

# BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

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## You are Summoned to the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 7.30pm in the Old School, Batcombe

*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 Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022** to be agreed and signed.  
*Enclosed/attached.*

**5. Matters Arising** – information updates only.  
*None that are not included in the items below.*

**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. The King's Coronation**

*The coronation of King Charles III will take place on Saturday May 6<sup>th</sup> 2023 and the following Monday will be an additional bank holiday. The Village Hall Trust have suggested setting up a village committee to co-ordinate plans for village events organised by village organisations. Do we have any volunteers willing to join this committee?*

**8. Allotments**

*Allotment rents were due on November 1<sup>st</sup>. Six allotments have been paid for and three are vacant which leaves one allotment where the rent is owing.*

**9. Footpaths and Highways**

*Councillors to report back on the County Council Fingerpost Training Course in Bridgwater.*

**10. Playground – Maintenance Report:** *Jayne Cox to report back on progress with the laying of the Playing Field hedge.*

*The tree surgeon, Jody Osborne, is unable to undertake the work on the Oak tree in the Playing Field on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and plans to undertake the work on December 9<sup>th</sup> instead.*

**11. Planning Applications:**

None at present.

**Planning Application Updates.**

*Following the decision of the Council at last month's meeting to authorise the Clerk to make a decision on the recommendation regarding the application for Listed Building Consent for minor alterations to Romsey Cottage, the Clerk recommended approval of the application after consulting Parish Councillors. No consultation has yet been made on the felling of the Cherry tree at Donegal Cottage – although the determination deadline is December 13<sup>th</sup>.*

**12. Review of the Parish Council's Connection with External Bodies**

Council's Membership of the Somerset Association of Local Councils

Clerk's Membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks

*Membership of both of these bodies is very helpful in providing information and advice on matters relating to the work of the Parish Council and would make the Clerk's job more difficult if they were not available. Membership of SALC will cost around £115 in 2023 and paying for the Clerk's membership of the SLCC will cost a similar amount.*

**13. Employment Matters - the Clerk's Salary and Pension Re-declaration**

*The National Joint Council for Local Government Services has (finally) reached agreement on new pay scales for 2022/23. The agreement consists of a flat rate increase of £1,295 across all pay scales (pro rata for part time employees). This will mean the Clerk's salary increasing from £11.73 an hour to £12.73 an hour (an increase of 8.525%) backdated to April 2022. The agreement also included the permanent addition of an extra day's leave to the annual entitlement (pro rata for part-time employees) from April 2023. The National Association of Local Councils recommends that these salary scales are paid to all Clerks with the standard contract of employment. The Parish Council should formally agree the increase in the Clerk's salary, which is in line with the Clerk's Contract of Employment, and the additional day's leave. The Clerk's contract currently entitles the Clerk to twenty-five working days leave per year (pro rata for part time employees) plus normal bank and public holidays plus two extra statutory days. The Clerk's contract will need to be amended if the extra day's leave is agreed.*

*Every three years the Parish Council has to re-declare to the Pensions Regulator that it has no staff enrolled in a pension scheme. This was done on 28<sup>th</sup> November. The level of the Clerk's salary means that the Parish Council is not automatically required to operate a pension scheme.*

**14. Budget and Precept for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

*An updated budget for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 is enclosed/attached. The changes from the budget distributed with last month's Agenda is that the cost of the hedge laying has been included in the current year's projection rather than next year's budget and the budget from maintenance has been increased from £250 to £750 to cover the potential cost of additional tree work in the Playing Field. Please see the notes included with last month's Agenda for all other details of the budget.*

*The effect of these two changes is a much larger deficit of £4,825 this year and a smaller deficit of £75 next year. The reserve at the end of next year will also be slightly smaller at £11,400 – which is still a significant reserve.*

*A decision on the level of the precept is usually left to the January meeting when we will know the the tax base for 2023/24 and thus the impact of the precept on Council Tax. However, it may be wise to make a decision in principle at this meeting – just in case we cannot meet in January.*

**15. Authorisation of Payments**

£160.00 Kevin Gale – Grass cutting in the Playing Field in November.

£50.00 SALC – Two Councillor Training Sessions.

**16. Other Business** – matters of information only.

*Consultation on Constituency Boundary Changes - The final consultation on boundary changes to the parliamentary constituencies will close on December 5<sup>th</sup> before this meeting. This means that the Parish Council will be unable to comment. Individuals can comment by going to the Boundary Commission website [www.bcereviews.org.uk](http://www.bcereviews.org.uk) where you can also see a map of the new constituencies. The reason for the boundary changes is to create constituencies of roughly equal size in terms of population - between 69,724 and 77,062 people. The number of constituencies in the South West will increase by 3 to 58.*

*Under the proposed boundary changes, Batcombe would be part of a new Frome constituency which would stretch from Combe Hay and Claverton just south of Bath to Bruton and would include Radstock, Midsommer Norton, Rode, Gurney Slade, Frome and Evercreech but not Shepton Mallet nor Brewham.*

*Wanstrow and Cloford Community Parish Plan – Tom Price notes that Wanstrow are updating their community parish plan (See <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WanstrowClofordPP> for details) and wonders if Batcombe should consider something similar at a future date.*

**17. Date and Time of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 7.30pm in the Old School.

*Rob Sage*

Rob Sage – Clerk

30<sup>th</sup> November 2022