
RUSPIDGE & SOUDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the MEETING held on Tuesday 8th Sept 2026.

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

Parish Councillors Present:

Cllrs. Tony Matthews, William Acland, Norman Snell, Denis Bagwell-Johnson, Paul Firth, Robert Stubbs, Glenn Turner.

County Councillors Present:

Cllr. Beki Hoyland.

District Councillors Present:

Richard Burton, Andy Moore.

Parish Council Clerk – Roland Dowding.

Apologies:

Cllr's Bernie O'Neill & Ray Donaghue.

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: Andrew Peacey Tony Smith.

Mr. Tony Smith – Newport 72 bus service suspended through Soudley & Ruspidge due to the proposed Soudley/Cinderford Rd closure from Monday 21st September – Friday 23rd October.

Mr. Smith insisted each individual Parish Councillor write to the Newport Bus Service & GCC Highways regarding the suspension of the service. Requesting a suitable solution be found. The suspension of this service will be of great inconvenience to the public, isolating some members of the community. The bus service is relied upon to get the public to important appointments and for working individual's commute. Mr. Smith informed the members present that GCC Highways are failing to inform the Newport Bus Service of forthcoming road closures, failing to answer & respond to public phone calls. Mr. Smith requested all the councillors present, including District & County Cllr's, contact Highway's requesting explanations for their actions and proposed solutions to prevent further disruption to our Bus Service in the future.

Mr. Smith noted that the Robin Bus Service is not a suitable replacement for a regular bus service that runs on a regular timetable. Mr Smith believes members of the community find the booking system for the Robin Minibus to be difficult and inaccessible for some and not guaranteed to be available. Also, suspension of our bus services also affects children attending schools in the area. School buses are also being cancelled because of road closures.

Mr. Smith stated he had proposed alternative bus routes but was ignored by the authorities involved and queried as to why the Lydney Dial A Ride Service could not be used to cover the suspended bus services.

Mr. Adrain Smith – Expressed his support for Mr. Tony Smith's comments. Demanding action be taken to address these issues to support our community.

GCC Cllr. Beki Hoyland – Addressing comments made by Mr. Tony Smith. Cllr. Hoyland stated that she is attempting to identify why and where GCC Highways are failing to respond and address the issues raised.

Cllr. Norman Snell – Advised Tony Smith contact Dial A Ride. Tony Smith & Adrian Paecey demanded the Parish Council undertake this task.

Cllr. Tony Matthews – Expressed how the Parish Council has ongoing problems obtaining responses and answers from GCC Highways. The Parish Council instructed the Clerk. Mr. Dowding to write to Lydney Dial A Ride enquiring to the possibility of their service covering the suspended 72 bus route. Tony Smith to be informed of the outcome of the Clerk's enquiry. GCC Cllr. Hoyland & FoDDC Cllr. Richard Burton also stated that they would contact the Dial A Ride service enquiring as to what support could be offered.

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

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

9.3. **Minutes** - The minutes of the council meeting held on the **14th of July, 2026** were **ACCEPTED** as a true record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman, Cllr. Tony Matthews.

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

9.5. **District Councillor Reports**

Comrades Club – Cllr. Robert Stubbs enquired as to the situation with the Comrades Club in Soudley. It was agreed Cllr. Burton and The Clerk would make additional enquires.

The Chairman, Cllr. Tony Matthews requested the District Council make some enquiries via their legal Dept.

Reports are attached as an Appendix to these minutes.

9.6. **County Councillor Reports**

Reports are attached as an Appendix to these minutes.

9.7. **Planning** – The completed schedule for **August & September** is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes. The Chairman duly signed the schedules for both August & September.

9.8. Following a report by the Honorary Treasurer, Cllr. Norman Snell the council **APPROVED** the accounts presented for **August**, payment totalling **£5,440.98**. These figures are inclusive of confidential expenditure. A financial report is included for **August** in the appendix to these minutes. The council also **APPROVED** the accounts presented for **September**, payment totalling **£9,388.28**. These figures are inclusive of confidential expenditure. A financial report is included for **September** in the appendix to these minutes.

9.9. **Parish Blue Grit Bins & Request/negotiation for GCC Highways to adopt.** Council are informed by GCC Highway that blue parish grit bins will not automatically be adopted, and each individual grit bin will require assessment against GCC Highway current Grit Bin Policy. Upon discussion, GCC Cllr. Beki Hoyland pledged to support the Parish Council should it need any existing grit bins adopted by Highway's for Soudley.

As GCC Cllr. Ray Donaghue for Ruspidge had sent apologies, the conversation around the Ruspidge grit bins has been deferred.

9.10. **KOMPAN. Annual Play Area Inspection Reports** – The members present acknowledged receipt of the 2026 KOMPAN Annual Play Area Reports. The Clerk Mr. Dowding explained, as Copland Maintenance are now taking over all future inspections and maintenance. The Clerk has sent Copland Maintenance the inspection reports highlighting the Ruspidge MUGA, Soudley Play Area's

Gate and Woodland View Swing Seat to be directly inspected and any maintenance requirements to be quoted for. The members present approved this action.

- 9.11. **Late S.137. Grant Application – Soudley Youth Club.** The members present approved this grant of £300.00
- 9.12. **Central Grant Application - Soudley Village Hall.** For £500.00 Asbestos survey. The members present approved the grant.
- 9.13. **Central Grant Application - Soudley Village Hall.** For £250.00 Rolling Grant Free Public Water Supply. The members present approved this grant as a rolling annual grant. Reviewed every three years as per protocol.
- 9.14. **Armed Forces Covenant –** Chairman to sign. The Chairman, Cllr. Tony Matthews duly signed the documentation.
- 9.15. **Liaison’s Report for Soudley Village Hall.**
- New Chairman appointed. Mrs. Paulina Stubbs.
 - Final details being attended to in the changing rooms.
 - Channel 4 Question time being hosted at Soudley Village hall.
- 9.16. **Liaison’s Report for Ruspidge Memorial Hall - Deferred.**
- 9.17. **Clerk’s Report to Council.**
- Caloo has installed a toddler Roundabout Ruspidge Recreational Ground.
 - AGAR Section 3 Certificate was received. AGAR completed for 2025/26.
 - Tramway Rd. Concerns over the traffic management recent road works raised by the public & addressed by GCC Cllr.
 - Pre installation of electrics at SVH for Defib. Awaiting Community Heartbeat Trust to finalise the new defib cabinet and delivery.
 - Cullimore bridge and STW. The surface of the track on the approach to the bridge has some water damage. Request from the public to repair this area. We are waiting on works to be attend to by STW.
 - KOMPAN Operational & Annual Inspections are now finished. Copeland Maintenance are taking over this role. Copeland Maintenance are reviewing our latest KOMPAN Inspection reports. Necessary Maintenance for play areas is being reviewed, and any necessary maintenance will be quoted for and undertaken.
- 9.18. **Correspondence -** The council **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following correspondence:
FoDDC. Cluster Groups Update. Parish and Town Council Cluster Meetings Schedule.
Clerk. Caloo Roundabout install notification and member inspection.
KOMPAN August Annual Inspection Reports.
Chris Walsh. GCC Highway’s Grit Bin Adoption & Policy Conversations.
No concerns regarding receipt of emails by the members were recorded.

9.19. **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the council will be held in the **Ruspidge Memorial Hall** at **7.00 p.m. Tuesday, 13th October 2026**. The agenda deadline for the full council meeting is **Monday, 5th of October 2026**.

- 9.20. **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: August 2026

1. Reconciliation of Account as at:				end July 2026					
Ledger		£				Bank		£	
Balance b/f		136,233.38			(Com Acc)	Lloyds Current A/c.		1,319.88	
Lloyds Interest		26.32			(Com Instant)	Lloyds Inst. Access A/c.		63,933.11	
GCC Payment		670.00				Unity Current A/c		906.00	
						Unity Inst Access A/c		64,801.48	
	Total	136,929.70					Total	130,960.47	
Less Expenditure July		5,969.23							
Balance		130,960.47				Balance		130,960.47	
2. Accounts for Payment		# = Paid in July but on August's ledger.							
#	EE Ltd	01. (DD)	17.83				Mobile Phone		
#	Lloyds Bank	02. (SC)	4.25				Bank Charges		
#	Wes Brown	3	360.00	60.00			Tree Removal		
	NEST	4	134.24				NEST Late Payment		
	Sjs Book Keeping	5	30.00	5.00			Payroll		
	Merlin Waste	6	300.00				Dog Waste Bins emptied		
	Soudley Village Hall	7	25.00				Grounds Maintenance Soudley Play Area		
	Soudley Village Hall	8	30.00				Hall Rental		
	Complete Landscapes	9	1,104.00	184.00			Grass Cutting Parish		
	Module IT	10 (DD)	19.79	3.30			VOIP Phone		
	Module IT	11 (DD)	147.23	24.54			IT Support.		
	Paper Station	12	155.45	25.91			Stationary		
	Tim Harris	13	158.38				Removal of Goal post. Ruspidge		
	Tim Harris	14	450.51				St Clean, Defib & Park Checks.		
	SLCC	15	253.00				Membersahip renewal		
TOTAL		3,167.60	302.75						

[illegible]

Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council

NO MEETING IN AUGUST 2026

Planning Reference
Site Address & Detail

Parish
Comment

No Notification from FODDC for this month

Decisions notified by the Planning Authority

Planning Reference
Site Address & Detail

Parish
Comment

District
Decision

No Notification from FODDC for this month

Signed:Dated:

Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council

Planning Schedule September, 2026

Planning Reference
Site Address & Detail

Parish
Comment

P0980/26/FUL

No Obj

Crematorium, Yew Tree Brake, Speech House Road, Cinderford.
Erection of a single storey side extension, addition of external door, extension to the Floral Tribute area, the siting of an air blast cooler unit, and associated works.

Decisions notified by the Planning Authority

Planning Reference
Site Address & Detail

Parish
Comment

District
Decision

Date

P0761/26/FUL

No Obj

Consent

10/08/2026

Abbotswood Lodge, Buckshaft Road, Ruspidge, Cinderford.
Erection of a single storey side extension with terrace on top with associated works.
Demolition of existing single storey extension.

P0381/26/FUL

No Obj

Consent

13/09/2026

Agricultural Building (Bradley Villa), Lower Soudley, Gloucestershire, GL14 2UD.
Conversion of a barn to a single self-build dwellinghouse, alterations to the access and associated works

P1042/25/FUL

No Obj

Consent

06/08/2026

9 Ruspidge Road, Ruspidge, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.
Erection of 2 Self-Build Dwellings and associated works.

Glos LGR update: 3 September 2026

Personal Data Sharing Agreement signed across all seven councils

A Personal Data Sharing Agreement (PDSA) was recently signed by all seven councils. This important milestone provides the framework for sharing information needed to support planning for Gloucestershire Council, while ensuring appropriate data protection safeguards remain in place. The article outlines what this means for colleagues, what information may be shared, and answers some frequently asked questions.

Councils to consider new joint committee for Gloucestershire's transition

Councillors will shortly be asked to consider proposals to establish a joint committee to coordinate the next stage of local government reorganisation.

Forest of Dean District Council has prosecuted an individual for offences relating to the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

On Tuesday, 18 August 2026, at Cheltenham Magistrates Court, Deborah Oakley was sentenced for offences in relation to the Animal Welfare Act. Ms. Oakley pleaded guilty to causing unnecessary suffering to one dog and three fish and of failing to meet the needs of animals in her care.

A warrant was executed at a premises in Ruardean occupied by Ms. Oakley on 26 March 2025, by officers of the Council's Street Warden team and Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit, with assistance from Gloucestershire Police. Officers found overwhelming evidence of poor hygiene and an accumulation of waste throughout the property with animals confined in conditions consistent with neglect, causing suffering over a long period of time.

The prosecution was brought by Officers in the Council's Street Warden Team, assisted by the Council's Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit (CFEU) and Legal team.

Make sure you're election-ready: check your voter registration details

Residents across the Forest of Dean are being urged to check their voter registration details now to ensure they are ready to vote in the May 2027 elections.

Forest of Dean District Council is carrying out its annual canvass to update the electoral register. This process helps identify anyone at risk of losing their right to vote and ensures that everyone eligible is properly registered and ready to take part in future elections.

As part of the annual canvass process, the Council's Electoral Services team will contact residents by email or letter to confirm voter registration details. Residents are encouraged to respond by email where possible, helping to streamline the process and reduce the need for paper correspondence.

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. I have requested info again.

Youth ASB/Engagement – We were taken through the SARA plan from the Police and met with Superintendent James Glasfield and expressed our concerns. I have asked for clarification on its results and longevity.

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 for young people.

We have had Youth Justice attend with FVAF with Nikki's Thursday night sessions.

I met with the Head of Childrens Services and await clarity on the following below. He is awaiting on the findings and report of YJ and information on the provision for youths in the area, so we are still:

- Map the planned activities and understand how they are addressing the concerns raised by the community.
- Identify any gaps in provision or opportunities for additional support, particularly from community members who are wanting to help.
- Formulate a plan that shows what is being done and how we can measure progress, review impact, and keep the work under ongoing review.

The feeling is there has been some progress with the sessions and support but not enough and not enough understanding of the future offer and our ability to be made aware and kept up to date.

Speedwatch – New sites have been approved (Station St, St Whites Rd, Church Rd, Valley Rd). I conducted a session on St Whites Rd and I am looking for Councillors to join me.

Grassroots - There have been lots of applications for the fund County Councillors can access and many have been approved or are on the way. The outdoor gym equipment has been approved and installed and the roundabout in Ruspidge Kids Park has been installed.

Police - I have continued to have regular meetings with Police and I the next meeting is the 10th of September. Please pass on to me any issues you wish to bring up.

We have had multiple reports in Cinderford & Ruspidge about masked riders on bikes, what appears to be illegal scrambling and other issues. We met with the; police and they have given us a list of questions to give people who want to provide intelligence. We have tried to start addressing this via the NHW and are meeting with the Police Thursday to find a way of collating information from the public. Our attempts to do this have been unsuccessful due to GDPR issues so far. However, some information has come via the NHW and that will be passed on. Hopefully we can find a way to get round this but also keep us in NHW in the loop.

Attended meeting on Rowandene issues – mixed reports on level of issues. Cllr Graham is making plans to raise objections of placing people with certain issues mixed in with elderly.

We have Neighbourhood Watch in September TBA.

Services/Traders Walkabout – next walkabout is on 10th of September.

The Keelings/2Rivers – I met with the CEO of 2Rivers and discussed some of the issues. He is willing to meet more of the local councillors so I am awaiting his return from annual leave to book. Work has begun on grass cutting, plans to fix some residents

issues and remove bushes that have swallowed up the back fence and gate. Their grounds and maintenance team were very helpful.

PLEASE fill in this link asking for resurfacing in the Keelings – the more applicants we get the more its possible we will get it done – Choose “Highways & Infrastructure/Policy” option and choose resurfacing. [Highways Contact Form | Welcome to the Highways Contact Form – Gloucestershire Forms](#)

We are speaking to 2Rivers and they are speaking to a couple of residents about a potential Residents Association/Group. I have been invited on a walk round with the local housing officer.

Parking – I have asked for the list of sites that are being refreshed – Disabled bays outside Boots and others. We were hoping for this and others to be done very soon.

I am invited to the Countywide Community Drugs Partnership in September. This will complement the work I am trying to do on rural substance misuse support.

Other constituent work includes highways, planning and policing issues. That includes –

Working on flooding issues in Valley Rd and Albion Rd & Old Engine Brook in Steam Mills.

Still awaiting the final stage work to be completed in Valley Rd.

GCC have also been doing work on the flood trenches and drainage system off Albion Rd. GCC are getting quotes to investigate where part of the system goes as its unknown and also to remove a blockage they have found on that section.

An FODDC officer came and met with residents and councillors and is going to coordinate the work needed and keep us up to date. In my opinion it was a productive meeting.

Request – 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. The LHM has told us they have done a deep clean of the gulleys in Valley Rd.

Update given on Forest High and another update booked for October.

Steam Mills Crossing petition – I have been given advice to look for “match funding” with local councils and businesses. I am going to start this process.

I have worked with GCC and Cinderford High St Action Group and now have an official statement. Myself and Lee of CHAG are meeting and I am in contact with Gloucestershire Live who have highlighted it. We ask that all add any posts or concerns to this group and encourage others to join. The group acts as a recording tool for our concerns. I have asked about a stage 4 Road Safety Assessment and await a reply.

Streetworks Wardens – We have 2 new volunteers who have just received training!

Other work includes – supporting residents living near to the Forest of Brambles on Greenway Rd to get it trimmed/discussed, chasing Forestry England about The Great Hole of Parragate & getting the Leaning Bin of Denecroft moved 😊.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

NEWS BRIEFING FOR TOWN, BOROUGH AND PARISH COUNCILS

Summary

Families from across Gloucestershire came together at The King's School, Gloucester, on 20 August for the county's fifth annual Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Summer Festival, celebrating another successful year of the programme.

Over 450 children and young people enjoyed a packed programme of free activities, entertainment and healthy food, with opportunities to try new experiences, develop new skills and spend time with friends. Activity providers from across the county offered everything from archery and climbing to arts and crafts, circus skills, reading activities, the chance to pet goats, ducks and hens and much more.

Gloucestershire's HAF programme provides free holiday activities and nutritious meals for eligible children and young people during the school holidays. The programme helps families access fun activities that support children's wellbeing, confidence and development, while ensuring they stay active, engaged and connected to their communities. Families regularly tell the council how much they value the HAF programme and the difference it makes for children and young people.

Cllr Linda Cohen, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills at Gloucestershire County Council, said: "It was fantastic to see so many children, young people and families enjoying this year's HAF Summer Festival. The day showcased the very best of the programme, with children exploring new activities, learning new skills and having fun in a safe and welcoming environment.

"HAF gives families access to high-quality activities and healthy meals during the school holidays, while helping children build confidence, develop friendships and discover new interests. I'd like to thank all of the providers and partners whose dedication makes these opportunities possible for families across Gloucestershire."

The HAF Festival, which was organised by the Venture Community Hub, marked the culmination of another successful summer of HAF activities delivered in communities across the county, helping children and young people stay happy, healthy and engaged throughout the school holidays.

[Visit Gloucestershire's Virtual Family Hub to find out more about HAF](#)
[Watch a video from the HAF Festival](#)

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Community to benefit from more joined-up adult social care services

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People across Gloucestershire will benefit from more joined-up adult social care services, greater support to stay independent and improved access to help within their communities, as Gloucestershire County Council completes its programme to bring key adult social care services back under its direct management.

From 1 September 2026, responsibility for the Mental Health Supported Accommodation Service and Community Reablement Service moved to Gloucestershire County Council.

The move follows the transfer of the Mental Health Social Work Service in June and Occupational Therapy services in August. Together, these changes complete the plans approved by the council's Cabinet in July 2025 to bring a number of adult social care services back under direct council management as part of a wider programme to strengthen services for Gloucestershire residents.

The services have been delivered previously by Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust (GHC) over many years, and both organisations have worked closely together throughout the transition to ensure continuity of support for residents. The transfer enables council-funded adult social care services to work more closely together, use shared systems and strengthen coordination across teams. This is expected to reduce duplication, improve oversight and support people to receive the right support at the right time.

An expanded Community Reablement Service will play a key role in the council's approach to prevention and early intervention. Reablement is a free, short-term service that helps people regain confidence and independence following illness, injury, a deterioration in health or a hospital stay. Delivered in [partnership with specialist local community reablement providers](#), the service will support more people across Gloucestershire to recover, remain independent for longer and stay connected to their communities, helping to reduce the need for more intensive care and support.

The Mental Health Supported Accommodation Service plays an important role in helping people with mental health needs live as independently as possible, with support tailored to their individual circumstances. Bringing the service closer to other adult social care teams will support a more coordinated approach and help ensure people experience seamless support across different services.

For residents, there will be no change to the support they currently receive. Services will continue as normal, and Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust have worked closely together to ensure a smooth transition. People already receiving support do not need to take any action.

Cllr Dr Kate Usmar, cabinet member for Adults' Support and Independence at Gloucestershire County Council, said: "Bringing these services into Gloucestershire County Council completes an important programme to strengthen adult social care for local people.

"By bringing Mental Health Social Work, Occupational Therapy, Supported Accommodation and Reablement services into the council, we can provide more joined-up support, improve how teams work together and make it easier for people to get the help they need.

"Whether someone needs support with their mental health, help to regain their independence after illness, or support to live well at home for longer, we want services to work seamlessly around them.

"Most importantly, residents can be reassured that services will continue as normal, delivered by the same dedicated staff who make such a difference every day."

The transfers form part of a wider adult social care improvement programme designed to strengthen oversight of statutory services, improve integration across teams and support better outcomes for Gloucestershire residents. The programme supports the council's ambition to place greater emphasis on prevention, early intervention and helping people to maintain their independence and wellbeing for as long as possible.

ENDS

Notes to editors

These changes relate to the organisation of council-funded adult social care services and do not affect NHS clinical services. Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust and NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board will continue to work closely together to support Gloucestershire residents through joined-up health and care services.

[This communication has been sent to town and parish council clerks. Please forward onto your councillors for their action and information.](#)



Reminder online webinar next Wednesday

We'll be holding an update and briefing for town and parish councils and clerks at **6pm on Wednesday 9 September**.

This 90 minute session is tailored specifically to town and parish councils, and will share what is known now, what is still to be decided and what happens next following the Government's decision to create a single unitary authority in Gloucestershire.

It will provide an opportunity for clerks and councillors to ask questions, share thoughts and understand how and when they can get involved with the work that starts now to create a new council.

Please add the date to your calendars.

[Webinar Invite](#)

Email sent by Gloucestershire County Council on behalf of Future Gloucestershire, the county's local government reorganisation programme, on behalf of all seven principal councils in Gloucestershire.

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Social worker shortlisted for top national award

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One of Gloucestershire County Council's adult social workers has been shortlisted in the annual Social Worker of the Year Awards, which celebrate exceptional social work practice and recognise professionals making a real difference to people's lives.

Sev Huggins, a social worker in Adult Social Care, was selected as a finalist for the Newly Qualified Adults Social Worker of the Year award in the Social Worker of the Year Awards 2026.

The award is open to newly qualified social workers with less than one year's experience who have made a positive difference to the lives of adults through their outstanding work.

Sev was nominated for his exceptional work supporting adults with complex needs, his strong advocacy for people's rights and independence, and his thoughtful, reflective approach to social work. He was nominated by Social Work Lead, Lauren Warner, who describes him as a compassionate practitioner who consistently goes above and beyond to achieve positive outcomes for the people he supports.

Sev Huggins said: "I am honoured to be selected as a finalist in the Newly Qualified Social Worker of the Year Award. To be recognised so early in my career is incredibly special.

"Social work is a profession I am passionate about, and I feel privileged to support people through some of the most important moments in their lives. This nomination reflects not only my own journey, but also the support, guidance and encouragement I've received from colleagues and teams across Adult Social Care."

Cllr Dr Kate Usmar, cabinet member for adults support and independence at Gloucestershire County Council, said: "I am so pleased for Sev, to see his dedication and hard work recognised at a national level. To be shortlisted in the Social Worker of the Year Awards is a huge achievement and very much deserved.

"Social workers play a vital role in supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, helping them to remain independent, safe and connected to the things that matter most to them.

"This nomination reflects Sev's commitment to making a positive difference in people's lives, and his excellent team work with colleagues, families and carers."

For more information about the awards, visit [Social Work Awards](#).

ENDS

Notes for editors

- The Social Worker of the Year Awards celebrate excellence in social work across the UK.
- The Newly Qualified Social Worker of the Year award recognises social workers with less than one year's experience who have made a positive difference through their outstanding practice.

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Forest Road closure extended to complete additional safety works

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Gloucestershire County Council has extended the road closure on the B4234 Forest Road between Whitecroft and Lydney to allow stabilisation works to be completed.

The closure is now expected to remain in place until summer 2027, subject to ground conditions and construction progress.

While repair works at the original landslip site have been completed ahead of schedule, further investigations identified two additional areas of accelerated ground movement that require stabilisation before the road can safely reopen.

The council recognises the disruption this will cause for residents, businesses and road users. However, completing all necessary repair works as part of the programme will provide a safer, more resilient route and help avoid future major closures.

The approach will:

- Complete all required stabilisation works in a single programme.
- Avoid reopening the road under temporary traffic signals before carrying out further major works.
- Address areas of emerging ground movement before they deteriorate further and require more extensive intervention, reducing the need for future closures.
- Improve the long-term safety and resilience of the route.
- Deliver a more durable connection between Whitecroft and Lydney.

Cllr Mark Harris, cabinet member for highways, said:

"I understand the impact this continued closure will have on residents, businesses and everyone who relies on Forest Road, and I'd like to thank everyone for their patience and understanding while this important work takes place.

While repairs at the original landslip site have progressed well and were completed ahead of programme, further investigations have identified ground instability that must be addressed before the road can safely reopen.

By carrying out these works now, while the road remains closed and specialist teams and equipment are already on site, we can deliver all the work through one coordinated programme. Although this means a longer closure in the short term, it will help provide a safer and more secure road for everyone who uses Forest Road."

Gloucestershire County Council and contractor Montel Civil Engineering will continue to provide updates throughout the project.

More information is available on the project webpage: [Forest Road, Lydney](#).

[Unsubscribe](#)



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Positive progress on flood resilience protecting Gloucestershire communities

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Although the current weather conditions have made flooding feel like a distant concern, significant work has been taking place across Gloucestershire to help communities become more resilient to future wet weather and flooding.

Along with its partners, the county council has delivered an extensive programme of flood resilience improvements over the past five years, helping to better protect homes, businesses and infrastructure.

Despite 2025/26 being one of the wettest winters on record, the number of properties affected by flooding remained comparatively low. Storm Claudia brought significant rainfall last November, yet the impact on homes was far lower than during similar events in the past.

As an illustration, during November 2024 to February 2025 Gloucestershire had more than 140 property-related flood reports, whereas during the same period in 2025/26 we received only five. Although there are many variables, this reduction has been cautiously welcomed.

This improved resilience reflects the sustained work of the county council, its partners and local communities to strengthen flood defences and use more natural approaches to managing water.

Gloucestershire County Council continues to attract external funding to deliver flood risk management schemes, such as £838,000 for the Cannop Natural Flood Management project. Above Lydney, the Cannop catchment is becoming a leading example of Natural Flood Management at scale. Work here focuses on slowing the flow of water, restoring rivers, creating wet woodland and using natural materials to work with the landscape rather than against it.

In Lydney, there are encouraging signs of progress. At Forest Road, flood water did not reach gardens, let alone homes, despite properties flooding during a similar event in 2020.

At Lakeside Avenue, work on Plummers Brook and downstream improvements have significantly reduced risk on what had previously been one of the county's most frequently flooded streets.

Elsewhere, new flood storage on the River Twyver at Upton St Leonards performed as designed, holding water back and helping to protect communities, including parts of Gloucester. This storage area, in combination with other measures in the area, was modelled to reduce flood risk to 26 properties.

These projects sit alongside a wider programme of work happening across the county, from property flood resilience measures and capital schemes to a growing pipeline of natural flood management projects, including work above Cirencester and more in development.

Much of this work happens quietly, often out of sight. It is the council and its partners "fixing the roof while the sun is shining" – surveying drains, clearing watercourses, modelling flood risk, building storage areas, working with landowners and helping communities prepare for future weather events.

The result is simple but powerful: when the next storm arrives, the impact is reduced and homes and businesses are better protected.

Even though communities are now better protected, preparation remains essential, not least because the recent months of unprecedented heat and extremely dry conditions brings with it an increased risk of surface water flooding when it does rain because the dry ground can't absorb rainfall quickly enough.

Residents are encouraged to check their flood risk, sign up for flood warnings where available, take simple steps to protect their homes and businesses and keep an eye on local watercourses and report any blockages. Gloucestershire County Council's Flood Guide provides practical advice on preparing for, responding to and recovering from flooding and can be found on the council's website.

Cllr Ashley Bowkett, Cabinet Member for Nature, Climate and Waste Reduction said: "While the weather has been very hot and sunny, we know the rain will come again, and thanks to the work happening across Gloucestershire, we are better prepared when it does. This is a shared success and a testament to the dedication, skill and commitment of the teams involved – work that may not always be visible but is making a real difference to people and places across Gloucestershire.

"What's really encouraging is that this isn't about one big project, but consistent, joined-up action across the county. From natural flood management in the Cannop catchment to targeted improvements in places like Lydney and Upton St Leonards, we are seeing the real benefits of taking a long-term, proactive approach.

"The recent dry weather is a reminder that extreme weather can take many forms. After prolonged dry periods, intense rainfall can lead to rapid surface water flooding and flash floods, so it is important that people do not become complacent.

"This work often goes unseen, but it is making a genuine difference, protecting homes, supporting communities and helping us adapt to a changing climate.

"I would encourage everyone to take a few minutes to look at the council's flood guide and make sure they know what to do if flooding affects their area. Being prepared can make a real difference when severe weather strikes."

Residents can find practical advice on flood preparedness, including how to protect their property, create a flood plan and recover after a flood, in [Gloucestershire County Council's Flood Guide](#).

ENDS

Issued by – Communications team, Gloucestershire County Council, 01452 427554, communications@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Notes for editors:

- To view photos of the flood resilience work, see: [Flood resilience work | Flickr](#)

Gloucestershire celebrates support for Ukraine

As Ukraine marks its Independence Day on 24 August, Gloucestershire County Council is celebrating the strength, resilience and contribution of Ukrainian families who have made the county their home, while thanking the hundreds of residents who have opened their doors through the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Since the Homes for Ukraine scheme launched in 2022, Gloucestershire has welcomed more than 2,000 Ukrainians fleeing the war. Today, more than 1,200 Ukrainians continue to live in the county, with many now settled in local communities, working, studying, volunteering and building new lives across Gloucestershire.

The generosity of local residents has played a vital role in that success. More than 200 Gloucestershire households currently host around 350 Ukrainian guests, with more than half of those hosting arrangements having now continued for more than 1,000 days.

Gloucestershire County Council's Migration Team continues to work closely with hosts, guests and local partners to support new arrivals, help families settle successfully, and ensure people can access housing, employment, education, healthcare and community services.

As the county marks Ukraine Independence Day, the council is encouraging more residents to consider becoming hosts and helping provide a safe, welcoming place for those being supported by the scheme.

Cllr Paul Hodgkinson, cabinet member for public health, communities and fire at Gloucestershire County Council said: "Ukraine Independence Day is a chance to celebrate the resilience of Ukrainian people and to thank the Gloucestershire residents who have helped families find safety and build new lives here in our county."

"As a council, we stand with Ukraine. We are proud of our partnership with a region in Ukraine and remain committed to supporting those affected by the war. We continue to welcome residents interested in becoming hosts through the Homes for Ukraine scheme and helping more families find a safe place to call home."

Residents interested in becoming a host can find out more about the [Homes for Ukraine scheme](#) and the support available by visiting the Gloucestershire County Council website.

Ends

Notes to editors

- Ukraine Independence Day takes place on 24 August.
- Since 2022, Gloucestershire has welcomed more than 2,000 Ukrainians through the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- More than 1,200 Ukrainians continue to live in Gloucestershire.
- More than 200 households currently host around 350 Ukrainian guests.
- More than half of current hosting arrangements have continued for over 1,000 days.



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New safeguarding strategy aims to make Gloucestershire safer for adults at risk

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A new strategy designed to help protect adults from abuse and neglect across Gloucestershire is set to be approved by Gloucestershire County Council.

The council's Cabinet will discuss the proposal at its meeting on 22 July.

The proposed Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (GSAB) Strategy 2026-2029 sets out how organisations across the county will work together to keep adults safe, promote independence, and ensure people receive the right support when they need it.

The strategy has been developed by the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board, which brings together partners including Gloucestershire County Council, the NHS, Gloucestershire Constabulary and voluntary sector organisations. It focuses on preventing harm, promoting awareness of safeguarding, listening to people with lived experience, and ensuring professionals have the skills and knowledge to respond effectively to concerns.

For Gloucestershire residents, the strategy aims to:

- strengthen efforts to prevent abuse and neglect before it happens
- improve awareness of safeguarding and how to report concerns
- ensure adults at risk are involved in decisions about their lives and support
- improve partnership working so organisations can respond more effectively to safeguarding concerns

- learn from people's experiences to continually improve services and outcomes
- support staff and volunteers across organisations to recognise and respond to safeguarding issues confidently.

Cllr Dr Kate Usmar, Cabinet Member for Adults' Support and Independence, said:

"Everyone has the right to live safely, independently and with dignity. This strategy will help partners across Gloucestershire work together to prevent abuse and neglect, respond quickly to concerns, and put people's voices at the heart of safeguarding.

"By improving awareness, strengthening partnership working and learning from people's experiences, we can help create safer communities and better outcomes for adults at risk."

If approved, the strategy will guide the work of safeguarding partners over the next three years, helping to ensure Gloucestershire remains committed to protecting adults at risk and promoting their wellbeing.

You can read the Cabinet paper on the [Gloucestershire County Council website](#).

Blakeney and Bream Division of Gloucestershire County Council Parishes Report

September 2026

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07815660013

Transport and travel

Please continue to use and promote the use of [FixMyStreet](#) to report issues on the roads.

A40, Over Bridge.

Find out more about the work: [A40 Over Bridge refurbishment - National Highways](#)

Read frequently asked questions: [A40 Over Bridge frequently asked questions - National Highways](#)

For further information please follow the links above or contact National Highways: info@nationalhighways.co.uk Tel: 0300 123 5

Other 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.
- 14th and 15th September Brockhollands between Park Hill Whitecroft and the Bream Road for road maintenance.
- 14th to 18th September George Lane. Littledean. Drainage works
- 24th August – 16th September. Cinderford Road, Brains Green for undergrounding cables.
- 21st September to 6th November Soudley bridge, closed for maintenance
- 13th to 23rd October Surface improvement work between A48 to Parkend and around Bream. **I am talking to Highways about access for business and residents during this time.**
- 28th October Awre Road, (just past last house out of Blakeney) Severn Trent
- 6th November -11th November. Bream- Lydney Road bottom part of High street and Parawell Road for resurfacing.
- 24th November – 3rd December. Littledean Hill Road for resurfacing (along with several other roads around Cinderford)
- 30th November New Road, Parkend. BT open reach work.

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](#)

County News

[Gloucestershire's Annual Report for Adult Social Care 2025-2026 published at the end of July](#)

The report highlights some positive elements such as

- 86% of care homes rated Good or Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission
- 76% of people aged 65 and over who received reablement after leaving hospital were still living at home 12 weeks later
- 66% of people aged 65 and over receiving support are living at home or with family. This means more people are staying independent at home for longer.
- 82% of adults with a learning disability aged 18-64 live at home or with family, an improvement on previous years.

However, the review also presents evidence of a reported decline in quality of life. Metrics linked to people's experience, including quality of life, social contact and control are all below where they should be.

The full report can be read or downloaded here:

[Gloucestershire's Annual Report for Adult Social Care 2025-26 | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

[Community Reablement care providers have been appointed.](#)

The decision to move to this new service was approved by Gloucestershire County Council's Cabinet in July 2025 but the appointment of three new providers prompted the threat of industrial action. Planned industrial action was withdrawn following constructive discussions, however: [Planned industrial action withdrawn following constructive discussions | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

The Green Group are bringing a motion to next full council that sending before any services are put into the private sector there must be more transparent consultation and scrutiny.

[Forest Road closure extended to complete additional safety works](#)

Gloucestershire County Council has extended the road closure on the B4234 Forest Road between Whitecroft and Lydney to allow additional essential ground stabilisation works to be completed. The closure is now expected to remain in place until summer 2027, subject to ground conditions and construction progress.

[Positive progress on flood resilience reported](#)

The County Council continues to work with partners to deliver flood risk management schemes and deliver a wider programme of work to mitigate flood risk. Recent heavy rain after a prolonged dry spell caused some localised flooding in late August and communities are urged to consider their flood preparedness ahead of the winter: more information can be found at [Flood guide | Gloucestershire County Council](#).

[Fridge and Freezer disposal: suspension of some services](#)

A national issue affecting the collection and processing of fridges and freezers means Gloucestershire County Council has temporarily stopped accepting these items at its household recycling centres (HRCs) since Saturday 8 August. The cabinet member for Nature, Climate and Waste Reduction has written to the Environment Minister calling for urgent action to address the national backlog in fridge and freezer disposal. Retailer take-back schemes and District/Borough bulky waste collections are potential disposal routes available to residents in the meantime.

[New Housing Commission to help shape better housing outcomes for Gloucestershire residents](#)

Gloucestershire's seven local authorities have come together to launch Gloucestershire Housing Commission, which will provide an evidence-based assessment of the county's housing challenges and opportunities and develop practical recommendations to help ensure future housing policies, investment and services better meet the needs of residents and communities across Gloucestershire. The project will run until summer 2027.

[Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service lead Bleed Kit Partnership](#)

People across Gloucestershire are being encouraged to learn about emergency bleed kits and how they can help save lives as part of the Gloucestershire Bleed Kit Partnership.

[Successful transfer of the council-funded Occupational Therapy service into Gloucestershire County Council.](#)

From 3 August 2026, responsibility for delivering adult social care Occupational Therapy services transferred from Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust (GHC) to Gloucestershire County Council. The move follows the successful transfer of the Mental Health Social Work service in June and is the latest step in the council's wider programme to strengthen adult social care services.

GCC Meetings

There were no Full Council, Cabinet or Scrutiny Committee meetings held in August. The next Full Council meeting will take place on **Wednesday 16th September**. The dates of September meetings can be found here: [Monthly meetings calendar - September 2026](#)

Greener Gloucestershire

Community Climate Adaptation Fund now open

The Community Climate Adaptation Fund helps Gloucestershire communities adapt to climate change impacts. This is a pilot project, and at this first launch there is a total of £20,000 available to community projects. Applications should be for between £2,000 and £4,999. The application window is open for six weeks between Monday 17th August 2026 and **Wednesday 30th September at 5pm**.

Eligible groups don't have to be climate experts to apply; communities who are starting their journey to take action and adapt to our changing climate are most welcome to submit an application. This fund is separate from the Community Climate Change Fund, which only funds carbon reduction projects. Find out more and apply here: [The Community Climate Adaptation Fund | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

Cycle September

Cycle September is a fun, free, and friendly biking challenge that residents can participate in alongside friends and co-workers and for those who get involved, there is a chance to win some fantastic prizes. Everything you need to know about riding towards a healthier, greener future this September can be found here: [Cycle September | Gloucestershire County Council](#)