BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage **Tel: 01749 850934**
e-mail: clerk@batcombe-parish-council-somerset.org.uk

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 2nd September 2026 in the Old School, Batcombe, commencing at 8.00pm.

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

Also Present: The Clerk – Rob Sage; and twelve members of the public.

6019 – Apologies for Absence: Rob Reed – Somerset Councillor.

6020 – Declarations of Interest: None.

6021 – Public Participation: None.

6022 – Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 5th August 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6023 – Planning Applications:

Planning Application No: 2026/1389/HSE Demolition of existing single storey extensions with the erection of side & rear extensions. Proposal also includes internal works & erection of greenhouse. Boxbush Farm, Batcombe – Householder Application.

Planning Application No: 2026/1390/LBC Demolition of existing single storey extensions with the erection of side & rear extensions. Proposal also includes internal reconfiguration works, addition of skylights, glazed link to connect extension & erection of greenhouse. Boxbush Farm, Batcombe – Listed Building Consent.

This was a reconsultation of applications considered at the August Parish Council meeting after revised plans were submitted. The applicant noted that it had been discovered that there was a restrictive covenant on the former farmyard at Boxbush Farm that prevented any structures being built on the former farmyard and as a result the wall of the single storey side extension needed to be brought in by 800mm. He had asked the owners of Boxbush Barn if the covenant could be amended but they had refused. The owners of Boxbush Barn, their son-in-law and others then repeated concerns about the size of the rear extension and its impact on Boxbush Barn, Boxbush Farm and the Conservation Area that had been made at the August meeting when the original application had been considered.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and noted that as the Parish Council had recommended approval of the original applications at its August meeting, the question to be considered was whether the changes were sufficient for the Parish Council to reverse the decision made in August. The view of the Council was that the changes did not make a material difference to the proposed works and so their original recommendation remained unchanged.

Planning Application No: 2026/1606/HSE Application for the erection of a rear single-storey extension and the refurbishment of the principal building, to include repair and upgrade of existing windows, installation of conservation rooflights, reinstatement of traditional materials, conversion of outbuilding to ancillary accommodation, drainage improvements, and minor landscaping. Jackdaw Cottage, Kale Street, Batcombe – Householder Application.

Planning Application No: 2026/1607/LBC Application for the erection of a rear single-storey extension and the refurbishment of the principal building, to include repair and upgrade of existing windows, installation of conservation rooflights, reinstatement of traditional materials, conversion of outbuilding to ancillary accommodation, drainage improvements, and minor landscaping. Jackdaw Cottage, Kale Street, Batcombe – Listed Building Consent.

The applicants noted that they were refurbishing Jackdaw Cottage, reinstating traditional materials and incorporating a bunker behind the cottage to form a single-storey rear extension. To increase light in the cottage a rear window would be replaced with French doors and the window above it was increased in size and at the pre-application consultation the planners were happy with these changes. It was noted that all the neighbouring cottages had rear extensions. The Parish Council decided to recommend approval as the proposals would improve the quality of the listed building.

Planning Updates: The application for the removal of the bough from the Cherry tree at Netherlea had been approved. As had the application for a new field access at Beeches Farm. It was noted that the work on the bungalow on Kale Street was to add a septic tank rather than to build an extension without planning permission.

6024 – Matters Arising from the Minutes: Action Table – Peter Glaisher noted that the allotments field was overgrown and most of the remaining allotment holders had given up on their allotments. He had seen the owner of the field and explained the situation and that the field would be sorted after November. Peter Glaisher had also spoken to the farmer at Lower Alham Farm about the blocking the lane to the farm which was a public highway. The Clerk to chase up Somerset Highways to repair the barrier on Hincombe Hill and to write to the owner of Church Farm about the wheelie bin permanently left in the road.

It was noted that there was a problem with parking for contractors working at Kings Hayes who were parking outside the Playing Field. Peter Glaisher to suggest that they might like to use the Glebe Field for parking.

6025 – Somerset Councillor's Report and Shepton Local Community Network (LCN): A report from Somerset Councillor Claire Sully had been distributed to Parish Councillors before the meeting.

6026 – Community Resilience Action Calendar and Parish Preparedness Survey: The Community Resilience Action Calendar produced by Somerset Councillor Claire Sully had been sent to Councillors. The Calendar was intended to bring together useful information about resilience, flooding, extreme weather, grants, training opportunities and community initiatives. It also set out key dates and simple actions for Parish Council and communities to consider.

The first item on the Calendar was the Community Preparedness Survey that had been sent to parishes in July 2025 - but 249 out of 328 town and parish councils had yet to complete it. A copy of the survey, stating when a list of 13 hazards had last occurred in the parish and evaluating the risk of these happening again and the parish's preparedness to deal with these risks, was distributed to Councillors by the Clerk. The Parish Council agreed with the Clerk's evaluation of these risks and the parish's preparedness. The Clerk to submit the survey.

6027 – Highways and Rights of Way: Tom Price reported that he was unaware of any progress on the bridge repairs on the Spargrove footpath. It was noted that there were some abandoned road signs at Eastcombe. Bryony Harling to report.

6028 – Playing Field – Maintenance Report: The Annual Safety Inspection – An electronic copy of the report on the RoSPA safety inspection had been distributed to Parish Councillors before the meeting.

As in previous years, most items were of low/medium risk with the actual risk of items being the same or slightly higher than the innate risk for that type of item. However, there were some new concerns raised this year and some items were given a higher risk score.

The gate was low risk but the inspector noted the decay in the old gateposts. Seating was also low risk but the inspector recommended regular inspection for bird fouling and removal with a disinfectant solution. The picnic table was low risk but the inspector notes loose or missing fixtures and decayed timber. The shelter was low risk but the inspector recommended that a competent person inspect the electrical equipment.

The overhead rings have a slightly higher innate risk but still in the low category. The inspector noted loose bolts that needed tightening and strimmer damage to the posts. There were also some natural splits in the timber that should be monitored. The goalposts were low risk but the inspector found some corrosion at the bottom of one of the posts that needed treating. He also noted a hole in the surface that was a trip hazard and needs filling.

The swings were given a medium risk rating, higher than the innate risk because the inspector was unable to gauge the structural integrity of the unit and recommends an internal inspection of all parts. It was assumed he meant removing the brackets attaching the swings to the frame to see if there is any damage to the frame hidden by the brackets as there weren't any other internal parts. He also noted some chain link wear and chain connector notching which was low risk but should be monitored.

The cricket net was medium risk which is its innate risk level. The inspector recommended monitoring and routinely checking the security of the key clamp fixings (which hold the frame together). He also noted that one stump was missing from the fixed stumps and recommended their replacement. (The Cricket Club state that they replaced the stump as requested but the replacement has been removed.)

The risk rating for the roundabout had increased from low last year to medium this year. This was because of gaps between the carousel and its surround that exceeded the permitted 8mm. The inspector recommended that this be modified to meet the standard. The inspector also noted separation between the roundabout surround and the safety surfacing which may represent a trip hazard, but is low risk.

The multiplay was low risk, while the basketball stand was medium risk because of its innate risk. The cableway was rated as medium risk as the inspector was unable to inspect the cable attachments on the cableway because they are covered. The inspector recommended an annual inspection of the cable attachments, which would involve dismantling the cableway.

The goalpost to be rubbed down and painted where they were corroded. The signs in the Playing Field were faded and it was agreed these should be replaced with new ones. It was noted that children had taken glass bottles into the Playing Field and broken them. An item to go in the parish magazine stating that glass was not to be taken into the Playing Field. Numerous holes had appeared in the surface of the Playing Field where the dry weather had caused the soil to collapse into the old mole runs. It was felt that this would sort itself out when it rained. It was agreed to buy new stumps for the cricket net which should cost around £39. Ian Sage volunteered to see if the gap on the roundabout could be adjusted.

Peter Glaisher was thanked for cutting back the inside of the Playing Field hedge in preparation for the Fete. The Clerk to send a letter of thanks to John Wiltshire for cutting the outside of the hedge. The Chair had inspected the Playing Field after the Fete and it was in a reasonable condition apart from the numerous holes that had prevented the children's races going ahead. The tap in the shelter had been broken during the Fete and the Fete Committee to be asked to replace it.

6029 – Review of the Parish Council's Complaints Procedure: The Council's Code of Practice for handling complaints can be downloaded from the Parish Council website. This had last been amended in 2011, and was based on a model produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). This procedure was only for complaints about the actions of the Parish Council as a body. Complaints about the Clerk should be dealt with by the Staffing Committee in accordance with the Clerk's Contract of Employment; and complaints against individual Councillors for breaches of the Council's Code of Conduct should be made to the Somerset Council's Monitoring Officer. The Parish Council had only received one complaint since the Code of Practice was adopted in 2003 and it was felt that there was no need to amend the current Complaints Procedure.

6030 – Bank Reconciliation and Budget Update: The bank reconciliation for the first quarter had been checked by the Chair and reported to the meeting.

An update on the budget had been distributed with the Agendas and consisted of a comparison between the budget for the period being considered and actual payments and receipts with a calculation of the variance between them. The period was actually up to July 31st which is four months rather than a quarter as there was no budget report in August.

As noted previously, the budget comparison requires entering in which month or months the budgeted figures would be paid/received, which means some variances were a result of amounts being paid/received in a different month to that expected.

The report showed that the final precept agreed was £500 more than the original figure proposed and as it was now paid in two instalments there is a variance of £250. The VAT repayment was £314 more than expected when the budget was produced because VAT was added on the second half of the payment to Thrive for the Community Review. The bank interest was £6.31 more than expected because online banking meant we were able to transfer money from the current to the reserve account more easily.

The Playing Field grass cutting was exactly on budget, but none of the Playing Field maintenance budget had been spent. The cost of the electricity supply was £23 less than budgeted to date and we had yet to pay the Somerset Playing Fields Association subscription of £15.

The Clerk's salary was £25 less than budgeted to date but there would be a back dated increase to come. The Clerk's expenses were £7.42 less than budgeted and the insurance premium was £1.75 less than budgeted. Nothing has been spent on training and the Affiliation Fees were £13 less than budgeted (as increased fees have been weighted towards larger councils). The additional photocopying of £34.70 was for the Community Review and was paid from the grant received. The website fee appears more than budgeted because the budget has a monthly figure but the fees are actually paid quarterly. The annual fee for the accounting software of £84 was omitted from the budget. (We weren't charged for using the software for our first year last year.)

The Grants were exactly as budgeted at £720. Other Payments included refreshments for the Community Review evening which were paid from the Community Review grant.

6031 - Authorisation of Payments: Councillors authorised the following payments:

Kevin Gale - £100.00 – Grass cutting in August. (One cut.)

Playsafety Limited – £118.80 – Playing Field safety inspection.

The payments to be made online.

Financial Regulations required payments made online to be reported to the Parish Council at the next meeting (not done at the August meeting). The online payments following the July meeting were:

Kevin Gale - £200.00 – Grass cutting in June. (Two cuts.)

HMRC - £23.19 – Income Tax and Employer's National Insurance Contribution (April)

And those following the August meeting were:

water2business – £46.59 – Water supply to the Playing Field (six months).

Kevin Gale - £200.00 – Grass cutting in July. (Two cuts.)

£2,500 was also transferred from the reserve bank account to the current bank account in August so that there were sufficient funds to make the payments in August and September.

6032 – Other Business – matters of information only. Crime – The crime report for July showed no reported crime in Batcombe. There was one attempted burglary of a home reported in June and one interference with a motor vehicle reported in August.

6033 - Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 7th October at 8.00pm in the Old School.

Janet Jones

7/10/26