

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF RODE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN RODE MEMORIAL HALL  
ON TUESDAY 9<sup>th</sup> MAY 2023 AT 7.30 pm**

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**UNCONFIRMED**

**Present:**

Cllr Mike Salmon (MS) – Chair, Cllr Andy Pickett (AP), Cllr Ann Edney (AE), Cllr Pat Restorick (PR), Cllr Peter Travis (PT), Cllr Jonathan Bowler (JB) and Cllr Moira Punt (MP)

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

**1. Parishioners Participation:** Concern was expressed over the new proposed solar farm as only the views from the proposer, Low Carbon, had been circulated and with the initial consultation due to close on 25<sup>th</sup> May the Parish Council (PC) was asked if it could circulate more information. It was noted that the PC had given information on the Zoom call on 10<sup>th</sup> May and Consultation afternoon in the Memorial Hall on 17<sup>th</sup> May but if any other body wished to provide information on solar farms the PC would publicise these as well. The PC would be given the opportunity to reflect the views of parishioners once the planning application was submitted to Somerset but currently was not in a position to reflect any views for or against the plan. Discussion was held whether a body such as the CPRE could inform villagers on this issue and this would be up to parishioners to arrange. The PC could not be seen to be promoting views either for or against as this could invalidate any future comments at the planning consultation phase.

**2. Apologies for absence:** Cllr J McAuliffe and Cllr D Denton (County Councillor)

**3. Approval of the minutes:** The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> April were approved.

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

**5. Actions from previous meeting:**

- i. **Trees: Merfield/The Mead and Halfpenny Row:** The trees along The Mead had now been cut down and the tree on Halfpenny Row pruned back.
- ii. **Hoedown:** The Hoedown on 30<sup>th</sup> April had again concentrated on litter picking. Less was collected this time and another Hoedown was planned for 28<sup>th</sup> May which would include some weeding along with a litter pick.
- iii. **Footpaths to and from Church Farm:** No progress had been made however the state of the path which was the responsibility of the Parish Council around the children's play area was in a very poor condition and more or less unusable. It was agreed the PC would get quotes to have either a 'tarmac' surface or boardwalk built along this stretch.
- iv. **Road verges:** There had been some improvement along some of the roads. It was agreed JB would contact Somerset to enquire what had been done and what plans it had for verge cleaning.

**6. Climate Change Group:**

- i. **National Green Week:** It was confirmed that presentations on Climate Change/Emergency would be made in the Memorial Hall during the afternoon of Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June. Additionally, there will be 'open houses' showing off a range of initiatives on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June.

ii. **Rewilding:** The seed had been sown on the area by the Memorial Hall and this would be monitored.

## **7. Highways:**

i. **Drainage:** The repairs to the drains in Rode were now complete.

ii. **Street Lights:** The meeting agreed the final list of lights to be turned off at midnight. The Police were to be approached with the list along with the accident figures supplied by Somerset to obtain approval for the turn-off. The meeting expressed some concern over the accident figures that Somerset had recorded for the Bradford Road/Rode Hill junction as these appeared to have omitted a several known accidents. It was agreed all future accidents would be reported to both the Police and Somerset.

iii. **A36 Slip Road:** Cllr Denton was still chasing this as there had been no response from National Highways.

iv. **SpeedWatch:** The trial was still ongoing by Gloucestershire Police and Somerset and Avon were assessing the results. It was expected this should be completed in a couple of months after which Auto Speed Watch devices could be approved. The Clerk was asked to chase up Somerset regarding the new posts for the current SID to be installed as agreed last year.

**8. County Councillor's Report:** Cllr Boyden reported that the Bradford Road/Rode Hill improvements should be in place by the end of June as these had been agreed. He said that there had been no update on the 20mph restrictions in the village and this would be chased up. The LCN meeting was planned for June and would be a mixture of in person and online meeting; the Chair agreed he would remain as the Rode representative and PT agreed to deputise if necessary.

He added that there was a 'screening letter' available in connection to the Bluebell Wood Solar Farm proposal which gave a lot of useful information and it should be read.

Finally, he reported that Farleigh Swimming Club was looking to get the stretch of the River Frome it used designated as official Bathing Water; which would put pressure on Wessex Water to reduce pollution. The PC backed this initiative.

## **9. Planning:**

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

**2023/0625/TPO:** To reduce the height of oak tree by 1.5m and branches by 2.5m and two ash trees by 1.5m in height and branches by 1.5m – Langham House. There were no objections to this on-going work at Langham House.

### **ii. Somerset decisions:**

None

### **iii. Planning Appeals:**

#### **2021/0071/OTS ref: 3292838:**

Planning proposal to build up to 49 dwellings on Barbara's Field, Church Lane. The Planning Inspectorate had rejected the appeal and the meeting expressed its thanks to Cllr Barbi Lund, Cllr Jim McAuliffe and Cllr Peter Travis for the work they had done in getting this rejected. The meeting agreed that the money spent getting Context Planning to help, had been money well spent as the views of Rode Parishioners had been upheld. (The cost to parishioners was under £10 per household for each of the last 2 years).

#### **2022/0932/VCR ref: 3312171:**

Planning proposal by Autograph Homes to sell 'affordable' homes on the free market at Church Farm. The meeting agreed it did not have an opinion on this proposal and would not make any further comments.

**10. Buses:** The flat rate £2 fare had seen an increase of 15% in bus use. However, this flat rate was due to end at the end of June and there was a big uncertainty over what will happen to the bus service. It was agreed the PC would write to Bristol Water regarding the extended closure of Church Lane which had affected bus services – the works had continued over the bank holiday weekend due to lack of tarmac.

**11. Playing Field:** The Chair of the Playing Field Committee had responded to the Parish Council's concerns over the S106 land and the possible funding of the levelling of an area to extend the cricket outfield saying these issues would be discussed fully at its next meeting in mid-June.

**12. David Warburton MP:** The Clerk had sent an email to David Warburton requesting a meeting with the Parish Council but had not had a response. It was agreed the Clerk should chase this up during w/c 15<sup>th</sup> May. Issues for discussion would include River Frome water quality, bus fares and services.

**13. Bluebell Wood Solar Farm:** This had been discussed under the Parishioners' Participation.

**14. Financial matters:**

**i. Insurance:** The meeting approved the new quote from BHIB for the annual insurance.

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

Downlands Tree Surgery	£660.00
Eagle Grounds Maintenance	£792.00
Somerset Association of Local Councils	£35.00
Clerk Salary	£242.36
HMRC PAYE	£60.40
R B Carpentry Services	£100.00
A Pickett (Digger and seeds for rewilding area)	£280.44

**15. Any other business:**

**Conservation Area and Neighbourhood Plan:** AP reported that he had reviewed the Conservation Areas for Rode which basically were two areas; one in the centre of the village and the other along the Frome Road. An extension to cover the whole of the village, i.e. merging the two areas into one would be best but it would be difficult to justify including all roads. However, there were areas which should be included and this was agreed. Initial approaches would be made to Peter Harris for historical information and Context Planning would be contacted with an initial hour consultation on what they could do to help.

The Neighbourhood Plan should be reviewed and updated; this had been highlighted by the Inspector at the Planning Inspectorate hearing during the Barbara's Field appeal. It was agreed to hold a separate meeting in late June/July to discuss this fully. Councillors were asked to review the current Plan. Again, some professional advice might be required.

**16. Date of next meeting:**

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

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm**

The meeting closed at 10.05pm.

Signed .....

Date .....

Print .....