

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF RODE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN RODE MEMORIAL HALL
ON MONDAY 12th FEBRUARY 2024 AT 7.30 pm**

CONFIRMED

Present:

Cllr Mike Salmon (MS) – Chair, Cllr Ann Edney (AE), Cllr Jonathan Bowler (JB), Cllr Pat Restorick (PR) and Cllr Moira Punt (MP).

In attendance: Hugh Williams – Clerk and Cllr Dawn Denton (County Councillor) and 2 Parishioners

1. Parishioners Participation: Concern was raised over the new windows that had been installed in The White House on Lower Street. These new windows had replaced the old rather ornate windows and had altered the look of the house in a Conservation Area. There were other buildings in Rode which had similar ornate windows and concern was expressed that these could be lost. It was noted that the building was not listed and no Article 4 was in place to prevent window replacement. Therefore, nothing could be done in this case as Somerset Council had been consulted. However, it was agreed the Parish Council would look into how Article 4 could be applied to buildings in the Rode Conservation Areas – this would probably involve photographs and some history on properties and consultation with Somerset. Cllr Denton agreed to investigate the process.

2. Apologies for absence: Cllr P Travis, Cllr J McAuliffe, Cllr A Pickett and Cllr A Boyden (County Councillor)

3. Approval of the minutes: The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15th January were approved.

4. Declarations of interest: None.

5. Actions from previous meeting:

- i. **Grass cutting:** Tony Jones and his son were attending the meeting to introduce themselves and said they were looking forward to cutting the grass within Rode. They emphasised that they would be keeping an eye on the length of the grass and would carry out cuts to keep it short, even if this involved more frequent cutting. The signed contract was returned.
- ii. **Paths at playing field:** Grant Slade had provided a new set of costings for a gate and path into the playing field. This would be a good quality temporary path that could, depending on the future of the village hall location etc., either be made permanent or removed. It was agreed by majority to proceed with this path once the ground had dried sufficiently.
- iii. **The Mill:** It was reported Cllr Pickett had written to the Licencing Officer at Somerset regarding the new Licence and was awaiting a response.
- iv. **Paths from Barrow Farm:** The Clerk reported a new reduced quote was expected for keeping the paths clear and this should meet the PC requirements.
- v. **Drainage:** It was reported that CALM had not finished all the drainage works and that when Somerset took over from Mendip they did not take over the agreed works. Cllr McAuliffe was in discussions with the Community Engagement Officer (Dr Paul Elliston) regarding drainage on Crooked Lane and Straight Lane. Suggestions that Rode develop a Community Emergency Plan to cover flooding had been made. MP said that the Climate Group could look at this. The Chair reported

that the LCN had also considered producing flood resistance plans for Parishes. (It was noted sandbags are not favoured; other more efficient products were now available).

6. County Councillors Report: Cllr Denton reported that Parkgate Lane was due to be inspected following last week's flooding but it was unlikely any work would be done on it until Somerset's new contractors started in April.

7. Highways issues:

i. **Street Lights Turn off:** No further comments had been received following publication of the questionnaire results in The Link. It was therefore agreed to approach Somerset to action turning off the agreed street lights after midnight by fitting new timing devices. Should crime rise this would be reviewed.

ii. **SIDs:** The AutoSpeedWatch devices would be ordered by the Clerk.

iii. **TRO for 20mph limit:** There had been no comments regarding the new speed limits in the village and along the A361. Somerset Highways will now put a schedule of work to action this in the next financial year, starting in April. The subject of village gates was discussed but with Autograph Homes no longer paying for these it would be up to the Parish Council to fund them.

8. Planning:

i) New applications:

2024/0108/TCA: To prune magnolia – 9 High Street. No objections.

2024/0172/CLE: Application for an existing lawful development certificate for Residential Use Class C3 – Barn at Monks Lake Farm, Monkley Lane. Noted.

2024/0244/TCA: Sorbus tree – 0.5-1m reduction all round, Grafted Maple – reduce crown by 1-1.5m, Apple and Pear – thin crowns by 10% and reduce by 1-1.5m, Birch remove all deadwood and reduce crown by 1-2m – The Stables, Langham Place. No objections.

ii) Somerset decisions:

None

9. Solar Farm: Application 2023/2183/FUL to build solar farm on land south and east of Bradford Road still had to be decided by Somerset. The CPRE had approached a Parish Councillor to request the Parish Council (PC) make further comment over the revised plans submitted by Low Carbon as the CPRE strongly felt these did not address any objections raised. Discussions on this agreed that no further comment should be made as the current PC objections were sufficient. It was also noted that the determination date for Somerset was today so any comment could be too late. Concerns were expressed that Low Carbon had not demonstrated that it had looked at alternative sites for this solar farm.

It was agreed that the PC had no objections to Low Carbon either attending the March meeting or conducting a 'Zoom session' with the PC.

A question over why Somerset's solar farm policy for the county had not been published and it was agreed to investigate when this will be published as it is considered important with regard to any solar farm developments.

10. Ultrafast broadband: Information had been received from Gigaclear that the cabinet should go live in March and connections should be completed in May. However, it was noted that the work in the High Street had not been completed due to too many other services being in the way of the Gigaclear cabling and this had to be resolved.

11. LCN: Previously reported above. However, Cllr Denton said that Somerset would be contacting the PC to get a form completed to assess the Council's priorities.

12. Financial matters:

i. Annual finances: The Clerk reported that after 10 months the PC was showing a profit for the year and should show a surplus for the year as there were no major costs envisaged for the next 2 months.

ii. Assets: The asset register was noted. The Clerk was asked to cost new waste bin for The Shard.

iii. Payments: The following payments were agreed:

Clerk Salary	£265.31
HMRC PAYE	£64.60
Autospeedwatch	£727.64
J McAuliffe (hall hire)	£44.00

13. Date of next meeting:

The next meeting would be held in the Committee Room at the Memorial Hall on: **Monday 11th March at 7.30pm** (A pre-meeting for the PC starting at 7.00pm for Councillors only will be held to review the Rode Neighbourhood Plan)

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Signed

Date

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