

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage

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You are Summoned to a Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 23rd June 2021 at 8.00pm in the Jubilee Hall Car Park, Batcombe

*In case of poor weather the meeting will be held in the Jubilee Hall
and those attending will be 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. Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control, Internal Auditor's Report and Certificate of Exemption from a Limited Assurance Review

Our Financial Regulations (1.5) require a review of the effectiveness of our system of internal control before approving the Annual Governance Statement which forms part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (see below). I believe our system of internal control to be more than sufficient for a small Parish Council. The details are given in the Financial Regulations. These include the budgetary process, the authorisation of all payments by the Council, the signing of cheques by two Councillors, who have to initial the cheque stubs and invoices, the quarterly bank reconciliations and the requirement for an internal audit.

Our internal audit was undertaken by Griff Williams, who satisfies the necessary requirements of independence of the Parish Council and competence. A copy of the completed Internal Audit Report is enclosed – page 4 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. All the internal control objectives were achieved, with the exception of petty cash payments which was “not covered” because the Council does not make any petty cash payments. Our internal auditor has suggested a number of changes for next year's accounts to reflect changes in the internal audit guidance.

Parish Councils, whose income and expenditure are both less than £25,000, do not have to send the Annual Return to the external auditor provided they send the external auditor a certificate of exemption (copy enclosed) signed by the Chairman and Clerk and publish the Annual Return on their website by June 30th. One advantage of the fact that Viridor Credits are paying the grant for the new play equipment directly to Sutcliffe Play South West is that our accounts will not exceed the £25,000 limit – as this would cost around £200 for the external auditor to check the Annual Return.

4. Annual Return Section 1 – Approval of Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is the Annual Governance Statement (page 5 of the enclosed Annual Return). This has to be approved by the Council before the Council approves the Accounting Statements with a separate Minute reference. I believe the Council can agree all eight statements.

Note: Statement 4 - The Parish Council's accounts have to be available for public inspection for 30 working days that begin on or before July 1st.

5. Annual Return Section 2 – Approval of Accounting Statements 2020/21

Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is the Statement of Accounts (page 6 of the enclosed Annual Return) which has to be approved by the Council. The attached Financial Statements for last year show how the figures in the Statement of Accounts have been derived – the circled numbers refer to the boxes in the Statement of Accounts. There are significant variations (more than 15%) in boxes 3, 6 and 9 between the figures for last year and those for the previous year. In box 3 this is due to the money raised for the new play equipment being £8,405 in 2019/20 compared to £910 in 2020/21. In box 6 this is due to the payment of the Contributing Third Party payment of £5,898 towards the play equipment grant in 2020/21. In box 9 this is due to the removal of the zip-wire (purchase value £5,000) from the Schedule of Assets when it was removed from the Playing Field.

The Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities requires that signed copies of the Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Statement and the Internal Auditor's Report have to be published on the Parish Council website no later than June 30th, along with a bank reconciliation and details of all items of expenditure over £100 and any land assets.

6. Authorisation of Payments

£15.00 Somerset Playing Fields Association – Subscription.

£160.00 Dominic Conway – Grass cutting in May.

7. Extension of Business Continuity Motion:

The Business Continuity Motion passed at the May meeting to delegate the authority to make decisions to the Clerk in consultation with Councillors, allowed for an extension of the authority to make decisions beyond June 23rd. Given the extension of the coronavirus restrictions to July 19th, it would be good to confirm extension of the delegated authority for similar period.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 21st July 2020 at 8.00pm in the Jubilee Hall. *Note: this is a change to the planned meeting on July 14th on the basis that the current restrictions will end on July 19th.*

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

16th June 2021