

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RODE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT RODE & DISTRICT MEMORIAL
HALL ON TUESDAY 3rd MARCH AT 7.30pm**

UNCONFIRMED

Present:

Cllr Terry Morrow – Chair (TM) Cllr Pat Banwell (PB) Cllr Ann Edney (AE) Cllr Pat Restorick (PR)
Cllr Andrew Hooker (AH) Cllr Elaine Butler (EB) Cllr Steve Eyles (SE)

In attendance: Hugh Williams – Clerk, Cllr Linda Oliver – County Councillor, Cllr Barbi Lund – District Councillor, 11 members of the public

1. Public Participation:

The issue of the exact area of land that was being added to the playing field under Section 106 was raised and it was agreed that the signed copy of the Section 106 along with all relevant plans would be given to the Playing Field Committee. This should clarify the area and also the route of footpath(s) from the Church Farm development to the village. (It was subsequently agreed that a meeting of the Playing Field Committee along with Cllr Lund would be held on this issue).

Parishioners were concerned over the possible housing developments in Rode and item 11 on the agenda was brought forward for discussion in the public participation time.

This was a complicated area as the current Mendip Local Plan Part 2 was still in draft form, within this plan there is a proposal that part of the Mendip requirement for new housing could be on land near Merfield. The Chair pointed out that currently that no planning applications had been submitted for any building on Merfield, Brown's Ground or Barbara's Field. Mendip was under pressure from central government to increase any house building from 2,000 homes in the next 5 years to 3,000 homes [Government formula is average house price should be less than 7 times local wage – more houses brings down house prices (theory)]. The draft plan had identified a figure of 505 homes for NE Mendip (our area). The strong feeling of all parishioners was that, if possible, no new homes should be built in Rode. The PC was requested to do all it could to keep housing out of Rode. The presence of a Neighbourhood Plan should have helped prevent housing development but it was pointed out the rules had changed and this now carried no weight regarding housing; its use now was limited to preserving green spaces and ensuring design of housing meets local requirements and any development includes priority for housing suitable to older people.

The Chair said that along with Beckington and Norton St Philip lawyers had been employed to look at the Inspector's report on the draft plan and just before the meeting a report from the lawyers had been received which looked as though putting the majority of new housing in NE Mendip was flawed and any development should be sustainable, preferably in towns. The 3 Councils would consider the report and return a joint letter to Mendip; and Rode PC would write a separate one challenging the Inspector.

2. Apologies for absence: Cllr Peter Travis (PT)

3. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 4th February: The minutes were approved and signed off with the correction in Item 11 line 2 where 'Planning application had been submitted for 25 houses on Merfield site' should read 'A proposal had been submitted by the owner to Mendip for 25 houses on Merfield site'.

4. Report from County Councillor: It was reported that Somerset was committing £1 million to communities to combat the Climate Emergency. Councils could bid for money for schemes that would help the Climate Emergency such as solar farms, planting of trees etc.

She added that she was hosting a meeting only for parish councillors on the Climate Emergency on 19 March in Frome Town Hall and asked anyone interested to let her know.

5. Highways issues:

i) **Bradford Road Small Improvement Scheme:** Cllr Oliver said that work on road hatching, resurfacing and installing Stop signs was now due to start on 16 March. This would also include the installation of a village sign on the A361 from the Trowbridge direction.

ii) **Village gates on A361:** There was still doubt about space on the A361 near the Church Farm site for wooden village gates; and it was agreed that once the Bradford Road work was done and checked and also whether payment by Ashford/Autograph for gates had been made; the installation of wooden gates and speed signs on the Beckington side of the A361 would be discussed further with Highways.

iii) **Zig zag lines and school bus:** to be discussed further.

iv) **Straight Lane/Park Gate Lane:** The undergrowth at the junction required cutting back and this would be raised with the landowner.

v) **SID data:** These had confirmed earlier data that most vehicles were not exceeding the speed limits in Rode.

vi) **Manholes/potholes:** The presence of potholes and faulty manholes should be reported on line to Mendip www.mendip.gov.uk/report and this could be done by any member of public, the inclusion of photos would help.

vii) **New Highways Group:** The following agreed to be members of the new Group: EB, PT, TM and Cllr Oliver.

6. Report from District Councillor: The Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) was introducing new collection programme which was coming to this area in June, as one of the first. Mendip had just issued its new corporate plan; the main themes were: make Mendip a fairer place; deliver on our climate and ecological commitment; and protect and enhance our towns and rural communities.

7. Actions from the previous meeting:

- i. **Lengthsman:** It was reported PT had spoken to Chair of Beckington and a possible man had been found to carry out these duties. It was agreed EB would act as liaison with the Lengthsman.
- ii. **Pediment next to 18 High Street:** AH had drafted a letter and with a few comments it was agreed the revised letter would be sent by the Clerk to the 3 owners of the Brewery Tower.
- iii. **Noticeboard outside Village Hall:** PT to still approach Village Hall Chair.
- iv. **Rockabella path:** Whether this was a footpath or highway had to still be determined, the Chair agreed to consult the Somerset footpath map.

8. Planning matters

a. New applications:

- i. **2020/0298/TCA:** Reduction of height of walnut tree by 2-3 metres and reshape (4A High Street), this had already been approved by Mendip ahead of the deadline; but it was agreed the PC would keep an eye on this as a previous application had been to fell it due to rot.
- ii. **2020/0380/TCA:** To fell eucalyptus tree (4 Marsh Road), there were no objections and this would be left to Planning Officer

b. Mendip decisions:

- i. **2020/0096/TCA:** Remove limbs of black walnut (junction of Lower Street/Halfpenny Lane). Approved no TPO required. PB would action this work.

9. VE Day celebrations: It was reported that although the school had offered the use of its premises there had been little interest shown by any groups for celebrating the Day. The PC felt that something should be

done and possibly showing a film along with fish and chips in the village hall and also display a collection of war photos and memorabilia. An article would be put in the Link.

10. Financial matters: The Clerk reported that the 2019/20 budget prepared by Joy Book looked to be very accurate and he also presented the budget for 2020/21 which showed expenditure should be matched by the agreed precept.

The following payments were agreed:

Eagle Grounds Maintenance	£345.60
Clerk salary and expenses	£249.17
HMRC PAYEE	£53.60

11. Climate Emergency: The Rode Group had held a couple of meetings and plans were underway for village meetings, one of which would be on recycling but would need to involve Norton and Beckington to ensure SWP attended.

12. Other matters: An approach had been received for volunteers to join the Somerset Citizens Panel which would deal with health and care services in Somerset. It was agreed the Clerk would find out more about the time etc. required for any involvement in this.

The Meeting closed at 9.50 pm.

Signed _____

Date: _____

Print: _____

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 7 April 2020 at **7.30pm**

Note: Rode PC AGM and Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Tuesday 5 May at 7.00pm

Website: rodeparishcouncil.webs.com