

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF RODE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN RODE MEMORIAL HALL
ON MONDAY 13th NOVEMBER 2023 AT 7.30 pm**

CONFIRMED

Present:

Cllr Mike Salmon (MS) – Chair, Cllr Ann Edney (AE), Cllr Peter Travis (PT), Cllr Jim McAuliffe (JM), Cllr Andy Pickett (AP), Cllr Pat Restorick (PR) and Cllr Moira Punt (MP).

In attendance: Hugh Williams – Clerk, Cllr Adam Boyden and Cllr Dawn Denton (County Councillors) and 6 parishioners.

1. Parishioners Participation: Concerns were expressed over the proposal to build two houses on The Mead. These would not be in line with existing properties and would be very close to an existing property, and even closer as this house had an extension agreed (yet to be built). The erection of a high fence would be out of place and there were concerns over parking and access to these two houses.

There was concern over the amount of water on Crooked Lane with blocked drains, the Parish Council (PC) was asked to report these.

The length of grass on the playing field was too long for junior football and required cutting.

It was brought to the PC's attention that there were plans for a village day on 13th July 2024 and there could be a request for seed funding.

2. Apologies for absence: Cllr J Bowler

3. Approval of the minutes: The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13th November were approved.

4. Declarations of interest: None.

5. County Councillors Report: It was reported that there had been 140 sites identified by landowners for meeting the shortfall of 505 houses within the 'Mendip' area. Somerset were currently reviewing these and would be issuing a consultation document to identify those to accept. It was added that there was a good chance none would be in Rode or Beckington as the Beckington roundabout on the A36 had been identified by Highways as requiring improvement and this could prevent any house building not being completed before the end of 2029 deadline.

The other major concern was the current financial situation faced by Somerset Council, this had been the result of large increases in care costs for the elderly and children. Somerset was looking at cuts across the board and a draft budget was being prepared. The Council had until February to agree a budget for 2024. Somerset was approaching Councils to see if they were interested in taking on any services from Somerset.

Night speed monitoring had been carried out in Berkley and Rode Hill was being looked at as a location for it to be carried out on.

Discussions were still ongoing regarding the slip road onto the A36.

Tellisford and Woolverton Parish Councils had raised the possibility of merging with Rode.

6. Actions from previous meeting:

- i. **The Mill:** It was reported that the appeal submitted by the Parish Council had been rejected as it was a day late. It was agreed that the Parish Council still required clarification over the wording of the new licence. Therefore, Somerset would be approached for clarification.
- ii. **Defibrillator:** It was noted that a Defibrillator Awareness Course was to be held in the Memorial Hall on Monday 27th November starting at 6.30pm.
- iii. **Grass cutting:** The length of the grass on the playing field had been an issue this year along with the frequency of cutting. Also, concerns were expressed that Eagle had only been contracted to cut until the end of October and with the continuing mild weather cuts in November are required. Quotes had been received from Eagle and J H Jones for 2024. After discussion it was agreed to go with J H Jones for 2024 due to the greater flexibility they offered over cutting schedules. The unpredictability of the climate made flexibility of cutting a major factor now.
- iv. **Paths at playing field:** A quote for laying scalplings and boarding the path round the back of the children's play area had been received. The alternative was to cut through the fence and insert a gate and put down short path to join up with the skateboard area. It was agreed that one of these would be done but to refer to the Playing Field Committee to agree which route to proceed with.

7. Climate Change Group: JM reported that the Group were now keen to do something beyond informing people about the issues. Thoughts on possible community energy projects were being considered along with encouraging residents to install solar panels etc. On the request to support the Climate and Ecology Bill the meeting agreed Rode PC should register support for this.

8. Highways issues:

- i. **Street Lights Turn off:** Discussion was held over the agreed street light 'turn off list' and Somerset requirements. It was agreed that another circular would be sent to all householders to seek approval for the Somerset compliant switch-off lights and give possible costs to residents.
- ii. **20mph limit:** The Chair reported he had just had a discussion with Sara Davis at Somerset and had been informed that the TRO should be issued before the end of November. However, with Somerset moving to a new highways contractor is unlikely the 20mph would be installed until the next financial year – i.e. after April.
- iii. **A361:** Chevrons are to be installed near the bends by the church.
- iv. **SID posts:** These are to be installed as agreed a couple of years ago.
- v. **Signs at Rode Hill/Bradford Road:** These are still to be straightened/undergrowth cut back.

9. Planning:

i) New applications:

2023/2036/TCA: Fell apple tree and reduce another by 1m to leave height and lateral branch length of 3m – 13 High Street. No objections.

2023/2103/FUL: Erection of 2no. semi-detached houses – 4 The Mead. It was agreed with these not being in line with other properties, their closeness to 6 The Mead, parking and access issues that the Parish Council would register a recommendation for refusal for this development.

2023/2135/TCA: To fell cherry and reduce cypress by 50% - 25 Lower Street. No objections.

ii. Somerset decisions:

2023/1817/TCA: Crown lift holly by 2-3m, re-pollard limes and fell elm to approx. 2m – Christchurch House, Rode Hill. Approved.

2023/1870/TPO: Cedar – crown clean and remove significant deadwood – Christchurch House, Rode Hill. Approved.

iii Other:

2022/1516/OUT: Outline planning permission for residential development at rear of 41A Church Lane. It was noted that Somerset Highways had recently registered a rejection to this application as well as Somerset Ecology recommending rejection unless conditions were implemented to protect bat presence. However no final decision had yet been made by Somerset.

10. Website: It was agreed this should go live even though there were still some missing content. It was hoped that once live organisations could complete their sections. It was agreed that an article would be put in The Link and information would be put on the Village Facebook. It would also be advertised on the questionnaire regarding street lights going to all residents.

11. Conservation and Neighbourhood Plans: AP reported he still had to work on the Conservation Plan and would approach Concept Planning. It was agreed that Councillors would review the Neighbourhood Plan and initial discussions on it would be held before the January Parish Council meeting (15th January).

12. The Link: Gill Leonard was going to give up compiling The Link in early 2024 and although the PC was unable to help it was agreed that AP would approach the Church to see if they could help.

13. Solar Farm: Concerns over the access and current archaeological work near Monkley Lane had been expressed by parishioners. JM agreed to send contacts for Low Carbon to them to make direct contact.

14. Any other business:

i) It was reported that Gigaclear had had a compressor stolen from the village. Gigaclear had asked if there was anywhere to store equipment when they came to install ultrafast broadband. It was agreed that possibly the container near the pavilion could be suitable and would be investigated.

ii) A request for assistance regarding a fence by the closed entrance off the bridge to The Mill had been made. The PC was not in favour and suggested Tellisford was approached as The Mill was outside Rode PC.

15. Financial matters:

i. **Precept:** Due to increased grass cutting commitments and possibly less support from Somerset due to its financial crisis it was agreed to amend the agreed precept for 2024 to £30,000.

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

Community Heartbeat Trust (awareness evening)	£210.00
SALC (Training)	£25.00
Zonkey Solutions	£622.74
Eagle Grounds Maintenance	£792.00
Clerk Salary	£249.35
HMRC PAYE	£60.40
Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal	£25.00
Cross Keys Rode (Remembrance food)	£100.00
J McAuliffe (Climate Group room hire)	£14.00

15. Date of next meeting:

The next meeting would be held in the Committee Room at the Memorial Hall on: **Monday 11th December at 7.30pm**

The meeting closed at 9.50 pm.

Signed

Date

Print

Website: rodevillage.com/parish-council