

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 2nd February 2022 at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Hall, Batcombe

*The wearing of face masks will no longer be compulsory –
but may be advisable in light of the number of Covid cases in 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

It is the Councillors' responsibility to declare any interests they may have in any item on the Agenda. If you are uncertain, please ask the Clerk before the 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 point in the meeting.*

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 5th January 2022 to be agreed and signed. *Enclosed/attached.*

5. Matters Arising – information updates only.

Precept for 2022/23 – Mendip District Council have confirmed receipt of the precept form.

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. Footpaths and Highways

Nothing to report at present.

8. Playground – Maintenance Report

On the Batcombe Facebook page, a resident invited volunteers to come forward to help maintain the willow structures in the Playing Field. Another resident has volunteered to organise the willow weaving and prepare a risk assessment for the work.

9. Planning Applications:

Planning Application No: 2021/2861/HSE –

Demolition of single storey detached holiday let (noted as ‘cottage’), partial demolition and reinstatement of existing boundary wall, erection of single storey extension to rear of property.

Partial demolitions and alterations south west gable. Formation of projecting first floor bay window.

To Southeast elevation: enlarge door opening.

To North West elevation: installation of window to first floor & roof light. Fell T3.

Shortwood Farmhouse, Kale Street, Batcombe – Householder Application.

Full details of the application can be found on the Mendip planning website at <https://publicaccess.mendip.gov.uk/online-applications/> by entering the planning application number into the search engine.

Planning Application No: 2022/0138/TCA –

T1 - Sycamore: fell to ground level. T2 - Yew: reduce to approx 4m in height.

Little Court, Gold Hill, Batcombe – Works/Felling Trees in a CA.

The two trees are at the back of Little Court on the boundary with Batcombe House. The Sycamore has a heavy lean and growing out of a retaining wall. The Yew is being reduced in height to be maintained as a topiary on recovery. Full details of the application can be found on the Mendip planning website at <https://publicaccess.mendip.gov.uk/online-applications/> by entering the planning application number into the search engine.

Planning Application Updates.

The application for tree works on two Goat Willows at Fir Tree Cottage has been approved.

10. Adoption of New Standing Orders

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) have produced new model standing orders to take into account recent changes in legislation in the areas of data protection, recording of local council meetings, electronic summons to meetings, transparency requirements and procurement.

Enclosed are new Standing Orders for the Parish Council to adopt that are based on the model standing orders produced by NALC with some amendments, listed below. Many of the Standing Orders are unchanged from the current Standing Orders adopted in 2014. Where the model standing orders have options or need figures inserted, I have kept to the options and figures in the 2014 Standing Orders. The points to note are as follows:

SO 1 – as noted in the Standing Orders meetings of the Parish Council are generally run informally but the Rules of Debate are available to fall back on when needed.

SOs 3l & 3m – these are new Standing Orders, resulting from the Secretary of State’s decision to allow the recording of local council meetings. Previously the Parish Council could forbid the recording of meetings. These are based on statutory legislation (indicated by the bold type) which means the Parish Council has no power to amend or suspend these Standing Orders.

SO 3w – the sentence delegating outstanding business to the Clerk when a meeting is inquorate is not part of the model standing orders produced by NALC. However, it was suggested amendment from SALC that was included in our current Standing Orders. It allows, for example, a decision to be made on a planning application consultation – when there would not be time to arrange for a new Parish Council meeting.

SO 5j – the model standing orders state that all policies of the Council should be reviewed at the Annual Meeting. As this would make for a very long meeting, SALC recommended amending this Standing Order so that arrangements are made at the Annual Meeting for the review of policies during the year. This amendment was incorporated in our current Standing Orders.

Standing Order 8b – this is an addition to the model standing orders that allows co-options to be decided by a paper ballot of Councillors rather than a show of hands. It was added to our current

Standing Orders to reduce the awkwardness of the co-option process when there are more nominations than spaces on the Council.

SO 9 – in my twenty years as Clerk I only received one written notice of a motion from a Councillor, which I had to reject under Standing Order 9d and was never resubmitted. Basically, if anyone wants something discussed or a decision made, they let me know and I will add it to the Agenda (provided the subject is a proper matter for the Parish Council to consider).

SO 11 & 21 – these are new statutory Standing Orders to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations now in force.

SO 12e & 20 – these are new statutory Standing Orders to comply with the Transparency Regulations for Smaller Authorities now in force.

SO 15bi – this is a new statutory Standing Order allowing the delivery of the summons to and Agenda for a Parish Council meeting by e-mail (provided the Councillor concerned has given consent).

SO 18c, 18f & 18g – these are a new statutory Standing Orders regarding procurement procedures.

11. Bank Reconciliation and Update on Budget for Year Ending 31st March 2022

Financial Regulations require that each quarter a bank reconciliation is produced by the Clerk, checked by a member of the Council, and reported to the Council as soon as possible after the end of the quarter.

Financial Regulations also require an update on the budget each quarter. The enclosed/attached sheet with four columns of figures shows the accounts for last year, the budget for this year, receipts and payments to 26th January this year and a projection for this year based on expenditure to date.

Receipts are projected to be £12,545 more than the budgeted figure because of the VAT claimed on the new play equipment which was not included in the budget. However, the allotments rent is likely to be less than budgeted because of the vacant allotments.

The projection for the Playing Field expenditure is £16,864 more than budgeted, due to the money spent on the new play equipment and the cost of the new gate that was not included in the budget. This was mainly the VAT that have been reclaimed. Grass cutting is £340 less than budgeted as the grass was not cut while the play equipment was being installed and a free cut provided. Maintenance consisted of £110 for the hedge trimming, £15 for wood preservative, and £65 for the molecatcher. Overall maintenance is likely to be £300 more than budgeted as it will include the tree works in the Playing Field.

The projection for the expenditure on Administration is £92 more than the budgeted figure. While the Clerk's expenses and photocopying costs were likely to be less than budgeted, the cost of the Zoom subscription was not budgeted and the insurance premium was larger than budgeted because of the new play equipment being insured. The Clerk's salary increase from April 2021 has not yet been agreed, because it is linked to the salaries for Local Government employees which have not yet been settled.

The projection for the expenditure on Grants and Other Items are likely to be as budgeted, except for expenditure on the allotments which is likely to be less than budgeted.

Overall, there is a projected deficit of £2,446 compared to a budgeted surplus of £1,915. This mainly due to the net expenditure on the play equipment after the VAT is reclaimed and the cost of the new gate. However, the projected funds at the end of the year are £16,220 – around £4,700 better than expected when the budget was made. It should be noted that approximately £1,000 of this figure will be earmarked for the allotments

12. Authorisation of Payments

£112.00 The Society of Local Council Clerks – Clerk's membership.

£17.00 Batcombe PCC – Cost of tree for Christmas Tree Festival in December

The cost of the Christmas tree will need to be authorised under a Section 137 resolution.

13. Other Business – matters of information only.

Parish Council Elections – The Notice of Election should be published on March 21st. Nomination papers should be hand delivered to the District Council Offices between 9.30am and 4.30pm from Tuesday March 22nd to Tuesday April 5th, (but no later than 4.00pm on Tuesday April 5th). Nomination papers will be available from the District Council's website once they have been revised by the Electoral Commission. Candidates are advised to submit their papers as early as possible. A list of persons nominated will be published on the District Council website by 4.00pm on Wednesday April 6th.

The Returning Officer has also clarified his estimate of the cost of a contested election. The figure of £5,000 was a maximum for a large parish with lots of postal votes and an expensive venue for the polling station(s). For a smaller parish like Batcombe a figure of £1,600 would be a more realistic estimate of the cost.

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday 2nd March 2022 at 7.30pm in the Jubilee Hall.

Rob Sage

Rob Sage – Clerk

26th January 2022