

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF RODE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN RODE MEMORIAL HALL
ON TUESDAY 7th MARCH 2023 AT 7.30 pm**

CONFIRMED

Present:

Cllr Mike Salmon – Chair (MS), Cllr Andy Pickett (AP), Cllr Ann Edney (AE), Cllr Pat Restorick (PR) and Cllr Jim McAuliffe (JM)

In attendance: Cllr Barbi Lund, Cllr Dawn Denton, Hugh Williams – Clerk and 3 parishioners.

1. Public Participation: Concern was expressed over the absence of the local MP, David Warburton, who had not responded to a parishioner and when they approached the Speaker of the House of Commons with their concerns the Speaker had refused to acknowledge any misdemeanours of the MP. The Chair said there was an item on the agenda regarding David Warburton. The managers of The Mill reported that they were willing to hold an event at The Mill to commemorate the Coronation of the King. They were thanked for this and the PC offered to help advertise and support this.

2. Apologies for absence: Cllr P Travis, Cllr J Bowler and Cllr A Boyden (County Councillor)

3. Approval of the minutes: The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th February were approved.

4. Declarations of interest: None.

5. Report from District Councillor: Cllr Barbi Lund reported that four Citizens Advice Bureaus across Somerset were considering merging into one. She also said that Lendology were providing loans to people to renovate homes prior to letting them. Lendology can also provide loans for double glazing and insulation.

6. Report from County Councillors: Cllr Dawn Denton said that the A36 slip road still had not been reported to Highways England but she would now report it. New plans for improving the Rode Hill/Bradford Road junction had been issued and she would send these to the PC. There was no timescale for this work. It had now been agreed that she and Cllr Boyden would be on the new East Somerset planning committee which was being set up ready to start on 1st April.

7. Actions from previous meeting:

- i. **Trees: Merfield/The Mead:** Cllr Lund had been in contact with the agent acting for Mr and Mrs James and a tree surgeon had been out to look at the trees. The Clerk reported he had now spoken to the tree surgeon and the trees were due to be cut during the week commencing 11 April. There would be some restrictions along The Mead during the felling. Thanks were given to Cllr Lund to resolving this issue.
- ii. **Hoedown:** The date, 26th March, had been advertised in The Link and this would be mainly a litter picking day to coincide with the Great British Spring Clean. It was agreed that the start time should probably be 2.00 pm. Posters would be put up.

- iii. **Highways:** Concern was expressed over the large amount of rubbish at the side of the A36 and A361 in the area. Since the verges/hedges had been cut this rubbish had become very noticeable. Cllr Denton agreed to raise this with Somerset.
Additionally on the issue of highways it was reported that the mail was no longer being delivered to Brook Cottage on the A361. It was agreed to try and improve access and Andy Fussell would be asked if he could cut back the hedge by the road.
- iv. **Footpaths to and from Church Farm:** JM reported that he had been in contact with the Enforcement Officer at Mendip who had tried to pass the issue back to Planning. However, Simon Trafford had agreed to come back on this issue during w/c 13 March. This remained a problem as the Developer was refusing to maintain the path beyond the Church Farm estate, hence it could become unusable.
- v. **Grass Cutting:** The Clerk reported he had accepted the quote from Eagle and alerted them to the fact that extra land on the playing field might require cutting later in the season. AP said that he was hoping David Jupp would level the land to extend the cricket playing area. This would then need to be rotovated and seeded. As this is S106 land it was thought some of the S106 monies could be used on this project.
- vi. **Allotments:** The PC had been willing to gift the land at the end of The Mead to become allotments. However, it had been decided at the recent Rode Garden Association AGM not to take up this offer as the costs of fencing etc. were too prohibitive. Land near Church Farm was to be investigated for allotments.

8. Climate Change Group: AP reported that it was planned to remove the top soil and clear the ditch on 25th March on the area by the Memorial Hall. A tipper trailer would move the soil to the S106 land on the playing field. Subsequently the land would then be re-seeded with wild flowers.

9. Highways:

- i. **Double yellow lines:** The missing section on Rode Hill had been filled in. Repainting of the double yellow lines in the village had been requested and should be done in the next financial year.
- ii. **Street Lighting:** The Clerk distributed the questionnaire to Councillors to put in residents' doors. The result would be reviewed at the next meeting.
- iii. **Drainage:** It was reported the work in Beckington had run into problems but the work should start in Rode on 22nd March. JM had spoken to Montel (the contractor) and had been reassured the budget for the Rode works was still in place. Somerset would be taking over the responsibility for the works from Mendip.

10. Planning:

i) New applications:

2023/0313/TCA: Reduce willow by 5 metres and reduce lateral branches by up to 2.5 metres and remove dead and split wood and hanging branches. Halfpenny Row. No objections.

ii. Mendip decisions:

2023/0131/TCA: Reduce magnolia, plum and apple trees all by 1m – 5 Lower Street. Approved.

iii. Appeal ref: 3292838:

Planning proposal to build up to 49 dwellings on Barbara's Field, Church Lane. The Inspector had visited the site in the middle of February but the decision was still awaited. Concern was expressed that the delay in deciding could mean she might approve the application to build.

11. Website: JM, PT and the Clerk had had a training session on the dummy site. The structure is in place and needs to be populated. It was agreed other organisations needed to be approached to

see what content they needed put on the site. All of the PC would have access to the site prior to it being launched, hopefully at the end of April.

12. Coronation Weekend: The offer by The Mill to host an event was considered a good option for an event for the village.

13. Neighbourhood Plan/Conservation area: It was agreed all Councillors would look at the Neighbourhood Plan before the next meeting and there could possibly be a survey in the village over future housing requirements. AP said he would have time in April to prepare an outline Conservation Plan for Rode.

14. Buses: The £2 fare had been extended to the end of June which was appreciated. There are going to be more evening buses from Frome to Rode and there is to be a new fast service D2X running between Frome and Bath which would stop in Beckington. A new timetable would come in at the beginning of April and it was agreed to fund the printing of this new timetable for distribution. The meeting also agreed that, if required, up to £500 would be available to promote use of the D2 bus service.

15. David Warburton MP: There was concern that parishioners were not being represented by their local MP as he had not attended the House of Commons for months and had not been active in the constituency for a year. The meeting was aware that constituents had not had responses from him. Consideration was given to a no confidence motion in David Warburton but it was noted that the PC had itself not approached him so this might not be the correct action. There was concern that Parliament had taken no action regarding the claims made against him and that he theoretically was still an MP even if performing no duties. It was agreed the PC would write to him asking him what support and help he could give if asked with a deadline for response. This issue would be reconsidered at the next meeting.

16. New Councillor: It was reported someone was possibly willing to become a co-opted Councillor and it was agreed to ask them to attend the next meeting.

17. Financial matters:

i. Financial situation: An overview of the accounts for the current year had been circulated. It was noted that for the year the PC would be posting a loss of just over £6,000; this was principally due to defending the position to oppose development of Barbara's Field at the Planning Inspectorate Hearing.

ii. Payments: The following payments were agreed:

Frome Printers (street light questionnaire)	£90.00
Clerk Salary	£247.29
HMRC PAYE	£60.40
Peter Watkinson (clock repairs)	£155.00

18. Any Other Business:

i. Ukrainian flag: A question had been raised why the flag was no longer flying. It had been agreed that both the Union and Ukrainian flags were only flown on specific days and this would continue. It was noted that unfortunately the Ukrainian flag had not been flown on the anniversary of the start of the war.

ii. Gigaclear: It was reported Gigaclear had on its agenda the clearance by the new box. (This has now been done). It was also offering free connection to the Memorial Hall and there was currently an offer to those showing interest in joining Gigaclear on its website.

19. Cllr Barbi Lund: The meeting thanked her for her support and help over the last few years and wished her well now Mendip District Council was ending there would be no District Councillor in future. A gift was given to her in appreciation.

20. Date of next meeting:

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

Tuesday 11th April at 7.30pm

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Signed

Date

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Website: rodevillage.com/parish-council