RUSPIDGE & SOUDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the MEETING held on Tuesday 10th November 2026.
(These minutes remain in draft form until approved at the next meeting of the Council)

Parish Councillors Present:
Cllrs. Tony Matthews, Norman Snell, Denis Bagwell-Johnson, Robert Stubbs, Paul Firth, Glenn Turner.

County Councillors Present:
Cllr. Beki Hoyland.

District Councillors Present:
Richard Burton.

Parish Council Clerk – Roland Dowding.

Apologies:
Cllr's William Acland, Bernie O'Neill, Ray Donaghue, Andy Moore.

Standing Declarations of Interest

a) Ruspidge Memorial Hall - Insignificant personal interest by Cllr. Denis Bagwell-Johnston.
b) Soudley Village Hall - Insignificant personal interest by Cllr. Rob Stubbs.

Public Present: Tony Smith, Nick Ashfeild.

11.1. **Apologies** received and recorded from absent members.

11.2. No declaration of prejudicial interest was declared by members present.

11.3. **Minutes** - The minutes of the council meeting held on the **13th of October, 2026** were **ACCEPTED** as a true record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman, Cllr. Tony Matthews.

11.4. **Matters Arising** - There were no matters arising from the minutes.

11.5. **District Councillor Reports**
Reports are attached as an Appendix to these minutes.

11.6. **County Councillor Reports**
Reports are attached as an Appendix to these minutes.

11.7. **Planning** – The completed schedule for **November** is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes. The Chairman duly signed the schedule for November. The Clerk is instructed to query with FoDDC planning team as to why application **F/26/00512/STC** was not received by the Parish Council.

11.8. Following a report by the Honorary Treasurer, Cllr. Norman Snell the council **APPROVED** the accounts presented for **November,** payment totalling **£5,079.56.** These figures are inclusive of confidential expenditure. A financial report is included for **November** in the appendix to these minutes.

11.9. **Parish Council Draft Budget 2027/28** – The members present debated the draft budget, to be finalised at the January 2027 parish council meeting.

11.10. **Grant Request from Soudley Village Hall Committee** – SVHC grant application for the annual grass cutting of Soudley Recreational Ground. The request is for £2,000.00 on an annual recurring basis. Following a report from Tony Smith of Soudley Village Hall Committee in support of the grant application. Approved unanimously. The Parish Council reserves the right to sight of annual Grass cutting expenditure. Subject to full review and new application in 2031.

11.11. **VAS SWARCO maintenance contract quotes –** Retrospective approval requested. Five of seven members of Council have approved this quote via email. The members present acknowledged prior approval of this three-year contract. Total cost £3,104.61.

11.12. **VAS** – Discussion about future use of the VAS. After debating the topic, the members resolved to present quarterly VAS figures publicly and canvas public opinion prior to renewal of the next maintenance contract in 2029. To be reviewed quarterly.

11.13. **Fleetwood Heir Hunting** – Member's debate if to enlist the services of Fleetwood Heir Hunting in regard to the Comrades Club Soudley. Deferred until January 2027. Waiting on report back from Cllr. Richard Burton.

11.14. **Liaison's Report for Soudley Village hall.**

- Snagging being attended to on recent building works.

11.15. **Liaison's Report for Ruspidge Memorial Hall.**

- Bookings are good.
- Carpets in the lower hall being attended to.
- Minor building work being attended to.

11.16. **Clerk's Report to Council.**

- VAS Maintenance Attended to.
- PC Insurance. Assets register declared values of play area equipment updating.
- AGAR Training & Portal. Webinars.
- Play Areas at Soudley maintenance & gate removal.
- Issues around the Recent Roadworks at Buckshaft.
- Soudley Defib Relocation and new cabinet installation.

11.17. **Correspondence** - The council **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following correspondence:

- **FoDDC Cluster Group Meetings. Various.**
- **FoDDC. Leisure and Active Wellbeing Newsletter - November edition**
- **FoDDC. Less Than One Week to Go – Join the Conversation. People's emergency briefing.**
- **FoDDC. Planning Application Consultation: P1361/25/FUL**

No concerns regarding receipt of emails by the members were recorded.

11.18. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the council will be held in the **Ruspidge Memorial Hall** at **7.00 p.m. Tuesday, 12th January 2027**. The agenda deadline for the full council meeting is **Monday, 4th of January 2027**.

11.19. **Exclusion of the Press and the Public** - The council **RESOLVED** that for any remaining business of a confidential nature, the press and the public should be excluded from the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 10.xi (2020).

The meeting closed at 8:40 p.m.

Signed:……Chairman. Dated:……

APPENDIX

FINANCIAL REPORT for the meeting in: November 2026

1. Reconciliation of Account as at: end October 2026

	Ledger		**£**		**Bank**		**£**
	Balance b/f		151,825.06	*(Com Acc)*	Lloyds Current A/c.		2,985.75
	Lloyds Interest		30.24	*(Comm Inst Acc)*	Lloyds Inst. Access A/c.		77,372.65
	HMRC VAT Refund		890.01		Unity Current A/c		906.00
					Unity Inst Access A/c		65,119.98
		Total	152,745.31			**Total**	146,384.38
	Less Expenditure Oct		6,360.93				
	Balance		146,384.38		**Balance**		146,384.38

2. Accounts for Payment *# = Paid in October but on November's ledger.*

#	Rem Day Bugler	1. Cash	70.00		Remembrance Day Bugler Payment
#	British Legion	2. Cash	60.00		Remembrance wreaths x2.
#	TEEC	3	194.39	32.40	Hosting & Domain Renewal
#	Silverline	4	25.80		Website Host
#	Silverline	5	82.75		PAT Test
#	Clerks & Councils Direct	6	108.50		Subscription renewal
#	EE Ltd	7.DD	17.83		Mobile Phone
#	Lloyds Bank	8.SC	4.25		Bank Service Charge
	Ruspidsge Memorial Hall	9	18.00		Hall Rental
	Merlin Waste	10	300.00		Dog Waste Bins
	PJR Electrical	11	316.69	52.78	Soudley Defib Installation
	Sjs Book Keeping & Account	12	30.00	5.00	Pay Roll
	Tim Harris	13	475.51		St Clean, Defib Checks, Bus Shelter Cleans, Park reports.
	Module IT	14. DD	19.79	3.30	BB & Telephone
	Module IT	15. DD	147.23	24.54	IT Suport
	Soudley Village Hall	16	25.00		Play Area Soudley. Grass Cutting
	Konica Minolta	17	94.32	15.72	Copier Hire
	Konica Minolta	18	19.36	3.25	Copy & Print Costs
	Complete Landscapes	19	960.00	160.00	Parish Grass Cutting
		TOTAL	**2,839.42**	**296.99**	

Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council

Planning Schedule November, 2026

Planning Reference Site Address & Detail	Parish Comment	
P1361/25/FUL 82 Ruspidge Road Ruspidge Cinderford Erection of a 3 bedroom chalet bungalow with associated landscaping, parking and works. Demolition of existing garage and outbuilding.	No Obj	

Decisions notified by the Planning Authority

Planning Reference Site Address & Detail	Parish Comment	District Decision
No Notification from FODDC for this month		

Blakeney and Bream Division of

Gloucestershire County Council Parishes Report

November2026

beki.hoyland@gloucestershire.gov.uk

07815660013

Transport and travel

Please continue to use and promote the use of **FixMyStreet** to report issues on the roads.

Public transport

£3 for a single journey on stagecoach busses. With fuel costs increasing it may be worth considering taking the bus. Below are links to help you find your timetable and route.

About 5 — FoDCAP to download the transport map of the Forest of Dean, including links to all the timetables.

traveline sw - welcome

County bus network maps | Gloucestershire County Council

How to book a journey | Gloucestershire County Council The Robin

Or you can consider walking or the train, here are links to help

Rights of way online map | Highways

The official source for trains in Great Britain | National Rail

Closed Roads

- 9th February - ongoing. Lydney to Whitecroft road is closed for structural maintenance. The no. 23 bus is rerouted as follows: Lydney, Bream, Whitecroft, Parkend, Sling.
    - We have now officially been told that more of this road needs to be stabilised so will not be opening before next June.
- 21st September to 11th December Soudley bridge, closed for maintenance (have asked for an update)
- 30th November New Road, Parkend. BT open reach work.

LGR and devolution update

Following an initial review of the local government reorganisation decisions it made earlier this year, the Government announced on 29th October that, before Christmas, it is "minded to" confirm a single unitary authority for Gloucestershire.

Minister for Local Government, Jim McMahon, said that in the event the decision is confirmed, elections to the new unitary authority would take place in May 2028, ahead of vesting in April 2029. Elections to Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean

District Council, and Tewkesbury Borough Council will go ahead on existing boundaries in May 2027. The minister also committed to taking further representation on the single unitary option before the final decision is made.
There was no further update on the status of wider devolution for Gloucestershire – which was also omitted from announcements made during the budget on Wednesday 28 October.

You can read the joint statement from leaders of Gloucestershire's councils here

30 & 40 MPH Speed Limits - A48 Nibley Crossroads | Highways Gloucestershire County Council is proposing to introduce 30mph and 40mph speed limits on various roads in the vicinity of the A48 Nibley Crossroads and within the parishes of Awre and West Dean. The objective of these proposals is to address the ongoing concerns of local and vulnerable road users and mitigate against future collisions and injuries. **Consultation closes 13th November**

West Dean – Safer Roads and Community 20s | Have Your Say Gloucestershire
We are seeking your views on our proposals for speed reductions in West Dean.
If you would like to comment on our proposals, please use the interactive map.
To provide more detailed comments on specific aspects of the proposals, please complete the survey.
The survey and mapping tool will close at midnight on Sunday 13 December.
If you would like to discuss the proposals with the project team, you can attend one of the following events:

Event name	Location	Date	Time
In-person pop-up event	The West Dean Centre, High Street Bream, Gloucestershire, GL15 6JW	Wednesday 18 November	10:00-18:00
Online webinar	Microsoft Teams (please register here(External link))	Thursday 26 November	18:00-19:00

Have your say on Gloucestershire's transport future
People who live, work and travel in Gloucestershire are being invited to help shape the future of transport in the county as a public consultation launches on the draft new Local Transport Plan (LTP). The draft plan sets out a long-term vision for how people move around the county over the coming years. It aims to support sustainable economic growth, improve transport connections, make journeys safer and more reliable, reduce carbon emissions and ensure transport is accessible and affordable for everyone. An online event is taking place on Thursday 12 November, 6-7pm and the consultation closes on 15th November 2026.

Families invited to help shape SEND services in Gloucestershire
Parents, carers and young people are being asked to share their experiences of SEND services. The Annual SEND Surveys 2026 opened on Monday 5 October, and will run until Friday 4 December. Following feedback from last year's survey, there are now two Annual SEND Surveys, one for parents and carers of children and young people aged 0 to 25 with SEND, and a brand-new survey for young people aged 16 to 25 with SEND, for them to share their experiences directly.

Coming soon: Public engagement on the Spatial Development Strategy is expected between 2 November and 14 December 2026 with public events around the county.

Sign a petition asking government to give a fair funding package to Gloucestershire.
For too long, Gloucestershire has been expected to deliver essential public services such as education for our children, social care and fixing potholes with not enough money. Recent Government decisions to reduce the amount of money we receive have made our situation worse, meaning making tough choices about the services people rely on every day. The amount of funding the Government gives us does not

reflect the true cost of serving a growing and ageing population in a large, mainly rural area. That's why we are launching a petition calling on the Government to provide Fairer Funding for the people of Gloucestershire

Fairer Funding for Gloucestershire | Have Your Say Gloucestershire

County News

Stay safe this Halloween and Bonfire Night

Residents are being advised to follow Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) and Trading Standard's top tips to stay safe this Halloween and Bonfire Night.

First Space to Care project creates room for children to stay with family

Two children have been fostered by their grandparents with the help of funding from Gloucestershire County Council's pioneering Space to Care scheme.

£3 million investment to boost digital inclusion, innovation and connectivity across Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire County Council has approved a major investment programme to help more people get online, drive business innovation, improve cyber resilience, and maximise the benefits of Gloucestershire's digital infrastructure.

The Robin expands to provide more flexible travel across Gloucestershire

The Robin bus service will expand to serve additional communities from November 2026 including Berkeley Vale, the North and South Cotswolds, South Forest of Dean, Newent and surrounding areas. Villages and towns, such as Frampton on Severn, Monmouth, Cinderford, Mickleton, and Birdlip will now be covered. Unlike a traditional bus service that follows a fixed route and timetable, The Robin provides flexible transport in an area to give passengers a convenient way to make local journeys. It's also easy to book via the app, website or call centre.

New strategy approved to support Gloucestershire's food and farming businesses

Cabinet has approved a new four-year strategy to support food and farming businesses. The strategy aims to strengthen one of Gloucestershire's key industries and support long-term economic and environmental resilience. While support for this important sector is welcomed, councillors noted a missed opportunity to create a more comprehensive strategy covering all aspects of food and farming in the county.

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service recognised for major improvements by independent inspectors

An independent inspection has highlighted significant improvements within Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service. The report recognises progress across the service and reflects ongoing work to strengthen performance.

Public information events planned, ahead of M5 Junction 10 slip road closures

Residents, businesses and road users are being invited to a series of public information events to find out more about the next major stage of Gloucestershire County Council's M5 Junction 10 Improvements Scheme.

Trading Standards reminds retailers of major vaping and nicotine law changes

Trading Standards is raising awareness of important changes to vaping and nicotine legislation. From 29th October, it will be illegal to sell vaping or nicotine products to anyone under the age of 18. It will also become illegal for adults to purchase vaping or nicotine products on behalf of someone under 18.

Children share serious road safety message as darker evenings arrive

Children from Gloucester Academy have created a video to help spread important road safety messages as the clocks go back and the evenings get darker.

£21 million investment set to transform SEND support in Gloucestershire

A grant of £21.781 million from the Department for Education will help fund SEND transformation and introduce "Experts at Hand" into the county. Experts at Hand forms part of the three-year SEND Reform programme. It will bring specialist support directly into schools and education settings, helping children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) get the right help earlier and closer to home. While SEND reform is needed and welcomed, there is some concern about the pace of change and how this will impact Gloucestershire's schools and families.

County Council continues support for young carers across Gloucestershire

Young carers across Gloucestershire will continue to receive dedicated support after Gloucestershire County Council awarded a new five-year contract to Gloucestershire Young Carers.

Government drops M5 Junction 9 and A46 transport scheme

The Department for Transport has this week said that the scheme has been removed from the Major Road Network and Large Local Majors Programme and is not currently being considered as part of a future Road Investment Strategy. The scheme proposed a new M5 Junction 9a and a re-routed section of the A46 designed to improve journey reliability.

Memory Sparks Bags help people living with dementia to share memories

People living with dementia and memory loss across Gloucestershire can now borrow special Memory Sparks Bags from their local library, helping them share memories, start conversations and spend meaningful time with family, friends and carers.

GCC Meetings

October was a quiet month for meetings with no full council meeting and just two scrutiny committees meeting. The next full council meeting is scheduled for 11th November, and the dates of all upcoming meetings can be found here: Monthly meetings calendar - November 2026

Cabinet

GCC Cabinet met on 21st October and at that meeting, cabinet members made the following decisions:

Cabinet decision	**What does this mean?**
SEND Reform Implementation Plan approved and £21.781 million SEND Transformation Grant to be accepted from DfE.	Subject to receipt of the government grant, GCC will implement their SEND Reform Plan through to 2029. This involves recruiting specialist SEND staff, expanding inclusion support in mainstream schools, transferring agreed health funding to the Integrated Care Board and delivering new speech & language, occupational therapy and early intervention services for children and young people with SEND. While SEND reform is welcomed, there is some concern about the pace of change and how this will impact Gloucestershire's schools and families.
Gloucestershire **Tobacco Control Strategy 2026-2030** adopted.	The strategy sets out how GCC and partners across health, local government and the voluntary sector will work together to reduce smoking rates, support more

Cabinet decision	What does this mean?
	people to quit smoking, tackle health inequalities and work towards a smokefree Gloucestershire by 2030.
Gloucestershire **Healthy Weight Strategy 2026-2036** adopted.	The strategy sets out how public sector, NHS, community and education partners will work together to improve healthy weight outcomes by promoting healthier food, physical activity, healthier environments and personalised support, with a particular focus on reducing health inequalities.
Spatial Development Strategy public engagement approved.	The council will launch a six-week countywide engagement programme on Gloucestershire's new Spatial Development Strategy, seeking residents' views on future housing, infrastructure, transport, environmental and economic growth priorities to inform the county's long-term planning framework. Public events will take place in November/December (including in-person events in Coleford, Stroud and Cheltenham)
Supporting Gloucestershire's Farming Businesses: A Strategy for 2026-2030, adopted.	The strategy sets out how GCC will work with farmers, businesses, colleges, research organisations and rural partners to strengthen the food and farming sector through business support, skills development, innovation, supply chain initiatives and delivery of the HARVEST programme. Green councillors would like to see a much more comprehensive food and farming strategy developed but welcome HARVEST and economic support to farming businesses.
Digital Infrastructure, Inclusion and Innovation Strategy Delivery and Investment Plan approved.	GCC will begin delivering the 4-year digital strategy programme, investing over £3 million in the first two years. The aim is to work with partners to improve coverage, procure a countywide Digital Inclusion Service and support digital innovation, cyber resilience and technology adoption across Gloucestershire.

More information on each decision can be found here with a full recording of the meeting here.

Scrutiny and Committee meetings

Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee 30/09/26

The committee reviewed the council's response to the 2026 Employee Engagement Survey, scrutinised the annual report of the Information Management Service (covering Freedom of Information requests, Subject Access Requests, transparency and the growing impact of AI-generated requests) and considered future options for Occupational Health provision, with discussion around service resilience, recruitment challenges and proposals to outsource clinical delivery. Members also reviewed the Quarter 1 corporate finance position, including the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit, SEND funding, highways pressures and savings delivery, and noted the Quarter 1 corporate resources performance report.

Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee 13/10/26

Members scrutinised the Gloucestershire Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC) and System Flow: Winter Plan 2026/27, examining how NHS and partner organisations are preparing services for winter pressures. The committee also received a maternity services update covering the recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) maternity inspection, the national Baroness Amos maternity and neonatal investigation, the Thirlwall Inquiry recommendations, and progress on the Gloucestershire Maternity Community Transformation Programme. The agenda also covered the forthcoming merger between NHS Gloucestershire ICB and NHS Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire ICB, alongside a broader update from partners across the Gloucestershire Integrated Care System (ICS).

Full recordings of all meetings can be found here.

Greener Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire Schools Pollution Project

Is a school in your parish interested in hosting an air quality sensor? Thanks to a budget amendment put forward by the Green Group, 80 air quality sensors have been purchased and we're keen to capture air quality impacts at schools and gather more information on pollution levels across the county.

To be eligible to host a sensor, the school must:

- Have a suitable outdoor location to install the monitor that is between 1.5 to 3 metres above ground level. The sensor can be secured to a wall, fence or drainpipe using cable ties or screws provided.
- Ensure the sensor will be continuously connected to mains power and WiFi, including overnight and during holidays. A 5-metre weatherproof power lead is provided. If access to a mains power supply is a problem, let us know.
- Be a non-fee-paying school.

If you know of a school that might like to host a sensor, please help spread the word about this project and ask them to email glosair@gloucestershire.gov.uk.

Pedal Eazy bike scheme

With fuel prices rocketing - why not consider trying an e-bike? The Pedal Eazy Rent Scheme is an exciting opportunity for you to discover the advantages of e-bikes for commuting, school runs, leisure or everyday travel. Whether you are tackling hills, facing headwinds or simply looking for a smoother ride, e-bikes make cycling easier and more enjoyable, offering a low-cost, healthy and eco-friendly alternative to traditional transport.

Anyone aged 18 or over can rent an e-bike through the Pedal Eazy scheme.

To book an e-bike, contact Transition Stroud, Gloucestershire Bike Project or one of the participating library hubs to check availability and arrange your rental. Collections are usually made from an agreed local hub so that the handover is convenient for you. Eazy Pedal E-Bike Loan Scheme

International E-waste day

Are you one of the millions of people with a 'drawer of doom', full of old, tangled cables? You're not alone and now's the time to do something about it. Across the UK, we bin and stash away 627 million unused cables - enough to reach the moon and back! This is part of the growing e-waste challenge, which is now the fastest growing source of waste in

the world, and in the UK. Like any electrical items, each one of those cables contains valuable materials like copper that can be reused and recycled. Join Recycle Your Electricals' Great Cable Challenge!

Everyone can do their bit:

1. Just bag up your old cables and any other unwanted electricals

2. Use the waste wizard to find your nearest repair, donation or recycling point- you might even be able to recycle them kerbside

3. Save hundreds of kilos of copper from going to waste

Cinderford & Ruspidge County Councillor Report August/September 2026

Town Centre Regeneration – The Heritage Stones from the Highways budget is still in process – Graham and Mark may be able to update more.

Public Transport –The Bus Station is next in line for a revamp and I will keep up to date on any developments. We had a meeting with the head of GCC Integrated Transport as their officer dealing with Cinderford is off long term along with the FODDC Active Travel Team. They plans have still not taken shape fully so we are meeting again before Christmas to get a closer look.

Fire Station/proposed changes in service – I have been strongly pushing this – the consultation is now closed but I implore you all to give your opinion on the proposed changes. Met with 5 other GCC Councillors and the Fire Brigade Union Rep again – he is sending us the alternative plans they have suggested.

Youth ASB/Engagement –

The Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding & Care met with us on the 14th of October. He is going to consider looking at Cinderford youth issues and support in a more holistic way and as a type of case study. How this looks or what that may mean I am unsure yet but will update you if and when we hear more.

I am still waiting to meet with the head of the under 18 substance misuse provider to ascertain what's being done in Cinderford & Ruspidge.

I hope to use some Grassroots Funding to help with activities so still open to ideas. The boxing club has shown an interest in getting funding for equipment and have now got back to me but I have a small amount left for the right project.

CRNM Meeting – they want local councillors to attend – Katie is attending the first one on the 9th. Can councillors volunteer?

Speedwatch – I am looking for Councillors to join me.

Police - I have continued to have regular meetings with Police. Please pass on to me any issues you wish to bring up.

Still having multiple reports in Cinderford & Ruspidge about masked riders on bikes, what appears to be illegal scrambling and other issues such as scooters. We have requested and expect an operation very soon.

We have Neighbourhood Watch monthly. Its slowly growing and is becoming useful for intel. Issues reported include bikes, multiple drug dealing reports and ASB.

2Rivers – CEO walkabout and meeting took place with Councillors, staff, the Street Warden, Ubico, Police. He listened to concerns of ASB, poor condition of some assets and residents concerns. He is coming back to me with his recommendations and ways that they can work more closely with residents and services. I have suggested a residents association but the CEO wants to look at a variety of ways.

One of the ways agreed was a regular meeting at one of their centres and walkabout between the police, 2rs housing officers & maintenance team, residents and councillors. We will need councillors to volunteer for this.

Parking – I have asked for the list of sites that are being refreshed – Disabled bays outside Boots and others. Still not done so I have asked for an update – this is hopefully being done in the next month. I have also shown the level of illegal parking. However, please send me any videos or pictures.

Flood Defence – Steam Mills is almost complete and looks good. Other works have been done/in process and I have included a very good report on them below.

Highways Work – the North of the Forest has the GCC Visual Impact Gang one week out of every 2 so if you have any ideas for things they could do let me know. I have asked for work on:

- Hudson View. Added to Find and Fix gang list.
- Hudson Lane Ruspidge. Added to Find and Fix gang list.
- Ruspidge Road, Ruspidge. Micro surfacing site.
- Darby Close, Cinderford. Added to Find and Fix gang list.
- York Road Cinderford. Added to Find and Fix gang list

We have resurfacing scheduled on:

Parragate Rd

Station St

Causeway Rd

Littledean Hill Rd

Work has just been done on Buckshaft Rd and Coomb Drive.

Forest High School – Update given on Forest High October 14th booked in with the Education Department. Request for urgent capital funding for upkeep of the school is now in. The rebuild request will be decided on in January.

Other constituency casework includes:

You have been handling numerous resident enquiries, including:

- Fibre broadband rollout delays at Newtown, Cinderford (Project Gigabit/Openreach issues).
- Greenway Road defects and potholes – being done by FODDC on week starting 16th of November.
- Drainage concerns in Buckshaft Rd
- Planning issues in Peacock Lan
- Parking on Station St
- Attending youth work outreach every other Thursday
- Bus services and mobility access concerns arising from road closures.
- Forest Deprivation & Cinderford Regeneration Panel work.

Gloucestershire County Council

This comprehensive Word document briefing compiles all official press statements issued by Gloucestershire County Council during October 2026, complete with structured bullet points, dedicated parish council relevance notes, expanded roadworks and transport disruption advisories, and an essential winter/crisis emergency contact directory.

1. Governance, Policy & Executive Leadership

29.10.2026 | Government Sets Out Next Steps for Local Government Reorganisation in Gloucestershire

Council Leader Cllr Lisa Spivey responds to the government's latest timeline regarding unitary structural reviews.

- Government announced it is 'minded to' confirm a single unitary authority for Gloucestershire before Christmas following an initial review.
- Council Leader Cllr Lisa Spivey issued an official statement outlining the council's position and next steps for local administration.
- Parish and town councils are advised that existing two-tier operations and statutory responsibilities remain fully active while final decisions are weighed.

Parish Council Relevance: Directly impacts town and parish councils by establishing that local governance, statutory functions, and precepting authorities remain entirely stable while structural reorganisation reviews proceed.

28.10.2026 | Council Leader Demands Answers from Government After Missing Out on Devolution

Cllr Lisa Spivey voices strong concerns over regional funding omissions and champions county interests.

- Cllr Lisa Spivey issued a robust warning that Gloucestershire will not become the 'forgotten county' of the South West regarding devolution deals.
- The administration is actively pressing central government departments for equitable regional investment and devolved powers.
- Local leaders continue cross-party lobbying to secure vital funding streams for county infrastructure and economic growth.

Parish Council Relevance: Vital for local councils tracking regional funding opportunities, economic growth strategies, and infrastructure investment distribution across Gloucestershire communities.

2. Community Safety, Health & Social Care

27.10.2026 | Stay Safe This Halloween and Bonfire Night

Essential public safety guidelines issued jointly by GFRS and Trading Standards.

- Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) and Trading Standards published top safety tips for residents celebrating Halloween and Bonfire Night.
- Guidance highlights safe handling of fireworks, costume fire-safety standards, and vigilance around seasonal community events.
- Retailers are reminded of safety regulations governing seasonal goods and novelty items sold ahead of festivities.

Parish Council Relevance: Essential community safety messaging that parish councils can share via local noticeboards, newsletters, and social media channels to protect residents during seasonal celebrations.

27.10.2026 | First Space to Care Project Creates Room for Children to Stay with Family

Innovative family-first fostering model successfully reunites children with relatives.

- Two children have been successfully fostered by their grandparents using funding from GCC's pioneering Space to Care scheme.

- The initiative provides practical and financial support to enable kinship placements within familiar family environments.
- Early outcomes demonstrate significant emotional and social benefits for children kept within their wider family circle.

Parish Council Relevance: Highlights local social care innovations supporting vulnerable families at the grassroots level, providing valuable insight into community support structures.

19.10.2026 | £21 Million Investment Set to Transform SEND Support in Gloucestershire

Major capital investment approved to revamp special educational needs and disabilities provision.

- GCC approved a funding package exceeding £21 million dedicated to transforming SEND support across the county.
- Investment targets the expansion of specialist resource spaces within mainstream schools and local community hubs.
- Project aims to reduce travel times for families and ensure children receive tailored support closer to home.

Parish Council Relevance: Direct relevance to rural parishes where families often face long travel times for specialist educational support, as community hub expansions improve local accessibility.

19.10.2026 | One Plan is Delivering Results for Children, Young People and Families

Multi-agency partnership demonstrates measurable improvements in early years and family services.

- The One Plan for all Children and Young People in Gloucestershire reported successful collaborative outcomes across health, education, and social care.
- Initiatives focus on early intervention, family resilience, and streamlined support pathways for vulnerable households.
- Partner agencies continue joint working models to sustain long-term improvements in youth service delivery.

Parish Council Relevance: Provides community leaders with an overview of multi-agency early intervention frameworks operating across county localities to support local youth and families.

3. Infrastructure, Transport & Environment

27.10.2026 | Residents' Views Drive Action on Parking and Tourism Pressures in Bourton-on-the-Water

Multi-agency task force progresses resident parking permit schemes following public consultation.

- Plans for a residents' parking permit scheme in Bourton-on-the-Water are advancing following extensive community consultation.
- County, district, and parish councils are collaborating to mitigate severe visitor congestion and parking pressures in the village.
- Proposed measures balance tourist access with resident amenity and highway safety.

Parish Council Relevance: Serves as a prime collaborative model for rural and tourist-heavy parish councils dealing with visitor congestion, parking friction, and multi-agency highways solutions.

22.10.2026 | £3 Million Investment to Boost Digital Inclusion, Innovation and Connectivity

Strategic funding package approved to enhance broadband access, cyber resilience, and tech innovation.

- GCC approved a £3 million investment programme aimed at narrowing digital exclusion across rural and urban communities.
- Funding supports business innovation, cyber security resilience, and optimization of Gloucestershire's digital infrastructure.
- Initiatives include community digital hubs and training programs to help residents get online safely.

Parish Council Relevance: Highly relevant for rural parish councils seeking to improve local broadband connectivity, digital access hubs, and digital literacy among older residents.

22.10.2026 | The Robin Expands to Provide More Flexible Travel Across Gloucestershire

On-demand rural bus service scales up operations ahead of November schedule changes.

- The Robin on-demand bookable bus service expands across Gloucestershire starting November 2026.
- Expansion provides vital connectivity to rural communities experiencing reductions in fixed commercial bus timetables.
- Residents can book rides via app, phone, or online portal for seamless multi-modal travel connections.

Parish Council Relevance: Directly benefits rural parishes experiencing commercial bus cuts by offering residents a flexible, bookable community transport alternative.

22.10.2026 | New Strategy Approved to Support Gloucestershire's Food and Farming Businesses

Cabinet greenlights four-year agricultural sector roadmap and rural economic strategy.

- GCC cabinet approved a comprehensive four-year strategy supporting Gloucestershire's vital food and farming industries.
- Focus areas include sustainable land management, supply chain resilience, and agricultural innovation.
- Strategy provides a framework for rural economic growth and environmental stewardship.

Parish Council Relevance: Highly pertinent for rural parishes with agricultural economies, providing structured support for local farming enterprises, supply chains, and environmental stewardship.

4. Inspections, Safety & Regulatory Compliance

21.10.2026 | Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service Recognised for Major Improvements

Independent inspectorate highlights significant operational progress and enhanced risk management.

- GFRS welcomed a highly favorable independent inspection report acknowledging major performance and safety enhancements.
- Report praises leadership, community risk management, and modernization across fire stations.
- Service personnel continue ongoing training programs to maintain high operational standards.

Parish Council Relevance: Reassures parish councils regarding local emergency service resilience, community risk management standards, and fire safety preparedness across county districts.

21.10.2026 | Public Information Events Planned Ahead of M5 Junction 10 Slip Road Closures

Community consultation sessions launched for major multi-million-pound highway upgrade.

- GCC announced public information events for residents and motorists regarding upcoming M5 Junction 10 construction phases.
- Sessions detail scheduled slip road closures, traffic management plans, and expected project milestones.
- Highways teams are available to address local queries and mitigation measures.

Parish Council Relevance: Crucial for parish councils situated near major transport corridors to inform residents about impending road closures, diversion routes, and community drop-in sessions.

19.10.2026 | Trading Standards Reminds Retailers of Major Vaping and Nicotine Law Changes

Proactive compliance campaign launched regarding upcoming national regulatory updates.

- Gloucestershire Trading Standards issued compliance reminders to retailers regarding new vaping and nicotine legislation.
- Campaign emphasizes age verification standards, product packaging rules, and restrictions on flavored disposables.
- Officers are conducting targeted checks to ensure full local compliance and consumer protection.

Parish Council Relevance: Assists parish councils in guiding local village shops and high street retailers on upcoming statutory compliance changes regarding age-restricted goods.

19.10.2026 | Children Share Serious Road Safety Message as Darker Evenings Arrive

Gloucester Academy students spearhead pedestrian safety awareness campaign.

- Pupils from Gloucester Academy launched a community road safety campaign as daylight saving time ends.
- Students distributed reflective gear and pedestrian safety tips to encourage high-visibility clothing during commutes.
- Initiative aims to reduce seasonal traffic incidents involving young pedestrians during early winter darkness.

Parish Council Relevance: Empowers parish councils to promote local pedestrian safety, school travel awareness, and high-visibility campaigns for children during darker winter evenings.

5. Expanded Roadworks, Transport Disruptions & Winter Hazards

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ALERT — Comprehensive breakdown of major strategic highway schemes, National Highways projects, and seasonal winter hazards across Gloucestershire for November 2026.

- M5 Junctions 11 to 12 Footbridge Demolition & Corridor Works: National Highways and GCC have scheduled rolling overnight closures along the M5 between Junctions 11 and 12 throughout November to facilitate the safe demolition of Uphill Court and Grove Court footbridges, alongside ongoing barrier and resurfacing works.
- M5 Junction 10 Improvement Scheme Slip Road Closures: Major preparatory works and public consultation rollouts are underway for the multi-million-pound Junction 10 upgrade. Full slip road closures will impact local junctions, requiring freight and commuters to follow signed motorway diversion routes.
- A417 Missing Link (Brockworth to Cowley) Realignments: Traffic continues to operate on temporary dual-carriageway bypass alignments. Periodic overnight and weekend closures remain in force as engineers tie in major bridge structures, drainage systems, and tie-in points. Sat-nav routing through rural parishes (Birdlip, Painswick, Brimpsfield) is strictly discouraged.
- A40 Over Bridge Refurbishment (£7M Scheme): Eastbound traffic continues to run in contraflow on the westbound structure under a strict 30mph speed limit. The slip road linking the A417 Over Causeway to the A40 westbound remains closed, causing significant delays for traffic entering Gloucester from Newent and the Forest of Dean.
- Hempsted Household Recycling Centre (HRC) Closure: Hempsted HRC remains closed for major capital modernization works (including 6 electric compactors and flood drainage installation) until mid-November. Residents must pre-book alternative visits to Wingmoor Farm (Bishop's Cleeve) or Pyke Quarry (Horsley).
- Seasonal Winter Hazards & Leaf Fall: Freezing temperatures, early morning ice, and wet leaf fall across rural lanes create severe skid risks and blocked drainage gullies. Parish councils are urged to report blocked drains and request grit box refills via highways portals.

Parish Council Relevance: Provides parish councils and local members with crucial technical data to brief residents, manage heavy traffic displacement through rural rat-runs, and coordinate emergency winter resilience reporting.

6. Winter, Emergency & Crisis Contact Directory

Keep these vital telephone numbers accessible for parish council offices, community wardens, and vulnerable residents during winter weather emergencies and crisis situations:

Service / Department	Contact Number / Details
Gloucestershire Highways Helpdesk (Emergency Road Hazards, Flooding, Gritting & Potholes)	08000 514 514 (Freephone, 24/7 during severe weather)
Gloucestershire County Council Main Customer Services & Parish Liaison	01452 425000 (Mon–Fri) | customerservices@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Emergency Services (Police, Fire & Rescue, Ambulance)	999 (Immediate life-threatening danger or crimes in progress)
Non-Emergency Police	101 (Non-urgent local crimes or community safety concerns)
Non-Emergency Health Services	111 (NHS medical advice, urgent care routing, and mental health crisis support)
Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (Community Safety & Fire Prevention)	01452 753333
Adult Social Care & Safeguarding Crisis Referral (GCC)	01452 426868 (Out of hours emergency: 01452 614199)
Children's Social Care Safeguarding Hub	01452 426565 (Out of hours emergency: 01452 614199)
National Grid Power Cut & Gas Emergency Line	105 (Free universal number to report power outages or downed power lines)
Environment Agency Floodline (Flood Warnings & Risk Alerts)	0345 988 1188
The Robin On-Demand Bus Booking Line	Contact via GCC integrated transport portal or local booking dispatchers.

Cinderford projects 05/11/2026

This report summaries the works GCC and partners have taken to reduce flood risk in Cinderford in 2026.

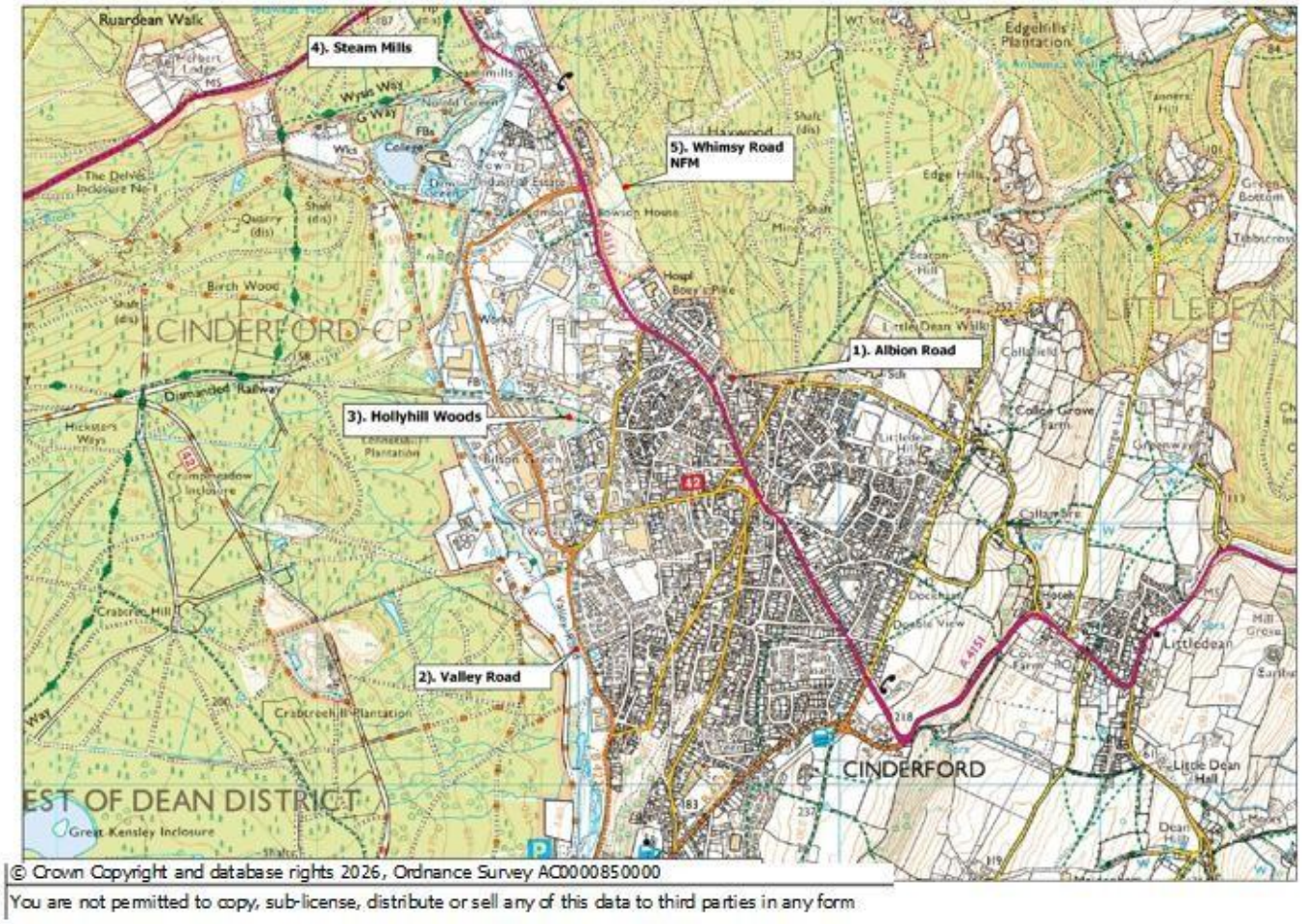


Figure 1: map to show the works locations in Cinderford

1). Albion Road

Flood risk to Albion Road is caused by surface water runoff from the steep forest land behind the properties.

GCC commissioned a CCTV survey from the culvert inlet within the woodland, at the trash screen to determine where the culvert runs. The survey was stopped by the third manhole chamber under the boundary between the Forestry England (FE) and residential land where a significant blockage was discovered.

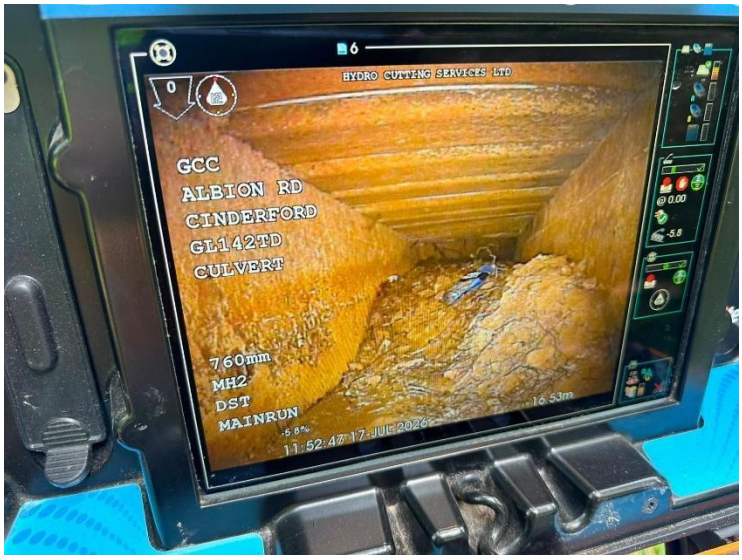


FIGURE 2: CCTV IMAGE OF BLOCKAGE



FIGURE 3: MANHOLE CHAMBER WHERE BLOCKAGE IS LOCATED

GCC obtained a quote of circa £30k to clear this blockage using a jet vac unit to suck the debris out. GCC assessed other options to clear the blockage for cheaper value, excavating the lid off and clearing out the material was ruled out due to the asbestos lined roof plates.

Clearance using buckets within the manhole and breathing protection was deemed appropriate with the contractor and was much cheaper and safer than the original quote. Approximately 4 tonne of material over a 12ft long blockage was identified and believed to be caused by a bend in the culvert.

Post clearance works a follow up CCTV survey is required to map where the culvert runs through Cinderford and check its condition, downstream of the blockage.

GCC also funded improvements to control water flow within the forest environment. This involved digging out ditches, so water did not overtop them and was contained within the ditches, installing woody debris to slow the flow and excavating a large holding area around the culvert inlet.

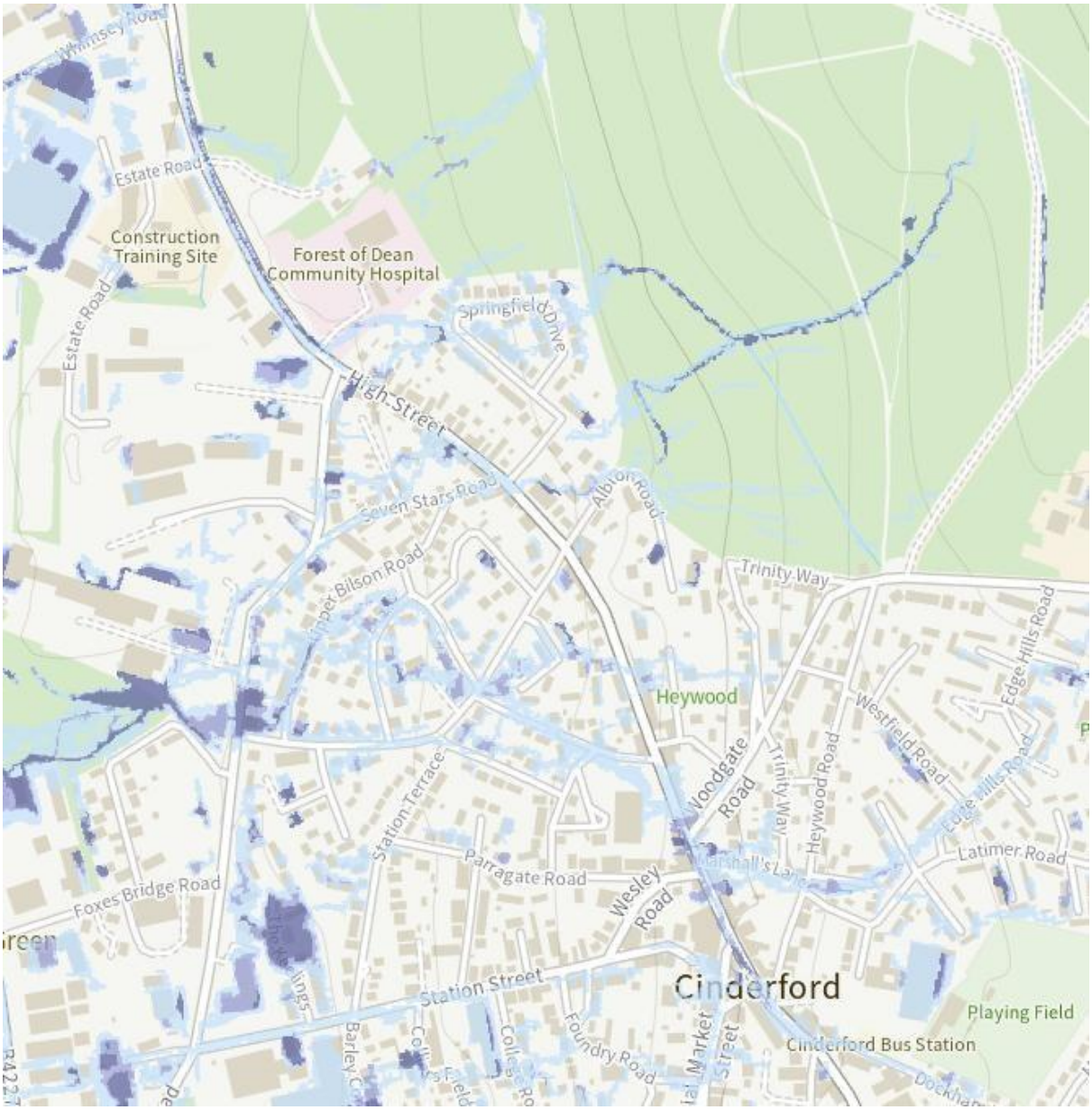


Figure 4: surface water flow route map

2). VALLEY ROAD

GCC were made aware of issues on Valley road in late 2025 and commissioned vegetation clearance enabling works in early 2026, with a view to undertake works to widen the channel during bird nesting season. The tree removal facilitated the option to work inside bird nesting season as well as reducing the potential for watercourse blockages, which residents reported had caused at least one of the recorded flood events.



Figure 6: Image after first phase of clearance works undertaken. Low spot in the road and watercourse is visible.

Valley Road has flooded from the watercourse but more often from surface water on the road, given it is the natural low spot. GCC Highways have undertaken CCTV works and identified some improvements however the watercourse levels being high dictates if the surface water can outfall to the watercourse, which places more importance on watercourse improvements.

A works license is required from Forestry England, due to the planned works being on their land. A design is needed to formalised the license, therefore GCC funded Ghyston Engineering to assess the potential options at the site.

The consultant found that the level 110metres down from the site, 10ms past the footbridge slopes more and allows greater hydraulic head for water to get away, whereas the 110ms upstream the bed is of slack gradient. So the flow capacity drops at these chainages, as shown in the table below.

Chainage	Gradient	Cross-section area	Flow capacity at 50%	Flow capacity at bank full
0 - 107	1:340	5.97	3.6m3/s	13.8
		7.08	4.8m3/s	18.9
107 - 151	1:1000	8.7	3.3	12.9
151 - 166	1:49	7	12.7	49
166+	1:278	7	5.3	20.9

Figure 7: Table of flow capacity assessment.

GCC, FE, FoDDC the consultant and contractor met to discuss the proposals on 16th October 2026. The conclusion was that regrading the river bed to match the downstream grading and allow for greater conveyance will be the preferred option taken forward. Alongside this a 300mm bund will be placed along the roadside, with the service manhole chambers raised to prevent water flooding out the watercourse, from the low spot.

Currently GCC and FE are awaiting permission from the utility companies before the works can be instructed.

3). Hollyhill Woods

GCC were approach by FoDDC regarding an issue at Hollyhill Woods where a lack of watercourse maintenance is causing adjacent businesses to flood.

There is an opportunity to undertake the required maintenance as well as enhancement works at site 1 on the plan below, to naturalise the watercourse and create a silt trap. In addition GCC identified an opportunity at point 2, where the watercourse has been modified to be in an embanked channel, resulting in no ability for high flows to flood into the woodland. Adjacent to this is a natural bowl where water could store before being discharged downstream, this would also create local habitat enhancement.

There are two potential options to deliver the work at point 2:

A). Remove the northern embankment and relocate along the orange line to raise the footpath level.

B). Create a scrape on the upstream end of the embankment for water to spill out, store and another for water to discharge back into the river once stored on the floodplain.

GCC is currently waiting FE approval and will fund the improvement works to reduce the flood risk to the nearby businesses.



Figure 8: LIDAR image of Hollyhill Woods project area

4). Steam Mills

The Environment Agency's flood maps show properties at Steam Mills are at flood risk

The flood risk is exacerbated by a lack of maintenance, causing no visible flow at the section which flows alongside the properties. Further investigation between FoDDC and GCC identified a blockage in the woodland approx. 400m downstream which is raising the water height above 500mm.

The scope of works here was to firstly remove the vegetation and silt from the reach nearest the properties and restore a healthy flow, the second phase is to remove the large root mass blockage within the woodland to allow a fall on the watercourse and greater hydraulic head, so flow can discharge at a greater rate.

Following GCC being made aware of this issue in September 2026, works at Steam Mills started on 21/10/2026 and flood risk to the properties has now been reduced going into the winter period.

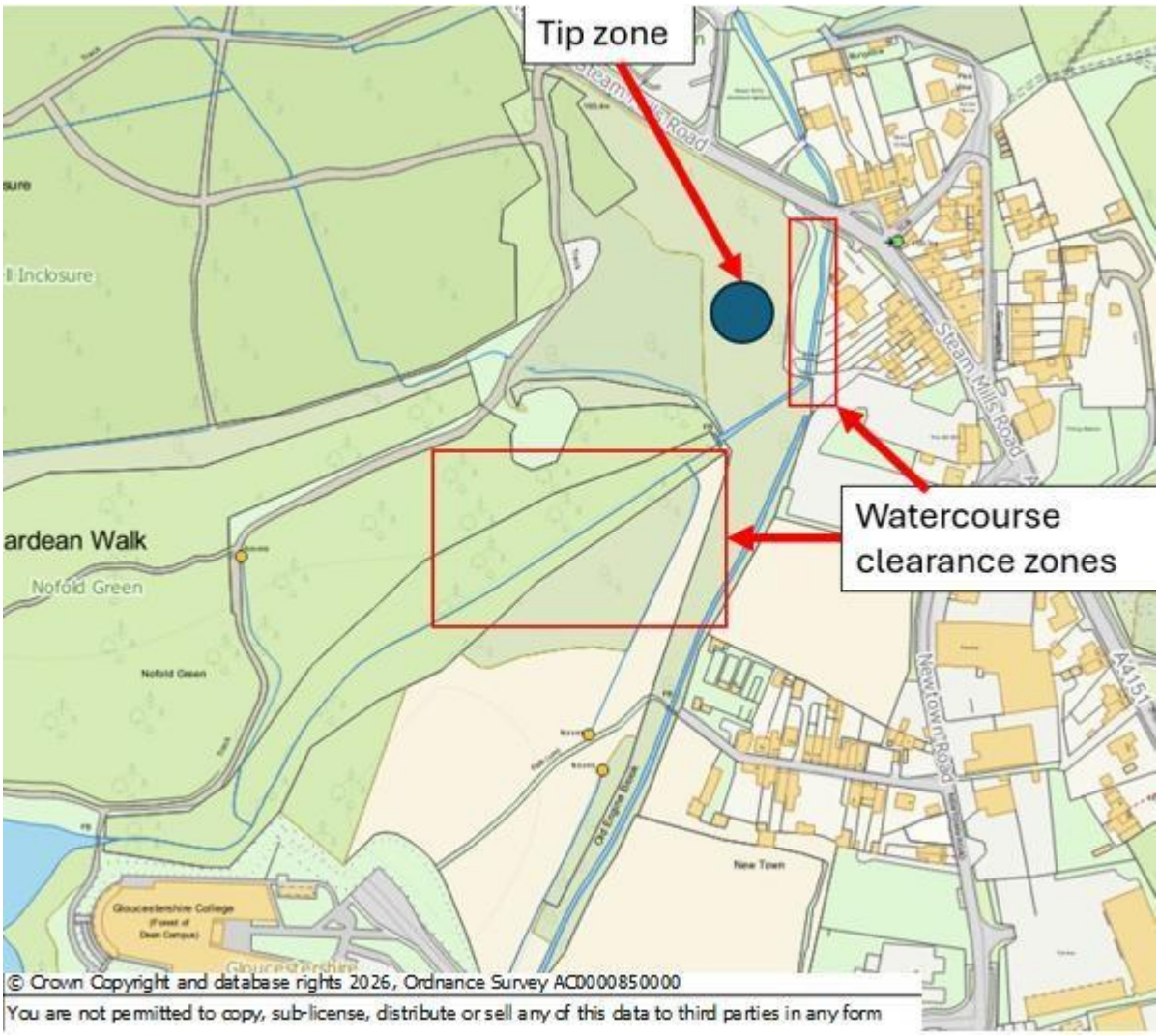


FIGURE 9: MAP DISPLAYING WATERCOURSE CLEARANCE ZONES



FIGURE 10: BEFORE AND AFTER IMAGE OF STEAM MILLS WORKS, LOOKING UPSTREAM FROM FOOTBRIDGE



FIGURE 11: BEFORE AND AFTER LOOKING DOWNSTREAM TOWARDS FOOT BRIDGE



FIGURE 12: POST WORKS IMAGE OF CLEARED CHANNEL DOWNSTREAM OF FOOTBRIDGE



FIGURE 13: IMAGE OF ROOT MASS AT DOWNSTREAM WORKS ZONE, CAUSING 500MM + RAISING OF CHANNEL BED



Figure 14: During construction image of root mass being taken out, in the image the middle of the root mass has been removed and water levels have dropped approximately 600mms, there is still remaining root mass either side which was taken away.

5). WHIMSY ROAD NFM

Surface water from the forest historically flooded onto Whimsy Road and flowed into properties. GCC Highways and FE delivered works to ditch alongside the road which did resolve issues for a few years.

In 2026 FE and GCC noticed this ditch had become heavily silted, due to high run off and the culvert became blocked.

FE funded works to provide greater resilience to the site, as part of the Forest Waters programme. The scoping was joint FE and GCC but funding came from FE. The works were delivered in June 2026 to great appreciation of the local business owner and properties.

The works involved de-silting the ditch, creating a sump for silt and installing large woody debris dams across the flow route, which will slow the flow of water and progressively catch silt at each structure.

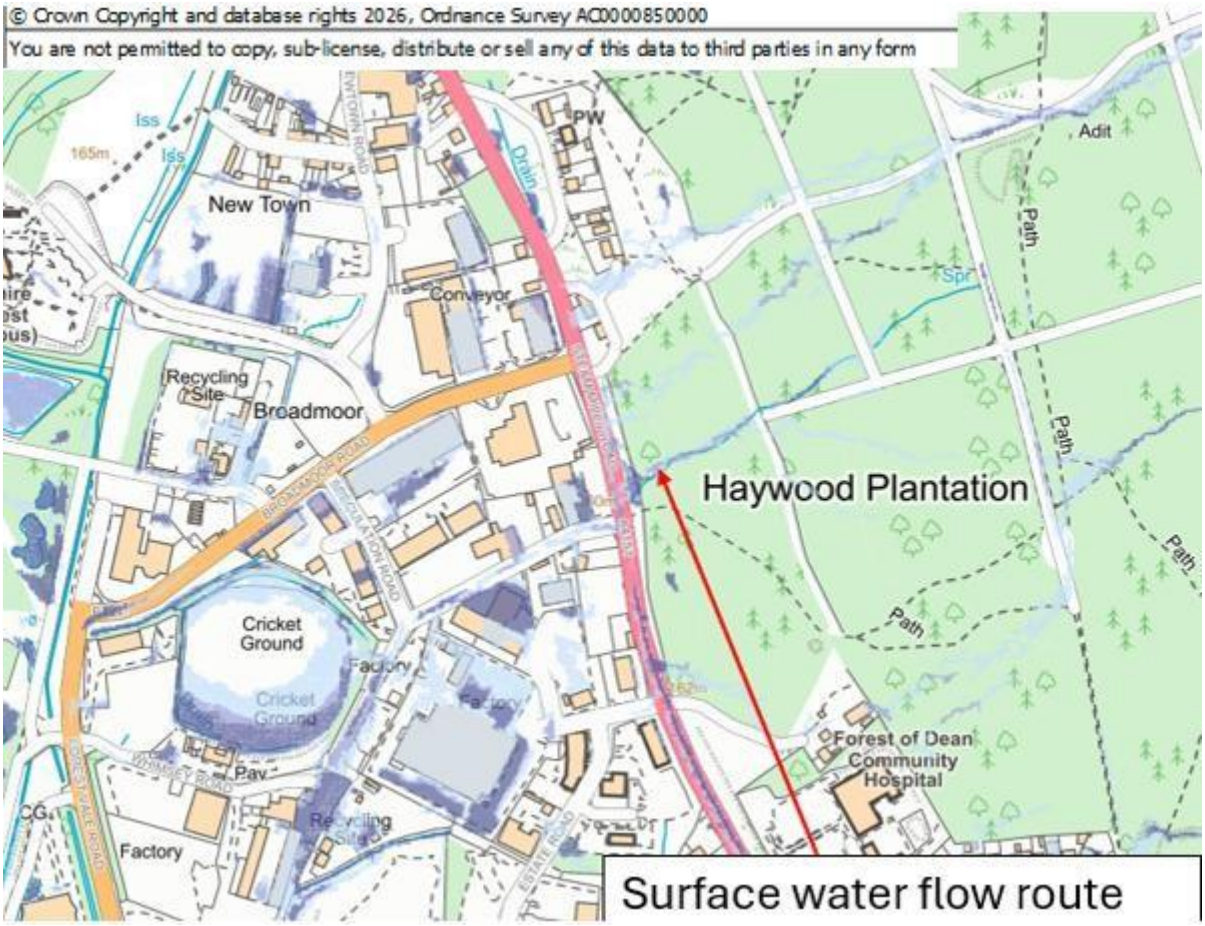


FIGURE 15: MAP SHOWING SURFACE WATER FLOW ROUTE, WHICH CAUSED FLOODING TO LOCAL PROPERTIES AND BUSINESSES



FIGURE 16: PRE-WORKS IMAGE OF CULVERT HEADWALL BEING BLOCKED WITH SILT



FIGURE 17: POST WORKS IMAGE OF CULVERT CLEARANCE, SILT TRAP AND A SECTION OF CLEARED DITCH



Figure 18: One of the large woody debris structures along the flow route to slow the flow of water and catch sediment.

Government 'minded to' confirm decision for one new council for Gloucestershire

Following an initial review of the local government reorganisation decisions it made earlier this year, the Government has announced today that, before Christmas, it is "minded to" confirm a single unitary authority for Gloucestershire.

In an update shared with council leaders and chief executives, Jim McMahon, the minister for local government, devolution and growth, said that all of the decisions made in July have been withdrawn – but that he was working to confirm the decision for the single unitary authority for Gloucestershire.

He said that in the event the decision is confirmed, elections to the new unitary authority would take place in May 2028, ahead of vesting in April 2029.

Elections to Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, and Tewkesbury Borough Council will go ahead on existing boundaries in 2027.

The minister also committed to taking further representations on the single unitary option before the final decision is made.

Gloucestershire County Council consultation on Spatial Development Strategy announced.

There is one consultation meeting in the Forest, Coleford Library 10th November, 1530 to 1800. The link below goes to the consultation web page.

https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/spatial-development-strategy-sds/have-your-say/

Five Acres redevelopment reaches major construction milestone

Representatives from Forest of Dean District Council joined lead contractor Willmott Dixon and Pick Everard for a topping out ceremony at Five Acres, marking a significant milestone in the construction of the new community and leisure facility.

The traditional construction ceremony celebrates the completion of the building's highest structural point and is an important stage in the redevelopment project, which is being delivered through the Levelling Up the Forest programme.

Construction officially began earlier this year, and work is progressing well on phase one of the redevelopment. Progress to date includes completion of the main building superstructure, upper floor decks, and roof parapets, alongside drainage and infrastructure works. Refurbishment of the Speedwell Building is also under way, and more than £3.8 million of construction work has been completed on site to date.

Council EV charging project delivers cleaner travel across the Forest of Dean

Forest of Dean District Council has completed the rollout of its electric vehicle (EV) charging network, with charging facilities now available at 10 council-owned car park sites across the district.

Delivered in partnership with Connected Kerb, the project has increased access to public EV charging infrastructure, helping residents, businesses and visitors make the switch to electric vehicles and supporting cleaner travel throughout the Forest of Dean.

The network is already proving popular with drivers. Since the first chargers became operational, more than 2,000 charging sessions have been recorded by 540 users, supporting approximately 130,000 miles of electric vehicle travel.

Data provided by Connected Kerb shows the network has also helped save an estimated 28,400kg of carbon dioxide emissions compared with equivalent journeys made using petrol or diesel vehicles.

More information on the project and the Council's parking facilities can be found here: https://www.fdean.gov.uk/parking-travel-and-visitors/car-parks-and-charges/

Council pledges its support for Reclaim the Night 2026

Forest of Dean District Council is proud to support Reclaim the Night 2026, taking place in Cinderford on Friday, 27 November, as part of the international 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign.

The annual campaign runs from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day, raising awareness of violence against women and girls and encouraging communities around the world to act.

Led by Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (GRASAC) and organised in partnership with Forest of Dean District Council, Reclaim the Night provides an opportunity for residents, community groups, partners and supporters to come together and send a clear message that violence against women and girls has no place in our communities.

The march highlights a simple but powerful principle: women should be able to go about their daily lives, at any time of day or night, free from fear, harassment and violence.

Participants will gather in the Triangle in Cinderford, from 6pm before setting off on the march at 6.30pm. The route, which is approximately half a mile long and fully step-free, will take walkers through the town centre before returning to the Triangle for reflection and hot refreshments.

The event is open to everyone who wishes to support the campaign. Participants are welcome to bring placards or simply attend and walk alongside others in solidarity. Stewards, first aiders, police representatives, and support services will be present throughout the event, with indoor safe spaces and refreshments available.

Further information about the march, including the route, parking details and how to participate can be found on the Council's dedicated website: https://fdean.gov.uk/reclaimthenight