

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage

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You are Summoned to the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held remotely via Zoom at 7.30pm on Wednesday 3rd February 2021

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 Meeting held on Wednesday 13th January 2021 to be agreed. *Attached. The Minutes will need to be signed later.*

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Precept – the precept has been submitted to Mendip District Council and acknowledged.

6. Proposed Para 79 House at Valley View Farm

Paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework allows a house to be built in the countryside if it is 'of exceptional quality, in that it is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards in architecture'. It must also 'significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area'. Two planning agents, Paul Fong and Jenny Henderson from Ridge and Partners LLP will be attending the meeting to talk about a proposal for a Para 79 house at Valley View Farm. They will be asked to speak for 15 minutes and then there will be an opportunity for questions.

7. District and County Councillors' Reports

An opportunity for the District and County Councillors to report to the meeting, either via Zoom or in writing.

8. Sewage Treatment Plant at Ash Tree Cottages

An opportunity for an update on progress on the work to replace the sewage treatment plant at Ash Tree Cottages. Work to instal the new treatment plant should start shortly.

9. Climate Emergency Community Fund Grant Application

The Chairman has made a grant application to the County Council's Climate Emergency Community Fund for a grant of £45,600 for a professional report on biodiversity and water management/resilience in the parish. Details of the application have been distributed to Parish Councillors together with a quote for producing the report - and the application has the support of our District and County Councillors. The application deadline has meant that the application has not been formally discussed by the Parish Council, so this is an opportunity for the Council to discuss the application and formally approve it.

10. Footpaths and Highways

Concerns were raised over a number of issues in Mill Lane at the last meeting and the Clerk was asked to write to one of the residents regarding these issues. A letter has been received from these residents expressing concern that the issues had been discussed without them being invited to be present so that they could defend themselves. They also state that any concerns about their septic tank are unfounded.

11. Playground.

Maintenance Report: *An application will be made for planning permission to crown lift the two trees behind the cricket nets to give a clearance of 1.5m and to rescue the oak tree in the corner of the Playing Field by lightly thinning the upper canopy and managing its size. This is necessary because the Playing Field is in the Conservation Area. There is no cost for applications for tree works.*

New Play Equipment: *A quarterly update on progress has been made to Viridor Credits and accepted. The order for the new play equipment has been placed with Sutcliffe Play South West and we are waiting to hear when it will be installed (which should be sometime in March/April). The revised quote from Sutcliffe Play is for £62,334. The £3,358 difference between the quote and the grant of £58,976 from Viridor Credits will be made up from the remaining money raised for the new play equipment. A total of £11,416.64 has been raised for the new play equipment so far of which £5,897.60 was paid to Viridor Waste Management Ltd as the Contributing Third Party payment that was a condition of receiving the grant from Viridor Credits. This leaves £5,519 of money earmarked for the new play equipment - £2,161 after the new equipment is installed. This money will be used for the remaining elements of the Playing Field project – refurbishing the cricket net and laying the Playing Field hedge and for future maintenance. The Parish Council has also set aside £4,000 of its own money for the Playing Field project. The revised quote does not include the VAT which will come to £12,467. The Parish Council will need to pay this before reclaiming it from HMRC. Fortunately, we will not need to pay the VAT until we have received our precept for 2021/22 so cash flow will not be a problem.*

12. Planning Applications:

None at present.

Planning Application Updates.

The County Council have refused planning permission for the re-opening of Bartletts Quarry while Torr Works Quarry is still open.

13. Budget Update for Year Ending 31st March 2021

We would normally ask a Councillor to check the quarterly bank reconciliation at this meeting. This will need to be done and reported to the next meeting.

Attached is an updated projection on this year's budget. The first column shows the actual figures for last year. The second column shows the budget for this year as agreed in January. The third column shows the receipts and payments to 27th January this year and the fourth column is an updated projection for this year.

Receipt of this year's precept and VAT repayment have been noted previously. Allotments rent will be £345 if the vacant allotment is let at a small discount. A total of £784.50 has been received for the new play equipment/Playing Field refurbishment - £84.50 has been received from the Mendip Lottery for the play equipment; a donation of £100 was received in September; and a further £600 donation was received from the Cricket Club. Interest will be minimal.

With regard to Playing Field expenses payments, the cost of the grass cutting, electricity and water supply and annual inspection should all be slightly less than budgeted. The cost of maintenance will be slightly more than budgeted because of the cost of the tree works. The cost of the play equipment is the Contributing Third Party payment of £5,897.60 to Viridor. The invoice for the new play equipment will be due in the next financial year and most of this will be paid directly by the grant from Viridor Credits, although the Parish Council will need to contribute £3,358 of the money raised for the new play equipment (see item on new play equipment above).

The increase in the Clerk's salary means this will be slightly higher than budgeted, but the Clerk's expenses are lower than budgeted. Membership of the SLCC is higher than budgeted because the Clerk's salary rose above £4,000 last year which put his membership up a price band. The Zoom subscription was an unbudgeted expense resulting from the pandemic. Photocopying was less than budgeted as paper copies of Agendas and Minutes, etc were not being distributed. Other administration expenses are likely to be as budgeted. Grants are as budgeted. The maintenance of the allotments is likely to be lower than budgeted. The budget included £200 for road salt but this has not yet been required - the County Council provided salt last winter without charge.

There is a projected deficit of £3,350 on the year as a result of spending money raised for the play equipment in previous years on the CTP payment. This gives funds of £18,180 at the end of the year of which approximately £5,530 will be earmarked for the new play equipment and around £1,045 will be earmarked for the allotments.

14. Authorisation of Payments

- £112.00 Society of Local Council Clerks. *Clerk's subscription.*
- £34.99 The Clerk. *Reimburse internet security for the Parish Council laptop.*
- £20.38 water2business. *Water supply to the Playing Field (July 2020 – January 2021).*

15. Other Business – matters of information only.

Allotments – one of our allotment holders has given notice that they no longer wish to rent an allotment and the first person on our waiting list would like to take this on. However, there is apparently a large amount on garden waste on the allotment and the new allotment holder asks if we can assist in its removal.

16. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Wednesday 3rd March 2021 at 7.30pm via Zoom.

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

27th January 2021