

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage

Tel: 01749 850934

e-mail: clerk@batcombe-parish-council-somerset.org.uk

You are Summoned to the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 1st February 2023 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 Meeting held on Wednesday 4th January 2023 to be agreed and signed. *Enclosed/attached.*

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Precept – The request for a precept of £9,250, unchanged from last year, has been submitted to Mendip District Council and acknowledged. Unfortunately, the tax base for Batcombe has fallen from 211.28 to 209.6, a reduction of 0.8%. This means that the element of Council Tax resulting from the Parish Council precept will increase by 37p to £47.35 for a Band D property with no discounts.

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. Footpaths and Highways

Serious issues have arisen on the roads in Batcombe during the recent icy weather. There were particular problems on Hincombe Hill and Crows Hill but difficulties elsewhere as well. The state of Hincombe Hill was reported to the police on at least two occasions. The problems with Hincombe Hill caused the school bus to be cancelled and concerns about the state of the roads were raised on Facebook.

Our County Councillor has been in contact with the Clerk and with Somerset Highways over the issues raised. Somerset Highways have promised to inspect Hincombe Hill, fill the grit bin (which

apparently was empty) and check the gulleys in the area. Highways also asked if the Parish Council would be interested in a 1 ton dumpy bag (presumably of salt) to be delivered to a farm for local use. Claire Sully also received the standard response as to why Batcombe was no longer included on the pre-salting network due to the difficulties with parked cars. Batcombe is apparently on the post-salting network, although priority is given to the pre-salting network routes.

8. Playground – Maintenance Report

The stoptap in the Playing Field has been broken allowing water to run across the Playing Field. The water has now been turned off in the road.

9. Planning Applications:

Planning Application No: 2022/2462/HSE – Erection of outhouse study

Little Acre, Batcombe – Householder Application.

The proposal is for a timber-clad outhouse consisting of a study and a shower room on the northern boundary of the property. It is also proposed to erect a 2.0m security fence along the boundary with Baytree House behind the outhouse (the ground level in Baytree House is significantly higher than that in Little Acre). 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 applications to fell a Sycamore tree and two Ash trees at Batcombe House have been approved.

10. New Somerset Code of Conduct for Councillors

A new model Code of Conduct for Councillors has been produced by the Local Government Association (LGA). The intention is that the same Code of Conduct should be used at all levels of local government with some modifications. The Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) have produced a version for parish councils in Somerset, which is attached. This is a complete re-write of our current Code of Conduct, and while the new Code is based on the same principles as the existing Code and the requirements for declaring interests are virtually unchanged the text of the Code has been significantly expanded to include guidance of how to comply with its requirements. Thus, whereas the existing Code has five obligations for Councillors under the Code of Conduct each expressed in a single sentence, the new Code has seven sections covering roughly the same obligations.

For those wanting more detailed guidance on complying with the Code the LGA have produced extensive guidance at [Guidance on Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct | Local Government Association](#). SALC are recommending that all parish councils in Somerset adopt the new Code of Conduct and are currently conducting a survey to check if parish councils have done so.

In essence there are no major differences in requirements under the new Code – just greater guidance in how to apply the Code. As a result the new Code runs to 13 pages whereas the old one was only 8 pages (and most of these were appendices).

11. Annual Parish Meeting

From the discussion at the last meeting, I assume that we wish to back to the old model of having a short Parish Council meeting at 6.45pm to deal with any urgent business before the Annual Parish Council meeting at 7.30pm – instead of meeting afterwards as we did last year. SSE Networks have offered to send someone to speak about the Priority Services Register for help for vulnerable people during power cuts, which would be another option for a speaker. We did have a good speaker from them some years ago. Unfortunately no member of the Frome Rural South Neighbourhood Police Team is able to attend the meeting due to their shift pattern.

12. Authorisation of Payments

£57.48 – The Parish News – Photocopying in 2022.

13. Other Business – matters of information only.

I am aware that a Westcombe resident is planning to erect a notice board in Westcombe to display notices of events. Should the Parish Council consider replacing its current notice which is in a poor state with a new one that could be used by the community?

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 1st March 2023 at 7.30pm in the Old School.

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

25th January 2023