

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 4th March 2026 in the Old School, Batcombe, commencing at 7.30pm.

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

Also Present: The Clerk – Rob Sage and one member of the public.

5931 – Apologies for Absence: Rob Reed – Somerset Councillor.

5932 – Declarations of Interest: None.

5933 – Public Participation: Martin Horsford stated that he had lived in Batcombe since 2014 and had a concept for Valley View Farm. He invited Councillors to come up to Valley View Farm, see the plans, a full model of what was proposed and walk the land. He had undertaken a pre-application consultation with the planning authority.

5934 – Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 4th February 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5935 – Matters Arising: Action Table – A copy of the Action Table from the meeting on February 4th had been distributed with the Agenda. There was nothing to report that did not appear later on the Agenda.

5936 – Somerset Councillor’s Report and Shepton Local Community Network (LCN): A report had been received from Somerset Councillor Claire Sully and distributed to Parish Councillors. Concern was raised over the state of the roads and the number and size of the potholes.

5937 – Highways and Rights of Way: Mary Comley, the Chair of the Mendip Bridleways and Byways Association, had written to Westcombe Dairy asking that the overgrowing hedge on the lane from Westcombe to Lower Alham be cut back and this had been done.

Tom Price had been forwarded an e-mail from the Senior Rights of Way Officer at Somerset Council by the landowner at Mill Farm regarding the damaged bridge on the Spargrove footpath where it goes onto Mill Farm land. The e-mail stated that: *“The RoWBP is split into 2 zones, north and south. Bridge 4093 is number 14 on the northern list. To put this in some context there are currently 76 bridges and structures on this list. As I mentioned in my previous email, the Bridge Warden covering the northern zone is currently off work and we do not have anybody to cover the projects in this area. I am trying to pick up some emergency works, but where a closure is in place, as there is here, we will monitor and maintain this until a project can be progressed. Having said this as I set out in my last email I will visit site to look at what can be done but regrettably I will not be able to do this for some time, due to other work priorities.”* The landowner had suggested putting this in the parish magazine to keep people informed of the dangerous state of the bridge and this was agreed. Tom Price to provide wording to go in the parish magazine.

It was noted that there were significant potholes on the Alham road and at the bottom of Holly Hill and cars had been damaged by them. The barrier on Hincombe Hill had been damaged by

a car during the icy weather earlier in the year and had probably saved them from going over the edge. The Clerk to e-mail Charlie Higgins at Somerset Highways to ask if the barrier can be repaired.

5938 – Playing Field – Maintenance Report: The Clerk reported that British Gas had estimated the electricity usage in the Playing Field in January as 2,278 units and as a result took £749 by Direct Debit from the Parish Council bank account. The Clerk had contacted British Gas and after initially saying they didn't provide refunds, agreed to refund £720.

5939 – Planning Applications: Planning Application 2026/0328/TCA Apple (T1) - Fell, Crab Apple (T2) - Fell. Ivy Wall House, Back Lane, Batcombe. Works/Felling Trees in a CA. The two trees were in the garden behind Ivy Wall House and the owner wished to fell them to create light and space in his garden. The Parish Council had no objections to the proposed tree works.

Planning Updates: Approval had been given for the reduction of the Lime tree in the glebe field. Approval had also been given for the removal of the Box stems at the entrance to Boxbush Farm and for the reduction of the Beech, Norway Maple and Cherry trees in the garden at Boxbush.

Councillors discussed the request to visit Valley View Farm and agreed to do so at 3.00pm on Sunday March 15th.

5740 – Annual Parish Meeting: The Annual Parish Meeting would take place in the Jubilee Hall on Wednesday April 1st. Our MP Anna Sabine was happy to attend and be part of a question time panel with our Somerset Councillors, Claire Sully and Rob Reed. The following timetable for the meeting was: 7.30pm refreshments; 7.45pm usual business; 8.15-9.00pm Question Time. Councillors agreed to provide refreshment; Bryony Harling would produce a poster; the Chair would talk to the Village Hall about a microphone and Peter Glaisher would ensure a parking spot was reserved for the MP.

5741 – Review of Schedule of Assets: An updated copy of the Schedule of Assets had been distributed with the Agenda. There was one change from the last time the Schedule was updated a year ago with the purchase of a new grit bin for Hincombe Hill (purchase value £216). As a result, the Parish Council's assets recorded on the Schedule had increased to £64,373. It was noted that the values given were the purchase value with no account made of depreciation or increase in value.

5942 – Review of Risk Management Policy and Insurance Cover: A copy of the Risk Assessment and Management document had been distributed with the Agenda. This was the same as the previous year's document as there had been no change in the risks to the Council. The Insurance Policy was due for renewal in June and the Parish Council was coming to the end of the first year in a three-year long-term agreement with Ecclesiastical arranged through Clear Councils Insurance. The level of the insurance premium would be known closer to the renewal date but the long-term agreement meant that there should not be a large increase. The cover was adequate so there was no reason to change insurance in the midst of a long-term agreement.

5943 - Authorisation of Payments: Councillors authorised the following payments:

- £95.00 Kevin Gale – Grass cutting in Playing Field and War Memorial in February.
- £116.00 Society of Local Council Clerks – Clerk's membership of the SLCC.

The payments to be made online.

In line with the new Financial Regulations, the Clerk reported that the following payments had been made by online bank transfer since the last meeting after being approved by the Clerk and the Chair:

£6.78 Bryony Harling – Reimburse cost of sticker for litter bin.

£47.29 water2business – Water supply to Playing Field.

5944 – Other Business – matters of information only. It was noted that the “No Dog Poo” sticker had been removed from the litter bin by the Playing Field entrance.

It was also noted that the Council bungalow in Kale Street had not sold when put up for auction. It was questioned why the bungalow was being sold when there was a need for more affordable housing in the parish and it was suggested that this question be put to the panel at the Annual Parish Meeting.

5945 - Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 1st April 2026 at 6.45pm in the Jubilee Hall. To be followed by the Annual Parish Meeting.

Janet Jones

1/4/26