

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 7th February 2024 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

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 Chair 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 10th January 2024 to be agreed and signed.
Enclosed/attached.

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Precept – In light of the decision taken at the January meeting to increase the precept by the same amount as the increase in the tax base so that there would be no change in amount of Council Tax resulting from the precept; the precept was increased by £150 to £10,075, an increase of 1.51% (the tax base increased by 1.52%).

LCN – Clare Kingston to report on the Shepton LCN meeting held in January. The date of the next meeting has been changed to Monday 11th March, 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at Shepton Mallet.

6. Somerset Councillors' Reports

An opportunity for the Somerset Councillors to report in person or in writing.

7. Footpaths and Highways

Road Closures – Hincombe Hill will be closed from Monday February 19th for five days while drainage works are undertaken. The road will be closed for 24 hours a day with no access for emergency vehicles. In addition, Back Lane and the road in front of the Round House will be closed for 6 hours on Wednesday February 14th (9.30am to 3.30pm) to allow Openreach to replace telephone poles.

Footpath Obstruction – the Parish Paths Liaison Officer for Bruton Town Council has reported an obstruction on Footpath SM 2/18 to the Rights of Way Officer. The footpath is accessed by the double gate by the Old Chapel and the gate is secured by two mechanical fastenings, baler twine and barbed wire making it impossible to open. He has also reported that the fingerpost footpath sign has been broken off and at the other end of the footpath (the gate opposite Coney’s Wood) both fingerposts point walkers along SM 2/17 (the footpath up to Ash Tree Cottages).

8. Playing Field - Maintenance Report

The moles are active in the Playing Field again – around the swings and the safety surfacing for the basketball hoop.

The Parish Council has received an apology from the Contract Supervisor at id verde who empty the litter bins for the Somerset Council. Apparently, there was a change of schedule and the litter bin by the Playing Field was missed off the new schedule. The overflowing bin has now been emptied and notes have gone in the Parish News and on Facebook asking people not to put dog waste in the litter bin and not to leave litter by the bin when it is full.

9. Planning Applications

Planning Application No: 2024/0154/HSE - Alterations to fenestration, utilisation of garage as office space. Pastoral, Kale Street, Batcombe. Householder Application.

The application is to update the windows and use the garage as office space. The changes would be permitted development if the property were not in the Conservation Area. Details of the changes can be found on the planning website at [2024/0154/HSE | Alterations to fenestration, utilisation of garage as office space | Pastoral Kale Street Batcombe Shepton Mallet Somerset BA4 6AE \(mendip.gov.uk\)](https://www.mendip.gov.uk/planning/2024/0154/HSE-Alterations-to-fenestration-utilisation-of-garage-as-office-space-Pastoral-Kale-Street-Batcombe-Shepton-Mallet-Somerset-BA4-6AE).

Planning Application Updates. *Nothing to report.*

10. Review of Standing Orders

The Parish Council is required to review its Standing Orders annually. An electronic copy of the Standing Orders is attached and any Councillor wanting a paper copy should contact the Clerk. The Standing Orders can also be down loaded from the Parish Council website. New Standing Orders were adopted in February 2022, based on model Standing Orders provided by the National Association of Local Councils and I am unaware of anything in these Standing Orders that needs revising.

11. Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Wednesday April 3rd at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Hall (with a short Parish Council meeting beforehand at 6.45pm). The meeting includes a review of the Parish Council’s year, but if we wish to invite a speaker for the meeting we need to do so fairly soon.

12. Bank Reconciliation and Update on Budget for Year Ending 31st March 2024

Financial Regulations require that each quarter a bank reconciliation is produced by the Clerk, checked by a member of the Council, and reported to the Council as soon as possible after the end of the quarter.

Financial Regulations also require an update on the budget each quarter. The enclosed/attached sheet with four columns of figures shows the accounts for last year, the budget for this year, receipts and payments to 31st January this year and a projection for this year based on expenditure to date.

Receipts are projected to be approximately £1,400 more than the budgeted figure because of the VAT claim made in the current rather than the previous one and the unbudgeted receipts for the contributions to the Coronation mugs and electricity for the Playing Field. Allotments rent will be less than the full £350 due to the vacant allotments.

The projection for the Playing Field expenditure is likely to be around £1,000 less than budgeted, as the maintenance budget is unlikely to be spent; the cost of the electricity supply will be less than

expected following a refund from SSE at the start of the year; and the grass cutting will be £155 less than budgeted unless an extra cut is needed this winter.

The projection for the expenditure on Administration will be around £150 more than budgeted, due to a higher than expected increase in the Clerk's salary. Some other items are slightly more than budgeted but this is balanced by there being no bank custody fee.

The projection for the expenditure on Grants is likely to be as budgeted. Other expenditure is likely to be £300 more than budgeted largely because of the cost of the Coronation mugs, balanced by the fact that nothing has been spent on allotments maintenance. The net cost of the Coronation mugs was £200.40 after contributions.

Overall, there is a projected surplus of £1,876 compared to a budgeted deficit of £75. This is largely due to the VAT claim received in the current year instead of the previous one and the underspend on the maintenance budgets for the Playing Field and allotments. The projected funds at the end of the year are £12,517 of which approximately £1,000 will be earmarked for the allotments. This is a reserve well in excess of the recommended two thirds of the precept – although it may be prudent in light of the uncertain financial position of the Somerset Council.

13. Authorisation of Payment

£46.76 – The Parish News – Photocopying in 2023.

14. Other Business – matters of information only.

Nothing to report.

15. Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday March 6th 2024 at 7.30pm in the Old School.

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

31st January 2024