

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF RODE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN RODE MEMORIAL HALL
ON TUESDAY 13th DECEMBER 2022 AT 7.30 pm**

CONFIRMED

Present:

Cllr Mike Salmon – Chair (MS), Cllr Peter Travis (PT), Cllr Ann Edney (AE), Cllr Pat Restorick (PR), and Cllr Jim McAuliffe (JM).

In attendance: Cllr Barbi Lund, Hugh Williams – Clerk and 5 parishioners.

1. Public Participation: There were problems with the playing field pavilion and a company had come to inspect the subsidence and quoted a cost of £12 -15k to repair it; a builder had turned down the job and a further company had quoted £12k+ to repair the subsidence but warned that the repair could upset the balance and result in further work. However, a builder had been found who could do temporary repairs for £3 -4k but these would probably only last for between 3 and 5 years. As a result of this a long-term solution was to be investigated with the playing field, memorial hall and scouts to look for a single hall solution to replace the current pavilion/Memorial Hall/Scouts hut. The Playing Field Committee had approved this; the Memorial Hall had agreed that a single hall in the right place was the way forward. The Scouts had met and also voted in favour of a joint project. The Parish Council were asked for their permission to explore this possibility and to also put someone forward to be on this group. It was agreed that any new building would need to be sustainable (unlike the current buildings) and therefore JM agreed to join the group to also bring his environmental knowledge to the group.

2. Apologies for absence: Cllr J Bowler, Cllr A Pickett, 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 15th November were approved.

4. Declarations of interest: None.

5. Presentation on Speed Watch: Ashley Reay (AR) and Rex Eastment were welcomed to the meeting. AR, the Mendip Co-ordinator for Speedwatch, said that Rode had been one of the founder members of Speedwatch and continued to supply good data. Currently Rode used SIDs to gather data on traffic and speeds and the police do not accept data unless there is a community Speedwatch in that area. New equipment is now becoming available – AutoSpeedWatch which captures numberplates and speeds of vehicles and is able to spot repeat offenders without anyone being present at the roadside. This enables repeat speeding offenders to be caught and can result in the police writing or visiting offenders. Somerset police have now agreed to the use of AutoSpeedWatch. A trial is currently in operation to evaluate AutoSpeedWatch and this will continue until around September 2023. This equipment is solar powered and therefore only works in daylight but as it is permanently located in a single place it can gather continuous data of speeding vehicles (limit for speeding set by equipment and does not gather any information on vehicles within the set speed limit) for that location. The cost of the equipment is around £550, with extra solar boost panel at £95 and ongoing cost of about £150/year (first year free). A

permanent location post has to be agreed by Somerset Highways prior to installation. Additionally, a Code of Conduct for the use of and use of data from the AutoSpeedWatch has to be agreed. The meeting considered the benefit to Rode with two locations being identified – Rode Hill and Bradford Road. It was agreed to purchase an initial AutoSpeedWatch device for Rode. Cllr Bowler would be asked to take this forward with Malcolm Wood (Rode Speedwatch Co-ordinator).

6. Report from District Councillor: Cllr Lund reported Mendip car parks would be free from 17 December up to Christmas. Somerset Waste Partnership had circulated collection dates for the Christmas period. It was also noted that Mendip Council was winding down its business and had cancelled a number of meeting due to lack of business.

7. Report from County Councillor: Cllr Denton had sent in a report which highlighted the following information: Somerset was on course to overspend by £22.5million this year; a unified council tax scheme was to come into force for next year to help those on low income/pay; Somerset was looking for landlords to take in Ukrainian refugees and a business survey to discover current business challenges was being conducted.

8. Actions from previous meeting:

- i. **Trees: Merfield/The Mead:** Cllr Lund said that she still had not heard from Bo Walsh and she agreed to write to David James on this issue copying in Bo Walsh. The meeting thanked her taking this action.
- ii. **Slip road onto A36:** Cllr Denton had received the stills and was to progress with Sara Davis on how SCC could support an approach to National Highways.
- iii. **Ultrafast broadband:** Limited information was available although Gigaclear had indicated it would start work in Rode in mid-January.
- iv. **Footpaths to Church Farm:** The Clerk was still to progress.

9. Climate Change Group: The rewilding of the area by the Memorial Hall was held over to the January meeting.

10. Highways:

- i. **Drainage:** JM had tried to find a start date for the work but still awaited a response. [Note: following the meeting JM has been informed work will start on 24 February, after the Beckington work.]
- ii. **Street Lighting:** The process for turning street lights off overnight had been circulated and lights could be turned off from midnight (or other agreed time) until dusk at a cost to the Parish Council. Certain lights at junctions would have to be kept on. Consultation with parishioners and the police would need to be carried out prior to any action by Somerset. The meeting agreed that this should start and the Clerk was requested to get a map of all lights in Rode.

11. Planning:

i) New applications:

2022/2303/TCA: Magnolia tree remove rotten branch and reduce crown by 1.5m – 9 High Street.
No objections

ii. Mendip decisions:

2022/1846/TCA: Fell birch tree – 1 Hughes Court, High Street. Approved

2022/2921/HSE: Conversion of existing garage to form extension – 69A High Street. Approved

iii. Other:

2021/0071/OTS: Appeal ref: 3292838: Development of Barbara's Field off Church Lane to build up to 49 dwellings. It was reported that PT, JM and Cllr Lund had had a useful call with Nikki White at Mendip regarding the appeal and had managed to get an extension to 12th January for comments. A recommendation had been made for Rode PC to contact Context Planning for their help in fighting the development.

JM had made contact with Context Planning and a quote for their work had been received and accepted (by email) by the PC. Context had visited the site to help gain an understanding for their work. It had become clear that the planned access road had to use some of Brown's Ground which was a designated Local Green Space which is equivalent to the Green Belt with regard to planning. It was also seen that there would be some visual impact from the proposed development. Context had agreed to produce a statement for the PC for submission to the Inspectorate. It was agreed to have another call with Nikki White before the next PC meeting at which the Context statement would be agreed prior to submission to the Planning Inspectorate. The Hearing date had been set for 24th January.

12. Playing Field Constitution: Discussions on the invoice were held over to the January meeting.

13. Buses: PT reported that the bus company had agreed to adjust the timetable for the D2 to take into account the extra time buses required to come through Rode. A new timetable would start on 22nd January. This would require the printing of a new timetable and the meeting agreed to fund this. No gritting had taken place through Beckington and Rode and currently buses were unable to go through Beckington due to an icy hill. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Cllr Boyden on the lack of gritting of the bus route for him to take forward to the appropriate authorities.

The meeting agreed to sign a letter to the Transport Minister to request an extension to the Bus Recovery Grant.

14. Website: An invoice for the start of the work had been raised and once this was paid work on the new site would commence.

15. Financial matters:

i) Annual Donations: The following donations were agreed to be paid in January:

Hardington Vale £650, The Chapel £350, Mendip Community Transport £150, Citizens Advice Mendip £100 and Tim Lynch (Christmas lights electricity £50)

ii) Precept: The Clerk had received the form for completion; there was some discussion whether a further increase should be requested with Somerset cutting service due to financial problems. It was agreed to keep the increase to that agreed last month but to seriously consider the 2024 figure in early autumn 2023.

ii) Payments: The following payments were agreed:

Contribution to buss fighting fund	£250.00
Zonkey Solutions (new website)	£1,197.00
Clerk Salary (Including back pay)	£388.05
HMRC PAYE	£95.00

16. Any other business: The grit bin at the foot of Church Lane had become depleted following the snow and it was agreed to ask James Osborne if he could get extra grit to fill it.

17. Date of next meeting:

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

Tuesday 10th January at 7.30pm

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

Signed

Date

Print

Website: *rodevillage.com/parish-council*