

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage

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You are Summoned to the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 5th January 2022 at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Hall, Batcombe

*Please note that seating will be well spaced and the room ventilated.
The wearing of face masks is required unless you are exempt.*

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 1st December 2021 to be agreed and signed. *Enclosed/attached.*

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee – the owners of Burnell are happy for a beacon to be lit there on June 2nd.

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.

7. Allotments

Thanks to Ian Sage for removing the rubbish from the allotment field. The allotment holders have been reminded of the need to maintain the allotments in good order. I understand that Justin Witcombe is unwilling to act as the Parish Council liaison with the allotment holders and so we will need to consider who can do this. We also need to consider what we will do about keeping the vacant allotments neat and tidy.

We had received a request from a resident of Evercreech to rent one of the vacant allotments, but the person concerned has not followed this up. The allotments are available to residents of Batcombe or any adjoining parish which includes Evercreech.

8. Footpaths and Highways

Upton Noble School hired large coaches to bring children down to their carol service in Batcombe Church and these are great difficulty in getting around the corner at Conduit Cottage and damaged a lamp on the cottage. The owner asks if the sign at the junction off the A359 could be upgraded to something legally enforceable.

The MBBA have contacted the Chairman to express a concern that the surface of Frys Lane by Longleat Cottage has not been repaired after work on a boundary wall. The MMBA would like the lane is restored to its original condition. This issue was discussed at our November meeting and Jayne Cox volunteered to speak to the owners of Longleat Cottage.

9. Playground – Maintenance Report

The water in the Playing Field has been turned off and the pipes in the bus shelter drained. The moles were active again for a while but I saw no new molehills on my last inspection.

Kevin Gale has quoted the same price as last season for cutting the Playing Field grass. Is the Parish Council happy to accept this quote or do we wish to obtain some alternative quotes?

10. Planning Applications:

Planning Application No: 2021/2779/TCA –

T1 - Goat Willow - Reduce limb by 20% (Up to 1.5m) T2 - Goat Willow - Coppice to ground level.

Fir Tree Cottage, Batcombe – Works/Felling Trees in a Conservation Area

T1 is at the rear of the property and it is proposed to reduce the end weight of a limb extending towards the rear boundary. T2 is on the road boundary at the front of the property and is too large for its location. Full details of the application can be found on the Mendip planning website at <https://publicaccess.mendip.gov.uk/online-applications/> by entering the planning application number into the search engine.

Planning Application No: 2021/2537/FUL –

Erection of steel framed apex building to cover existing slurry store.

Horsehill Farm, Horsehill Lane, Batcombe – Full Application

Full details of the application can be found on the Mendip planning website at <https://publicaccess.mendip.gov.uk/online-applications/> by entering the planning application number into the search engine.

Planning Application Updates.

The application to clad on all four sides a barn on land opposite Higher Greenscombe, adding a concrete pad and improving the track to the barn, so it can be used to house TB quarantined animals, has been approved. The application to alter the garage at Eastcombe Cottage to accommodate PV panels has also been approved.

An application has been submitted for prior approval for the conversion of a barn at Valley View Farm to a dwelling house. The Parish Council is not consulted on applications for prior approval.

11. Budget and Precept for Year Ending 31st March 2023

A budget for the year ending 31st March 2023 was enclosed with November's Agenda. See November's Agenda notes for details of the budget. The only thing to note since the last meeting is that there will be election costs in 2022/23, as was anticipated in the budget. However, we have now received an estimate of potential election costs from Mendip's Returning Officer. He states that an uncontested election would cost £100 (in clerical fees and the Returning Officer's fee) and recommends that each parish should budget £5,000 for a contested election, although this will vary depending on the number of candidates and seats up for election.

The impact on the budget presented in November is that if there was an uncontested election, we would see a surplus of £700 instead of the budgeted deficit of £730. But if the election cost £5,000 we would see a deficit of £4,250. This would still leave us with a reserve of £11,750 (of which £1,000 is

earmarked for the allotments and £4,000 set aside for the Playing Field). It likely that an election in Batcombe would cost less than £5,000, given that we are a small parish but it would be considerably more than our last contested election which cost £933 fifteen years ago.

A decision on the precept was deferred from the November meeting until the tax base for 2022/23 was known so that the impact the increase in the precept will have on Council Tax can be calculated. [The tax base is the number of Band D equivalent properties in Batcombe when taking into account the number of empty properties, various discounts (including 25% for single people) and the weighting of the different bands above and below Band D.]

Batcombe's tax base for 2022/23 is 216.7 which when revised for a 2.5% non-collection rate becomes 211.28. The revised tax base for 2021/22 was 211.09. A slightly higher tax base means that the same increase in precept will produce a slightly lower increase in Council Tax.

If, as agreed in principle at the last meeting, the Parish Council were to leave its precept unchanged at £9,925, a Band D property with no discounts would have to pay £46-98 towards the precept in 2022/23 instead of £47-02 this year, a reduction of 0.085%. It is this figure that will appear on residents' Council Tax bills.

12. Authorisation of Payments

- £1,049.23 The Clerk – Salary for 3rd Quarter. *See enclosed sheet.*
- £81.06 The Clerk – Expenses for 3rd Quarter. *See enclosed sheet.*
- £75.00 Gary Butler – Cutting the allotments field hedge.

13. Other Business – matters of information only.

A resident has expressed concerns about a young wire-haired hound running free in the village that he may be hit by a car, spook a horse, or be stolen. The resident would like the Parish Council to contact the presumed owner.

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 2nd February 2022 at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Hall.

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

29th December 2021