaptation of existing outbuildings for ancillary residential use, provision of an open swimming pool with an associated building and a new building for equestrian and agricultural use” at Greenscombe Farm. It is proposed to place the new building on the existing bridleway. The determination date for all these applications has passed but no decision has yet been made. The Conservation Team have stated that Listed Building Consent should be refused as the level of harm to the listed buildings would not be outweighed by the public benefit.

12. Himalayan Balsam along the River Alham

A resident of Stoney Stratton (who happens to be a former environmental officer with Bristol City Council) has reported that the stretch of river between Spargrove and Westcombe is heavily infested with the invasive weed Himalayan Balsam. She has reported this to Mendip District Council but has been informed that it is the landowners responsibility to clear this invasive weed and the District Council and the Environment Agency will only get involved if it is encroaching on a neighbour’s land and the neighbour complains. The resident asks if the Parish Council would be willing to inform the landowner(s) of the need to clear the weed. Alternative the resident would be willing to do this if we can inform her of who the landowners are.

13. Authorisation of Payment

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

Southern Electric - £51.82 – Electricity supply for the Playing Field (April to July). *This bill will have been paid by Direct Debit on or after August 23rd. I have queried the bill with Southern Electric as they have overcharged us. They adjusted the billing period and appear to have charged the quarterly standing charge for a period of less than a month. I have been promised a refund.*

14. Other Business – matters of information only.

Please note that the Parish Council cannot make decisions on items that do not appear on the Agenda – so matters raised under this item are for information only.

Defibrillators – a former Parish Councillor notes that the electricity supply to the telephone kiosk in Westcombe has been removed and suggests that the Parish Council informs the defibrillator fundraisers that this is the case as they may be hoping to use the kiosk as the location for the Westcombe defibrillator.

The VAT claim of £76.48 made on May 6th was paid on June 26th. HMRC are normally quicker than this.

15. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 2nd October 2019 at 8.00pm in the Old School, Batcombe.

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

28th August 2019