

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage

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You are Summoned to the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council to be held on Wednesday 6th January 2016 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

2. Declarations of Interest and Granting of Dispensations

Councillors' Declaration of Interests forms have been sent to the Monitoring Officer at Mendip District Council. As they have not yet been published on the District Council website all interests should be declared at this 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 time.

4. Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 2nd December 2015 to be agreed and signed. Enclosed.

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Nothing that does not appear on the Agenda below.

6. District and County Councillors' Reports

An opportunity for the District and County Councillors to report on matters relevant to the parish, either in person or in writing.

7. Allotments

A meeting with the allotment holders has been arranged for the morning of Saturday January 16th. So far three of the allotment holders have confirmed that they will be there. The Parish Council has funds in the Allotment Fund that can be used for hedge trimming or grass cutting if required. This money can only be spent on the allotments.

8. Footpaths and Highways

The Chairman is concerned that the Highways sign on the A359 junction is in feet and not in metres. The sign placed there by the Parish Council is now very dirty and so is not visible at night.

A resident of Mill Lane complained that no grit had been left on Mill Lane when it was left elsewhere in Batcombe. I have contacted Somerset Highways and they will be placing some grit on Mill Lane. The same resident would also like a bollard placed at the bottom of Mill Lane to stop cars from driving onto the grass and getting stuck. Somerset Highways currently have no funds for anything but safety works.

An HGV attempting a delivery to the brewery at Westcombe came down the road past Batcombe Lodge onto Cockpit Lane and then got stuck on Back Lane at the junction with the road past The Three Horseshoes. It had to stay there overnight (December 12th/13th) and the police came and put out road blocked signs. The County Council have informed us that the direction signs to the brewery have been delayed as they are waiting to see if the cheese factory will share in the costs and so have not been able to undertake the sign design as yet.

9. Playing Field - Maintenance Report

Grass cutting in the Playing Field has finished for the season, but given the mild weather Gardens of Avalon will be prepared to undertake an additional cut if required.

The basket has been removed from the basket swing. The Council needs to confirm that it wishes to accept the quote of £495 from Vita Play for the repair of the zip wire as discussed at the last meeting.

10. Planning Applications

Planning Application No: 2015/3075/TCA - Proposed pruning of two trees in a Conservation Area T1 Lime – 60% pollard to address storm damage; T2 Poplar – remove deadwood. The Parsonage, Gold Hill, Batcombe – Works/Felling Trees in a Conservation Area.

Planning Application Updates.

Nothing to report at present.

11. Emergency Plan

The Chairman is proposing that Rob Jones be added to the Emergency Plan Working Party. The Working Party currently consists of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Clerk and Arish Turle representing the PCC.

12. Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting is due to be held on Wednesday 6th April at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Hall. The Council needs to consider whether it wishes to invite a speaker to this meeting.

13. Budget and Precept 2016/17

The District Council have now sent the details of the tax base a little later than promised. Batcombe's tax base for 2016/17 will be 201.19 compared to 206.09 for 2015/16. [The tax base is the number of Band D equivalent properties in Batcombe when taking into account the number of empty properties, various discounts (including 25% for single people) and the weighting of the different bands above and below Band D.]

The smaller the tax base the more Council Tax each household has to pay to provide the same precept for the Parish Council. If the Parish Council were to leave its precept unchanged at £7,948, a Band D property with no discounts would have to pay £39-50 towards the precept in 2016/17 an increase of 2.41% on this year.

If, as proposed at the last meeting, the Council increases its precept by £500 to £8,450 (an increase of 6.29% in the precept), a Band D property with no discounts would have to pay £42 towards the precept, an increase of 8.89%. Please note that it is this figure that appears on Council Tax bills.

SALC have informed us that the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have decided not to apply referendum principles to the parish council sector for 2016/17 (this would mean having a referendum if the increase in our precept was above a certain level). However DCLG "expect town and parish councils to behave responsibly and protect their taxpayers from excessive precept increases. If parishes fail to do so, the government has the option of making them subject to the referendum principles in future."

I have enclosed an amended budget and forecast showing the proposed increases in precept of £500 each year. I have included estimates of the additional items of expenditure on the war memorial wall,

the notice boards and the computer and software in the budget so that it tallies with the forecast. This additional expenditure would mean a deficit of £500 next year, but then there would be surpluses of over £1,000 in each of the following years. This would build up sufficient funds to allow for the replacement of the basket swing frame at the end of this period.

The £600 estimate for the war memorial wall is for repointing the wall, replacing some of the stone and rebuilding “a few patches that are not so good”.

The Chairman is planning to use the spreadsheet he produced to show the impact on the forecast over the next three years of expenditure on various items.

We need to make a decision at this meeting as Mendip had asked for our precept figure by January 25th.

14. Authorisation of Payment

- £???.00 Gardens of Avalon – Grass cutting in December. (*Invoice not yet received.*)
- £957.96 The Clerk – Salary for 3rd Quarter. (*See enclosed sheet.*)
- £115.23 The Clerk – Expenses for 3rd Quarter. (*See enclosed sheet.*)

15. Other Business – matters of information only.

None at present.

16. Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Wednesday 3rd February 2016 at 7.30pm in the Old School, Batcombe

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

30th December 2015