

Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council

MINUTES of the MEETING **held on the Tuesday 8th March, 2022**

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

Parish Councillors Present:

Cllrs. Tony Matthews. Chairman,
Jo Smith, Helen Medcraft,
Bernadette Wood, Norman Snell,
William Acland.

County Councillors Present:

Cllr. Beki Hoyland.

District Councillors Present:

Cllr. Bernie O'Neill, Nicky Packer.

The Clerk – Roland Dowding.

Public Present:

Roger Jackson.
Luke Baily, Nicola Randalt Stone.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Graham Morgan,
Gwyn Roberts, Carole Roberts.
Mark Ogden.

Standing Declarations of Interest

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

RUSPIDGE WELFARE TRUST

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

3.1. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

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

3.2. No declaration of personal or prejudicial interest declared.

3.3. **MINUTES** - the minutes of the council meeting held on the **8th of February, 2022** were **ACCEPTED** as a true record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

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

3.5. **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

Report attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.

3.6. **COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

Reports attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.

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

FINANCIAL MATTERS

3.8. Following report by the Treasurer the council **APPROVED** the accounts presented for payment totalling **£4,091.51**, this figure being inclusive of confidential expenditure.

- 3.9. **CO-OPT NEW COUNCILLOR** - William Acland was duly co-opted as member for Ruspidge (WEST) by unanimous vote.
- 3.10. **LOCAL PLAN** - The Parish Council put forward **St Whites Farm Field** as a potential suitable housing site, that can take ten or more houses.
- 3.11. **PLAY AREA INSPECTIONS** – The recent inspections undertaken by RoSPA identified maintenance required in the parish recreational areas. Any immediate action required has been taken in removing one defective swing identified to be on Ruspidge play area. A contract has been awarded to **Kompan** to undertake four annual inspections of the parish recreation areas and provide maintenance. It is agreed to pursue funding to replace the fencing around Ruspidge recreational field and to fence off the play area making a no dog zone. Dog walkers are allowed access through the park but are required to keep dogs on leads. Signage on all recreation areas is to be updated and brought in line with current legislation.
- 3.12. **WEIGHT LIMIT SIGN** - Weight limit sign for Soudley bridge deferred until April’s meeting.
- 3.13. **BLUE ROCK TRAIL** - It was decided to maintain and restore any areas on the trail that are lacking gravel. A suitable contractor will be sought to undertake this task. It was also noted that damage to the trail has been reported to the Parish Council. Allegedly due to work undertaken in the area by Forestry contractor’s vehicles using the trail for access. The Parish Council instructed the Clerk to pursue a resolution to this matter with the Forestry Ranger.
- 3.14. **QUEENS PLATINUM JUBILEE** – The Parish Council decided not to supply jubilee beacons, but to award Ruspidge and Soudley Village Hall’s both a grant each of £250.00. The grants must be used for each respective Hall’s platinum jubilee celebrations.
- 3.15. **FOREST PULSE GRANT APPLICATION** – By unanimous vote the Parish Council awarded a grant for £419.99 to **Forest Pulse** for the purchase of **Music Step Pads**.
- 3.16. **CORRESPONDENCE** The council **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following correspondence: The Parish Councillors accepted all relevant correspondence has been forwarded via email to all members.
- 3.17. **Next Meeting** - the next meeting of the council is to be held in the **Soudley Village Hall** at 7.00pm **Tuesday, 12th April, 2022**. The agenda deadline is **Monday, 4th April, 2022**.
- 3.18. **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 for the February, 2022 meeting.

Planning Reference Site Address & Detail

Parish Comment

P0145/22/TPO

13 Abbots View, Ruspidge, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.
Beech tree T3 of DFTPO51 remove to ground level due to the onset of decay in the lower trunk, significant lifting bark, a decay column in the centre of the canopy and some weak fork on major timber. The root system also extends under the road limiting the trees ability to extract nutrient and oxygen over 50% of its root area. Replanting is to be with a *Fagus sylvatica* 'Purpurea' in order to maintain an interesting tree scape.

No Objection

P0135/22/DEM

Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 (As Amended)
Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order, 2015 (As Amended)
Prior Approval for Method of Demolition
Former St Whites Primary School St Whites Road Cinderford
Prior notification for the demolition of No. 5 disused buildings/structures.

No Objection

P0222/22/FUL

58 Buckshaft Road, Ruspidge, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.
Proposal to create 1 x 2 bed detached and 2 x 1 bed semi detached dwelling houses with dedicated parking and separate plant room and associated works.

In light of recent complaint from a resident of Sneyd Wood Rd about parents taking their children by car & parking anywhere it is felt that this development on Buckshaft Road will either worsen the problem, or develop similar complaints from owners of the proposed development, due to the lack of a suitable drop off point on Buckshaft Road. This is the only concern because of the proximity of the new school.

P0134/22/FUL

46 Ruspidge Road, Ruspidge, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.
Conversion of garage to provide dual use of annexe accommodation and holiday let.

No Objection

Decisions notified by the Planning Authority

Planning Reference Site Address & Detail	Parish Comment	District Decision	Date
P0135/22/DEM Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 (As Amended) Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order, 2015 (As Amended) Prior Approval for Method of Demolition Former St Whites Primary School St Whites Road Cinderford Prior notification for the demolition of No. 5 disused buildings/structures.	No Obj	Approved	28/02/2022

District Councillor's Report.

Cllr. Nicky Packer

Local Plan

I have previously written about my disappointment to hear that Town and Parish Councils will not be any more involved in the Local Plan than usual.

To repeat the situation: the strategic option being proposed to replace the 'New Settlement' option is the 'dispersed' or 'dispersal' option. Whereas the process in the past has been for towns and large villages to take most of the housing sites, the dispersed option would see all settlements of all sizes providing a growth of 20% wherever possible, (i.e. taking into account physical and policy constraints). Those settlements with good facilities and access may be expected to provide slightly more than 20%, because many settlements will only be able to provide few or no housing sites, due to constraints. As you know, the number of housing sites required is set by the Government and the Local Plan will be sent back by the Inspector if the Government target number of sites isn't achieved.

If you could let me know about anywhere in the Parish that you would like to see become sites for 10 or more houses, then I will pass these on. You will have received a request for sites for the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, so you may have already considered this.

Cinderford Northern Quarter

There was a further 'evidence gathering' session for the CNQ Scrutiny Inquiry on 21st February. A recording of the last session is available (one of only two sessions that were successfully recorded of the five sessions):

<https://aisapps.sonicfoundry.com/AuditeIScheduler/Player/Index/?id=97b6d6b5-b60d-4d79-9bb6-39c6061f94c9&presID=301ee93495a749feb2deed0e34d5a90e1d>

The committee will meet at the end of April to discuss the report to be drawn up.

Cabinet meeting 10th February

More details can be found at:

<https://meetings.fdean.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=4058&Ver=4m>

and the a recording of the meeting can be watched at

<https://aisapps.sonicfoundry.com/AuditeIScheduler/Player/Index/?id=ef82d895-cb10-4166-a26e-dfa802540444&presID=947fd4306daa4191baabe88fa0cb1b451d> but the following were agreed:

- Revenue and Capital Budgets and Council Tax Proposals, which include a £5 per annum increase in Council Tax. This would be a 2.65% increase based on a band D property. This relates only to the Forest of Dean District Council part of the Council Tax payment. Although Forest of Dean District Council are responsible for collecting the money from residents, only a fraction of it goes to FoDDC. The rest is passed on the Gloucestershire County Council and the Police, as well as Parish and Town Councils. The exact amounts to each body are listed on the Council Tax demand sent to each resident at the start of the financial year.
- Planned Expenditure of the Homelessness Grant: the allocation of unspent Government funding that has accrued.
- Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies: reporting on investments the council has made in the past and the strategy going forward.
- Allocation of Community Housing Fund: Use of a reserve fund to enable Land Trust, Co-housing and Self Build development.

- Continuation of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee for another year. This is a committee with members from each of the councils in Gloucestershire, in partnership with strategic bodies such as GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership.
- Options for Parking Enforcement: parking enforcement has been contracted out in a joint agreement with Cotswold District Council. As Cotswold District Council have opted to bring enforcement back in-house, the existing contract will terminate in March. Parking enforcement will also now be managed in house in Forest of Dean District.
- Additional Restriction Grants (Omicron Support): The Council has received a small amount of additional funding to distribute to support businesses severely affected by Covid restrictions.
- Covid 19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF): Discretionary business rate relief for eligible local businesses

Full Council 17th February

The Revenue and Capital Budgets and Council Tax Proposals, Council Tax Resolution and Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies, following on from the Cabinet meeting, were all passed without amendment.

More details can be found at:

<https://meetings.fdean.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=120&MId=4069&Ver=4>

Strategic Oversight and Scrutiny Committee 3rd March

The Draft Publica Business Plan 2022-25 was presented. The plan will go to Cabinet for approval by the Leader.

We also received a Community Wellbeing Activity Update, about the work done by this award-winning team.

Documents can be viewed on the Council website:

<https://meetings.fdean.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=233&MId=4129&Ver=4>

A recording of the meeting can be viewed on the Council website:

<https://aisapps.sonicfoundry.com/AuditeIScheduler/Player/Index/?id=07e7b76f-4695-4051-b52b-d21a21401c25&presID=73e08da712a34aadaac89ad42fa82cba1d>

ClIr. Bernie O'Neill

Forest Lodge, I have had it accepted for it to be decided at full Planning Committee after I called it in. It was a late call in so I had to justify it which was successful. I am prepared to go to the Planning Committee to speak against the current proposals. I have some views from the Parish Council, but any others would be good.

St White's. More Planning Applications. One at Committee today. Can the PC please let me have any views on any future applications as I am becoming more concerned about the increased activity in that area.

Currently, within my Cabinet portfolio, we have processed £75million in grants over the past 2 years of the Covid situation, and we are now working on the new applications. Our Officers have worked very hard on making sure about the delivery and the accuracy. The fraud team have been incredibly efficient and the discrepancies are about 0.02%. Puts Govt fraud loss to shame!

Start-up grants. Another of my roles is to allocate Start-Up grants and we have so far allocated 12 new businesses at £1000 each and this has enabled these projects to start new businesses in the Forest. We are assessing the new applications shortly. Should anyone know of any interest in applying, the forms are on the website.

Please look at our regular newsletter called 'Business Matters', on-line, for any links to anything to do with local regeneration and Business.

County Councillor's Reports

Cllr. Graham Morgan

month the meeting of the County Council was taken up by the budget which went through at 1.99% and 1% for Adult Social Care.

This means a budget for the County of £519 million with the £3.5 million for Adult Social Care.

Cllr. Beki Hoyland

Roads Changes to the Highway Code Highway Code changes have come into force in January. The revamped code focuses on the hierarchy of road users, with those who pose the greatest risk having a higher level of responsibility, as well as new advisory measures around giving way to pedestrians or opening car doors. Many of the rules in the code are legal requirements and to disobey these rules is to commit a criminal offence. The changes also introduce new advisory measures that are not legal requirements but could be drawn upon in court proceedings. These include advice that drivers:

- Should give way to pedestrians crossing or waiting to cross a road into which or from which their vehicle is turning.
- Should not cut across cyclists or horse riders going ahead when turning into or out of a junction or changing direction or lane, to prevent "left hook" collisions.
- Should open car doors using the "Dutch reach" method, (see link below) with the hand on the opposite side to the door they are opening. This makes drivers turn their heads to look over their shoulders and reduces the likelihood of "dooring" a passing cyclist.
- Should leave at least 1.5 metres when overtaking cyclists at speeds of up to 30mph, and give them more space when overtaking at higher speeds.

The code also advises cyclists to give way to pedestrians on shared-use cycle tracks and to horse riders on bridleways, and to "slow down when necessary and let them know you are there, for example by ringing your bell (it is recommended that a bell is fitted to your bike) or by calling out politely." Review of the Highway Code: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/review-of-the-highwaycode-to-improve-road-safety-for-cyclists-pedestrians-and-horse-riders/summary-of-the-consultationproposals-on-a-review-of-the-highway-code>

Dutch Reach: <https://www.theaa.com/driving-advice/safety/dutch-reach>

<https://www.gigaclear.com/fastershire>

Gigaclear are working to install fiber on the roads around the whole of the Forest in a rolling program. The links above and below give a good level of detail of where and when. There is nothing in Soudley for the next 3 months but approach roads will be affected.

The junction between **New Road and Blakeney Hill Rd** is closed to all vehicles, and is now closed to pedestrians and cyclists too. It will remain closed to vehicles for the duration of the works but they will try and reintroduce pedestrian and cyclist access as soon as it is safe to do so

Severn Trent works on **Ruspidge road, traffic lights 7th to 9th March Road** closed resurfacing Ruspidge Road 16th -19th May

These are the most relevant road works to Soudley and Ruspidge but the link below gives a good map of all the road works in Gloucestershire if you would like to know more detail

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

Making it easy to report issues

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/your-highways-report-it/>

This is the link to the place to report issues with roads such as:

- Objects on the highway network (i.e. a fallen tree)
- Faulty temporary or permanent traffic lights (i.e. stuck on red)
- Exposed cables

- Multiple street lighting faults
- Flooded roads
- Potholes over 75mm deep
- Manhole/Metal Cover (i.e. missing/dangerous)

It may be useful to put this on the Parish Council Website so that residents have easy access to it.

Forest Climate Group met in Lydney town Hall on Saturday 5th March. The aim of the day was to find “Parishable Projects, Townable Tasks and a People’s Assembly” It was a productive day looking at ways Parish Councils can engage with their need to adapt and participate in mitigation and prevention of the Climate and biodiversity emergencies. One useful tool that was shared was Impact, Community Carbon Tool, developed by Exeter University: <https://impact-tool.org.uk>. Please see attached the PDF of Ruspidge and Soudley’s Carbon impact report. This can be used to see where the easiest and quickest carbon gains can be found in your area. If the Council is interested in developing some of this work I am happy to work with them.

2023 Boundary Review Consultation. There will be a consultation from 22nd February till 4th April run by the Boundary Commission for England on the proposed new map of constituencies. From my first look at the documents there seems to be no changes proposed to the Forest of Dean Constituency but several changes around the whole of Gloucestershire. For more information please go to www.bcereviews.org.uk

Children and Families. Ofsted visited GCC in February. It was the first full inspection since they were rated as inadequate in 2017. Since then there has been a change in the top management and a lot of hard work with on going monitoring visits from Ofsted. It is hoped that this Ofsted visit will lift the Inadequate label. I will give a fuller report once I have more information.

GCC Council Meeting. We had Full Council meeting on Wednesday 16th February where the Strategy and Budget were passed. The four strong Green Group had two amendments accepted which will mean that GCC will:

- Be appointing a biodiversity officer who will be able to identify project opportunities on the county estate, assist G first LEP develop the Gloucestershire Nature and Climate Fund and sign post Parishes and business in their own obligations as regards biodiversity.
- Creating a pilot “tip shop” helping residents to lower their own emissions; passing things on rather than throwing away, enabling those who wish to, to avoid buying new. Allowing us to join the circular economy, and keep materials in circulation and out of the incinerator.

Thanks and feel free to ask any questions.

Beki Hoyland

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