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# RUSPIDGE & SOUDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES of the MEETING held on Tuesday 14th November, 2023**

*(These minutes remain in draft form until approved at the next meeting of the Council)*

**Parish Councillors Present:**

Cllrs. Chairman Jo Smith, William Acland, Norman Snell, Denis Norman Bagwell-Johnston.

**County Councillors Present:**

None Present.

**District Councillors Present:**

Cllr. Bernie O'Neill.

**Parish Council Clerk** – Roland Dowding

**Apologies:**

Cllrs. Helen Medcraft, Tony Matthews, Andy Moore, Richard Burton, Beki Hoyland, Graham Morgan.

**Standing Declarations of Interest**

- A) Ruspidge Memorial Hall - Insignificant personal interest by Cllr. William Acland.
- B) St Whites School Board of Governors - Insignificant personal interest by Cllr. William Acland.

**Public Present:**

Adrian Peacey, Anthony Smith, Andrew Lloyd, Rebecca Child, David Child.

**RUSPIDGE WELFARE TRUST (RWT)**

Members were mindful that these items were considered and determined as trustees to the RWT.

11.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes.

11.2 No other business.

**Public Participation:**

**Anthony Smith** – Mr Smith requested to know what news the Parish Council had on the re-opening of the Ruspidge / Soudley Rd and the situation with Clarke Telecom and the installation of a Telecom Mast in Soudley. Cllr. Smith responded, the Parish Council had written to Highways and we are informed that the repairs to the Rd are due to start at the end of the Month (November), repairs are due to last two weeks, the Rd estimated to be open prior to Christmas, until then, the Rd must remain closed due to the nature of the damage and risk to the public. Regarding the telecom mast, Clarke Telecom, have arranged an appointment for a survey at the Beeches, Soudley, until the result of the survey is known, no further information is available to the Parish Council.

**Adrian Peacey** – Concerned by the road signs placed by Highways throughout the parish and confusion it is causing motorists in the parish. Believes signage needs to be clearer and more precise. Mr Peacey's comments were supported by Cllr. Bernie O'Neill.

**David Child** - Wanting to know the progress on the Ruspidge / Soudley Rd closure, Mr. Child is concerned by the additional mileage, fuel consumption and damage to the environment that the Rd closure is causing. Mr Child believes that the damage to the Rd was avoidable, potholes being caused due to water drainage in the area through the limestone that underpins the road. Mr Child believes the original Severn Trent water leak merely accelerated the process of the Rd failing. Mr Child requested to know if the Parish Council knows the scope of the work Highways will be undertaking in repairing the Rd, he believes the Rd to be unsafe due to subsidence to the sides of the Rd, visible from the Blue Rock Trail. Mr Child also commented that the school bus cannot access the area due to the Rd closure and will Highways be repairing said Rd to a standard where buses can use said Rd, and to note this is damaging the children's education. The Chairman, Cllr. Jo Smith agreed the Parish Council would attempt to obtain a 'scheme of work' from GCC Highways. Cllr. Bernie O'Neill commented that he would also query GCC regarding this action.

**Andrew Lloyd** - Mr Lloyd queried why the repairs to the Ruspidge / Soudley Rd are taking so long and when will it be open again. Cllr. Smith responded, the Parish Council cannot answer the question of why it has taken so long to repair and advised that Highways need to ensure adequate repairs are conducted in making the road safe. Cllr. Smith reiterated the latest information received from Highways, the repairs will be commencing with in the next two weeks and the Rd should be re-open by Christmas. Mr Lloyd also asked if the Parish Council could take some action to raise its profile in the area and suggested perhaps a parish newsletter as not all parishioners have access to or use digital media. Cllr. Jo Smith advised that the Parish Council need to consult further if such action were to be taken and a volunteer would be required to produce a newsletter, currently no volunteers have come forward.

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

11.2. **Cllr. William Acland** declared prejudicial interest .

11.3. **Minutes** - The minutes of the council meeting held on the **10th of October, 2023** were **ACCEPTED** as a true record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

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

11.5. **District Councillor Reports**

Cllr. Bernie O'Neill stated he would contact Cllr. Graham Morgan regarding the Ruspidge / Soudley Rd closure to obtain further information at the request of the public present at the meeting. Cllr. O'Neill informed the members present he had been contacted by residents of Sneyd Wood regarding the Boar accessing the area and causing damage. Forestry Commission had been contacted and a fence erected to prevent further Boar incursions. Cllr. O'Neill is still pursuing the Forest Lodge planning application and with Parish Council support, believes the application to be unsuitable and due to the application running now for two years or more needs to be rejected. The application is due to be heard at the December planning meeting, Cllr. O'Neill will attend and update council on the outcome.

*Further Reports are attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.*

11.6. **County Councillor Reports**

*Report is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.*

- 11.7. **Planning** – The completed schedule for **November** is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.
- 11.8. **Financial Matters** - Following a report by the Treasurer the council **APPROVED** the accounts presented for the **November** payment totalling **£4,787.79** this figure is inclusive of confidential expenditure.
- 11.9. **Parish Council Draft Budget 2024/25** - After deliberating the draft budget the members and one email vote, voted unanimously to approve the draft budget.
- 11.10. **Grant Request Soudley Village Hall Grass Cutting - £800** grant requested from Soudley Village Hall for the grass cutting of Soudley Village Hall recreational field. Due to the understanding **SVH** had previously purchased a 'ride on mower' to cut the recreational ground grass and due to the Parish Council's limited grant budget currently standing at **£1,000.00** the members unanimously agreed to decline the application.
- 11.11. **Grant Request Soudley Village Hall Fireworks - £500** grant requested from Soudley Village Hall for fireworks. The members present unanimously agreed and approved the **£500.00** grant.
- 11.12. **Soudley Village Hall Newsletter Grant Request - £400.00** grant request from Soudley Village Hall to produce a quarterly eight-page newsletter. Council deliberated the request and unanimously agreed to award **£130.00** to produce the next issue of the newsletter and advised the applicant can re-apply for additional future issues.
- 11.13. **Blue Rock Trail Survey** - Should an additional survey and a second opinion be sought on the BRT banks. Members present unanimously agreed to defer this question until after the Forestry Commission England have responded to Council regarding Forestry Commission taking on ownership of the **BRT**.
- 11.14. **Blue Rock Trail Public Safety** - Members to debate; removal of the safety barriers adjacent to the banks identified as being an issue to public safety, due to the risk of falling rocks. Placement of two Highways failing rock signs along the **BRT**. Members present unanimously agreed to defer this question until after the Forestry Commission England have responded to Council regarding Forestry Commission taking on ownership of the **BRT**.
- 11.15. **Correspondence** - The council **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following correspondence: The Parish Councillors accepted all relevant correspondence has been forwarded via email to all members.
- 11.16. **Next Meeting** - the next meeting of the council is to be held in the **Soudley Village Hall** at **7.00 p.m. Tuesday, 12th December 2023**. The agenda deadline is **Monday, 4th of December, 2023**.
- 11.17. **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 8.10 p.m.

Signed:.....Chair.

Dated:.....

# APPENDIX

## Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council Planning Schedules for November 2023.

<b><u>Ruspidge &amp; Soudley Parish Council</u></b>			
<b><u>Planning Schedule November, 2023</u></b>			
<u>Planning Reference</u>	<u>Parish</u>		
<u>Site Address &amp; Detail</u>	<u>Comment</u>		
<b>P1257/23/FUL</b>	Objection		
9 Peacock Lane Ruspidge Gloucestershire Proposed use of existing summer house for annexed accommodation ancillary to main dwelling.			
1 It is basically a glorified shed.			
2 No mention is made of services to the development ie sewage water electricity or gas.			
3 No mention of parking provision for the annexe.			
4 No mention of reason to have an 'annexe' whether it is for personal use or for letting to family or Air BNB etc.			
5 As a separate dwelling down a very narrow lane, concerned about traffic loading.			
<b><u>Decisions notified by the Planning Authority</u></b>			
<u>Planning Reference</u>	<u>Parish</u>	<u>District</u>	
<u>Site Address &amp; Detail</u>	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Date</u>
<b>P1215/23/FUL</b>	No Obj	Consent	26/10/2023
Dean Vale 4 Lower Road Soudley Cinderford Gloucestershire GL14 2TZ Erection of log cabin to provide home office/studio space (retrospective)			
<b>P0684/23/FUL</b>	No Obj	Consent	13/10/2023
Brook Farm Tramway Road Soudley Cinderford Gloucestershire GL14 2UG Erection of a steel framed storage garage and workshop with associated works, Demolition of existing workshops.			
<b>P1033/23/LD2</b>		LDC Issued	10/10/2023
25 Fir View Road Ruspidge Cinderford Gloucestershire GL14 3AL Existing drop kerb to be extended and existing driveway to be resurfaced using tarmac.			
<b>P0067/23/DISCON</b>		Consent	13/10/2023
St Whites Farm St Whites Road Cinderford Gloucestershire GL14 3BS Discharge of conditions 03 (design and repair) relating to P0818/20/PQ3PA.			

# District Councillor Reports.

District Councillor Report for Ruspidge and Soudley Parish Council – 14<sup>th</sup> November

## **CLLrs Richard Burton, Andy Moore**

The construction of the new leisure, enterprise and education facility at Five Acres in Berry Hill has taken a significant step forward, with planning now submitted, enabling residents and members of the wider Forest community to view and comment on the plans on the Council's planning portal, under reference P1435\_23\_FUL.

Forest of Dean District Council are set to take greater control of council services. In conjunction with our partner councils, we will be receiving recommendations to be considered by each council following a review of their jointly owned company, Publica.

The Forest of Dean District Council is to receive a £250,000 grant from the charity Thirty Percy, to fund two new part-time members of staff for two years, and to procure a carbon reduction pathways report, all of which will enable the council make further progress towards its net zero goals.

The Forest of Dean draft Local Plan is proposed to be updated following consultation with residents. The latest version of the plan will take into account feedback from residents and also include lower housing numbers than it previously did, before going back out to consultation in Spring 2024.

### Richard Burton: Development Committee and Scrutiny Committee

I've attended full Council meetings, Scrutiny Committee, and Development Management Committees and site inspections.

Andy Moore: finance, assets and re-cycling.

## County Councillor Reports.

### **Cllr. Graham Morgan.**

The main issue in the area is still the road closure between Ruspidge & Soudley where investigations are still ongoing along the road looking ground conditions.

The Clerks of both Cinderford & Ruspidge & Soudley have recently met with me as County Councillor, and Forest Highways Manager Andrew Middlecote, to discuss highways issues in both areas.

In Cinderford there will be a couple of Highstreet closures one for Severn Trent to replace a main valve, the other in the New Year for work on resurfacing pavements.

speeding remains an issue throughout the area.