

# BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

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## You are Summoned to the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2026 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 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 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026 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 January 7<sup>th</sup> is attached/enclosed.*

*Precept – The precept form with a request for a precept of £11,500 has been sent to the Somerset Council and acknowledged.*

### 6. 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. The most recent LCN meeting was held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026.*

### 7. Highways and Rights of Way

*Somerset Council are consulting the Parish Council over a street naming application for the new road on the development at Beeches Farm. The developer has applied to call the road Woodland View as the properties will overlook a woodland. We have until February 13<sup>th</sup> to respond to the application, although the only basis for objection is: duplication; difficulty of pronouncing or spelling; or where the name could cause offence.*

*The cutoff date for adding Rights of Way to the definitive map is January 1<sup>st</sup> 2031. The Government have said that they will repeal this date but have not yet done so as it requires primary legislation. The Somerset Ramblers Area Footpath Officer, Les Stather, has asked if the Parish Council would*

*comment on their findings regarding evidence of footpaths in Batcombe that do not appear on the definitive map. A copy of their evidence was passed to Parish Councillors at the time of the last meeting. The Ramblers have found evidence from the 1910 Inland Revenue Census for the paths with the following numbers, marked in green on their maps:*

*84157 - runs from Higher Alham to Brickhouse Farm, Wanstrow (all but the start outside the parish).*

*84277 - runs directly from Mill Farm to Batcombe Vale (rather than following the river)*

*84325 - runs from the ford at Lower Alham, following tracks through the grounds of Westcombe House to Churchbridge Lodge.*

*84846 - runs from Lodge Farm to the Lodge road close to the Highlands (a more direct route to Lodge Farm from Batcombe).*

*85613 - runs from the entrance to Valley View Farm, south of Hincombe Hill before joining the road again just below the junction with the A359.*

*85786 - runs from Beeches Farm to the top of Burts Hill on the A359.*

*They have also marked possible footpaths for which they don't have documentary evidence in red:*

*83787 - runs from halfway down Bailey's Lane to somewhere in Westcombe.*

*84132 - runs from halfway down Bailey's Lane to Batcombe Vale.*

*85066 - runs from Back Lane to Linch Lane parallel to Kale Street.*

*The Ramblers would like to know if any of these paths are currently walked, whether we know of any other paths currently walked and if we know of any historical information relating to these paths.*

## **8. Playground - Maintenance Report**

*The litter bin outside the Playing Field has been emptied - thanks to Bryony Harling for continuing to report it. A note has been placed in the parish magazine that the bin will be removed if it continues to be abused and filled with domestic waste and dog poo bags.*

*The molecatcher caught two moles in the Playing Field and was paid £75 in cash to be reimbursed to the Clerk.*

## **9. Planning Applications**

*None at present.*

**Planning Application Updates.** *The felling of the Medlar at Strawberry Cottage has been approved.*

## **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 in the Jubilee Hall at 7.30pm on Wednesday April 1<sup>st</sup>. Our MP Anna Sabine is happy to attend and be part of a question time panel. Suggested timetable: 7.30pm refreshments; 7.45pm usual business; 8.15-9.00pm Question Time. Our Somerset Councillors have been invited to be part of the panel.*

## **12. Bank Reconciliation and Update on Budget for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026**

*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. As we now have online banking and online accounts, the Chair can check the bank reconciliations before the meeting.*

*Financial Regulations also require an update on the budget each quarter. As noted previously the accounting package provides a comparison between the budget for the period being considered and actual payments and receipts and a calculation of the variance between them, with a second comparison between the budget and the actual figures for the year to date.*

*Receipts during the period were a small amount of interest; allotments rent, which is significantly less than budgeted although there should be a further £70 to come; and Miscellaneous Receipts which consists of the £100 electricity contribution from the Fete committee and £142.50 in voluntary accommodation levies from the Three Horseshoes. The latter was not included in the budget, while the electricity contribution was received later than expected. Overall Total Receipts are £5,039 up on the year to date, mainly due to the Community Review Grant which was not budgeted.*

*The Playing Field grass cutting was £30 under budget for the period but exactly as budgeted for the year to date. Playing Field maintenance budget is £400 below budget for the year to date, with £156 having been spent in the last quarter (on the roller) but a further £75 has been spent on the molecatcher this quarter. The cost of the electricity supply is less than budgeted to date but the cost of the water supply is more than budgeted.*

*The Clerk's salary was slightly more than budgeted in the quarter due to a back dated payment in October but is slightly less than in the year to date. The Clerk's expenses are also slightly less than budgeted in the year to date. The National Insurance contribution is less than budgeted, but there was an increase in the data protection registration fee which means that it is more than budgeted.*

*£114 was spent on a second helmet for the strimmer which roughly what was budgeted for strimmer expenses. Miscellaneous Payments are the purchase of the grit bin and sealant for the roundabout which were not budgeted. There was also the contribution to the prize for taking part in Community Review which was not budgeted.*

*Total Payments are £1,456 over budget for the year to date, but this is due to the payments for the Community Review which are covered by the grant received. Without the cost of the Community Review Total Payments would be under budget.*

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

£75.00 The Clerk – Reimburse £75 cash paid to molecatcher.

*The reimbursement will need to be paid by cheque as the Clerk cannot approve a payment to himself.*

£2010.00 Thrive (Community Council for Somerset) – 2<sup>nd</sup> 50% of Community Review cost.

*This is a retrospective authorisation as payment was due on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. Thrive is now VAT registered which is why the first 50% of the cost was £1,675 and the second 50% was £2,010. However, the Parish Council can claim back the £335 in VAT on the second 50%.*

*In line with the new Financial Regulations, I can report the following payments were made by online bank transfer since the last meeting and after being approved by the Clerk and the Chair:*

£40.84 HMRC – Income tax (£19.80) and Employer's NIC (£21.07) for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter.

£45.90 News from the Parishes – Photocopying in 2025 (1,030 black copies; 47 colour).

£2010.00 Thrive (Community Council for Somerset) – 2<sup>nd</sup> 50% of Community Review cost.

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

*Nothing at present.*

### **15. Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 7.30pm in the Old School.**

*Rob Sage*