

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 2nd October 2024 at 8.00pm 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 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 September 2024 to be agreed and signed.
Enclosed/attached.

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Action Table – A copy of the Action Table from the meeting on September 4th is attached/enclosed. The Parish Council agreed to check progress on the actions listed in the Table under Matters Arising.

6. Tourist Tax

Steve Gilbert has requested that the Parish Council discuss the introduction of a tourist tax again. Steve believes that Tim Chater has “progressed this to a certain extent and had favourable discussions with the pub.” Steve feels that it needs to be discussed how best Batcombe can implement a voluntary tourist tax for those providers of accommodation willing to participate. Steve believes this could bring in £5,000 or more and that the village is missing out on this income every day that this has not been actioned.

Steve Gilbert had asked the Parish Council to consider a tourist tax at the March 2023 Parish Council meeting and it was agreed to raise the issue at the Annual Parish Meeting. Tim Chater raised the issue again at the March 2024 Parish Council meeting and the Parish Council were happy for Tim to investigate the matter further. In April 2024 Tim reported that legislation to impose a levy on tourist accommodation was passing through the Scottish parliament but that there were no plans for similar legislation in England. Tim concluded that more work was needed and the Parish Council agreed to consider set up a Working Party at the next meeting. In May Tom Price volunteered to be a

member of the Working Party and it was agreed to ask Tim Chater to chair it. It was noted that the idea would need the support of the pub and that there were questions over who would decide where the money would be spent and where it would be held. The Clerk was asked to check if the Parish Council can hold funds for a tourist levy.

7. Somerset Councillors' Reports and the Shepton Local Community Network

An opportunity for the Somerset Councillors to report on matters relevant to the parish, either in person or in writing.

8. Footpaths and Highways

Enhanced Highways Maintenance pilot – The EHM allows parishes to purchase work directly from Somerset Council's contractors at a cost of £685 a day (for two men with a lorry and small tools). More specialist work is also available at cost and training for volunteers to work on the highway. Details of the pilot were sent to Parish Councillors at the beginning of September.

The grit bin at Hincombe Hill has been checked and is full.

9. Playground - Maintenance Report

Willow and Wasps – To consider the removal of the willow structure which has been shown to attract large numbers of wasps into the Playing Field.

10. Planning Applications

None at present.

Planning Application Updates. *Prior Approval was not required for the excavation of five shallow scrapes at Horsehill Farm. Lodge Farm planning application – the details reserved by conditions 11 and 12 (Dairy stair, screen, WC door and floor) were approved. However, the details reserved by condition 17 were refused.*

11. Review of the Parish Emergency Plan

The list of volunteers in the Parish Emergency Plan was updated by the Chair and Bryony Harling two years ago. The Plan was then updated to reflect the replacement of the District and County Councils by the new Somerset Council. The Plan is confidential, as it contains personal details of volunteers.

12. Church Clock

In June the Parish Council agreed to provide a grant of £500 towards the £16,000 cost of the repair of the church clock. This was in addition to the regular budgeted grants that the Parish Council provides. The repair of the clock is now underway and Peter Glaisher has requested that the Parish Council consider an additional grant towards the cost. As noted at the June meeting the Parish Council has the power to assist in the provision of a public clock but as an unbudgeted expenditure any additional grant would require a formal resolution to be passed.

13. Authorisation of Payment

£180.00 Kevin Gale – Grass cutting in September.

£1,398.71 The Clerk – Salary and expenses for 2nd Quarter (*see attached sheet*).

14. Other Business – matters of information only.

None as yet.

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

Rob Sage