

Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council

MINUTES of the MEETING

held in the on the Tuesday 13th July, 2021

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

Parish Councillors Present:

Mr. W. Acland Chairman
Cllrs.Ms. H. Medcraft,
T. Matthews, M Ogden, N. Snell
J. Smith

County Councillor Present:

Bei Hoyland

Apologies:

Graham Morgan, Richard Boyles, Nicky Packer
& Bernie O'Neill

The Clerk - Ms. Joanne Rawlings.

Standing Declarations of Interest

- (a) Ruspidge Memorial Hall - Insignificant personal interest by Cllrs. Matthews & Snell.
- (b) Soudley Village Hall – Insignificant personal interest by Cllr. Smith.

RUSPIDGE WELFARE TRUST

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

1. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

2. **MINUTES** - the minutes of the council meeting held on the 8th June, 2021 were **ACCEPTED** as a true record of the meeting by council and will be signed by the Chairman at the next full council meeting.

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

2.2 **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT** **(N/P)**

- It is true that the cost to the Forest of Dean District Council of providing services has been reduced. The financial position of FoDDC is worrying, due to successive reductions in Government funding to local authorities and so cost reductions are needed. However, the provision of services was not supposed to be affected. The way that the contract with Publica was set up gives Forest of Dean District Council no direct control about how the service is provided. Over the past year, it has been clear that there are service delivery issues, particularly the lack of officer time for planning and enforcement, but also in other areas. The problems don't really show up in the quarterly reports provided by Publica but councillors are aware of them through their ward casework. Discussions are taking place to try to improve the situation, but the way the contract was set up gives Publica great autonomy, so only time will show whether services can be improved.

- **The Forest of Dean District Council pilot project on land management**
FoDDC have commenced a trial for grassed areas at Newerne Street Car Park and Centurion Road in Lydney left mostly untouched through the growing season, to allow wildflowers and grasses to flower and seed. Over time, this cycle of propagation is expected to improve the range of plants in the grassland as well as the insects and other animals they support. An explanation board to inform residents has been placed on the site.

This means the district council will only be mowing the grass twice a year in some places, including a final cut at the end of the summer, although established paths through the grassed areas and edges will continue to be cut back regularly to maintain access.

Grass cuttings will be left as 'habitat piles' at each of the sites to attract insects and other wildlife, such as toads and slow worms, to inhabit the areas and to reduce transport carbon emissions by not having to remove the waste, adding to the sustainable way in which the sites are managed.

The pilot project that will be expanded to other areas if successful.

The Council is currently conducting a survey of all land under its stewardship – including play areas, car parks and commercial sites – to identify more areas where similar or new measures can be taken and which give maximum ecological benefit. The assessment will be finished later in the year.

<https://news.fdean.gov.uk/news/wild-flowers-left-to-grow-for-longer-in-lydney-as-council-gives-biodiversity-a-boost>

- Wye Valley AONB – a 15 year management plan is put forward for adoption.
- Treasury management activity report 2020/21 which shows council borrowing, investments and reserves.

(BO'N)

- Forest Lodge, St White's Road. I have been liaising with Mrs Wendy Jones at 1, Combe Drive and our Planning Officer and the result is that the Application for housing in the Grounds of Forest Lodge have been refused. I expect that there will be a further revised application but this must reflect the reasons for refusal. The Agents have not been very helpful.
- St White's School. I have no further information but I shall try to get an update before the meeting.
- Levelling Up bid has been submitted and we are awaiting the result which should be Sept/October time.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

(R/H)

- Gigaclear works continue all around Bream, Sling, Newnham and Coleford, all these will allow controlled access.
- Top Road Soudley will be closed for maintenance of the bridge from 6th September to 18th October; there will be no pedestrian access apart from possibly at definitive time.
- There is a time limit set for adding public rights of way to the definitive map. If a footpath or bridle way is on the definitive map it is a protected by law as a right of way. The government has set 2026 as the cut off to add rights of way to the definitive map. I suggest that it would be a job worth doing by the parish councils to check that all the usual footpaths that are used in the parish are on the definitive map so that they are protected. The link above should take you to the definitive map for Gloucestershire.
- If footpaths are identified that are not on the definitive map I am happy to help apply for them to be added.

- South Forest of Dean will be a pilot area for on demand accessible minibuses that are intended to compliment and extend the existing bus services to rural areas. You will be able to book on line and on the phone and will be available 7am to 7pm Monday to Saturday. It is a two-year pilot that the county has funding for from the Rural Mobility Fund. A review will determine whether the council will continue to fund it and even roll it out into other areas.

(G/M)

- At the County Council Cabinet has approved £2.6 million in a significant boost for Adult and Community Learning in the County, they have also approved £3.7 million for 12 new greener Fire Engines, with some 20 vehicles the need replacement altogether.
- A new state of the art 999 system is in place at Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service costing £300,000, this system is called Vision 5, this means mobile phones can be pinpointed within 50 meters of their location in addition land lines are identified with there address when a call is made.
- A £2 million Build Back Better Fund is set to launch, subject to Cabinet sign off on the 21st July, this will be spread evenly across the Counties 53 divisions, each ward Councillor will be allocated a total of £40,000 in grants to support their local areas, I have already alerted Cinderford Town Football Club and their youth section to these opportunities.
- In addition to this The County Council as offered to fund digital Community Projects across Gloucestershire, this amounts to £200,000 worth of grants available to Community or Voluntary Groups and Charity Organisations, to fund Digital and Technology led Initiatives, this is the second year of this fund and applications of up too £20,000 per project will be accepted from Monday 12th July.
- A motion was put to the July County Council asking for 20mph limits in all towns and villages across the County where practical to do so, this was supported by the Lib-Dem, Labour & Green groups of Councillors, the ruling Conservative group of Councillors would not fully support this, instead putting forward an amendment asking for it to go to the Environment Scrutiny Committee, which many Councillors had the feeling this would in effect kick this idea into the long grass so to speak, this was passed by their greater majority.

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

- P0079/21/DISCON Planning application has objections from Tony Matthews.

2.4 **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

Following report by the Treasurer the council **APPROVED** the accounts presented for payment totalling £30,790.69, this figure being inclusive of confidential expenditure.

2.5 The Parish Cllrs discussed banning dogs from Ruspidge play area, but agreed more signs where needed to remind public to clean up after their dogs.

CORRESPONDENCE

3.0 The council **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following correspondence:

- a) GCC – GCC Release: £2million Build Back Better Fund set to launch.(fwded)
- b) GCC - Release: £200,000 offered to fund digital community projects in Glos (fwded)
- c) Gloucestershire charges ahead to power electric vehicles (fwded)
- d) FODDC – update on St Whites School (fwded)
- e) FODDC – New Hospital (fwded)

- 3.1 **Next Meeting** - the next meeting of the council is to be held in the **Soudley Hall** at 7.00pm **Tuesday, 14th September, 2021.**
The agenda deadline is **Monday, 6th September, 2021.**
- 3.2 **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).
- 3.3 The meeting closed at 7.45p.m.

Signed: Chair. Dated: