

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF RODE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN RODE MEMORIAL HALL
ON WEDNESDAY 11TH AUGUST 2021 AT 7.30 pm**

UNCONFIRMED

Present:

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

In attendance: Hugh Williams – Clerk, and 5 members of the public

1. Public Participation:

Concern was expressed that the Parish Council (PC) was not taking the appeal against the rejection of the planning application to build 29 houses on the Merfield/Mead land with enough urgency and was not alerting the village to the appeal. The Chair said that the PC was consulting with DLA Piper on the best way to respond to the appeal and to determine which points should be focused on. All of the parishioner objections have been sent to The Planning Inspectorate and Mendip themselves will be pursuing its decision to reject the application especially if overturned Mendip will be liable for costs. Further comment was made that following the impact of Covid a number of businesses had closed which had freed-up many buildings within towns which could be converted to housing, which should be prioritised over this development. It was also important that mention should be made of the mental health and wellbeing impact this proposed development is having. It was agreed to bring this item forward on the agenda to enable parishioners to participate in it.

2. Apologies for absence: Cllr Steve Eyles, Cllr B Lund and Cllr L Oliver

3. Approval of the minutes: The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12th July were approved.

4. Declarations of interest: None.

6. Report from County Councillor: The decision over the future make-up of Somerset had been made and there would be a single Unitary Authority replacing the current Council and the 4 District Authorities.

6. Report from District Councillor: SWP had had to suspend garden waste collections from the beginning of August for six weeks due to driver shortages.

7. Planning matters

i) Appeal of 2020/1686/OTS

Ashford Homes had lodged an appeal against the rejection by Mendip of this planning application on four grounds: setting of the site and heritage; drainage; trees, and issues relating to open spaces, travel, footpaths etc. The advice received from DLA Piper was that the PC should focus on the heritage issues along with its location. The advice was that the drainage and tree issues were probably very technical and could be argued by experts. The report from the Inspector following the Hearings last November/December was still awaited and if he endorsed the removal of RD1 (Merfield/Mead) from the Local Plan Part 2 this would add weight to the PC case.

It was agreed that heritage was the key issue and that it would be difficult to get an expert to site and prepare a report for the PC before the deadline of 31st August; however, CPRE and Heritage England would be approached as they had initially objected. JM reported he had contacted CPRE and they were aware of the appeal.

The PC would check whether only the four points raised by Ashford Homes should be focused on or whether other issues could be raised again. There had been a similar case involving Chilcompton where the Planning Inspectorate had come down against the appeal by the developer and it was agreed this should be used in the PC case. The issue of the climate change impact related to transport arising from this development should be raised. Additionally, the Government's policy of giving priority to development in towns and cities not being in line with this proposal, especially following changes in lifestyle following Covid19.

The Clerk agreed to see if an extension could be given to the appeal as not all those who had commented had received notice of the appeal (Clerk's note: Mendip are not in a position to grant an extension and The Planning Inspectorate has been approached and have agreed to extend deadline to **14th September**).

It was agreed that a PC paper challenging the appeal would be prepared and submitted to The Planning Inspectorate and this would be copied to Mendip and Cllr Lund.

ii. Mendip decisions:

2021/1212/VCR: Application to vary condition of planning permission 2018/2015/VCR to allow for variation of some elements of approved boundary materials – 3 Frome Road. Approved with conditions.

2021/1295/HSE: Erection of free-standing carport and formation of associated access – 41A Church Lane. Approved with conditions.

2021/1402/HSE: Installation of garage door to carport – 6 St Lawrence Lane. Approved with conditions.

2021/0415/HSE: Erection of second storey extension above existing single storey side extension – 3 Walnut Close. Approved with conditions.

8. Church Farm access to village/footpaths and playing field: The path from the site to the playing field had not started and further emails on this issue had been exchanged with Autograph Homes still without any path starting. It was agreed that Mendip would be informed that Autograph still had not installed a path as agreed under the S106 agreement. (Autograph would be copied in).

Nigel Clarke (Chair of Playing Field Committee) joined the meeting and he reported concerns he had over the Trustees remaining quorate – they required 7 members (2 of which are PC members). If the Committee could not recruit additional members there was a possibility it could fold and all responsibility return to the Parish Council. It was proposed an effort to recruit members would be made at the Village Day to be held on the playing field on 30th August.

The Clerk had a Declaration of Trust which covered the new S106 land and he agreed to send a copy to Nigel Clarke.

9. Highways:

i) AP had submitted the Traffic Consultant's report challenging SCC's highways assessment on the Barbara's Field development to SCC, he agreed to forward it to Mendip and to chase SCC for acknowledgement.

ii) MS reported he had emailed Sara Davis to let her know the PC was in agreement over the 20mph zone, the village gate signs and the proposed measures on Rode Hill; however, he had not had any acknowledgement.

- iii) The Clerk reported that Cllr Oliver had pursued SCC over the adoption of The Sportsman and a reply had been received. The PC was concerned that SCC indicated that water run-off from adjacent land was not their or Wessex Water's concern and it remained unclear if SCC would adopt The Sportsman even though there was a bond in place.
- iv) The Clerk was seeking quotes to repair the fingerpost on Straight Lane as the PC agreed a proper cast iron finger should be sourced. It was reported the finger had been broken off around 20 years ago.

10. Actions from the previous meeting:

- i. **Hoedown:** The last one had not been so well attended and it was agreed to fund the distribution of flyers to the village to encourage more participation and awareness.
- ii. **The Bell:** Contact had been made with the managing agents but they said they needed to contact the owners of The Bell, a response was still awaited.
- iii. **Jubilee Clock:** David Hornsey had arranged for repairs to be carried out by Peter Watkinson and these had been carried out the previous week. There was agreement that further ongoing maintenance should be put in place. Thanks were given to David Hornsey for arranging the repairs.
- iv. **The Mead/Clay Lane:** A report of the condition of the trees on The Mead was still outstanding, once received the owners would be contacted. The Clerk reported that Andy Fussell had agreed to fell the dead trees adjacent to Clay Lane when his crop was harvested in mid-October.
- v. **Marsh Road:** An onsite meeting with Somerset County Council had been agreed for 17 August.
- vi. **Dog bin foot of Marsh Road:** A request to move this bin onto the village green had been received. It was agreed this was not practical and would destroy the appearance of the green.
- vii. **Doctors Practice:** The response from Beckington Practice had been received and was noted.
- viii. **Waste off A361:** Complaints had been received over the waste being dumped at a site on the A361, however as this was on someone's own land the PC could not do anything about it.

11. Climate Emergency: As part of the efforts to combat the climate emergency JM had proposed the PC promote a 'no mow May' and consider if areas the PC was responsible for also be left un-mown. It was agreed that Julia Robb be consulted on possible returning a couple of areas to wild flower zones. A presentation on Extinction Rebellion was planned for the 19th August in the Memorial Hall and this event would be used to try and recruit more people to join the Climate Change Working Group and also to generate ideas of what could be realistically done by Rode.

12. Calm Engineering and drainage: It was agreed a date for a presentation of what Calm Engineering had done and were planning to do would be arranged.

13. Parish Council website: The village website (rodevillage.com) has been amended to include a Parish Council section with the direct link being: www.rodevillage.com/parish-council/ The Clerk had access to update this site.

14. Unitary Authority/Frome: The Chair reported that he had received a spreadsheet from Frome which had been sent to all parishes in the Frome area. He had completed this indicating what the PC was responsible for. The next step was for all parishes to complete.

15. Conservation Area/Neighbourhood Plan: AP reported he had approached Mendip over these issues. Mendip had said the current Neighbourhood plan was still current and had authority for planning applications but emphasised that any changes to the Rode Neighbourhood Plan would need to concentrate on the character assessment of the area, with a need to define additional character. To

create an expanded conservation area that covered the whole village and protected it would need to identify more characteristic buildings. It would probably be a longer and more difficult process to create a conservation area. A conservation area would not come under planning but conservation within the district council. To revise the Neighbourhood Plan would probably require the village to identify areas where development could take place which could be difficult to get agreement on, but improved plans could define a red line encompassing the village where development is not favoured.

It was agreed to do these would involve a lot of work and the PC would need to seek expert help. It was agreed that initially a timeline should be drawn up outlining what would be required and when.

16. Bus services: PT reported that he had submitted a document for Rode, with the help of members of the PC, as the first step in improving bus services across the county.

17. Financial matters: The following payments were agreed:

Eagle Grounds Maintenance	£725.12
Clerk salary	£220.62
HMRC PAYE	£55.20
SALC (training)	£30.00

18. Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held in the main hall of the Memorial Hall at:

7.30pm on Monday 6th September

Please note the change of day for the meeting.

The Meeting closed at 10.45 pm.

Signed _____

Date: _____

Print: _____

Website: rodevillage.com/parish-council/