

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of a Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 6th October 2021 in the Jubilee Hall, Batcombe, commencing at 8.00pm.

Present - Councillors: David Stevens – Chairman, Mary Comley, Jayne Cox, Peter Glaisher, Janet Jones and Ian Sage.

Also Present: The District Councillor – Michael Gay and three members of the public.

In the absence of the Clerk, the Minutes were taken by Janet Jones.

5107 – Apologies for Absence and Acceptance of Reasons for Absence: Justin Witcombe who was working.

5108 – Declarations of Interest: Jayne Cox and Ian Sage for the Clerk's salary and expenses.

5109 – Public Participation: None.

5110 – Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 1st September 2021: Michael Gay asked that the paragraph on Greenacres under Planning Application Update (5100) was removed until the issue had been resolved. Otherwise, the Minutes were agreed as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman after the meeting.

5111 – Matters Arising: Allotments – the signed lease had not yet been returned by the owners of the field. There would be at least one, probably two vacant allotments when the rents were due on November 1st.

Annual Grants – Thanks for the grants from the Parish Council had been received from the Village Hall Trust, the PCC and Mendip Community Transport.

Next Parish Council Election – A survey of parish councils in Somerset resulted in 97 councils saying that they would like the next Parish Council Elections brought forward to May 2022 to coincide with the new unitary authority elections - and 16 councils wanting them to remain in May 2023. A decision on the date would be made in early October but it looked likely that the elections would be brought forward.

5112 – District and County Councillors' Reports: Written reports had been received from the District and County Councillor for September and distributed to Parish Councillors.

The District Councillor noted that the referral on Carrot Hill Farm had been sent to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning Board while he was on holiday.

The Valley View Farm planning was compliant under the phosphate regulations. The tree officer had raised a holding objection. It would be 6-8 weeks before the planning report was ready and then it would go to the Planning Board.

Potential electoral arrangements for the new unitary council – papers on this had been distributed in advance of the meeting. None of the options were what the Parish Council might want and it would be hard for rural areas to get their voice heard. More information would be circulated. A decision would be made by the Minister in October. This should be an Agenda item next month.

5113 – Integrated Care System: Integrated Care Systems are new partnerships between the organisations that meet health and care needs across an area and are intended to remove the traditional divisions between hospitals and GPs, between physical and mental health and between local authorities and the NHS. Virginia Membrey came to the meeting to say that she foresaw significant changes in the way we receive care in the future and that there will be one board with lots of power covering all of Somerset. She would like to hold a public meeting so people are aware of the issues. It was agreed that she would write an article for the Parish News and that Pippa Taylor would be asked if Virginia could talk about this at the defibrillator meeting on 17th November. Virginia would ask David Heath to attend and talk to Pippa. **Action: David Stevens to talk to Pippa**

5114 – Footpaths and Highways: Concern was again raised about a “water feature” on Kale Street that would apparently require traffic lights for work to be undertaken to resolve the issue because there are no speed restrictions on Kale Street. **Action: Mary Comley to write to Highways**

It was agreed that it would be useful to repeat the article in the Parish News about landowners’ responsibility for hedges by the road. **Action: Janet Jones**

5115 – Playing Field: As the moles were active again, it was agreed that Wendy Maxwell should be employed to remove them. **Action: The Clerk**

The meeting agreed to give The Clerk authority to switch electricity supplier. **Action: The Clerk**

There was no update on the new gate for the playing field. A timeframe of 5-6 weeks from the date of order had been given.

5116 – Planning Applications: There were no applications to consider.

Planning Application Updates: The application for a tennis court at Rockwells House had been approved with conditions by Mendip District Council.

The application for the erection of an agricultural barn and stables at Carrot Hill Farmhouse had been approved by the District Council despite the Parish Council’s recommendation of refusal. Concerns were raised at the precedent this planning permission set for the extension of domestic curtilage onto agricultural land. A letter to be written to the County Councillor as to why this had been approved and for him to come to the next meeting to explain the situation. **Action: The Clerk**

5117 – Westdown Quarry Reopening: In May of this year Hanson Aggregates UK applied to reopen and extend Westdown Quarry. Westdown Quarry lies to the north-east of the Torr Works Quarry and south of Whatley Quarry (north of the A361 to the east of the Leighton junction). The Parish Council was not consulted about this application (although Wanstrow Parish Council was) and only learnt about it when letters were received from campaigners against the re-opening urging the Council to join in objecting to the proposal. The Chairman had invited Richard Mawer from Cloford, one of the campaigners, to update the Council on the situation.

The Parish Council decided to support the objections and Mary Comley will raise a response based on the objection to the re-opening of Bartlett’s Quarry with further details supplied by Richard. **Action: Mary Comley**

The District Councillor left the meeting at this point.

5118 - Batcombe Village Hall Trust – Application to Vary the Premises Licence: The Village Hall Trust’s application to vary their Premises Licence had been withdrawn so was not discussed.

5119 - Authorisation of Payments: Councillors authorised the following payments:

- £160.00 Kevin Gale – Grass cutting in Playing Field in September.
- £1,049.23 The Clerk – Salary for 2nd Quarter. See enclosed sheet.
- £109.84 The Clerk – Expenses for 2nd Quarter. See enclosed sheet.
- £15.00 Clare Kingston – Wood preservative for Playing Field.

The following payments were authorised retrospectively:

- £1,049.23 The Clerk – Salary for 1st Quarter. See enclosed sheet.
- £123.03 The Clerk – Expenses for 1st Quarter. See enclosed sheet.
- £34.99 The Clerk - Kaspersky Internet Protection for the Parish Council laptop.

5120 – Other Business – matters of information only: The issue of parking by a campervan in the lay-by by the Playing Field had been resolved and so was not discussed.

5121 – Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 3rd November 2021 at **7.30pm** in the Jubilee Hall.

D J Stevens

3/11/21