

# BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

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## Minutes of an Extra Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023 in the Old School, Batcombe, commencing at 8.00pm.

**Present - Councillors:** Janet Jones – Chair, Jayne Cox, Peter Glaisher, Bryony Harling, Clare Kingston, Tom Price and Ian Sage.

**Also Present:** The Clerk – Rob Sage and one member of the public. The applicants for the planning application at Church Barn joined the meeting by Zoom.

**5458 – Apologies for Absence:** None.

**5459 – Declarations of Interest:** None.

**5460 – Planning Applications:** Planning Application Number: 2023/1252/LBC Alterations to glazing including new and replacement rooflights, fenestration and internal alterations including replacement staircase, creation of ensuite bathroom, demolition of modern partition walls, reinstatement of door way and creation of new door way. (Re-submission of 2022/1052/LBC). Kings Hayes, Gold Hill, Batcombe. Listed Building Consent. This was a re-submission of the Listed Building Consent for the alterations to the Coach House at Kings Hayes following the application to vary the drawings of planning approval 2022/1051/HSE that had been considered at the previous meeting of the Parish Council. The Parish Council had recommended approval of the application to vary the drawings and on that basis recommended approval of the Listed Building Consent.

Planning Application No: 2023/0311/HSE New openings for the insertion of windows to east elevation, roof lights to east roof slope, timber boarded door to north elevation. (Revised information received 29/06/2023) Church Barn, Church Farm, Batcombe – Householder Application. The lower east elevation of Church Barn was left blank when the barn was converted to create the impression of the previous inward facing barns around a central courtyard. An application to insert windows in this blank elevation had been withdrawn in 2021 after the Parish Council and the Conservation Officer recommended refusal of planning permission because of the impact of the changes on the Conservation Area and the surrounding listed buildings that include Church Farm, the Old School and the Church.

The original version of the current application had been considered by the Parish Council in March. This application had smaller windows inserted in the blank elevation to address some of the concerns raised about the previous application. The Parish Council decided to recommend approval subject to the Conservation Officer's report as there were concerns about the impact on the Conservation Area, given that the blank elevation had been one of the conditions of the Church Farm development.

No Conservation Officer's report had been forthcoming and the Chair's attempts to speak to the case officer had not been successful. At the beginning of June new plans had been submitted adding a door and widening two of the windows on the east elevation. In the light of these changes, the Parish Council had decided at its June meeting to recommend refusal due to the impact on the Conservation Area.

The original case officer had left the Somerset Council and the new case officer had indicated to the applicant's agent that she would need to recommend refusal in light of the revised

drawings and the Parish Council's recommendation of refusal. However, they were offered the opportunity to submit revised plans reducing the number of openings. The case officer had recommended that: the pair of openings to the southern sitting room be reduced to a single opening as this was already lit by two windows on the other side; the number of first floor windows and rooflights into the corridor should be significantly reduced, as the addition of six windows and two rooflights was excessive and the corridor was not a habitable space; and windows should be positioned in a more 'ad hoc' nature to be more in keeping with the agricultural character of the building (as opposed to uniform rows of openings).

The applicant's agent had submitted revised drawings with the omission of one rooflight, one pair of first floor openings and one ground floor opening; and the case officer was re-consulting on these revised plans. The applicants stated that they had submitted the new plans for feedback from the case officer and had not expected a formal reconsultation to take place on them. They also disagreed with the case officer and argued that as the corridor was part of their home it was a habitable space. The applicant's architect, Patrick Benjamin from Benjamin and Beauchamp Architects argued that it was perfectly acceptable to place openings in historic buildings to provide light and that the proposed openings would have a minimal impact on the Conservation Area.

Councillors felt that the new plans were an improvement on those previously submitted but were divided over whether to recommend approval or not. Some felt that the uniform row of first floor windows gave a domestic appearance to the building, reducing the feel of the historic courtyard farm to the detriment of the Conservation Area and the surrounding listed buildings; and that the case officer's recommendations had not been complied with. Others felt that the building was no longer a barn but a home and the important thing was to provide light to the living space. The Parish Council agreed by a vote of four to three to recommend refusal on the grounds that the row of first floor windows was inappropriate and noting that additional rooflights would be a better solution for providing light to the first-floor corridor.

**5461 - Date and Time of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 8.00pm in the Old School, Batcombe. [*Changed post meeting to Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> August.*]

Janet Jones  
6/9/23