

**Minutes of Roade Parish Council Meeting  
held on Wednesday 30 January 2008 at 7.30 p.m.  
at the Village Hall**

**Present:** Dr John Gwilt (Chairman)

Rev Malcolm Beech	Dave Bennett	Cecil Bottomley
Bill Dredge	Glenn Dudman	Mrs Anna Freund
Mrs Myra Inglis	Mrs Susan Mallock	Bill Mann
Rick Thake		

**Apologies:** Dick Johnson                      Mrs June McAlear                      Mrs Sylvia Mawby (Clerk)

**Minute Taker:** Mrs Nicky Hall

The Chairman opened this extra meeting of the Parish Council at 7.30 p.m.

**Action**

1.        **Declarations of Interest:** There were no declarations of interest.
  
2.        **Public Session:**
- 2.1      *Mr Dennis Samwell of 9 Churchcroft* was concerned at the possibility of an 11% increase in local tax and reminded the Council of the difficulties this could cause to the many people who were on a fixed income. The Chairman confirmed that the increase in the precept had been discussed openly and at length during several recent meetings of the Parish Council and also reminded Mr Samwell that Roade still compares very favourably with other, similar-sized villages. The Chairman also confirmed that all works and expenditure were undertaken in the best interests of the village.
  
3.        **Apologies:** Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Johnson and McAlear.
  
4.        **Attendance Register:** This had been signed by all Councillors present.
  
5.        **Allocation of Budget Items:**
- 5.1      Cllr Mallock had prepared a budget sheet which was screened for all to see at the meeting. In order to fit available monies to the proposed budget, a number of small savings would need to be made and these were discussed.
  
- 5.2      Based on information already received, it was anticipated that there would be a carry-over of £5,809.92 from the current financial year.
  
- 5.3      After some discussion, it was agreed that the £3,000 “pot” for the Cemetery, originally ring-fenced in this financial year’s accounts in anticipation of works required on the Cemetery Extension, should be removed. Instead a sum of £1,000 should be allocated in the 2008/9 budget to be put towards the works which will be needed once the extra land has been made available. In addition, £500 each was removed from the Lighting and Recreation Ground budgets, thus reducing the anticipated expenditure for 2008/9 to £57,040. A precept of £50,000, plus £1,200 Agency repayment, plus the £5,809.92 carry-over gives a total of £57,009.92, leaving an expected deficit at the end of the financial year 2008/2009 of £30.08. It was also noted that, as in previous years, capital expenditure in relation to lighting and play equipment could always be left until later in the year if unexpected expenditure for other necessary items came to light in the meantime. Under and overspends in the various cost centres could also be varied as appropriate during the year if necessary and where funds were available.
  
- 5.4      Cllr Thake noted that a loan of, say, £10,000 could be sought from the Public Loans

Board in due course, repayable over perhaps 10-15 years, for the works which will need to be undertaken in order to extend the Cemetery (fencing, hedging, re-direction of footpath, consecration etc), although the £1,000 now in the budget would be a “starter pot” to set the ball rolling.

- 5.5** Cllr Dredge proposed, Cllr Dudman seconded, and with all in favour it was agreed that the budget be set as shown on the screen at the meeting. (Copy attached to these minutes.)
- 5.6** Cllr Thake requested that a minute reference be allocated in due course to highlight the S137 grant made in respect of the Parish Plan. This grant had been made in order that other funding might be made available for work on the Parish Plan.
- 6. Any Other Business:**
- 6.1** Cllr Beech noted that during recent months there has been a degree of concern expressed by some Councillors about the way in which they have been addressed by other members of the Council. The Chairman confirmed that he had been concerned at the content of a number of exchanges of emails in recent weeks, but was glad to note that these had now been toned down.
- 6.1.2** Cllr Beech had prepared a short briefing note, based on the Code of Conduct, which he distributed to all Councillors. The thrust of Cllr Beech’s note emphasised that in private and in public life it is to be expected that at all times we deal with the lives of others in a sensitive and respectful way. We should be able to express critical opinions without even appearing to others to be abusive, discourteous, inconsiderate, rude and offensive.
- 6.1.3** The Chairman asked all councillors to read and consider Cllr Beech’s note and to take this into account in their dealings with colleagues.
- 6.2** Cllr Dredge reported that he had now produced 1200 copies of the survey document which the police had asked to be distributed to all households in Roade. Distribution will take place via the Roade News distribution team; response boxes will be placed in the Post Office, T&H Newsagents, Byrmans and Cripps House.
- 6.3** Cllr Dredge had downloaded a 15 page questionnaire regarding the Village of the Year Competition (which Roade won in 2000). Allseasons garden contractors have expressed an interest in taking part, as have the Scouts. The questionnaire is available for anyone who is interested in looking at what is involved, and a full discussion and decision would be held at the next meeting.
- 6.4** Cllr Dredge reported that The George public house had been broken into and badly vandalised over the weekend, with copper piping having been stolen and flooding having taken place. Several photographs were shown. The police were informed and the water was turned off. Cllr Dudman had contacted the duty Property Manager of Enterprise Inns and a contractor had now made the building safe. It is understood that considerable refurbishment work will now be needed; Enterprise Inns have indicated to Cllr Dudman that they plan to re-open the pub as soon as possible.
- 6.4.1** The Chairman was concerned that as The George now had a look of dereliction, this may encourage further vandalism. It is a prominent building and is passed every day by a great deal of traffic travelling through the village. He suggested that the Clerk write to Enterprise Inns asking that steps be taken at the earliest opportunity to mitigate the effect of the derelict and unoccupied look of the building. In light of the many comments made in the Parish Plan questionnaire, it might be appropriate for a representative of Enterprise Inns to meet with Councillors to discuss a more appropriate business to be housed in The George which would attract a different type of customer than unfortunately had often

Clerk

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previously been the case.

**6.4.2** Cllr Bennett understood that the appeal to regain the licence was due to be held that day. Cllr Dudman read out a letter from Enterprise Inns which made it clear that they intended to re-open the pub as soon as possible. It was agreed that a letter from the Clerk to Enterprise Inns would emphasise that the Parish Council took a great interest on behalf of the village in the future of the pub.

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**6.5** Cllr Dredge reported that the former Walkerpack site (now signed as the future Grafton Gate development) was in the process of being levelled, including the felling of a number of trees. It was confirmed that none of these trees was the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. Cllr Bottomley confirmed that TPOs could not be applied for once a site was under development. Cllr Dudman, having checked through the previous 12 months' minutes, confirmed that no comments had been received during public sessions regarding any possible TPOs on trees on this site. It was agreed that all councillors should be aware of any "village gossip" and correct any misunderstandings wherever possible.

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**6.6** The Chairman noted that the proposed meeting between representatives of the Parish Council and Mr Trevor Jolley (representing Kent Associates) would take place at 10.30 a.m. on Wednesday 5 March 2008 at 3 Hartwell Road. He quoted Cllr Bottomley from the minutes of the previous meeting: "he was concerned to note that **all** councillors are entitled to be members of any committee, advisory group or ad hoc discussion group (unless they have a financial or prejudicial interest in the matter)". The Chairman was aware of 2 or 3 councillors who have volunteered to be part of this discussion group who might be seen to have an interest. He asked all councillors to search their consciences to be sure that they do not have any interest, be it financial, prejudicial or perhaps even personal, to ensure that the group may act with absolute transparency in any possible present or future discussions.

**6.6.1** Cllr Dredge confirmed that he had had heard from the Chairman, Cllrs Bennett, Dredge, Mallock and Mann, as well as District Councillor Townsend that they would be available to meet with Mr Jolley, and either the Clerk or the Minute Taker will be in attendance to take notes of discussions. Cllr Bottomley should also be included in the meeting. A list of these names will, out of courtesy, be passed to Mr Jolley in advance of the meeting.

**6.7** Cllr Inglis thanked Cllr Mallock for her hard work in preparing the budget spreadsheet, with thanks also to Cllr Dredge for providing the hardware to enable this evening's presentation.

**7. Date of next meeting: Monday 11 February 2008 at 7.30 p.m.**

The meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.