

# 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 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 8.00pm in the Jubilee Hall, 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**

*This is necessary as any member who is absent for six months, without the Council accepting their reasons for absence, automatically loses their seat on the Council.*

**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 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023 to be agreed and signed.**  
*Enclosed/attached.*

**5. Matters Arising – information updates only.**

*Coronation Mugs – A credit note for £168.10 has now been received from FedEx for the delivery of the Coronation mugs to Buckland Newton Primary School that had been delivered to Batcombe by mistake and then mistakenly billed to the Parish Council.*

*Change of bank mandate – the change of bank mandate adding new signatories to the Parish Council bank account and removing old ones has failed to go through for a second time and we will have to try again.*

*Audit – The Certificate of Exemption has been e-mailed to our external auditors PKF Littlejohn and acknowledged. All the items required to be published under the Transparency Code have now been placed on the Parish Council website. These include the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements approved at the last meeting, an end of year bank reconciliation, details of any variations greater than 15% between the figures for last year and the previous year in the Accounting Statements, and a list of all items of expenditure over £100. In addition, the notice of the period when local electors may exercise their rights to examine the Parish Council's accounts have been published on the website and the parish notice board. This period must consist of 30 working days that include the first ten working days in July. For the Parish Council they run from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June to Friday 4<sup>th</sup> August.*

## **6. Somerset Councillors' Reports and the Shepton Local Community Network**

*The Somerset Councillors' report for July has been distributed to Parish Councillors.*

*The first meeting of the Shepton Local Community Network (LCN) will take place on Tuesday July 31<sup>st</sup> at 7.00pm at Pilton Village Hall. A formal invitation will be sent but has not been received yet. The Council are asked to nominate a Councillor representative to attend the meeting. They will be trialling a hybrid meeting for those unable to attend in person.*

## **7. Footpaths and Highways**

*Verge cutting – the grass verges on the roads in Batcombe were cut at the beginning of July. Verges on minor roads are now only cut once during the summer in June and July. We had one complaint that the verge cutting was late although this has been the usual time for several years now. We also received a complaint that cars emerging from the allotments field could not be seen. Hopefully the cutting of the verge will have reduced this problem.*

*Winter gritting – to consider how to follow up on the meeting with representatives of Somerset Highways last month.*

*Fingerpost Restoration. As noted in the last meeting, CPRE Somerset have offered a grant of £500 to help pay for the restoration of two fingerposts this year. There will be more grants available from CPRE Somerset in future years to restore more of the parish's fingerposts – and there are at least seven in need of repair. We have an initial quote of £885 + VAT to restore the fingerpost by the Playing Field and sent photos of this fingerpost and the one by the Old Post Office to CPRE Somerset in the grant application. If possible, we should obtain alternative quotes, although this may be a specialist area.*

## **8. Dog Poo Bin**

*At the last meeting it was agreed to put the provision of a dog poo bin on the Agenda, as a significant amount of dog poo was being placed in the bin by the Playing Field. The Parish Council has considered the provision of dog poo bins in the past and decided not to provide them over concerns about the smell and the fact that the Parish Council may end up having to empty the bins. In the past the District Council would have emptied a dog poo bin provided by the Parish Council, but the new Somerset Council website is not clear about this. It does say that they cannot empty bins on private land including land belonging to the Parish Council. It may be possible to place a dog poo bin on the verge and get the Somerset Council to empty it, but we would need to check this and get permission from Somerset Highways for wherever we wanted to put it.*

## **9. Playground - Maintenance Report**

*We have not yet received the annual safety inspection report for the Playing Field undertaken by RoSPA. The inspection will have taken place at some point in June.*

## **10. Planning Applications**

*Planning Application Number: 2023/1120/VRC – Application to vary condition 2 (drawings) of planning approval 2022/1051/HSE (Alterations to glazing including ...)*

*Kings Hayes, Gold Hill, Batcombe. Variation or Removal of Conditions*

*Planning permission and Listed Building Consent for alteration to the glazing and various internal alterations to the coach house at Kings Hayes was granted in 2022. There are now new owners who are applying to vary the drawings. The variations include the addition of a flue for a wood burning stove, a terrace at the rear of the building and some alterations to the glazing including replacing one of the proposed French windows with a picture window and additional/replacement rooflights. There will be minimal impact on the south elevation (seen as you enter the gates), although the flue will be visible. There will also need to be a variation on the condition for the Listed Building Consent, which we have not yet been notified of.*

**Planning Application Updates.** *The case officer's report on the erection of the outhouse study at Little Acre has now been received and distributed to Parish Councillors. The application for driveway, turning and parking area at Stonecot will have been considered by the Planning Board on July 4<sup>th</sup>. The case officer recommended approval but the application had to go to the Planning Board as the change of use contravenes the Local Plan.*

#### **11. Review of the Social Media Policy and the Press and Media Policy**

*A copy of the Press and Media Policy can be downloaded from the Parish Council website (Parish Council Documents page) if Councillors do not already have a copy. This was reviewed a year ago. The main point about the Press and Media Policy is that formal contact with the Press (which is quite rare) should be left to the Chair and the Clerk to ensure a consistent approach in line with the Policy. Fortunately, we have a good relationship with the Parish News which is the main way of communicating with local residents, apart from social media.*

*A copy of the Social Media Policy is attached (and can also be downloaded from the Parish Council website). All Councillors should be aware of the Social Media Policy when using social media and beware of appearing to represent the Parish Council when posting personal comments. The Social Media Policy was updated last year when the Parish Council set up a Facebook page with similar provisions for posting on the Facebook page as on the Parish Council website (Sections 4.5a and 4.5b of the Policy). A requirement to obtain permission from their parents before posting photographs of children was also added to the Policy (Section 4.2).*

#### **12. Annual Grants from the Parish Council**

*The Parish Council has budgeted for a grant of £300 to the Village Hall (£150 for our own meetings and £150 for committee meetings of other village organisations); for a grant of £200 to the Parochial Church Council for the maintenance of the churchyard and £200 for smaller grants to charities. For several years the Council has given two grants of £100 to Mendip Community Transport and Mendip Citizens Advice Bureau (Citizens Advice Somerset from October 1<sup>st</sup>). In the past we have supported Victim Support Somerset; Mendip RELATE; the Bruton Carers Group; St Margaret's Somerset Hospice and Somerset Art Works.*

*The Council has the power to support the Village Hall Trust, to help maintain the churchyard, and to support the Citizens Advice Bureau, but grants to other charities must be made by a specific resolution under the section 137 power, which allows the Council to spend a limited sum on items in the interest of parishioners which it has no specific power to support.*

#### **13. Authorisation of Payment**

£180.00 Kevin Gale – Grass cutting in the Playing Field and War Memorial in June (2 cuts).

£1,274.48 The Clerk – Salary and expenses for 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter (*see attached sheet*).

#### **14. Other Business – matters of information only.**

*Insurance – we have received confirmation of the renewal of the Parish Council's insurance with Aviva arranged through BHIB Ltd.*

*Potential Waste Services Industrial Action – the Unite union have rejected an 8% pay offer from Suez, Somerset Council's waste collections contractor. Unite staff intend to take industrial action from Wednesday to Friday each week for four weeks from July 12<sup>th</sup>. Around 40% of Suez staff are Unite members and priority will be given to refuse and clinical collections. This means that, if the industrial action goes ahead, some residents could go multiple weeks without recycling collections.*

#### **15. Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 2nd August 2023, if required for planning applications.**

Otherwise, Wednesday September 6<sup>th</sup> at 8.00pm in the Old School.

*Rob Sage*

Rob Sage – Clerk

6<sup>th</sup> July 2023