

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF RODE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN RODE MEMORIAL HALL  
ON TUESDAY 7<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2023 AT 7.30 pm**

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**CONFIRMED**

**Present:**

Cllr Andy Pickett – in the Chair (AP), Cllr Peter Travis (PT), Cllr Ann Edney (AE), Cllr Pat Restorick (PR) and Cllr Jim McAuliffe (JM)

**In attendance:** Hugh Williams – Clerk and 1 parishioner.

**1. Public Participation:** Concern was expressed over a large pothole on Crooked Lane but it was thought this might have been reported as it was now marked up. Thanks were expressed for the double yellow lines at the Rode Hill/High Street junction but a question was raised regarding the gap in one set of these. (The Clerk agreed to ask Somerset about this).

Gigaclear had been approached regarding installing ultrafast broadband and had responded this would be at end of 2023. PT commented he had just spoken to Gigaclear and had been informed work should start in quarter 2 and be complete at the end of quarter 3 this year.

Special thanks was given to JM and all the others who had put the case for not developing Barbara's Field at the two day Hearing in January.

**2. Apologies for absence:** Cllr M Salmon, Cllr J Bowler, Cllr B Lund (District Councillor), Cllr A Boyden (County Councillor) and Cllr D Denton (County Councillor)

**3. Approval of the minutes:** The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> January were approved.

**4. Declarations of interest:** None.

**5. Planning – Appeal Hearing:** The Hearing had taken two full days, 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> January and it was thought the PC had presented a good case against the development of Barbara's Field, with JM and Context Planning doing well. There was some disappointment that Mendip had not done as well as hoped defending their decision to refuse the planning application. There was considerable concern that should the application be approved by the Inspector the S106 agreement appeared to have been prepared without any input from the Parish Council. The S106 would cover Brown's Ground and it appeared this would be given to Somerset Council with the village having no say over it. The PC could decide that it did not want to take on Brown's Ground and leave it to Somerset to retain as an open space. It was noted the Inspector still had to visit the site before making her final decision and she had been offered the opportunity to see the site from the historic buildings on Bradford Road, which she had verbally accepted. This might help her decide against the development. AP said he would be informed when she was coming to visit.

**6. Report from County Councillors:** Cllr Denton and Cllr Boyden had reported on road gritting in Somerset and it was clear due to budget restraints this could become more limited. It was unclear whether the village grit bins would in future be filled free of charge. Pressure to grit the D2 bus route was still being applied but it was doubtful this would succeed in Rode.

It had been agreed that Rode would form part of the Frome LCN, which would be composed of 18 Parish Councils. Concern had been expressed that the LCN Planning Board would not have enough power with major decisions being taken by Somerset.

### **7. Actions from previous meeting:**

- i. **Trees: Merfield/The Mead:** Cllr Lund had sent a letter to Mr James regarding the trees and had a response from Mrs James who was getting a tree surgeon to look at the trees. Hopefully action would be taken. The Clerk agreed to write to Mrs James thanking her for acting so quickly.
- ii. **Footpaths to and from Church Farm:** JM reported that he had engaged with the Enforcement Officer at Mendip on the path but it had now gone quiet. He added that Autograph Homes had agreed to commit to delivering everything on the Travel Plan to the residents on Church Farm. There was little the PC could do, as it was not part of the S106 agreement, but up to Somerset to enforce.
- iii. **Hoedown:** The poster prepared by JB was approved but it was agreed that it should only have the March and April dates on it. Further Hoedowns would be arranged for the summer and autumn but it was agreed not to hold them monthly.
- iv. **Tree on Halfpenny Row:** A quote for cutting 5m off the height and removing a number of branches of the contorted willow had been submitted and it was agreed to accept this quote and get the work done.

**8. Climate Change Group:** It was agreed to continue to rewild the area by the Memorial Hall. AP had circulated a quote to remove the top four inches of grass/soil and it was agreed this should go ahead along with clearing the ditch at the back of the area. The soil could be put on the S106 land at the playing field. The meeting approved up to £200 for digger hire.

### **9. Highways:**

- i. **The Sportsman:** There had been no S106 agreement for this development as it was less than 10 dwellings. There was a substantial sum held from this development and it was thought this could be used to improve the drainage on Clay Lane which had not been resolved.
- ii. **Street Lighting:** The Clerk had circulated a proposed list of lights that could be turned off at midnight. This list ensured lights at junctions remained on and also no road would be left in total darkness. The main concern would be in winter when it would be darker for those going out before dawn. However, there were benefits to wildlife, reduced energy consumption to help combat climate change etc. with reduced lighting and it was agreed the Clerk would draft a questionnaire for approval and circulation of the village.

### **10. Planning:**

#### **i) New applications:**

**2023/0131/TCA:** Reduce magnolia, plum and apple trees all by 1m – 5 Lower Street. No objections.

#### **ii. Mendip decisions:**

None

**11. Playing Field Constitution:** AP reported he had spoken to the solicitor, David Kirby, regarding the invoice and clarified it. Following discussions with Steve Eyles (Chair of the Playing Field Committee) it had been agreed the Parish Council would pay 60% of the invoice, the PC being custodians should pay the larger portion. The meeting agreed to this payment.

**12. Buses:** The new timetables had been circulated to all the village. It was reported that the Department of Transport had replied to the PC regarding extending the bus support grant saying no decision had yet been made. This was disappointing as the end of March was approaching fast.

**13. Website:** The construction of the new website was proceeding and photographs of the Councillors were being supplied. Access to the new site would be available to the Parish Council prior to its approval and it going live.

**14. Coronation Weekend:** There was little support to doing anything major over the weekend of 6<sup>th</sup> May as it was less than a year since the Jubilee celebrations. A possible party for children was discussed. It was agreed to discuss this again at the March meeting.

**15. Conservation area:** It was agreed to relook at defining the Conservation Area for Rode as currently the village centre and along the A361 were covered but there were listed buildings not in the current Conservation Area. It was agreed to try and protect the village as a whole.

**16. Financial matters:**

**i. Yearly expenditure:** The Clerk said that the annual expenditure would exceed £25,000 again this year and that an external audit of the accounts would be required.

**ii. Grass cutting:** The quote from Eagle Grounds Maintenance was accepted but the Clerk was asked to go back to them as an extra area of the playing field would require cutting following the moving of the cricket square. AP agreed to determine this extra area.

**iii. Payments:** The following payments were agreed:

Context Planning (Pre-Hearing work)	£4,080.00
Frome Printers (bus timetable)	£160.00
Clerk Salary	£241.85
HMRC PAYE	£60.40
Context Planning (attending Hearing)	£5,910.00
DK Legal (60% of playing field constitution fee)	£576.00

**17. Date of next meeting:**

The next meeting would be held in the Committee Room at the Memorial Hall on:

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm**

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Signed .....

Date .....

Print .....

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