

# BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage

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## Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2013 in the Old School, Batcombe, commencing at 8.00pm.

**Present - Councillors:** Liz Hollis – Vice Chairman, Iona FitzGerald, John Sommer and Justin Witcombe.

**Also Present:** The Clerk – Rob Sage.

**3532 – Apologies for Absence:** Chris Wildridge – who was on holiday, Jayne Cox and Ian Sage – who were at a parents' meeting, David Stevens – District Councillor and Nigel Woollcombe-Adams – County Councillor. It was noted that the meeting had again clashed with the District Council Planning Board Meeting, and a change of date might need to be considered if the District and County Councillors were to attend.

**3533 – Declarations of Interest and Granting of Dispensations:** None.

**3534 – Public Participation:** None.

**3535 – Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2013** were approved and signed by the Chairman.

**3536 – Matters Arising:** Grants – Thanks had been received from all the organisations that had received grants from the Parish Council.

**3537 – Footpaths and Highways:** Justin Witcombe reported that he had been told about a drain on Walter's Lane. He would attempt to find and unblock it.

John Sommer and Justin Witcombe volunteered to be volunteers in the County Council's strimmer project. It was agreed to pay for John and Justin to attend the training course if necessary. The Clerk to check if Justin needed to attend the training course as he had his own public liability insurance.

**3538 – Playing Field – Maintenance Report:** Jayne Cox had found a traditional molecatcher whose prices were lower than the one used previously. The Clerk had asked him to deal with the moles in the Playing Field.

A complaint had been received from Philip Clarke about low hanging branches from the trees in the Playing Field damaging tractors. Iona FitzGerald offered to ask her husband Tristram to look at the trees. It was agreed that the Parish Council should pay for any work that was needed. Justin Witcombe volunteered to help Tristram.

**New Play Equipment:** Iona FitzGerald reported that work had begun on installing the new play equipment. The new equipment was made from English oak. The bridge had had to be rethought due to health and safety issues and would now be a completely wooden construction instead of using wire supports. The stay from the electric pole was in the way – Iona would be contacting Southern Electric to see if it could be repositioned, if not it would have to be built around. Digging out the foundations of the old fort and swings had taken two days because they were so large. Bobby Loxton was thanked for taking away the rubble. While digging out

the swings the sheath of the electric cable to the shelter had been struck. Southern Electric had been out and fixed the problem but it should have been buried to a greater depth.

The old fort was falling apart. It was hoped to receive a donation for it but it might only be suitable for firewood. The swings had been previously painted with the wrong paint and so would have to be wire brushed before repainting. It was agreed to pay for the paint from the Playing Field maintenance budget, although Justin Witcombe knew someone who might be willing to donate some paint.

There would be a tea party to open the new equipment on Friday July 19<sup>th</sup>. Due to her long involvement with the children of the village, Mary Sage had been asked to perform the opening.

The Clerk reported that he had ordered a post-installation inspection from RoSPA and was waiting for the inspector to contact him to arrange the date. He had also spoken to the Council's insurers and the additional premium for insuring the new equipment would be £48.73 a year.

**3539 – Coney Wood – Lease of the Wood:** The Clerk reported that the Woodland Trust had provided a copy of their latest tree survey conducted in September 2012 which only identified two trees at risk – both close to the road. He had also contacted the Parish Council's insurers who stated that signs would be required regarding the water in the wood. If the Parish Council had a full maintenance programme for the trees then cover would be provided under the existing public liability for no additional liability.

Councillors expressed concerns about the potential costs of maintaining the trees under a 25 year lease. The Clerk was asked to find out what would happen to the wood if the Council did not lease it. It was noted that volunteers could help with the maintenance of the wood without taking on a lease.

**3540 – Planning Applications:** There were none to consider.

**Planning Application Updates:** The house on land behind Chapel Row – A response from the District Council had been received noting that the principle of a contemporary design had been established by the appeal decision and that it would have been unreasonable for the District Council to re-visit issues considered acceptable by that decision. With regard to the photovoltaic panels, the owner's agent had argued that the installation was not yet complete and when it was finished their height will be in accordance with the approval. The enforcement officer had asked for drawings showing how the array would be installed and the comparative levels with the approval. He noted that formal enforcement action would be premature at this stage.

The appeal against the refusal of Listed Building Consent for the conversion of the coach house at the Stables in Westcombe to an annexe had been allowed by the Planning Inspector. The Parish Council had recommended approval of the application.

Chandler's House – Although no formal notification had been received the Clerk reported that the District Councillor had stated that the application for 11 photovoltaic panels on the roof of Chandler's House in Kale Street had been approved by the District Council's Planning Board.

An application for the erection of agricultural livestock and storage building at Hedgestocks by Donald Sage had been deemed to be permitted development.

**3541 - Authorisation of payment:** Councillors authorised the following payments:

- £96.00 Mr G Sparkes – Grass cutting for June.
- £12.50 Mendip Bridleways and Byways Association – Contribution towards repairs of Honeycliffe bridleway.
- £795.44 The Clerk – Salary for 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter.
- £93.79 The Clerk – Expenses for 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter.
- £27.05 Francis Self – New stopcock for allotments water.

**3542 - Other Business - Matters of Information:** John Sommer asked if it was known when improvements would be made to the road from Westcombe to Stoney Stratton. The Clerk to ask Somerset Highways about this and the road closure of Saite Lane.

The Vice Chairman reported that the Chairman had a number of ideas for developing the Parish Council website, which included including local businesses. He would also like Councillors to consider putting their photographs on the website and having a website e-mail that could be linked to their own e-mail. It was noted that would be a personal choice as to whether Councillors put their photograph on the website.

**3543 – Date and Time of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013 at 8.00pm in the Old School, Batcombe, unless there were planning applications to consider when there would be a short meeting on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> August at 8.00pm.

*Chris Wildridge*  
*4th September 2013*