

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL (via ZOOM) MEETING OF RODE PARISH COUNCIL HELD
ON TUESDAY 4th AUGUST AT 7.30 pm**

UNCONFIRMED

Present:

Cllr Peter Travis – Chair (PT) Cllr Terry Morrow (TM) Cllr Pat Banwell (PB) Cllr Ann Edney (AE)
Cllr Andrew Hooker (AH) Cllr Elaine Butler (EB) Cllr Steve Eyles (SE) Cllr Pat Restorick

In attendance: Cllr Linda Oliver – County Councillor, Cllr Barbi Lund – District Councillor, Hugh Williams – Clerk, and 21 members of the public

1. Public Participation:

All the Parishioners present at the meeting were there for the possible housing developments that might take place in the village. The Chairman said that the 2 possible developments, at Merfield/The Mead and Barbara's Field could if both went ahead result in 80 new properties in Rode. He also said that any final decision could not be made by Rode PC but would be determined by Mendip but Rode PC would be one of the consultees.

A statement by Anna Hales was read out on behalf of David James regarding the Merfield/Mead development making 8 points in response to concerns already raised over the development (*the statement is attached as an appendix*). She indicated that an outline application would be submitted to Mendip very soon, but declined to answer any questions.

A survey arranged by Rode residents (not the PC) to gauge current views on a development at Merfield/The Mead had been carried out over the last few days, this had been done to get up to date information as views might have changed since the development of the Rode Neighbourhood Plan which was done 5 years ago. The results indicated that nearly 90% of respondents were against development on this site although 20% agreed there was a need for more housing in Rode. Parishioners said that if there was such a strong feeling over development at Merfield/The Mead should David James not proceed as he had previously indicated he would withdraw an application if the village was not supportive; however concern was expressed that he might just sell his land to a developer which could be worse for the village.

To clarify the identification of a number of sites for development in Rode's Neighbourhood Plan it was pointed out that the Parish Council (PC) had an obligation to speak to all landowners to enquire whether they were planning any development. This did not mean the PC was in favour of any development.

There was discussion over access to a Merfield site and the junction of The Mead and Straight Lane as this was already congested at school drop off and pick up times and it was difficult to see how this could be improved. A highways statement was promised as part of the outline planning application and it was agreed that the PC should find a traffic consultant who could examine this on behalf of Rode as objections to the Church Farm access had been rejected as not put forward by an 'expert'.

It was recommended that should people want to object the development of the Merfield site they should address 'material considerations' in any objection and send them to Mendip. It was agreed the PC would publish what 'material considerations' are.

Parishioners made requests that the PC keep them as fully aware of any possible developments within the village to avoid any surprises and accusations of going behind residents.

2. Apologies for absence: None

3. Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2020: The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. Report from County Councillor: A report had been sent to the Clerk and it was agreed that this would be put on the Rode village website (<https://rodeparishcouncil.webs.com/>) as would future monthly reports.

5. Report from District Councillor: Similarly, a monthly report had been sent to the Clerk and this and future ones would be posted on the village website.

6. Actions from the previous meeting:

- i. **Lengthsman:** Attempts were still being made to contact the person who was acting as Lengthsman for Beckington and Norton St Philip and PT and EB planned to present a proposal of work he could do for Rode at the next meeting.
- ii. **Church Lane verges:** The Clerk reported that when approached about cutting back further and clearing the footpath Mendip had responded that this was the landowner's responsibility. PT agreed to investigate this.
- iii. **New waste recycling:** SWP was preparing to roll out the new increased recycling programme across Mendip in October. This would entail properties getting a new 'blue bag' for all plastic and metal waste, another bag for batteries and small electrical items and a change to 3 weekly general rubbish collections. It was emphasised that it was important with a 3 weekly collection for households to have a waste bin for food waste (collected weekly) to avoid smells in the general waste bin.
- iv. **Signs on Rode Hill:** The Clerk reported that he had an email back saying the Area Superintendent would arrange for remedial work to be carried out.
- v. **Fussell's drain on Straight Lane:** A complaint had been received that this was still blocked and the road flooded after heavy rain. The Clerk would approach Andy Fussell on this issue.
- vi. **War memorial name:** Although not identical to the other names with regard to the format of the rank it was agreed this was acceptable and need not be amended.

7. Highways issues: It had been agreed that not only speed and volume data would be gathered in September after the schools go back but also vehicle type (e.g. HGV, car) data would be gathered on the A361 between Church Farm and Bradford Road.

The work on Rode Hill and Bradford Road had been completed, unfortunately this was at the same time as Church Lane was closed by Bristol Water for a water leak. Discussions with Bristol Water have resulted in them now giving good up to date information which had not been the case during the start of the work on Church Lane.

8. Planning matters

- a. **New applications:**

2020/1370/TCA: Felling of bay trees – 5 Langham Place; there were no objections and this would be left to the Planning Officer.

b. Mendip decisions:

2020/1304/AGB: Change of use of land off Rode Hill/A361 for fishing holiday accommodation and lake – Prior approval not required. Development can proceed.

c. Other planning matters:

Merfield development: Some criticism had been received that only those objecting to this development had been invited to the public meeting on 17th July held in the playing field. It was said that due to social distancing requirements numbers had been limited and those who had objected should be given priority to attend. It was agreed future public meetings should be open to all as far as possible. The PC agreed that a traffic consultant should be found who could independently on behalf of the PC assess any highways statement put forward with the outline planning application and to assess the situation during pick up/drop off times outside the school.

It was noted that although housing on the Merfield site had been added to the Local Plan Part 2 it is subject to the Inspector's hearing in mid-September.

It was agreed that the PC could call a special meeting once any outline planning was submitted to Mendip.

Barbara's Field: Andy Fussell had agreed to hold a public meeting in the playing field on 20th August. Residents would be invited to attend and to bring their own chairs but would need to be socially distanced (subject to there being sufficient volunteers to ensure social distancing). It was agreed to letter drop the residents on Bradford Road, Clay Lane and Church Lane as they would be most affected. Notices would also be put up in the village and advertised on Rode Village Facebook.

The traffic consultant would also be requested to review this potential development.

9. Church Farm access to village/footpaths and playing field: The Section 106 agreement had specified a footpath to the Brewery site (via steps) should be provided and another to the edge of the playing field. The Brewery steps were too steep to be converted into a ramp that could enable disabled access. Therefore, the only 'easy' access would be to the playing field. Nigel Clarke reported that the Playing Field Committee had been very concerned about a footpath extending across the field in particular due to possible dog mess and its proposed route. He said an alternative route round the edge could be acceptable to the Committee and it was agreed that this alternative route, provided it was fenced, would be a solution and Autograph would be approached to put this path in; should Autograph not be willing to fund its entire length round the playing field the PC agreed to consider helping towards funding any shortfall required to provide a fenced 'hoggin' compressed stone and clay path.

10. Landowners: The Chair said that the PC had a requirement to consult with landowners to see if they are planning any development and to discuss any Section 106 agreements with them. This did of course not mean that the PC was seeking development but was to ensure the village was as aware as possible of any forthcoming plans. The PC at any meeting could put forward mitigating points. It was agreed that it was vital the parishioners were kept aware of any meetings and maybe this had not always have been done in the past.

11. Inspector's Hearing: TM reported that Rode was working with Beckington and Norton St Philip along with a top-class lawyers (DLA Piper) to challenge the Inspector's Report on the Mendip Plan Part 2 that 505 houses should be built in NE Mendip. He said it was very unusual

for the Inspector to reopen a hearing. TM would be representing Rode at the hearings in mid-September and the lawyers would be questioning the premise that 505 houses were actually required and if so why in NE Mendip. BANES had also rejected 400 of the proposed 505 houses being put adjacent to Midsomer Norton and Radstock. It was noted that Rode, Beckington and Norton St Philip had already over provided their number of new homes. The PC fully backed the challenge.

12. Website accessibility: It was a requirement that the Rode village website met the new requirements for disability access and therefore needed to be independently assessed to see if it met the new legislation. The Clerk agreed to get this checked.

13. One Somerset: Somerset County Council had agreed to proceed to move towards becoming a Unitary Authority doing away with the 4 District Authorities. It was agreed to discuss this at a future meeting.

14. Financial matters

- i) The Clerk reported the VAT refund of £1,176.33 for last year had been received.
- ii) It was reported that the monthly interest rate on the account had now fallen and only generated around £0.45/month.
- iii) The following payments were agreed:

Eagle Grounds Maintenance	£725.12
Clerk salary and expenses	£223.25
HMRC PAYE	£53.60
Peter Travis (Zoom subscription)	£14.39
- iv) Current PC bank balance is £51,000

The Meeting closed at 10.30 pm.

Signed _____

Date: _____

Print: _____

Date of Next Meeting (virtual via Zoom): Tuesday 1st September 2020 at **7.30 pm**