

BATCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Rob Sage

Tel: 01749 850934

e-mail: robsage@uwclub.net

Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Batcombe Parish Council held on Wednesday 2nd March 2016 in the Old School, Batcombe, commencing at 7.30pm.

Present - Councillors: Chris Wildridge – Chairman, Jayne Cox, Lucinda Edgell, Iona FitzGerald, Ian Sage, John Sommer and Justin Witcombe.

Also Present: The Clerk – Rob Sage, Dick Skidmore – District Councillor, and six members of the public.

4058 – Apologies for Absence: Nigel Woollcombe-Adams – County Councillor.

4059 – Declarations of Interest: John Sommer declared an interest in item 4069 – Affordable Housing, and Iona FitzGerald declared a pecuniary interest in item 4068 – planning application for tree works at Boords Farm.

4060 – Public Participation: Mr Steve Gilbert stated that he had submitted a planning application regarding South View on Kale Street and as he would not be able to attend the next two Parish Council meetings wished to inform Councillors of the proposal. He was proposing to change the use of the old butcher's shop that had not been used for many years to residential use and to split South View into two properties. He noted that there were no plans to alter the shop front or the layout of the room which were listed; the room was not suitable for commercial use; and the Conservation Officer had no objections.

Mr Bruno Cristofoli reported that he had scrapped away dirt from the top of the Honeycliffe bridleway but that the soakaway was filled with mud. He felt that there needed to be a ditch along the road to prevent water running down the bridleway. The Chairman stated that he would discuss this with Somerset Highways. It was noted that the Mendip Bridleways and Byways Association (MBBA) were prepared to assist with repairs to the bridleway.

4061 – Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd February 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4062 – Matters Arising: None.

4063 – Footpaths and Highways: This item was brought forward due to the public interest. The Clerk reported that Somerset Highways had suspended precautionary salting through the village until further notice because of the difficulty their operations team have in passing parked vehicles. This was despite warnings in the parish magazine and on the Parish Council website of the need to park considerately. The residents present noted that large agricultural vehicles and recycling lorries drove through Kale Street on a regular basis with no problems and would like to see evidence of the problems the salting lorries were having. It was noted that there would be serious difficulties in getting in and out of the village in icy weather and the treacherous roads would pose a serious safety issue. The Clerk was asked to write objecting in the strongest possible terms to the cancellation of the salting.

4064 – District and County Councillors' Reports: The District Councillor stated that he followed the meetings of the Parish Council through the Minutes and anyone was welcome to contact him. He noted that the District Council would have to be self-sufficient by 2020

relying on business rates for its income and that sooner or later the District Councils in Somerset would need to combine services – currently Mendip had signed deals with South Oxfordshire, Havant and other nearby District Councils and benefits for Birmingham were being dealt with at the offices in Mendip.

4065 – Allotments: Gary Butler had quoted £160 to cut the inside of the road hedge; to cut back the overhanging boughs on the far side hedge; to burn all cuttings and as much rubbish from the compost heap as possible and this quote was accepted. The Clerk had contacted Mendip DC about the rubbish bins and other plastic items in the allotments and they would treat these as fly-tipping and remove them.

The Clerk reported that the previous holder of the recently vacant allotment had left a polytunnel on the allotment, which the new allotment holder had made use of, but which he now wanted. The Clerk had put him in contact with the new allotment holder.

4066 – Footpaths and Highways (continued): The Clerk reported a request from North Cadbury Parish Council for information on the Parish Council's HGV warning sign on the A359 junction. They had similar problems with HGVs and one of their residents had spotted the sign after it had been cleaned.

The Chairman reported on an exchange of e-mails with Ginnie Jones from the MBBA regarding the bridleway at Honeycliffe. Ginnie was working with Clare Haskins at the County Council to repair the bridleway.

Justin Witcombe stated that he had reported the blocked drains in the parish to Somerset Highways, asking that they be jetted. John Sommer noted that the roads were in a poor condition in a number of places including at Churchbridge and on Hincombe Hill.

4067 – Playing Field – Maintenance Report: The Clerk reported that Vita Play had not yet undertaken the repair of the zip wire but would be doing so in March, while they were undertaking other projects at Ditchat and in Frome. The Clerk to inform Vita Play that the Council would like the repair to be undertaken before the Easter holidays.

The mole continued to be active in the Playing Field and the Clerk reported that Geoff Sparkes would begin cutting the Playing Field grass shortly. It was agreed to order 50 bags of play bark for the multi-play equipment and Ian Sage volunteered to collect it. Iona FitzGerald reported that work on the willow structure had been partially completed with the help of a number of volunteers. The Chairman asked that it be noted that the volunteers had done twenty hours of work on the structure.

4068 – Planning Applications: There were no planning applications to consider. The Clerk reported that the tree officer at the District Council had informed him that the work on the tree at Boords Farm was considered minor work and so no consultation would be undertaken. The Clerk to thank him for keeping the Parish Council informed.

4069 – Affordable Housing: The Clerk reported that Jane Birch from the Community Council was willing to speak at the Annual Parish Meeting about the Housing Needs Survey. She would like to meet with the Council to discuss the questionnaire for the Housing Needs Survey and determine how it should be adapted to meet the needs of the parish. To save time she was willing to come to the April meeting, but it was felt that there would not be time to do the Survey justice in this short meeting. The Community Council required the Parish Council to pay a 25% deposit towards the cost of the Housing Needs Survey before meeting with the Council and this was agreed.

4070 – Review of Risk Management Policy: A copy of the Risk Assessment and Management document had been distributed with the Agendas. The only change from the previous year was for the Council to consider insuring the new laptop when purchased.

4071 – Review of Insurance Policy: The Council had entered into a three year agreement with Came & Co two years ago and the level of insurance was considered to be adequate.

4072 – Review of Schedule of Assets: A copy of the Schedule of Assets had been distributed with the Agendas. The Schedule was unchanged from the previous year but would be updated with the purchase of the Council laptop.

4073 – Annual Parish Meeting: The date of the Annual Parish Meeting had been changed to Wednesday 13th April and Jane Birch would be speaking about the Housing Needs Survey. Councillors volunteered to supply coffee, tea and cakes for the meeting.

4074 – The Queen’s 90th Birthday: It was noted that the owners of Burnell were happy for a beacon to be lit there as part of a national lighting of beacons on the Queen’s actual birthday on April 21st. Ian Sage and Justin Witcombe volunteered to help with the preparation of the beacon. The Clerk noted that the insurers required a risk assessment to be undertaken.

4075 – Administration: A written declaration stating that Councillors were happy for Minutes and Agendas to be sent to them electronically had been enclosed with the Agendas.

The grant of £249.98 for the purchase of a laptop computer for the Clerk had been received and a local IT company Netitude had quoted £248 + VAT for a HP 250 G4 laptop and £155.67 + VAT for Microsoft Office Home and Business. This was agreed. Netitude has offered to set up and deliver the laptop as a donation to the Parish Council. It was also agreed that a separate e-mail address should be established for Parish Council business.

4076 – Notice Boards: The Parish Council had been notified that it would be received a grant of £395 for a new notice board from the County Council’s Health and Wellbeing Scheme. The Clerk to write a letter of thanks to the County Councillor. It was agreed that two new notice boards should be purchased, one for Batcombe and one for Westcombe. The Clerk to prepare recommendations for the next meeting.

4077 - Authorisation of payment: Councillors authorised the following payments:

£484.40 Netitude Ltd – Laptop computer and Office Home and Business software.

£604.50 The Community Council for Somerset – Deposit on Housing Needs Survey.

4078 - Other Business - Matters of Information: The Clerk reported that he had received a revised estimate from Christopher Cox for the repair of the war memorial wall, which included rebuilding part of the wall and which came to £1,600. Ian Sage noted that the local branch of the Royal British Legion would be willing to make a donation towards this cost and to organise a fundraiser. Justin Witcombe asked if the Parish Council would help sponsor the (mechanical) pig racing evening being put on by the Village Hall Trust. To be authorised at the next meeting. The Clerk noted that the Kimber Classic Trial would be taking place on Saturday April 9th. It was noted that there had been some disturbance from an unauthorised rally. The Clerk noted a Parish Information Surgery would be held in Wanstrow Village Hall in March.

4079 – Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 13th April 2016 at 6.45pm in the Jubilee Hall, Batcombe to be followed by the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.30pm.

Chris Wildridge
13th April 2016