
RUSPIDGE & SOUDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the MEETING held on Tuesday 14th January, 2025.

Parish Councillors Present:

Cllrs. William Acland Chairman, Jo Smith, Norman Snell, Tony Matthews, Denis Bagwell-Johnson, Paul Firth, Helen Medcraft.

County Councillors Present:

Cllr. Beki Hoyland.

District Councillors Present:

Cllr. Richard Burton, Andy Moore.

Parish Council Clerk – Roland Dowding.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Lori-Leah Griffiths, Bernie O'Neill, Graham Morgan.

Standing Declarations of Interest

- a) Ruspidge Memorial Hall - Insignificant personal interest by Cllr. William Acland.
- b) St Whites School - Insignificant personal interest by Cllr. William Acland.
- c) Soudley Village Hall - Insignificant personal interest by Cllr. Norman Snell.

Public Present:

Dean Jackson, Sasha Jackson, Roger Jackson, Tony Child, Dave Child, Rebecca Child, Antony Wood, Adrian Peacey, Leoni Dawson.

R&SPC Public Participation: No Public Speakers.

- 1.1. **Apologies** received and recorded from absent members.
- 1.2. No declaration of prejudicial interest was declared by members present.
- 1.3. **Minutes** - The minutes of the council meeting held on the **12th of November, 2024** were **ACCEPTED** as a true record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.
- 1.4. **Matters Arising** - There were no matters arising from the minutes.
- 1.5. **District Councillor Reports**

Cllr. Smith referenced derelict housing in Soudley. FoDDC, Cllr. Richard Burton will look into the possibility of FoDDC taking compulsory ownership.

Reports are included as an appendix to these Minutes.

1.6. County Councillor Reports

Reports are included as an appendix to these Minutes.

- 1.7. **Planning** – The completed schedule for **December & January** are attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.
- 1.8. **Financial Matters** - Following a report by Cllr. Norman Snell acting as signatory to the RFO, the council **APPROVED** the accounts presented for **December & January**. Payment for **December** totalling **£3,278.25**. Payment for **January** totalling **4,731.26**. These figures are inclusive of confidential expenditure. A financial report is included for this month in the appendix to these minutes.
- 1.9. **Budget Transfers. Requested by the RFO Mr. Dowding.**
- Transfer of funds from Contingency budget **250.00** to balance RWT/Annual Maintenance budget, members present approved.
 - Transfer of funds from Contingency budget **615.00** to balance Grass Cutting budget, members present approved.
- 1.10. **Draft 2025/26 Budget** – The members present voted unanimously and approved the draft 2025/26 budget set at **68,510.00**.
- 1.11. **Friends of the Blue Rock Trail Proposal (FoBRT)** – Mr. David Child spokesman for the **FoBRT** made a presentation to Council regarding a funding application made by **FoBRT** to **Forest of Dean District Council**. The purpose of the funding is to attend to the walking surface along the Blue Rock Trail. Consent from the Parish Council was requested by the group for the works to be undertaken on the section of trail owned by Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council. **Leoni Dawson Ranger for Forestry England (FE)** attended the meeting. She confirmed, FE had given consent for the works to go ahead on the section of trail owned by FE. Also, FE would undertake financial administration of the project, with consent from the Parish Council. After deliberation, Cllr. Jo Smith proposed the project, seconded by Cllr. Tony Matthews. A unanimous vote was returned by the members present and consent for FoBRT's proposal was granted.
- 1.12. **Obstruction to pavement Lower Ruspidge** - Vegetation originating from private property obstructing the pavement just before the Ruspidge entrance to the Blue Rock Trail. As previous attempts to identify the owner of said land failed, the members present voted unanimously to refer the area to GCC Highway for their attention.
- 1.13. **Grant Imjin** – Consider request, should the decision be deferred and considered under the 2025/26 funding applications, if so, a full funding application should be received via the PC's regular procedure. The members present decided to defer the request until the April – June funding round is open.
- 1.14. **Parish War Memorials** – Cllr. Bagwell – Johnston provided further information regarding the Imjin Veterans and showed the members present a picture of the proposed memorial, to be sited at the Cyril Hart Arboretum at Speech House.

- 1.15. **Community Speed Watch SNEYD WOOD** – Cllr. Tony Matthews reported, the camera is now operational and regular reports are being sent into Gloucestershire Constabulary. Due to weather conditions reading have been obscured by fog over the last week.
- 1.16. **Liaison’s Report for Soudley Village Hall** – Cllr. Norman Snell informed the members present that the current SVHC have cleared the hall’s debts and are now in the process of taking bookings for activities. A list of activities will be published by the SVHC in due course. SVHC will be holding an AGM on the 28th January, the members of the PC are invited.
- 1.17. **Correspondence** - The council **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following correspondence:
The Parish Councillors accepted all relevant correspondence has been forwarded via email to all members.
- 1.18. **Next Meeting** - the next meeting of the council will be held in the **Ruspidge Memorial Hall at 7.00 p.m. Tuesday, 11th February 2025**. The agenda deadline is **Monday, 3rd of February 2025**.
- 1.19. **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 8.30 p.m.

Signed:.....Chair.

Dated:.....

APPENDIX

Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council

Planning Schedule December, 2024

Planning Reference
Site Address & Detail

Parish
Comment

P1309/24/FUL

30A St Whites Road, Cinderford, Gloucestershire, GL14 3DG.
Erection of two-storey rear extension and internal alterations.

No
Objection

Decisions notified by the Planning Authority

Planning Reference
Site Address & Detail

Parish District
Comment Decision

No Planning Notifications Posted This Month.

Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council

Planning Schedule January, 2025

Planning Reference
Site Address & Detail

Parish
Comment

P1958/21/FUL Appeal

Forest Lodge St. Whites Road, Cinderford, GL14 3ES
Erection of 7 dwellings with associated parking, landscaping and works. Construction of a new access (revised scheme).

Objection

Decisions notified by the Planning Authority

Planning Reference
Site Address & Detail

Parish District
Comment Decision Date

P1309/24/FUL

30A St Whites Road Cinderford Gloucestershire GL14 3DG
Erection of two-storey rear extension and internal alterations.

No Obj Consent 06/01/2025

Financial Reports For December 2024 & January 2025.

FINANCIAL REPORT for the meeting in: December 2024					
1. Reconciliation of Account as at:		end November 2024			
Ledger		£		Bank	£
Balance b/f		133,364.46		(Treasurers) Lloyds Current A/c.	404.66
Bank Interest		62.63		(Reserves) Lloyds Inst. Access A/c.	64,952.72
				Unity Current A/c	906.00
				Unity Inst Access A/c	62,265.02
	Total	133,427.09			Total
Less Expenditure Nov		4,898.69			
Balance		128,528.40		Balance	128,528.40
				* excludes last month's previously presented payments and includes this month's payments already presented, see # below.	
2. Accounts for Payment		# = presented payments			
Payee	No	Total £	VAT	Narrative	
Solutions In Tech	D/D	65.53	10.92	Telephone & Broadband	
EE Limited	D/D	15.11		Mobile Phone	
Module IT	D/D	81.53	13.59	Monthly IT Support	
Sculptural Landscapes	1	558.40		Removal & Transportation of Hob Boy	
Soudley Village Hall	2	25.00		Soudley Play Area, Grass Cut	
Soudley Village Hall	3	21.00		SVH Rental	
Tim Harris	4	545.51		Street Cleaning, Play Area Safety Checks, Defib Checks, Bus Shelter Cleaning, Road Sign Cleaning.	
Complete Landscapes	5	288.00	48.00	Parish Grass Cutting	
Merlin waste	6	224.00		Dog Waste Bins Empty	
	TOTAL	1,824.08	72.51		

District Councillor Reports

January 2025, Richard Burton

Local Government reorganisation

The Government announced its plan for local government devolution last month, with very little consultation and just before the long holiday period. There have been many high level meetings about what is going to happen e.g. the District Council being abolished and replaced with a unitary authority, Gloucester County merging with other counties, but nothing has yet been decided. Latest news is that GCC cabinet unanimously supported postponing county council elections to press ahead with reform as soon as possible. A matter of great concern is the role of Parish Councils, with the Devolution document being extremely unclear about what will happen to them.

Forest of Dean District Council granted a 12-month extension on the Five Acres regeneration project

This means that the deadline to spend the grant money awarded to Forest of Dean District Council as part of the successful Levelling Up Fund bid, has been extended until March 2026. The council secured the extension after working closely with representatives from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Residents urged to have their say on Council budget proposals

Forest of Dean District Council invites residents and businesses to give their views on its spending plans as it prepares its budget for the next financial year, with a consultation beginning 20 December 2024 and running until 17 January 2025.

Council agrees council tax support scheme for residents

Following consultation with residents, Forest of Dean District Council has agreed to increase the band widths for Council Tax Support eligibility, in line with inflation, following the Chancellor's 2024 Autumn Budget Statement and reintroduce a Second Adult Rebate discount for next year's Council Tax support scheme.

Forest of Dean District Council agrees additional tax on second homes

District Councillors have agreed to proposals which will see an increase in Council Tax payments on empty and second homes, with the aim of increasing the number of homes available for local people in the area.

Report January Cllr. Bernie O'Neill

Recommendations to raise Council tax by the maximum amount of 12p per week for band D. Reminder, that FODDC is only 10% of the total Council tax....add County Council and PCC for the total.

Growth bids of £170k including...

- Creating new roles within the organisation to help tackle climate change across the Forest of Dean, enabling us to step up our actions in response to the declared Climate Emergency within the local community £50k . To coordinate cross departmental implementation on the Council motion on rivers and seas
- Continuing to bring in more affordable homes for residents in the district
- Continuing to support our local economy, and helping new businesses and social enterprises get up and running with our grant schemes
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The County Council today have taken the decision to write to Government asking to postpone the County Council elections due in May because of the Devolution White paper just released.. The future of our district our parishes, towns and county are at stake. It may even mean postponing the district Councils in 2 years time. We all need to keep an eye on what is happening as it could also mean merging Counties in order to elect a Mayor as in W. Midlands.

January 2025, County report to parishes

From Beki Hoyland, beki.hoyland@gloucestershire.gov.uk 07815660013

I hope 2025 is a peaceful and productive year for you all.

I am taking part in a member's panel reviewing the Highways Road Safety Policy. We will feed our comments into the review process that is collecting views from a cross section of the council and public. The existing policy can be found here:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/a55m00cs/road-safety-policy.pdf>

If anyone would like to feed any comments to me that I can consider feel free.

The general website for GCC is always a good place to start looking for any information:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk>

Committees I sit on if you would like more detailed information on these do feel free to ask.

- Children and Families Scrutiny committee
- Adoption West
- Foster Panel
- Ambitions board (for our children)

- Corporate Parenting
- Commons and Rights of Way (Chair)

Roads

I am step closer towards getting a **speed reduction** at Nibley Crossroads with a speed survey coming back that indicates the police will support it. We are applying for a TRO to make this happen, there will be public consultation as part of this process but there is at least 18 months before it will be considered due to a huge back log.

Please be advised of the following temporary road closure:

A48 from Elton to High Street Newnham, Broadoak

This road will be closed (as per the attached plan) from **17th February 2025 to 28th February 2025** between the hours of 09.30 and 15.30 hrs each day. This is to allow for drainage investigation works on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council.

Emergency and pedestrian will be maintained.

If you should require any further information regarding this temporary closure please contact Gloucestershire Highways on Highways@gloucestershire.gov.uk

This link is where you can find all the planned road works, the above is the only major work I can see and have been notified about but there are several more minor roads that will be closed and have restrictions on them.

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/roads/roadworks/>

Please continue to use and promote the use of FIX MY STREETS

<https://fixmystreet.gloucestershire.gov.uk>

It has been a year since Fix my Streets was introduced as a tool for us all to report issues with our roads and footpaths.

Devolution

The Government white paper on devolution will be changing the shape of local authorities over the next few years. What this looks like for Forest of Dean and Gloucestershire is not clear, but it is likely to mean that Gloucestershire will become unitary, taking out the layer of District Councils. This could have an impact on parish councils.

Vacancy - Member of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Are you interested in how local government works and what councillors are paid?

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/vacancy-member-of-the-independent-remuneration-panel/>

The county council has released details of its proposed spending plans for 2025/26.

This will see spending rise by more than £32.7 million on 2024/25 levels, to almost £650 million. The council's Cabinet is set to approve the proposed budget and a launch a public consultation at its meeting on Wednesday, 4 December. The £649.6 million proposed budget includes significant investment into the council's priority areas of highways, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), adult services, infrastructure, and the environment.
<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/budget2024-25/>

Integrated Urgent Care Service for Gloucestershire

The Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust will be providing the service with our partners IC24.

<https://www.ghc.nhs.uk/news/integrated-urgent-care-service-for-gloucestershire/>

The new service incorporates:

- NHS 111 – telephone and online support
- A new doctor-led Clinical Assessment Service (CAS) giving the public and health professionals access to clinical advice
- An out of hours GP service – seeing people in person either at a local hospital or in their own homes

In the last six months, as we have worked to mobilise the service, we have recruited more than 50 local GPs, we have introduced new IT systems, equipped new bases and vehicles, developed onboarding and training processes and worked carefully with the former providers to transfer existing colleagues into the new team – and this work continues.

We have carried out engagement with primary care colleagues, pharmacists, our partners at Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, colleagues in our own hospitals and community services, commissioners, South West Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust and a range of other organisations to support a smooth transition and test our plans and processes. We have also taken on board feedback and suggestions around the staffing model in order to provide resilience in the initial weeks the service is running. Finally, we have established a group of Experts by Experience who have fed in their ideas and will continue to do so in the coming weeks and months.

The IUCS will form an important part of the system's approach to ensuring patients can access the right service to meet their needs.

For the public, they should notice little change other than what we hope will be an enhanced service when they contact 111. The system's Winter Campaign, which launches very soon, under the banner 'Click of Call First' will signpost the public to 111 as it has done previously, as well as highlight the role of other NHS services locally.

If you have any questions about the new service please do contact us via ghccomms@Ghc.nhs.uk.

Kings Award for Voluntary Service (Gloucestershire Recipients) 2024

On 14 November 2024, HM The King's Birthday, it was announced that the Kings Award for Voluntary Service was awarded to:

Dean Trail Volunteers - Forest of Dean Cycle Centre, Coleford, Gloucestershire. Awarded for the building of safe, inclusive, recreational mountain bike trails for recreation in the Forest of Dean.

I would like to offer my congratulations and thanks to them for all their work.

More details of other awards around the country can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/awardees-of-the-2024-kings-award-for-voluntary-service-announced>

Pete Bungard, Chief Executive to retire in May 2025

After 27 years at Gloucestershire County Council, Pete Bungard has today (6 November) announced that he will be retiring on 4 May next year.

Residents are being invited to borrow an e-bike for up to three months in a new scheme to promote sustainable travel in Gloucestershire.

The 'Pedal Eazy' project was agreed by the county council following a budget amendment put forward by the Green Party at a meeting earlier this year. The scheme is being run by the council's Thinktravel team with the support of Gloucestershire Bike Project and Transition Stroud, and is open to anyone in the county.

The main aim of the Pedal Eazy Loan Scheme is to give people the chance to borrow an e-bike for up to three months and see how it can transform their travel and daily lives. Anyone aged 18 and over can borrow an e-bike through the scheme. To check availability and make a booking, contact [Transition Stroud](#) or [Gloucestershire Bike Project](#).

E-bikes are hired on a monthly basis, with a maximum hire period of three months. It costs £70 per month for standard rental and £30 per month for jobseekers. If you decide to purchase a bike or accessories, all hire fees are refunded in the form of a bike voucher to encourage continued cycling. For more information on the project and support with getting going, visit: <https://www.thinktravel.info/cycling/pedal-eazy/>