

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL (via ZOOM) MEETING OF RODE PARISH COUNCIL HELD  
ON TUESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 2020 AT 7.30 pm**

---

**UNCONFIRMED**

**Present:**

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

**In attendance:** Cllr Linda Oliver – County Councillor, Cllr Barbi Lund – District Councillor, Hugh Williams – Clerk, and 4 members of the public

**1. Public Participation:**

Parishioners hoped all the Councillors would work together and continue to keep villagers informed. There was concern expressed that although road repairs had been carried out on Straight Lane, Crooked Lane and Parkgate Lane the drains had not been cleared. Also speeding continued on Straight Lane.

Water draining onto Church Lane and Clay Lane was still occurring and there was concern that during winter this could freeze and make the pavements dangerous. It was important to know who was responsible for this. Continued discussion with Wessex Water was recommended on all water issues especially if a planning application was submitted for Barbara's Field and Brown's Ground.

**2. Apologies for absence:** None

**3. Approval of the minutes:** The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> October were approved.

**4. Declarations of interest:** None

**5. Report from District Councillor:** Home improvement grants were available for energy improvements and these were available for home owners, those renting and landlords. Mendip along with Somerset had declared a climate emergency.

She added that she would be attending the Inspector's LPP2 Hearings from 24<sup>th</sup> November to 4<sup>th</sup> December and this could result in delays to responses from her.

**6. Code of Conduct:** The Councillors had recently held a virtual meeting with the Monitoring Officer to clarify issues regarding predetermination and pecuniary interests and learnt that any infringement could result in a substantial fine for a Councillor not complying.

The Rode PC Code of Conduct had been circulated to all, with minor amendments, and it was endorsed and adopted by all Councillors.

**7. Councillor Responsibilities:** Following the resignations of Pat Banwell and Terry Morrow a number of roles required redistribution. It was agreed that the following would take these up:

Environment: AE, EB and MS

History: AE and EB along with help from Peter Harris and Lisa Restorick

Paths: AE, EB, MS and AP in liaison with Caro Smith. There was report from Cllr Lund that it was important to ensure that all the local paths were registered otherwise they could get lost as a public footpath. This was a project that these Councillors agreed to investigate to ensure none were lost. MS said that Somerset provided an online map showing all footpaths and this can be found at: [www.roam.somerset.gov.uk](http://www.roam.somerset.gov.uk)

## **8. Actions from the previous meeting:**

- i. **Lengthsman:** Following the last meeting it had been agreed not to continue with employing a Lengthsman. PT, MS, AE and EB had held discussions about handling weed, scrub etc. clearance by parishioners and a leaflet had been drafted to be delivered to all; it was agreed to add a one line caution to this leaflet. Initially people would be encouraged to clear outside their own properties. There was discussion over organising groups to do 'hoedowns' round the village but concern was expressed over possible liabilities. No final decision was made. It was agreed to approach Shane Collins in Frome where a 'hoedown' scheme was already up and running to discuss how the Frome scheme was run. Rode Parish Council (PC) already had a strimmer and its location would be determined, but concerns were raised should the PC supply parishioners with this or any other equipment as they could be liable should anything untoward happen. It was recommended that the information on the Somerset website on use of equipment was viewed. It was agreed the PC fund the initial leaflet drop and possibly the purchase of high-vis jackets. Funding could also be available from Mendip/Somerset and this would be investigated.
- ii. **Recycling:** The new blue bags had been delivered although some properties had been missed out. The new collection rota had just started and it was agreed that the PC would seek parishioners feed-back in a few weeks' time and formally feed this back to SWP.
- iii. **Broadband:** There was funding available for ultra-fast broadband however as two companies were possibly interested in supplying this to Rode this might not be the case here. It was agreed that PT would approach Truespeed and SE approach Voneus about ultra-fast broadband for Rode.
- iv. **Website accessibility:** The quote to upgrade the Rode PC website to meet the new accessibility standards was considered high and it was proposed that developing a completely new site might be the better option. This would be investigated.
- v. **Trees at foot of Halfpenny Row:** A parishioner had reported that phone lines were running thorough a couple of trees and might need attention. The Clerk said that a tree surgeon had inspected and said this was not currently a problem but the situation should be monitored. A second opinion was to be sought.
- vi. **The Bell:** This pub had been empty for over two years and its condition was deteriorating. It was reported that the Hungerford Arms in Farleigh Hungerford, which was owned by the same company, had recently been sold. It was agreed that the owners of The Bell would be approached over their plans for this building. The Conservation Officer at Mendip would also be approached as listed buildings, such as The Bell, should be maintained and this was obviously not happening here.
- vii. **Remembrance Day:** The PC wreath would be placed by the War Memorial by AE. The flag would also be raised and it was reported that some soldiers might commemorate the day on the Green. No groups should gather on the Green.

**9. Highways:** Cllr Oliver said that she had not had any feedback on the data collected and circulated on the volume and speed of traffic on the A361. It was commented that the mean speed was not

the important data, of more interest was the number of vehicles speeding and also their speeds. It was pointed out that speeding was a police issue and mean speed was important to Highways, if the mean speed was within the speed limit then no further action to reduce it was required by Highways. It was agreed that PT and AP would review the data and consult with the Rode Traffic Consultant to fully understand the data. Any questions should be addressed to Traffic Management and copied to Cllr Oliver so she could chase up responses.

There were some questions raised regarding the Traffic Consultant's report which had recently been circulated regarding where he had obtained his speed data. His report had also highlighted some road flooding issues and these should be taken up with Highways/County Roads.

Regarding flooding it was reported that Somerset/Mendip were to conduct a flood risk assessment of Rode, it was not known when this would be done but Cllr Oliver agreed to find a contact.

The A361 improvement scheme was still to be dealt with, an issue regarding signs was to be resolved.

## **10. Planning matters**

### **a. New applications:**

**2020/1956/HSE:** Insertion of 3 windows on ground floor rear elevation – 11 St Lawrence Lane. No objections leave to Planning Officer.

### **b. Mendip decisions:**

**2020/1734/HSE:** Single storey rear extension and two storey side extension – 6 The Mead. Approved with conditions.

**2020/1816/TCA:** fell two elms, one Lawson cypress and one Ellwoodii Lawson cypress – Belmont, Halfpenny Row. TPO not required.

### **c. Other planning matters:**

**Barbara's Field and Brown's Ground:** There had been no response from Aster following the walk round undertaken by members of the PC and Andy Fussell regarding water run-off into Nutts Lane. It was reported that Brown's Ground was to be re-sown with grass, which might help reduce water run-off. Water management of both these fields is of concern. However, a possible solution to the immediate problem of water running into the properties on Clay Lane had been found and would be implemented.

[The report of the meeting of the walk around these fields is attached as Appendix A.]

**Merfield/The Mead:** Mendip Planning Policy had submitted a comment on this development which indicated that the lack of a 5-year Housing Land Supply should be considered when this application was reviewed. Rode PC agreed to make representations on this – saying it should not be considered with the ongoing Hearings into the Mendip Local Plan Part II, this also is the view taken by DLA Piper. The Highways report raised a number of conditions that had to be met, none of which in themselves would prevent the development. However, with a number of Parishioner's comments on the development based on highways' issues it was felt the issues regarding, in particular, the school and traffic required resolution.

**11. Church Farm access to village/footpaths and playing field:** As part of the walk round Barbara's Field and Brown's Ground the footpath from Church Farm to the playing field had been reviewed. [See Appendix A]. An initial agreement for the fence (dog-proof by the playing field) to run inside the land boundary as defined in the S106 agreement from this development was made. However exact plans were required and none present had these; Cllr Lund agreed to forward the plans.

The cost of all the fencing required (including its installation) was in the region of £2,000. A final virtual meeting between the PC representatives, Autograph Homes, Playing Field Chairman and Andy Fussell would be held to finalise these issues.

The soak away ditch adjacent to the playing field was getting filled with grass cuttings and it was agreed Eagle Grounds Maintenance would be asked not to put cuttings in it.

**12. Inspector's Hearing:** The Hearings are due to start on 24<sup>th</sup> November and PT and Terry Morrow will be representing Rode. A briefing meeting with Beckington and Norton St Philip is to be held, both these parishes are to attend the Hearings as well as Cllr Lund. DLA Piper will also be monitoring the virtual Hearings. It was asked whether anyone could observe the Hearings, but this was not known.

**13. Somerset Climate Emergency, Somerset Unitary Authority and Police Beat Manager:** These were all postponed to the next meeting due to lack of time. The Clerk agreed to chase the Beat Manager for a monthly report.

**14. Financial matters**

i) The Clerk reported that slow progress was being made to change the key contact with the NatWest to AE and to add EB and MS as new signatories to the account.

ii) The following payments were agreed:

Clerk salary and expenses           £227.22

HMRC PAYE                               £55.00

Peter Travis (Zoom subscription)   £14.39

Remembrance Day PC wreath       £25.00

The Meeting closed at 10.15pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print: \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Next Meeting (virtual via Zoom):** Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 at **7.30 pm**

*Website: [rodeparishcouncil.webs.com](http://rodeparishcouncil.webs.com)*

## APPENDIX A

### REPORT ON VISIT TO BARBARA'S FIELD, BROWN'S GROUND AND RODE PLAYING FIELD 11:00-15:00 ON OCTOBER 27, 2020

PRESENT: LANDOWNER OF BROWN'S GROUND & BARBARA'S FIELD: ANDY FUSSELL

RODE PC: ELAINE BUTLER, JIM MCAULIFFE, ANDY PICKETT, PETER TRAVIS

#### 1. PURPOSE:

- a. To consider, with the landowner, the reports that had been received from residents of adjacent properties of flooding from run-off from Barbara's Field and Brown's Ground.

*(These issues had not previously been brought to the attention of the Parish Council. Concerns over the impact of any possible development on Barbara's Field plus the exceptional rainfall of up to 6" that happened over a single weekend in October had probably prompted these issues to be raised recently. Nevertheless, it is clear that there has been a long history of previous flooding occurrences affecting properties on Clay Lane, at least one on Bradford Road and on Nutts Lane.)*

- b. To discuss general drainage issues on Barbara's Field and Brown's Ground with the landowner

#### 2. BARBARA'S FIELD

Andy Fussell explained that should Barbara's Field be developed, there would be a strictly enforced planning condition on the developers of Barbara's Field to create a well-drained area with SUDs and other provisions that would manage the drainage, similar conditions to those imposed on the developers of both Parkgate Lane and Church Farm.

##### a. **Barbara's Field/ Clay Lane:**

Andy F advised run off currently being captured in the lower end of the ditch at the rear of Clayfields, and then overflowing into Alison Graham's and Robin Bishop's gardens, could be released into Clay Lane without making an appreciable difference to the function or capacity of the drains on Clay Lane – in fact he confirmed that some time ago a pipe ran under the bank in the hedgerow for that purpose, but that that pipe appears now to be buried/blocked.

He also advised that his understanding of the boundary of Barbara's Field which runs parallel to Bradford Road at the rear of Bradford Road properties is defined, for the most part, by the ditch; but at the lower end diverts into the field following the visible deciduous tree line in that lower corner. Therefore the ditch at the point it is overflowing is, in his view, within the property boundary of Clayfields.

##### **Actions:**

- i. Andy P to confirm with Alison/Adam (owners of Clayfields) that they are in agreement for Andy F to modify the ditch termination to provide described relief (**action complete – it is confirmed that they are in agreement**).

- ii. Andy F to lower the bank within hedge bordering Clay Lane to a level below the driveway at the rear of Clayfields, leaving a small “weir” to prevent debris from being washed into Clay Lane.
- iii. Whilst not directly relevant to the flooding issue, Andy F also agreed to cut back the verge to the boundary ditch along the entire Barbara’s Field eastern boundary to reduce vegetative growth to a ground level.

### 3. BROWN’S GROUND

It had been raining heavily on the day of the inspection and a heavy downpour started as we walked Brown’s Ground.

#### a. Nutts Lane

Flooding of gardens had been experienced by residents of properties on Nutts Lane during the recent exceptional October rainstorm and this flooding had been reported to the Parish Council.

During our inspection visit, we saw run-off water on Brown’s Ground but no sign of it spilling into the Nutts Lane properties, despite the heavy rain. However, residents said they had had many problems with run-off water previously. It was understood the water had flooded their gardens but had not reached their homes.

None of this had been previously reported to the Parish Council nor to Aster (4 of the 5 affected properties are owned by Aster). Reports had now been submitted.

Andy Fussell advised that when Brown’s Ground is grassed, this should reduce the scale of the problem. Following the harvesting of maize earlier in the season, the resultant bare earth had become firmly compacted, hence the land was not capable of absorbing any of the precipitation (it was compared to ‘hard concrete’). Given the wet weather, it had so far not been possible to sow any grass but that is the plan for Brown’s Ground going forward. It is therefore relevant to note that on Strategic Land’s adjacent patch of Brown’s Ground, which had been kept under grass, there was no visible evidence of run-off water.

#### b. Drainage on Brown’s Ground

The potential for a channel to be dug leading towards Church Lane was discussed but (unless properly attenuated) this was only likely to cause more problems (i.e. for properties in Church Lane and beyond).

In addition to the grassing of Brown’s Ground, Andy Fussell suggested during periods of heavy rain that water run-off could be further reduced through the construction of dew ponds on Brown’s Ground.

### 4. RODE PLAYING FIELD

Following discussion given Andy Fussell was with the PC team, it was decided to look at

the S106 land that is in the process of being transferred to Rode Playing Field.

a. ***Scout Hut end of new Playing Field land:***

Andy F requested clarity on the proposed new boundary between the Playing Field and his field known as “Granny’s Field” (field adjacent to Church Lane behind the scout hut).

PC members present agreed that it should be as per the S106 defined boundaries, and that fencing and pathway over the Playing Field land at that end needs to be organised between the PC and Playing Field committee.

No action required from Andy F, but PC needs to ensure the boundary is properly physically defined, even if fencing over the Playing Field land may not follow the boundary and that maintenance of land outside of the fencing but inside that defined boundary is the responsibility of the PC.

**Action:** PC to discuss and approve a motion to give requested assurance to Andy F at the meeting of 3/11/2020.

b. ***Other end of new Playing Field land:***

PC members agreed there is a need for dog-proof fencing to be erected to provide a barrier to existing footpath in adjacent field (running to the Brewery site) and the Playing Field. This would not follow the boundary defined in the S106 agreement. Land between proposed fencing and official boundary will nonetheless be owned and maintained by the PC. Fencing to be erected by Andy F (likely actually to be carried out by workers on the Church Farm building site)

**Action:**

- i. Andy F to provide a copy of the plan included in the S106 agreement, with a proposed line of fencing added.
- ii. To seek approval from PC meeting on 3/11/2020 to the proposal; Andy F then to arrange for fencing to be erected.

c. ***Ditch between the Playing Field and the S106 land***

Concern was expressed that Eagle Grounds Maintenance was filling the open ditch with grass cuttings thereby blocking the flow of water along the ditch. This open ditch is crucial as it leads to the huge soakaway that was constructed on the S106 land by SCC Flood in order to manage and regulate run off waters. This soakaway has eliminated the serious flooding of houses on The Brewery. It was further reported that there were plans by the Playing Field to fill in this ditch and it was agreed that this proposal requires urgent review.

**Action:**

Onsite meeting with Andy F and Chairs of Rode PC and Rode Playing Field to discuss.