
RUSPIDGE & SOUDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the MEETING held on the Tuesday 9th May, 2023

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

Parish Councillors Present:

Cllrs. Tony Matthews. Chairman, Jo Smith Chairman-elect, Norman Snell, William Acland, Helen Medcraft.

County Councillors Present:

None Present.

District Councillors Present:

Cllrs. Bernie O'Neill.

Parish Council Clerk – Roland Dowding

Apologies:

Cllrs. Beki Hoyland, Graham Morgan.

Standing Declarations of Interest

- A) Ruspidge Memorial Hall - Insignificant personal interest by Cllr. William Acland.
- B) Soudley Village Hall - Insignificant personal interest by Cllr. Jo Smith.

Public Present:

Vicky MacDougall, Adrian Peacey.

RUSPIDGE WELFARE TRUST (RWT)

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

- 5.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes.
- 5.2. Members noted and approved the report for the Ruspidge Welfare Trust.
- 5.3. No other business.

Public Participation

Vicky MacDougall – Committee member for Soudley Village Hall, request to work closely with the Parish Council. It was suggested by the Chairman that upon approval by Soudley Village Hall Committee Vicky MacDougall become liaison to the Parish Council.

Adrian Peacey – Mr. Peacey informed Council the petition to reinstate a suitable bus service through Soudley & Ruspidge had reached 600 signatures. Requested an update from the Parish Council regarding the progress of Parish Council inquiries to Stagecoach, Mr. Peacey was informed Parish Council inquiries had now been escalated with Stagecoach public services, and Stagecoach is obligated to answer our query. Mr. Peacey informed Council the public was having difficulty in ordering a seat on the Robin, the public being told that the service does not always cover their area. General dissatisfaction with the Robin bus service not serving its purpose.

- 5.1. **Apologies** received and recorded from absent members.
- 5.2. No declaration of personal or prejudicial interest was declared.
- 5.3. **Minutes** - the minutes of the council meeting held on the **14th of March, 2023** were **ACCEPTED** as a true record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.
- 5.4. **Matters Arising** – There were no matters arising from the minutes.
- 5.5. **District Councillor Reports**
Cllr. B O'Neill will request an additional site visit for Forest Lodge, St Whites Rd, Cllr. O'Neill will keep Council updated on the progress. Cllr. O'Neill will request Cllr. Robinson (Cabinet Member) attends a Parish Council meeting regarding the situation of the lack of busses through the parish.
- 5.6. **County Councillor Reports**
Report is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.
- 5.7. **Planning** – completed schedule is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.
- 5.8. **Financial Matters** - Following a report by the Treasurer the council **APPROVED** the accounts presented for the **April** payment totalling **£5,418.24**, this figure is inclusive of confidential expenditure.
- 5.9. **Internal Audit Report for the year ending 2022/23** – Members noted the internal audit concluded satisfactory confirmed by Mrs Shirley Fowler, appointed internal auditor to Council.
- 5.10. **Grant Application Earlybirds Playgroup** - Council approved a £500.00 grant for a new fence with the provision before Council releases the proposed funds, the applicant confirms and proves they have secured the match funding.
- 5.11. **Grant Application Ruspidge Memorial Hall, Kings Coronation Celebration** - Members unanimously approved a £250.00 grant policy.
- 5.12. **Correspondence** - The council **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following correspondence:
The Parish Councillors accepted all relevant correspondence has been forwarded via email to all members.
- 5.13. **Next Meeting** - the next meeting of the council is to be held in the **Soudley Village Hall** at **7.00pm Tuesday, 13th June 2023**. The agenda deadline is **Monday, 5th June, 2023**.
- 5.14. **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 8.00 p.m.

Signed:.....Chair.

Dated:.....

APPENDIX

Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council Planning Schedule for May 2023 meeting.

P0452/23/FUL

Former St Whites Primary School , St Whites Road, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.
Variation of Condition 2 (accordance with approved plans), Condition 10 (accordance with approved vehicle parking and EVC), Condition 11 (accordance with approved cycle storage) and Condition 12 (accordance with approved access arrangements) to allow improvements to detail in respect of details relevant to Plot 7 and to access arrangements relating to planning permission P2073/21/FUL.
Condition Number(s): 2, 10,11 & 12

Conditions(s) Removal:

Conditions 2 and 12 need to be changed to reflect revised drawing numbers allowing for improvement to detail in respect of details relative to plot 7 and to access arrangements.

Conditions 10 and 11 simply require updating to reflect the amended drawing number As explained above, and as further detailed in the accompanying Design, Access and Planning statement

Parish Comment

No objection.

P0391/23/FUL

Land Parcel East Of 40 - 43, Edmunds Way, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.
Erection of a pair of 3-bedroom semi-detached houses with associated access, parking and amenity area.

P0260/23/FUL

77 Ruspidge Road, Ruspidge, Gloucestershire, GL14 3AW.
Change of use of restaurant and first floor flat into dwelling house.

Parish Comment

As they seem to have resolved parking issues, providing the car parking is exclusively for the proposed property, then No objections.

Decisions notified by the Planning Authority

P0021/23/DISCON

Former St Whites Primary School St Whites Road Cinderford Gloucestershire GL14 3DH
Discharge of Condition 3 (surface and foul water drainage scheme) and Condition 4 (hard and soft landscaping scheme) relating to planning permission P2073/21/FUL.

Parish Comment: No Objection

District Decision: Consent.

Date: 24/04/2023

P0098/23/FUL

St Whites Primary School , Sneyd Wood Road, Cinderford, Gloucestershire. Erection of a first floor extension with associated works.

Parish Comment: No Objection. **District Decision:** Consent **Date:** 17/04/2023

P0366/23/LD1

Brookview Lodge, Rolls Green, Blakeney, Gloucestershire.

Application under section 191 to establish whether the use of the converted building and segregation of garden as a separate residential dwelling is lawful.

Parish Comment: No Objection. **District Decision:** Consent. **Date:** 14/04/2023

Annual County Report to Parish Councils in Blakeney and Bream Division.

from: Beki Hoyland. County Councillor for Blakeney and Bream Division
Beki.hoyland@gloucestershire.gov.uk or 07815660013

ROADS

There are a phenomenal amount of road works in the area. They are all done by contractors for different reasons, a lot of it currently Gigaclear but water and gas are around too and general highway maintenance continues through it all. Street Works and Highways try and make sure that:

- signs are in place on the road to warn of closures a week in advance
- road closures are not all in the same village at the same time
- work is done to the right standard and that the area is left tidy at the end

Please let me know if this is not the case and I will work with Highways to put pressure on the contractors.

At the beginning of the year a set of road works was pushed back a week because contractors had not put adequate advance warning in place, another time one utility closed a road without permission that caused access issues for a day or two, they have been fined for this. We do have a voice to make companies follow the rules and I am happy to make sure that voice is heard so do please let me know if you want me to talk to highways about local issues.

Highway maintenance is an ongoing issue everywhere. Why do potholes get filled and then crumble within months? Why do they fill one pothole but not the one next to it? These are questions that the green group at County are asking repeatedly to put pressure on improving our highways. Pot holes can be lethal as well as damaging cars. Please report them when you see them on this link. <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/your-highways-report-it/>

This link will take you to the website that shows where roadworks are happening and what is planned. <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/roadworks/>

I keep an eye on it but please do let me know if there is an issue with access in your area that you would like me to highlight to Highways.

Each year each county councillor is allocated 30K to spend on the local highway network .Last year I spent 10K of this on Public rights of way as they are chronically underfunded and access to walking in our landscape is essential if we are to be a healthy population connected to our surroundings and able to use walking as a safe option for local journeys. I also put money into clearing and maintaining pavements, again to make those that walk along our roads and in our villages safer. Some of this money was also spent on The community maintenance team, this team is working across the whole district for about 8 months of the year and the money I gave them went towards an extra week just in Blakeney and Bream division in the late autumn to prepare for winter. This is a very useful small team that we should make sure we make best use of, please let me know of jobs in the villages that need doing such as clearing pavements of leaves, replacing and mending road signs, cutting back vegetation that is restricting lines of sight or sign visibility clearing drains and making sure runn off water can actually reach the drain.

There have been several drain issues that are ongoing, the community maintenance team has dug them out but still they do not work, in some situations the jet washer tanker then can be called in and that resolves the issue but not everywhere and this is an area that needs work, maintaining good drainage is important if the surface is to stay in good condition and not become hazardous.

I attend the **Forest Road Safety Liaison Group** that meets in Coleford three or four times a

year, this is a group of councillors, fire, police and highways that meet to work together on issues. I have been asking that we look at speed limits within the Forest boundary which is currently 60mph and many think that for the safety of those that use the forest for active travel, leisure and for the wild animals and sheep this is too fast and that like other statutory forests around Britain this should be lower. New signs on the A48 at the Viney Hill junction will hopefully allow speeds to now be at a level that the police are willing to support a 50 mph limit, we are awaiting the speed survey that will establish this that has been promised. If there are any areas where you are particularly concerned about safety this is a good forum for me to raise it.

I have become the County Councillor rep on the Dean Forest Green way, a multi use track between Lydney and Parkend that is going through the planning process. I am very keen that this project goes ahead, a safe route between Lydney and the heart of the Forest and to where a lot of people in Blakeney and Bream Division live is vital to the local and tourist economy, it will allow access to national rail and local bus services by bike, as well as school and shopping. With the advent of the e bike this kind of travel is open to many more people and is one that we need to encourage for our health and well being as well as the bigger environmental picture of reducing reliance on individual cars.

Work on footpaths

over the last year work has been able to proceed to upgrade our footpaths, an incredible resource that we need to promote, the footpath along the Severn is now more accessible and gives views across the Severn, we can walk from Newnham to Purton. The Bream Heritage path has also had some upgrading.

Public Footpaths DAW59 & 95 Repair of three stiles

Public Footpath DAW81 / Severn Way Repair of two sets of steps between Gatcombe & Purton

Public Footpath DAW81 / Severn Way Resolving drainage issues and resurfacing around footbridge at Purton

Public Footpath DAW84 / Severn Way Installation of galvanised kissing gate plus aggregate at Little Hagloe

Public Footpath DAW84 / Severn Way Surfacing with aggregate 95metre section at Little Hagloe

Public Footpath DAW95 / Severn Way Installation of six galvanised steel kissing gates near Whites Court Farm

Public Footpath DAW112 / Severn Way Vegetation clearance (tractor flail / manual shrub clearance) on 800metre section

Public Footpath DAW112 / Severn Way Installation of five galvanised steel kissing gates near Guy Hall & Northington Farms

Public Footpath West Dean 14 (RWD14) / Bream Heritage Walk Installation of two galvanised steel kissing gates & fence repair at Saunders Green Farm, Bream

Public Footpath West Dean 18 (RWD18) / Bream Heritage Walk Vegetation clearance

If there are any foot paths in your parish that need maintenance or up grading do let me know. Notice given of temporary diversion of footpath RWD 13 from Corner Road Pillowell from the 1st June to 1st December 2023 for building works to take place.

Build Back Better Fund

The other pot of money that each County Councillor has to spend in the division is the build back better fund. 40K over 4 years. The vast majority of this has been spent over the last 2 years as follows, however this fund has now been extended by 3k for projects specifically aimed at young people.

Forest fighting Fit, Onward Hall, play tunnel system in Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre, Playgrounds in Blakeney, Newnham and Soudley (DHC but with free access for local children) community gardens in Parkend and Yorkley, Hod Boy restoration, PSHE in schools, wild flowers in Blakeney, noticeboards, cricket and rugby in Bream, Food hub and Dean Forest Kitchens. I have

aimed to make sure that all ages and areas of the community have had some of the money, supporting music, sport, play, education, food, environment and community. It has been a privilege to work with the groups and get to know a little of what they are doing. What a great place we live in!

I will work with youth groups to make sure the 3k is put to best use, if you work with a youth group or know one that could do with a little support then do let me know.

Children

The other areas that I have been part of over the last year as a county councillor has been scrutinising the work of the County Council in their work with Children and Families. The main issue that social services face is that a lot of the work force are agency which pushes up cost and reduces stability. This has an impact on the nearly 900 children that are in the care of the local authority in Gloucestershire. It is not a problem isolate to Gloucestershire and the Social work academy in Gloucester is innovative and starting to address this issue. Most children are looked after in foster families and for this I am very grateful to all the families in Gloucestershire that have been able to open their homes to young people that need them. More are needed.

Although the governments aim is that all schools become academies by 2030 many are still maintained by GCC who is looking at ways to support the process and works closely with heads and other school leaders. The new SEND Inspection Framework is also an area of focus for all schools at the moment.

As part of my role of scrutinising Children and Families work I am part of the Corporate Parenting group that makes sure that children in care are kept in mind in all decisions across the work of the county and outside bodies, that they have opportunities and care that they deserve.

I sit on the the Continuous Improvement Board that makes sure that last years improvement in the Ofsted report are not allowed to slip but are built on to improve services across the board. I also volunteer as a mentor as a way of experiencing how social care works in families that need support.

I have great respect for the new senior team at GCC that have vision, experience and committent, I hope to see their plans make a difference to our children that face so many challenges.

Other work of a county councillor.

I am also a member of the **Commons and Rights of Way** committee and although no footpath from within our division has come before us I have learnt a lot about the law of public rights of way, Commons, bridle ways and our right to roam in the statutory forest. The deadline for putting rights of way on the definitive map was lifted but has been re instated at a later date and I believe is still under review.

Busses is another area that I am focusing on, I am working with a group in Soudley around the reinstatement of a bus between Blakeney and Cinderford. I am on the bus task force that is gathering information and will use this to report back to cabinet on suggestions of how the service needs to be improved. Questions to full council on this topic to keep it on the agenda and meetings with Philip Robinson, the cabinet member for bus travel as well as talking to Lydney Dial a ride to understand how the Robin is working and what this on demand service can address and what it cannot. I will continue to work on this as we cannot be expected to catch a bus if the service is sub standard.

I am also on the **Rural Estates Task group** who are looking into the farms that the county council own and how they are used and how the rural estate can give GCC a real opportunity to be a leader in the way that land is used to tackle the climate and biodiversity emergencies we are living through. We will be sending a report to cabinet in the autumn that will feed into a review of the rural estate strategy review.

Full Council gives the Green group an opportunity to bring motions and amendments, to ask questions of cabinet members and senior officers. We were successful in securing funding for several

projects in the budget that are now in the process of being designed, we have worked closely with the new biodiversity officer that was appointed as a result of last years budget and making sure that biodiversity is written through all policies.

Violence against women and girls. Council members attended a training session on what GCC and the police are doing on this subject as part of an ongoing conversation about what more can be done.

Under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Gloucestershire County Council as a Tier 1 Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing within refuge and other 'domestic abuse safe accommodation'.

We aim that GCC should become a white ribbon accredited organisation and lead the way on this vital subject. Follow this link to find out more. All organisations can look at this important work.

<https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk/?!tclid=>

As councillors we regularly ask questions that relate to our own areas, do let me know if there are areas that you would like me to ask about but also be aware that there is always an opportunity for public questions at each full council meeting. Here is a link to how to participate:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/arrangements-for-engagement-with-full-council-meetings/>

Other work that the County Council is doing that I would like to make you aware of at the moment: for more on what is going on the GCC website is a good resource. <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk>

Driving Safely in Spring

OUR POPULAR, FREE ZOOM WEBINAR RETURNS AT 10AM ON SATURDAY 29 APRIL.

The webinar includes advice on:

Safer driving strategies to address the springtime challenges as more vulnerable road users - such as pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders - take to the road 2022 changes to the Highway Code designed to encourage more active travel.

For a link to join the webinar email fodfglos@gmail.com

Please share this invitation with anyone for whom this could be of value and, if they are not comfortable with zoom, consider hosting a viewing at your home or community facility.

Libraries

Gloucestershire Libraries are launching a new three-year project called Ageing with Creativity aimed at supporting the over 60s. The project will be launched during Dementia Awareness Week (15 to 21 May) and will include a number of creative activities, workshops and opportunities.

It follows Gloucestershire Libraries being recognised as a National Portfolio Organisation by Arts Council England, with funding awarded for three years for new activities and resources.

Gloucestershire Homes for Ukraine Scheme

Monthly Update 5th May 2023

Update on arrivals and visits

- Over 120,000 Ukrainians have now arrived in the UK on a HFU visa. Thanks to the generosity of Gloucestershire residents, 1,434 Ukrainians have arrived in county on the scheme since April 2022. Roughly a third of these guests have since left the scheme, mostly by finding private accommodation or deciding to return to Ukraine.
- There are currently 821 guests in Gloucestershire on the scheme, and the county HFU team has been revisiting households as they reach six and twelve months in the country. At these follow-up visits, guests and hosts talk through their future plans, confirming if guests are able to remain in their placements for the second year or if they hope to move on from the scheme. If plans are in place for ending the arrangement, rematching and housing options are also discussed.

Homes for Ukraine Champions campaign

- At the Cabinet meeting on 29th March a decision was made to utilise the HFU grant funding to provide additional support to guests and hosts as they continue or move on from the scheme.
- All existing and new hosts on the HFU scheme in Gloucestershire will now receive a 'thank you' payment of £600 per month. This is an increase of £250 or £100 on top of the payment currently allocated by central government.
- To accompany this increased support the Gloucestershire HFU team have launched an advertising campaign, encouraging new hosts to sign up to the scheme and become a HFU "Champion". This includes circulating flyers around the county and utilising community links for further promotion.
- As well as encouraging new hosts to sign up, the increased support will be a further incentive for current hosts to continue their placements, reducing pressures on the local housing sector.

Eurovision events announced across Gloucestershire

- This year's Eurovision Song Contest will be held in the UK for the first time in 25 years. The UK is hosting the event in Liverpool after finishing in second place in last year's competition to Ukraine, who cannot host this year for obvious reasons.
- Several Eurovision screening events have been organised in collaboration with community groups across the county. They will be held on Saturday 13th May in Stroud, Forest of Dean and Cheltenham, as well as a capacity screening at Gloucester Guildhall.
- Guests and hosts on the scheme have been invited to join their local event and it will be an opportunity for the two nations to come together for an evening of fun and celebration.

Painswick-Slavutich friendship agreement

- Last year, 10 Ukrainians from Slavutich, a town in North-East Ukraine, moved to Painswick. Slavutych was built after the Chernobyl disaster to house workers from the plant, but suffered badly when the Russians occupied it on February 24th 2022 at the beginning of the war.
- It was completely coincidental that several families from the same town and place of work at the Chernobyl power plant arrived in Painswick, as they did not know each other previously.
- Instigated by one of the Painswick Ukrainians who had previously worked for Slavutych Town Council, links were made between their mayor and the chair of Painswick Parish Council. This has led to the signing of a friendship agreement.
- There have been various cultural contacts made between primary school children and gifts have been exchanged. There are also now "Friends of Slavutych" signs at the entrance to the village on the main A46.
- This is a lovely example of both the welcome Ukrainian guests have been given by our local community and how well they have integrated into life in Gloucestershire, forming a lasting friendship for years to come.

Update on driving licences

- Currently, Ukrainian guests are required to exchange their Ukrainian driving licence for a British one after 12 months in the UK. As Ukrainian licences issued before 2022 do not specify if they can be used for manual driving,

many Ukrainians would have to retake their test in order to continue driving manual cars.

- The Government is proposing to extend the period of time in which a Ukrainian licence is valid, from the current 12-months to 3 years, matching the length of their Homes for Ukraine visa.
- The consultation period for this matter closed on 2nd May 2023, and a summary of responses will be published within 3 months.

The following information and graphs provide an update on the Homes for Ukrainians (HFU) scheme in Gloucestershire.

National visa applications ⁱ

(for each Ukraine refugee scheme as of 4th May 2023)

Total visa applications	Received	Issued	% Issued	Arrived in UK	% Arrived
Ukraine Family Scheme	94,900	68,100	72%	50,800	54%
Homes for Ukraine Scheme	193,300	159,600	83%	121,700	63%
Total	288,200	227,700	79%	172,500	60%

Local visa applications

HFU scheme only

Total visa applications	Received	Issued	% Issued	Arrived in UK	% Arrived
Cheltenham	437	352	81%	302	69%
Cotswold	427	362	85%	297	70%
Forest of Dean	310	267	86%	228	74%
Gloucester	177	156	88%	123	69%
Stroud	396	354	89%	294	74%
Tewkesbury	370	231	62%	190	51%
Total Gloucestershire	2,117	1,722	81%	1,434	68%

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