BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage **Tel: 01749 850934**

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You are Summoned to the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 2nd September 2020 at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Hall, Batcombe

Those attending the meeting are asked to use the hand sanitiser, maintain social distancing and wear a face covering unless they have a valid reason not to.

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 Thursday July 9th and Wednesday 5th August 2020** to be agreed and signed. *Attached/enclosed. The Minutes for Wednesday 4th March also need to be signed having been approved at the remote meeting in July.*

5. **Matters Arising** – information updates only.
   Annual Return - The Certificate of Exemption has been sent to the external auditors and acknowledged. The notice of the period for the exercise of public rights to examine the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and the accounting records for the year it refers to has been published on the Parish Council website along with the AGAR and the other documents required under the Transparency Code.

   Himalayan Balsam – Tom Price has provided the required risk assessment for the working party to remove the Himalayan Balsam from Coney Wood and has received an Access Agreement from the Woodland Trust.

   Annual Grants – Thanks for the grants from the Parish Council made at the July meeting have been received from the Village Hall Trust, Batcombe PCC and the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

6. **Sewage Treatment Plant at Ash Tree Cottages**
   As noted in the Minutes of the August meeting, our District Councillor informed us that Hastoes solicitors are negotiating with the solicitors of the landowners of the neighbouring field and this has

delayed the work on the sewage treatment plant, to the concern of the neighbours affected by the smell.

7. **Allotments**
The owners of the allotment field have expressed concern about some overgrown areas in the field and the state of some of the fences between the allotment holders. They have made the extension of the lease for another four years conditional on the allotments being tidied up. I had contacted the allotment holders to ask them to ensure their fences are kept tidy but this doesn't appear to have had any impact. We may need to pay someone to tidy up the communal areas.

8. **Footpaths and Highways**
Verges have now been cut. Further concerns were about blocked gullies leading to flooding off Back Lane. This was reported to Somerset Highways - along with photos of water coming up out of the gully – and as a result the gully was inspected and jetted. Hopefully, this has resolved the problem.

9. **Playground.**
Maintenance Report: *The Playing Field hedge has been cut back. A smart meter has been installed in the Playing Field but has not been commissioned because of the poor mobile signal. Concerns were raised about the Playing Field gate which is badly warped at the July meeting.*

New Play Equipment: *The grant application to Viridor Credits was completed by July 31st. Viridor Credits excluded the £350 in the lowest quote for fencing and welfare during installation but a quick response by them meant an amended application could be submitted by the deadline. An appeal on the Batcombe Facebook page resulted in 37 e-mails of support which were submitted as part of the application. As a result the application scored high enough to be considered by the grant making committee on September 24th. Viridor Credits will be making a pre-assessment visit early in September. We should hear the result by our October meeting and hopefully we will be in a position to decide on which quote to accept at that point.*

10. **Planning Applications:**
Planning Application No: 2020/1528/TCA - T1 – Oak - Fell
Batcombe Village Hall, Batcombe – Works/Felling Trees in a CA
This is the Oak tree in the car park which is dying. The application states that it will be replaced on the site away from the drive. The application can be viewed on the District Council's planning website **https://publicaccess.mendip.gov.uk/online-applications/** *Due to the coronavirus restrictions there will not be an opportunity to view a paper application prior to the meeting.*

Planning Application No: 2020/1665/TCA - T1-T3 – Ash trees - Fell
Shortwood Farmhouse, Kale Street, Batcombe – Works/Felling Trees in a CA
The application is to fell three Ash trees along the river, all of which are showing signs of Ash dieback. The application states that these will be replaced with native species. The application can be viewed on the District Council's planning website **https://publicaccess.mendip.gov.uk/online-applications/** *Due to the coronavirus restrictions there will not be an opportunity to view a paper application prior to the meeting.*

Planning Application Updates.
The Parish Council has received another informal request for its view on a proposal to convert the field by the telephone exchange into a camping site.

We have been informed by the Torr Quarry Liaison Group that Aggregate Industries UK Limited (AIUK) has submitted an application to recommence limestone extraction from Bartletts Quarry at Nunney. One of the conditions of allowing the deepening of the Torr Quarry was that work on the Colemans Quarry complex at Nunney (of which Bartletts Quarry is a part) should cease until quarrying at Torr had finished. However, increasing demand for limestone (for HS2) means that AIUK wants to operate both quarries together.

11. **Batcombe Conservation Volunteers Group**
Tom Price has offered to organise and lead a Batcombe Conservation Volunteers Group to undertake work throughout the year to improve our green space if the Parish Council would support and provide public liability insurance. Tom would be willing to provide risk assessment and a list of volunteers for each activity.

12. **Website Accessibility Check**
Work on the Website Accessibility Check has been delayed by the need to complete the grant application for the new play equipment by July 31st. However, it should be possible to complete the Checks and publish an Accessibility Statement on the website by the September 23rd deadline. We then just have to correct the issues revealed in the Accessibility Check.

13. **Future Meetings – Remote, Physical or Hybrid?**
Under current restrictions both remote and physical meetings have their limitations. It may be possible to conduct hybrid meetings but these may have technical limitations. Councillors views would be welcome. It should be noted that the Jubilee Hall has a capacity of 40 under current restrictions, so controversial planning applications would need to be considered remotely as we cannot restrict access to the public..

14. **Budget Update**
The need to complete the grant application for the new play equipment by July 31st means that the budget update will have to be deferred to the next meeting.

15. **Authorisation of Payments**
£???.00 Dominic Conway – Grass cutting in August (invoice not yet received).

16. **Other Business** – matters of information only. *None at present.*

17. **Date and Time of Next Meeting:**
Wednesday 7th October 2020 at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Hall, Batcombe.

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk 28th August 2020