

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL (via ZOOM) MEETING OF RODE PARISH COUNCIL HELD
ON TUESDAY 1st DECEMBER 2020 AT 7.30 pm**

UNCONFIRMED

Present:

Cllr Peter Travis – Chair (PT), Cllr Ann Edney (AE), Cllr Elaine Butler (EB), Cllr Steve Eyles (SE), Cllr Pat Restorick (PR), Cllr Jim McAuliffe (JM), Cllr Andy Pickett (AP), Cllr Mike Salmon (MS)

In attendance: Hugh Williams – Clerk, and 6 members of the public

1. Public Participation:

Alex Holmes reported that on 16th December there would be ‘doorstep carols’ in Rode, this had been advertised in The Link and she was looking for ways to reach all residents. It was agreed this would be put on the village Facebook site. The doorstep carols would be held between 6.00pm and 7.00pm and were also being broadcast on Radio Somerset, the carol sheet and information can be found at: www.doorstepcarols.co.uk

Concern was raised that Highways England had only considered traffic congestion at the Beckington roundabout on the A36 as traffic through the village and on other routes had not been considered in connection with the Merfield/Mead development. It was pointed out the Highways England were only responsible for the A36, but they had said they were reluctant to approve any development until this roundabout was improved. A Mendip highways study had shown the A361 to be one of the most over used roads in the district.

A question was raised why the Inspector’s Hearings were not considering Barbara’s Field; it was explained that only the Merfield/Mead site had been identified by Mendip as a possible site to meet a requirement to build extra houses. The Inspector was due to visit Rode during w/c 14 December to view the site.

The work to reduce water run-off from Barbara’s Field going into gardens had resulted in water now flowing down Clay Lane and concern was expressed that this could freeze (see also minute 7iv). There were also concerns over water in The Sportsman and the adoption of this site.

Continued speeding past Crooked Lane and The Mead required action and it was suggested the 20mph sign be moved to the far side of Crooked Lane. (see also minute 8)

A parishioner reported that a recent post regarding the planning application for the Merfield/Mead site from the Mendip Conservation Officer had recommended its rejection.

2. Apologies for absence: Cllr Lund and Cllr Oliver

3. Approval of the minutes: The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3rd November were approved.

4. Declarations of interest: None

5. Report from County Councillor: Thanks were given for the report which had been sent, the speeding issues are further discussed under minute 8.

6. Report from District Councillor: Thanks were given to Cllr Lund for her work during The Inspector's Hearings and the meeting also thanked Terry Morrow and Peter Travis for their work in connection with these Hearings.

7. Actions from the previous meeting:

- i. **Weed control:** The leaflet had been delivered to all houses in Rode and an article printed in The Link. Discussions were held on how to take this forward and it was agreed to investigate what would be required to close roads to facilitate any weed clearance. It was agreed to try and find someone to take a lead in weed clearance but probably it was now best to get community involvement in early Spring 2021.
- ii. **Recycling:** The new scheme appeared to be working well but it was agreed to leave any feedback to SWP until after Christmas to see how collections went over the holiday period.
- iii. **Broadband:** There was to be a meeting, on Zoom, with Voneus hosted by SE on Thursday and hopefully if there was enough interest fibre could be put into Rode in the next 6-9 months. It was possible a similar meeting with Truespeed could be held although Truespeed was looking for a significant commitment from residents before it would proceed.
- iv. **Website accessibility:** Discussions had been held to develop a completely new accessibly compliant website for the Parish Council which could also host other groups in the village, with each having its own access to upload material as necessary. A further supplier was to be approached and both would be asked to submit quotes for work. It was agreed the PC would review these and decide which to employ.
- v. **Trees at foot of Halfpenny Row:** The Clerk said that a second tree surgeon had inspected these and said they were not currently a problem confirming the original view.
- vi. **Water run-off issues:** Action had been taken by reducing the height of the bank near Barbara's Field but this had resulted in water now running into Clay Lane and this had continued even after a few relatively dry days. Wessex Water/Somerset Rivers Authority/Mendip had agreed to fully investigate flood management in Rode but it was thought this would take a few months. A leaflet drop regarding this was to be carried out in early 2021 with local information and participation being sought. However, it was noted that in the meantime the work done would be reversed in order for water to be retained in the ditch. AP agreed to inspect Clay Lane and liaise with residents to help them resolve this matter.
- vii. **The Bell:** This was carried over to the January meeting
- viii. **Christmas tree:** The tree had been put up on the village green and thanks were expressed to the Osbornes for supplying it, a letter of thanks would be sent. Keith Sharman was thanked for installing the lights.

8. Highways: Cllr Oliver had circulated recent updated data from the survey carried out in September. Somerset worked on average speeds but the PC expressed its concerns over the significant number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit. It was agreed that PT, JM and AP would review the data and discuss it with the Transport Consultant before seeking a meeting with Cllr Oliver and Somerset Highways.

Data from Speedwatch on traffic in Rode indicated that there were vehicles exceeding the speed limit (Speedwatch had used over 36mph as speeding) and the PC agreed that the village should become a 20mph zone – in particular High Street, start of Straight Lane and Church Lane. It was agreed to work with Cllr Oliver on this issue and try and get Somerset to fund signage but, if

necessary, the PC could look to fund the installation of signs. This would be further discussed at the January meeting.

9. Planning matters

a. New applications:

2020/1997/HSE: Conversion of loft, construction of three flat dormer windows to rear elevation – 25A Lower Street. No objections leave to Planning Officer.

2020/2267/OTA: Erection of detached two store dwelling – 4 Fairfield. No objections leave to Planning Officer.

2020/2286/HSE and 2020/2287/LBC: Demolition of existing extension and replace/erection of a single storey extension and roofing works together with internal alterations – 12 Lower Street. No objections leave to Planning Officer.

2020/2328/FUL: Forestry building, with a seasonal retail element and forestry office, to include demolition of existing barn – Hill View Farm, Marsh Road. No objections leave to Planning Officer.

2020/2346/VRC: Application to vary condition 2 (drawings) of planning approval 2020/0973/FUL – land behind 16 Lower Street. No objections leave to Planning Officer.

2020/2378/TCA: Two apple trees thin crown by 20-30% and reduce height by approx. 1 metre – 30 High Street. No objections leave to Planning Officer.

b. Mendip decisions:

2020/1091/FUL: Change of use from agricultural to leisure, including construction of fishing lake, three holiday accommodation huts and landscaping – off Rode Hill. Approved with conditions.

2020/1775/HSE: Erection of single storey rear extension/garden room – 7 The Mead. Approved with conditions.

2020/1956/HSE: Insertion of 3 windows on ground floor rear elevation – 11 St Lawrence Lane. Approved with conditions.

c. Other planning matters: -

10. Church Farm access to village/footpaths and playing field: A further meeting had been held with PT, EB, AP, Autograph Homes, Andy Fussell and Playing Field Chairman to finally agree fencing, path and ditch crossing. The work was planned to proceed. It was agreed that discussions with the Playing Field and Parish Council (PT, EB, AE, PR and AP) would be held to discuss who was responsible for what with regard to the newly donated land. The Declaration of Trust had been signed but the final document from the Land Registry was still awaited.

11. Inspector's Hearing: The Hearings had started on 24th November with PT and Terry Morrow and Cllr Lund representing Rode. The Chair reported that the main discussions concerning Rode were due to take place on the following day. Tobias Shaw Paul of DLA Piper had been invaluable during the Hearings. It was impossible to predict what the outcome would be; although BANES had put a very good case against extra housing in Midsomer Norton and Radstock. A key question had been posed by the Inspector as to why Frome had been excluded for any extra housing.

It is thought Mendip might not decide on the Merfield/Mead planning application until the Hearing results are published (April 2021).

12. Somerset Climate Emergency: The SAVE Climate proposal looked principally like an education programme but it was agreed this could be of benefit and without any initial cost the PC agreed Rode should join it. There was discussion over Rode declaring a Climate Emergency and it was agreed that if it did so then any decisions made by the PC would have to consider possible effects on climate change. The wording of a policy to reflect a climate emergency should be considered. It was agreed that a fuller discussion would take place at the January meeting with this as an early agenda item.

13. Somerset Unitary Authority: It was agreed that Rode could make little impact and Central Government would decide what the make-up of a Unitary Authority for Somerset would be. This would be taken off the agenda.

14. Police Beat Manager: The Clerk had chased the Beat Manager for a monthly report, but had heard nothing. An incident of keying cars in Walnut Close was mentioned, the Police had been informed and the Beat Officer would be alerted too.

15. Financial matters

i) The Clerk reported that he had had a letter from NatWest indicating there was a problem adding the two new signatories. However, the weblink given in the letter did not work and the phone lines were always busy; he said he had written back to ask what the actual problem was.

ii) The meeting agreed that with possible expenditure to put up 20mph signs in the village and extra Transport Consultant and legal costs the Precept for 2021-2022 should be raised to £19,000.

iii) The following payments were agreed:

Eagle Grounds Maintenance	£725.12
Frome Printing Company (weed flyer)	£110.00
SALC training (Code of Conduct)	£75.00
Clerk salary and expenses	£253.43
HMRC PAYE	£55.00
Peter Travis (Zoom subscription)	£14.39
Moss Naylor Young (traffic con.)	£1,600.00

The Meeting closed at 10.10pm.

Signed _____

Date: _____

Print: _____

Date of Next Meeting (virtual via Zoom): Tuesday 5th January 2021 at **7.30 pm**

Website: rodeparishcouncil.webs.com