

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 1st July 2026 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 3rd June 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 June 3rd is attached/enclosed.

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 22nd June to Friday 31st July.

6. Somerset Councillor's Report and Shepton Local Community Network (LCN)

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

The LCN AGM will take place on Monday 6th July, 7-9.00pm in the Council Chamber at Shepton Mallet.

7. Wessex Internet

The Clerk met with the Senior Engagement Manager from Wessex Internet in June. Wessex Internet will be bringing ultrafast internet to Batcombe and surrounding areas in 2027. In 2024 Wessex Internet was awarded a five-year contract under the government-funded Project Gigabit programme to bring gigabit-capable broadband to hard-to-reach communities across Dorset and South Somerset and their network will reach Batcombe at some point next year (progress is dependent on winter weather and other factors). Wessex Internet will be bringing full fibre broadband to rural communities, which means a fibre optic cable going all the way to a home or business directly from the provider's network, delivering superior speeds and reliability compared to copper or partial fibre networks. They are currently at the planning stage talking to local landowners about how the network will reach Batcombe and the surrounding properties. Most of the rural network will be laid underground although some of the network in the village may use existing Openreach telegraph poles and ducting.

Wessex Internet will be holding a residents' meeting early next year to explain what they are offering, three months or so before the network is operational. It has been suggested that this would be suitable for the Annual Parish Meeting on April 7th next year – although they might need an earlier meeting if progress is better than expected.

Wessex Internet are based in Blandford, Dorset and offer four internet packages: Full Fibre Lite at £29 a month at 100Mbps download, 15Mbps upload and a data limit of 100GB a month for online essentials; Full Fibre 250 at £42.50 a month (250Mbps download, 125Mbps upload, unlimited data); Full Fibre 500 at £55 a month (500Mbps download, 250Mbps upload, unlimited data) for older properties with thick walls; and Full Fibre 900 at £79 a month (900Mbps download, 450Mbps upload, unlimited data) for data hungry households. There is free installation and a £49 activation fee. Residents do not have to use the full fibre connection if they do not wish to and a coil would then be left at the property boundary. Currently no other providers are using Wessex Internet's network, but this may change in the future. They offer an eighteen-month contract with no midterm price increase.

For every community connected to their network, Wessex Internet offer one Community Hub, connecting a community building for £1 a month and they will be contacting the Village Hall Trust about this. Wessex Internet will also be offering a variety of telephone packages, where residents can retain their landline number when the copper landlines are removed in a few years' time.

8. Highways and Rights of Ways

Temporary Speed Limit on Hincombe Hill – There will be a temporary 30mph speed limit on Hincombe Hill (near the telephone exchange) on Thursday 9th July to allow the upgrading of overhead power lines.

9. Playing Field - Maintenance Report

Nothing to report.

10. Planning Applications

None at present.

Planning Application Updates. *No updates to report.*

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

Copies of the Social Media Policy and the Press and Media Policy can be downloaded from the Parish Council website <https://www.batcombe-parish-council-somerset.org.uk/parish-council-documents/> if Councillors do not already have a copy. Both policies were last reviewed a year ago. All Councillors should be aware of the Social Media Policy (updated in 2022) when using social media and beware of appearing to represent the Parish Council when posting personal comments. 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.

12. Authorisation of Payments

Kevin Gale - £200.00 – Grass cutting in June. (*Invoice not yet received.*)

HMRC - £23.19 – Employer’s NI Contribution (April) £14.19 plus Income Tax (April) £11.20 less previous payment £2.80 (April 2025)

The Clerk – Salary and expenses for 1st Quarter (details to follow).

13. Other Business – matters of information only.

The Parish Council laptop is not working and I need to see if it can be repaired. Fortunately backups mean I am able to work from an old personal laptop for the time being. However, issues with restoring data to the PAYE Basic Tools means I am unable to calculate the income tax due on this quarter’s salary at present.

14. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 5th August 2026 at 8.00pm in the Old School if required to consider planning applications, otherwise Wednesday 2nd September.

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

24th June 2026