

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL (via ZOOM) MEETING OF RODE PARISH COUNCIL HELD
ON TUESDAY 6th OCTOBER 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)

In attendance: Cllr Linda Oliver – County Councillor, Cllr Barbi Lund – District Councillor, Hugh Williams – Clerk, and 9 members of the public

1. Public Participation:

Concern was expressed over any development on Barbara's Field and Brown's Ground as water run-off from Brown's Ground, in particular, was going into properties along Nutts Lane. Water run-off also affected Marsh Road and Clay Lane and should the Parish Council (PC) be gifted Brown's Ground it was suggested this could become a financial burden to the PC in future years. Parishioners who had water concerns should initially contact Wessex Water.

The Chairman said that prior to any development on Barbara's Field the developer would need to approach Wessex Water regarding the capacity of waste water pipe capacities. The PC encouraged residents in Nutts Lane and Clay Lane to contact the PC about their concerns and it was suggested that members of the PC approach residents on this issue. It was added that with the growing impact of climate change meant that heavy rain incidents were more likely to occur.

It was thought that a possible planning application for Barbara's Field could be submitted to Mendip in early November.

Parishioners said that the current possible housing developments in the village were causing increased mental stress in the senior residents. It was reported that the buddy scheme set up during Covid 19 was still supporting around 25 residents and had around 80 volunteers on its books and these could help on these issues.

2. Apologies for absence: None

3. Approval of the minutes: The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 1st September were approved. The minutes of the Special Parish Council meeting held on 21st September were approved.

4. Councillors co-options: The meeting co-opted the following to become full members of the Parish Council until elections in 2023:

Jim McAuliffe (JM), Andy Pickett (AP) and Mike Salmon (MS).

The Clerk would send these new Councillors the relevant forms for completion.

The Rode Parish Council Code of Conduct was under revision and would be confirmed by the PC at its next meeting.

5. Declarations of interest: Pat Restorick declared an interest in the Merfield/The Mead development and would not comment or vote on it.

6. Report from County Councillor: The monthly report had been sent (and uploaded onto the PC website). She reported that she had sent the Chairman information following her contact with Somerset Highways regarding the Merfield development. She added that the developer could if the development went ahead be asked for a contribution to provide a bus stopping bay for the school. Somerset Highways Traffic Officer would now be forewarned about the possible Barbara's Field development.

Somerset Waste Partnership had already, and would be circulating more leaflets about the new refuse and recycling collections. People were encouraged to recycle any food waste and not put it in their normal waste bins which would only be collected every three weeks.

CDS had decided to terminate its contract with Gigaclear to install ultra-fast broadband, which included Rode. There are commercial opportunities but for them to come to fruition it would require commitment from residents. The PC was encouraged to drive this forward; SE said he would contact Voneus on this issue.

It was reported school numbers that were forecast in 2019 indicated the Rode school had capacity until 2023 and therefore the Merfield development probably would not be asked by Somerset for an education provision.

Highways Issues

Cllr Oliver reported on the two issues:

a) A361 speed/volume/vehicle type data

The survey had been conducted (14 to 21 September) at three points on the A361 and unfortunately the data had only arrived today. A quick review suggested mean speeds were within the seed limit. It was suggested the data was fully reviewed and compared with previous collected data. It was commented that peak speed data were important.

Discussions were still ongoing regarding the installation of the Village Gates on the A361.

b) Autospeed Watch

Currently this was not endorsed by Somerset CC therefore equipment could not be put on Somerset Highways poles. However, Wiltshire was conducting trials and it was suggested that Rode should wait for the results of this (It was thought Wiltshire would approve) before proceeding. If Wiltshire approved the use of Autospeed Watch this could encourage Somerset to do likewise.

7. Report from District Councillor: Green Homes grants were now available for residents to, for example, install insulation, low carbon heating etc.

Most Christmas markets within the district (including Wells) were being cancelled.

8. Actions from the previous meeting:

- i. **Lengthsman:** Jason Macey had agreed to take up the role but due to an incident had been unable to start, however he had recently stated he was now ready to start. There was discussion over the use of weedkillers (glyphosates) with Norton not using them whereas Beckington used them. There was difference of opinion between keeping costs down and using weedkillers versus the concerns over chemicals leaching into water courses and their impact on biodiversity. It was agreed that a single use of weedkillers would take place but after April 2021 weedkillers would not be used and that 'village teams' would be encouraged to help the Lengthsman keep weeds down.
- ii. **Recycling:** This had been covered under County Councillor's Report but it was added that a new blue bag for increased recycling would be distributed to all homes soon. Mendip was

going to become the first trial area in Somerset to move to the new refuse/recycling scheme and people were encouraged to make it work.

- iii. **Buses:** Because of the requirement to socially distance on buses the capacity on a 60-seater bus was currently reduced to around 20. To handle capacity at peak times on the D2 route First bus was running twin busses were possible. Faresaver's X34 was not currently experiencing any capacity issues on this bus through Rode.
- iv. **Website accessibility:** The Clerk reported that this had now been evaluated and the report had been sent to him and forwarded to member of the PC. He said that although the website had a number of failures it was in general quite good. Some errors were easily fixed but some would require web developer/designer to correct. A name for the Clerk to contact was made and costs for improving the accessibility would be sought.

9. Planning matters

a. New applications:

2020/1686/OTS: Outline planning permission with some matters reserved for the erection of up to 29 no dwellings with associated access and landscaping works with details of access – Land on Merfield estate adjacent to The Mead.

Objection to this had been agreed at the Special Parish Council meeting on 21st September and a working party had since then put together a comprehensive paper outlining the PC case. This was considered an excellent document and thanks were given to all those who had helped put it together, particularly JM. The meeting endorsed the finalised document and it would be submitted to Mendip. It was also agreed to post it on the PC website and the village Facebook site.

In addition, it was agreed that a letter prepared on behalf of the PC by DLA Piper objecting to this application should be submitted to Mendip.

The PC would also submit a letter to Mendip regarding S106 monies and it was agreed this would be submitted 'without prejudice with our fundamental objection to the development'. It was agreed that no financial breakdown could be included in this letter as the amount was unknown; this could be done should the development proceed and the finances become known.

It was additionally agreed to circulate the Traffic Consultants report to the PC and this report should be also sent to Somerset Highways.

Comment was made that CPRE Somerset had submitted a very well-informed objection.

2020/1734/HSE: Single storey rear extension and two storey side extension – 6 The Mead. No objections, leave to Planning Officer.

2020/1775/HSE: Erection of a single storey rear extension/garden room – 7 The Mead. No objections, leave to Planning Officer.

2020/1816/TCA: fell two elms, one Lawson cypress and one Ellwoodii Lawson cypress – Belmont, Halfpenny Row. No objections, leave to Planning Officer.

b. Mendip decisions:

2020/1540/TCA: Felling of 2 sycamore trees, reduction of height of another and felling of a pine tree – The Old Coach House, 1A Rode Hill. No TPO required, approved.

c. Other planning matters:

Barbara's Field – covered under Parishioners Participation.

10. Church Farm access to village/footpaths and playing field: Meeting to be held on Wednesday 7th October between AE, EB and Autograph Homes.

The Clerk agreed to continue to chase up the Declaration of Trust to transfer the land.

11. Inspector's Hearing: These had now been further delayed until early November at the earliest as four weeks-notice had to be given before the Hearings.

12. Somerset Climate Emergency: PT said that an ambitious plan for a solar farm had been prepared but this would require too much consultation to be conducted before the deadline for submission so had now been withdrawn. Other options were to be explored.

13. Multi-use paths: PT and Cllr Lund had had a conversation with Mendip on this and Rode could possibly be linked to one of the network of paths Beckington was investigating.

14. New Beat Officer: A meeting earlier today with the new Police Beat Officer, Toni-Marie Lines, had been held with PT, AE, EB and the Clerk present. She would send regular monthly reports to the Clerk and planned to attend one PC meeting each year. The point of contact with her would be through the Clerk.

15. Southwick Neighbourhood Plan: This was in draft prior to submission and it was agreed that it would be reviewed and commented on as it was the adjoining parish.

It was also noted that the Norton St Philip Neighbourhood Plan had been legally challenged by a developer, concerned that green spaces were being used to block development. The Plan was to be reworded and would then be resubmitted and hopefully could be put to a referendum.

16. Remembrance Service: It had been reluctantly agreed that this would not go ahead this year. However, wreaths would be laid at the War Memorial and the poppies put out outside the chapel. It was hoped children could be encouraged to make poppy stones.

17. Financial matters

i) Two new signatories to the NatWest account were agreed and EB and MS would be added to the account. The process of changing the key contact to AE was still ongoing.

ii) The following payments were agreed:

Eagle Grounds Maintenance	£725.12
Clerk salary and expenses	£275.17
HMRC PAYE	£67.80
Peter Travis (Zoom subscription)	£14.39

18. Any other business: The determination date for the Merfield development was not known and subsequent to the meeting Cllr Lund had found no dates had yet been set by Mendip.

The Meeting closed at 9.55pm.

Signed _____

Date: _____

Print: _____

Date of Next Meeting (virtual via Zoom): Tuesday 3rd November 2020 at **7.30 pm**

Website: rodeparishcouncil.webs.com