

# Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council

## MINUTES of the MEETING

held on the Tuesday 11th January, 2022

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

### Parish Councillors Present:

Cllrs. Tony Matthews, Chairman,  
Bernadette Wood, Helen Medcraft,  
Mark Ogden, Norman Snell.

### County Councillors Present:

Cllr. Graham Morgan.

### District Councillors Present:

Cllr. Bernie O'Neill.

**The Clerk** – Roland Dowding.

### Public Present:

Gwyn Roberts, Carole Roberts,  
Roy Fletcher, Aaron Jones,  
Theresa Bevan, Heather Hammond-Beeston,  
Katrina Beeston.

### Apologies:

Cllrs. Bernie O'Neill,  
Beki Hoyland, Nicky Packer,  
Jo Smith.

### Standing Declarations of Interest

- (a) Ruspidge Memorial Hall - Insignificant personal interest by Cllrs. Matthews.
- (b) Soudley Village Hall - Insignificant personal interest by Cllr. Ogden & Woods.

## **RUSPIDGE WELFARE TRUST**

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

1.1. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

1.1. **APOLOGIES** received and recorded from absent members.

1.2. No declaration of personal or prejudicial interest declared.

1.3. **MINUTES** - the minutes of the council meeting held on the **14th of December, 2021** were **ACCEPTED** as a true record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

1.4. **MATTERS ARISING** - there were no matters arising from the minutes.

1.5. **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

### **Cllr. Bernie O'Neill.**

District Council has purchased the Five acres site in Berry Hill.  
Demolition is due to commence later this month.

At Lydney Harbour, the cafe, toilet, and information site are now open to the public.  
Work is still under consideration for the repair of the road into Lydney Harbour.

A display of artwork expressing the industrial history of Lydney Harbour is under consideration. This is proposed to be displayed within the vicinity of Lydney Harbour.

149 trees have been planted on the access road into Lydney Harbour.

The Forest Economic Partnership has turned 14 years old. A partnership arrangement between Gloucester City Council, Gloucestershire First and an additional 250 individual bodies, made up of both private and public sector.

Objections noted to planning application **P1958/21/FUL** Forest Lodge, St Whites Road, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.

Objections also noted to planning application **P2073/21/FUL** Former St Whites Primary School, Land At Buckshaft Road, St Whites Road, Cinderford.

Cllr. O'Neill has agreed to take up the issue of slow & intermittent broadband speeds on behalf of the residents of Hewlett Way, Ruspidge.

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

1.6. **COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

*Reports attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.*

1.7. **PLANNING** – completed schedule is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.

**FINANCIAL MATTERS**

1.8. Following report by the Treasurer the council **APPROVED** the accounts presented for payment totalling **£2,178.30**, this figure being inclusive of confidential expenditure.

1.9. **GRANT** - Soudley Village Hall. Council approved the proposed grant for £1,000.00 to be awarded to Soudley Village hall, for the purpose of grass cutting, maintenance & pitch marking.

1.10. **Financial Regulations, Risk Assessment, Health & Safety & Standing Orders** - Members to review, amend or re-adopt as necessary. Standing Orders were duly re-adopted and signed by both the Chairman & the Clerk, witnessed by the Parish Council members. Financial Regulations, Risk Assessment and Health & Safety have been deferred until February 2022 meeting.

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 is to be held in the **Soudley Village Hall** at 7.00pm **Tuesday, 8th February, 2022**. The agenda deadline is **Monday, 31st January, 2022**.

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 8.05 p.m.

Signed: ..... Chair.      Dated: .....

# APPENDIX

## Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council

### Planning Schedule for the January, 2022 meeting.

Planning Reference Site Address & Detail	Parish Comment
<b>P1937/21/FUL</b> 2A Ruspidge Road, Ruspidge, Cinderford, Gloucestershire. Erection of a garage	No Obj
<b>P1957/21/FUL</b> Rock House , Lower Road, Soudley, GL14 2TZ. Variation of condition 03 (occupancy) relating to planning permission P1467/18/FUL to allow for the annexe to be mixed use as a holiday let.	No Obj
<b>P2073/21/FUL</b> Former St Whites Primary School, Land At Buckshaft Road, St Whites Road, Cinderford. Erection of seven dwellings together with parking spaces shared access & associated works (redevelopment of previously developed land).	Objection (See note below)

*This application by another applicant has been previously turned down.  
Since then, the junction has been improved.  
However, the proximity to the junction has not altered, the number of homes applied  
for remains the same, the parking issues for the new school have not altered enough,  
even with the magic words shared parking space.  
This sounds like a future conflict in the making where residents there will not be  
able to park outside their properties for parents who are dropping off or collecting  
their children.*

### Decisions notified by the Planning Authority

Planning Reference Site Address & Detail	Parish Comment	District Decision	Date
<b>P0079/21/DISCON</b> Land Off Railway Road Ruspidge Gloucestershire GL14 3HH Discharge of conditions 3 (Caravan details, siting levels, foul sewage), 4 (windows facing 118 St Whites Rd),5 (Lighting), 7 (badger protection), 13 (Land Contamination assessment) and 20 (cycle storage) of planning permission P0993/19/FUL - Use of land for the siting of two residential caravans for permanent residential use.	No Obj	Consent	15/12/2021
<b>P0818/20/PQ3PA</b> St Whites Farm St Whites Road Cinderford Gloucestershire GL14 3BS Prior notification for the conversion of two barns into two dwellings and associated building operations.	No Obj	Prior Approval Approved	23/12/2021

# District Council Report.

Cllr. Nicky Packer.

## *Report to Ruspidge and Soundly Parish Council – January 2022*

### **Five Acres**

Forest of Dean District Council have finally bought Five Acres site from Homes England for £1. The delay has been to get agreement from Homes England to this price without punitive conditions attached.

The timing is good because the council want to quickly demolish most of the buildings – the cost of this work is now provided by the Levelling Up Fund grant whereas the council would have had to borrow the money otherwise. Until the buildings are demolished, the council is liable to pay the Council Tax for the site – which is a large amount, only a small proportion of which would come back to the council.

Most of the existing buildings were deemed not to be fit for purpose in a decision dating back many years to when the relocation of the college to the Cinderford Northern Quarter was agreed as a regeneration priority, although the existing buildings have never actually been surveyed so the condition of them is not documented. The newest building on the site – a small, arc shaped building at the back of the site - will be retained and converted.

### **Budget**

Forest of Dean District Council is expecting to achieve a balanced budget again this year, which means that it won't need to dip into its much-depleted reserve fund. It is unsustainable to rely on the reserve as there is only a small amount left in it. It has been necessary to withdraw from the reserve because the Government has reduced financial support for local councils in recent years.

The District Council only receives 10% of the total council tax bill residents pay, which is split between the district council, county council, police, and fire service. Residents can see the exact split in their council tax bill.

To view the Council's proposal for the 2022/23 budget, visit: <https://fdean.gov.uk/budget>

Despite making savings, the council will need to increase income to balance the budget. To pay for the budget the Council is proposing to raise council tax by 10p a week for a band D property.

If you have any questions, either email to Andrew Knott, Chief Finance (S151) Officer for the Forest of Dean District Council – [section151@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:section151@fdean.gov.uk), alternatively email or phone me about it and I will ask him.

The deadline to respond to the consultation is 28th January 2022.

### **Flooding**

We were given an excellent presentation about flooding by GCC, as the Local Lead Flood Authority (slides attached).

Although the lead authority, GCC are not first responders, so emergency services should be contacted in a flood emergency, flooding incidents should be reported to GCC to help shape policy: Flooding and drainage - Gloucestershire County Council

GCC have information on their website Flood Guide - Gloucestershire County Council and there is also a page about flooding on the FoDDC website: <https://fdean.gov.uk/environment/flooding/>

Has the Parish Council received the FoDDC handout: Flooding – A quick guide for councillors? If not, I will scan and forward. FoDDC have produced a small leaflet about flooding which I can also scan and forward if wanted.

# County Council Report

Cllr. Beki Hoyland

## *Report to Ruspidge and Soundly Parish Council – January 2022*

### **Happy New Year.**

For January I will not come to the meeting to minimise people in the room for Covid precautions but do please ask me any questions about this report or anything else that I may be able to help with.

### **Roads**

Etloe, Gatcombe and Lensbrook roads are all having major works with Gigaclear some will be closed others will have give and take from now until 4th February.

### **Works – Give and Take**

- Viney Hill Road from A48 junction 6/1-10/1
- Old Dam Road, Oldcroft. 4/1 – 14/1
- Pollards Lane, Viney Woodside, 10/1 - 7/2
- Ned's Top Oldcroft 12/1 – 22/2
- Baileys Hill, Yorkley 4/1 – 14/1
- Parkend Road, Bream 11/1 – 17/1

Dean Road at the Grange Village will be **closed** on the 14<sup>th</sup> January

I have been in conversation with Stuart Budd about various parts of the local network if there is any significant changes that develop I will let you know. We have talked about the Viney Hill /A48 Junction, the St Whites/ Littledean Junction, the lights on the zebra crossing at Littledean, New Road Blakeney.

**GCC have approved funding for Electric Charge points**, at Full Council in December Cllr David Gray, Cabinet member for Environment and Planning said:

“In the Summer Cabinet approved and authorised 1000 charge points, the aim is to award the contract in January 2022 and start installation in Spring 2022.

Last year we set up a dedicated email address for the public to give feedback and suggest charging locations: [electricvehicles@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:electricvehicles@gloucestershire.gov.uk) Many sites and locations have been suggested by private individuals and councils of which we have kept a record of these expressions of interest. Once the EV contract has been awarded the successful contractor will work with GCC and the electricity distribution network operator, parish and town councils to review all the site suggestions and identify which ones are suitable. We will also write to all town and Parish Councils to let them know how they can make use of the contract should they wish to fund chargers of their own.”

### **Children and families**

There are currently over 800+ children in care in Gloucestershire (Approximately 15 -20 of those are in Blakeney and Bream division) and it is becoming increasingly more of a challenge to find suitable foster families. As a result there are concerns that some children may have to wait longer for the right foster home.

The County Council is launching a new eight-week, fast track fostering assessment for people who have experience caring for children and are interested in becoming foster carers.

If you or someone you know may be interested in offering a home to a child in need please contact:

**[www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering) or call 01242 532654 –**

**Do share this short film, it is very moving; it is part of the campaign to raise awareness and recruit more foster families for the County Council.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2xrGUebxb8>

At Children and Families Scrutiny committee we heard from the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP). This is county council children's services, NHS and the Police working together to make sure that information about children is shared appropriately and systems are in place to provide a safety net. They are responsible for MASH, the first port of call for any safeguarding concern within the community. The work with schools, this communication has improved during the pandemic as regular conversations and support has become built into the relationship.

Children's Services was given an inadequate Ofsted rating in 2017, it has not been formally inspected since so still holds this rating officially although their annual conversations with Ofsted and the data suggests that they have improved considerably. Ofsted is expected for another full inspection shortly. In the meantime the main areas of concern seem to be retention of social workers and their casework load, which should be around 18 but is over 25 too often. This is part of a national shortage of social workers and Gloucestershire has set up a social work training so as to "grow their own" which is starting to have effect and has been praised as exemplar.

There is an increasing number of children being home educated and while this in its self is not an issue there is some concern for the lack of visibility these children have to services. Children leaving care are much more likely to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) is considerably higher than the general population of 19 to 21 year olds. 45.1% of care leavers and 1.3% overall.

The service is monitoring itself with an accelerated improvement plan (AIP) this data shows helps build a system that offers reliable and representative findings that support continuous learning and improvement. In February 2018 an Ofsted monitoring visit suggested this was a tool that was working. As a member of the scrutiny committee I will do my best to ask relevant questions and hold officers and cabinet to account. I have been impressed with the hard work and dedication of the senior officers I have met. I have the sense that although the service must continue to improve they are putting children at the centre of what they do.

Beki Hoyland  
[beki.hoyland@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:beki.hoyland@gloucestershire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 07815660013

**Cllr. Graham Morgan**

### ***Report to Ruspidge and Soundly Parish Council – January 2022***

The main issue in this month's report is the forthcoming County Council Budget for 2022/23, it is being proposed a County tax increase of just under 3% consisting of 1.99% increase for general services, which will bring in £10.2 million, coupled with a 1% increase for Adult Social Care Levy which will identify around £3.7 million to help protect vulnerable adults.

The total budget proposed come to £519.6 million an increase of almost £37 million on the 2021/22 budget.

There is a public consultation that is running until mid-day 21st of January, then the Cabinet will meet on 26th January to consider the public response and decide what to recommend to the Full County Council at its Meeting in February.

On local issues I have had complaints of speeding vehicles along Buckshaft Road, which I have reported to the Parish Council and Gloucestershire Highways, at the time of writing this report I have not received a response back from Highways yet on this issue.

I have also been dealing with a disabled parking issue in Hilldene Cinderford.