
RUSPIDGE & SOUDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the MEETING held on Tuesday 12th May 2026.

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

Parish Councillors Present:

Cllrs. Tony Matthews, Norman Snell, William Acland, Denis Bagwell-Johnson, Nicky Packer, Priya Shukla, Paul Firth.

County Councillors Present:

Beki Hoyland.

District Councillors Present:

Andy Moore.

Richard Burton.

Parish Council Clerk – Roland Dowding.

Apologies:

Cllr. Helen Medcraft, 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. Norman Snell.

Public Present: Glenn Turner, Adrian Peacey, Andy Blake, Rob Stubbs.

Adrian Peacey – Expressed a concern regarding Cinderford Town & the closure of the shops. Mr. Peacey also expressed concern as to how this situation will affect the parish in the future, mentioning the upcoming loss of bus route 711 bus from Buckshaft to the Pludds due to a lack of passengers. The Chairman, Cllr. Tony Matthews responded and noted, Cllr. Donaghue GCC Cllr for Cinderford would be best qualified to answer Mr. Peacey's question. Unfortunately, Cllr. Donaghue had sent his apologies for this evening's meeting. The Chairman advised, Mr. Peacey attend a Cinderford Town Council meeting and express his concerns directly to the Town Council. Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council have no jurisdiction regarding Cinderford Town.

Mr. Peacey further remarked as to what would happen if Ruspidge lost its bus service. GCC Cllr. Beki Hoyland commented to Mr. Peacey that he can contact her office directly on the issue.

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- 5.1. **Apologies** received and recorded from absent members.
 - 5.2. No declaration of prejudicial interest was declared by members present.
 - 5.3. **Minutes** - The minutes of the council meeting held on the **14th of April, 2026** were **ACCEPTED** as a true record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman, Cllr. Tony Matthews.
 - 5.4. **Matters Arising** - There were no matters arising from the minutes.
 - 5.5. **District Councillor Reports**
Reports are attached as an Appendix to these minutes.

- 5.6. **County Councillor Reports**
Reports are attached as an Appendix to these minutes.
- 5.7. **Planning** – The completed schedule for **May** is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.
- 5.8. Following a report by the Honorary Treasurer, Cllr. Norman Snell the council **APPROVED** the accounts presented for **May**, payment totalling **£7,881.13**. These figures are inclusive of confidential expenditure. A financial report is included for **May** in the appendix to these minutes. Due to an accounting error, amendments were made to the following financial sheets and signed by the Chairman and Honorary Treasurer. **March**, payment totalling **£10,555.53**. **April**, payment totalling **£4,832.43**. These figures are both inclusive of confidential expenditure.
- 5.9. **Reallocation Request for Allocated Reserve – CCTV Ruspidge £ 4,000.00 to Play Area Budget.**
The members present approved the request.
- 5.10. **Review of Standing Orders 2026** – The members present approved and the chairman, Cllr. Tony Matthews & the Clerk, Mr. Roland Dowding duly signed.
- 5.11. **Review of Financial Regulations 2026** - The members present approved and the chairman, Cllr. Tony Matthews & the RFO, Mr. Roland Dowding duly signed.
- 5.12. **Review of Risk Assessment 2026** - The members present approved and the chairman, Cllr. Tony Matthews & the Clerk, Mr. Roland Dowding duly signed.
- 5.13. **Review of Health & Safety Policy 2026** - The members present approved and the chairman, Cllr. Tony Matthews.
- 5.14. **Parish Council Insurance Renewal – Quote £1,405.23.** The members present approved the 2026/27 Insurance quote and renewal policy.
- 5.15. **Members note receipt of Internal Audits 2025/26. For both R&SPC & RWT.** This included the internal auditors report for the 2025/26 AGAR. The members present noted receipt of the reports. No questions.
- 5.16. **Liaison’s Report for Soudley Village Hall.**
- Solar panels are now sited and functional. Reducing the hall’s electricity costs.
 - Waiting on grant funds for the improvements to the changing rooms.
- 5.17. **Liaison’s Report for Ruspidge Memorial Hall.**
- Amendments to the wheelchair access.
 - Improvements to fireproofing.
- 5.18. **Clerk’s Report to Council.**
- Soudley White Horse Inn Nomination Form’s Submitted on 23rd April to the Assets of Community Value Office. Cllr’s Acland & Shuklar along with Mr Salter were copied into the submission.
 - HMRC IT Issues have been resolved. But currently the Basic Paye App only runs on the PC Laptop.
 - HMRC PAYE End of financial year 2025/26 submissions were made on time.

- GCC. Grass Roots Grant. £3,000.00 Ruspidge Rec, Roundabout. Sponsored by Cllr. Donaghue has been approved.
- Internal Audit 2026 completed. Certificate for AGAR issued.
- VAT Submissions attended to. Financial year 2025/26 VAT now finalised.
- Addressing queries regarding the Comrades Club, Soudley. Referred to FoDDC, last year.
- NEST Payments delayed For May as we are currently unable to make a submission. This issue has been raised with NEST via our Accountant.
- Memorial Bench Top Rd. Soudley near to the telephone box. GCC Highways has granted permission.

5.19. **Correspondence** - The council **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following correspondence:

- **P0446/26/FUL**. Planning Consultation Notification. 11 Ruspidge Road, Ruspidge, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.
- **R&SPC Clerk** - PC Insurance Renewal Policy 2026/27
- **R&SPC Clerk** - Internal Auditor Reports 2025/26. RWT. R&SPC. AGAR Report.

No concerns regarding receipt of emails by the members were recorded.

5.20. **Next Meeting** - the next meeting of the council will be held in the **Soudley Village Hall at 7.00 p.m. Tuesday, 9th June 2026**. The agenda deadline for the full council meeting is **Monday, 1st of June 2026**.

5.21. **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 8:45 p.m.

Signed:.....Chairman.

Dated:.....

Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council

Planning Schedule May, 2026

Planning Reference

Parish

Site Address & Detail

Comment

P0446/26/FUL

No Obj

11 Ruspidge Road, Ruspidge, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.

Erection of a three storey rear extension including modernisation of existing dwelling.

Demolition of dilapidated rear extension.

P1361/25/FUL

No Obj

82 Ruspidge Road Ruspidge Cinderford

Erection of a 3 bedroom chalet bungalow with associated landscaping, parking and

works. Demolition of existing garage and outbuilding.

District Councillor Report – Richard Burton – May 2026

Drivers urged to help protect the Forest of Dean from litter

Residents and motorists are being asked to help protect the natural beauty of the Forest of Dean, as the district council highlights the growing problem of litter along roadsides and verges.

Several areas across the district are experiencing repeated problems with litter building up near roads, including food packaging, drink cans, cigarette ends and plastic bottles. The council says much of this waste is believed to be thrown from passing vehicles.

Cllr Andy Moore, Portfolio Holder for Waste and Recycling at Forest of Dean District Council, said:

“Litter is not only an eyesore - it poses a serious threat to wildlife, which can ingest it or become trapped and entangled in discarded items.

“Last year alone, the council collected around 200 tonnes of litter across our district - an effort that required an estimated 12,480 hours of work from paid street operatives and dedicated community volunteers.

The council is reminding drivers that littering from a vehicle is an offence and can result in a £50 fixed penalty notice. In some cases, the registered keeper of the vehicle may be held liable, even if the litter was thrown by a passenger.

Residents who capture a littering offence on dashcam footage can submit it to the council and this may lead to enforcement action being taken against the vehicle’s registered keeper.

Footage can be emailed to waste@fdean.gov.uk. When submitting evidence, residents should include the date, time and location of the incident.

Forest of Dean District Council is responsible for removing litter and fly-tips from public land and emptying litter bins. Residents can report overflowing litter bins, litter problems and fly-tips on the council’s website at: www.fdean.gov.uk/litter

Councillor Dave Tradgett appointed Cabinet Member for Property and Projects

Councillor Dave Tradgett has been appointed as Cabinet Member for Property and Projects at Forest of Dean District Council. He replaces Councillor Sid Phelps who has decided to step down from the role to focus on other commitments.

Councillor Dave Tradgett said:

“I would like to offer my thanks to Councillor Phelps for his contribution as a Cabinet Member here at Forest of Dean District Council. He has worked tirelessly for his local ward and for the wider Forest of Dean and I know that he will continue to do so as a District Councillor for Lydbrook.

“I’m honoured to take on the job of Cabinet Member for Property and Projects and look forward to working closely with fellow members; and indeed, all officers and staff to ensure we maintain continuity and provide the best service possible to our residents.”

Councillor Sid Phelps said:

“I was incredibly pleased to accept the position of Cabinet Member for Property and Projects and have thoroughly enjoyed my time in the role. I’m proud of the progress that has been made on many projects, particularly the ambitious new leisure facilities being constructed at Five Acres, and I look forward to construction beginning very soon.

“However, at this present time I feel it is right for me to take a step back and focus on other commitments within my life.

“I’m delighted that Councillor Tradgett has accepted the position and have no doubt that he’ll carry out the role dutifully. Furthermore, I remain fully committed to continue delivering for Lydbrook and the wider Forest of Dean in my role as a District Councillor.”

Councillor Phelps will continue to serve as a District Councillor for his ward of Lydbrook, with Councillor Dave Tradgett taking on the role of Cabinet Member for Property and Projects, as well as a District Councillor for Longhope and Huntley.

Full details for the Cabinet Members and their responsibilities can be found here:
<https://www.fdean.gov.uk/about-the-council/cabinet-roles-and-responsibilities/>

Gloucestershire County Council Parishes Report May 2026

beki.hoyland@gloucestershire.gov.uk

07815660013

Transport

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

I am now chair of the Forest of Dean Road Safety Group which brings together highways, fire, police, councillors from parish, town, district and county, Forestry England and others as required. The aim of this meeting is to highlight areas in the whole district that need attention and work done to improve safety. If there is something you would like to add to this agenda do let me know.

I thought rather than only letting you know about roads I would highlight public transport availability in the Forest. It is still capped at £3 for a single journey on stagecoach busses. With fuel costs increasing it may be worth considering taking the bus.

[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

Closed Roads

- 9th February to August 2026 Lydney to Whitecroft road is closed for structural maintenance. The no. 23 bus is rerouted as follows: Lydney, Bream, Whitecroft, Parkend, Sling.
- 18th to 22nd May from A48 to Awre, Bullo end for drainage works.
- 8th June to 16th June Awre Road, Blakeney drainage works
- 23rd -26th June A4151 between Littledean and Cinderford closed for resurfacing

Highways

First communities announced for Gloucestershire’s Safer Roads and Community 20s programme

Gloucestershire County Council has today finalised the first communities to be brought forward as part of its new Safer Roads and Community 20s programme – a countywide initiative designed to improve road safety, support public health and help create nicer places to live.

As you can see from the detail in the link several areas around us are in the first wave of introducing safer speeds.

Areas of: Cirencester, Cheltenham, Stroud, Tewkesbury and for us in the FoD:

- • Cinderford
- • Ruspidge
- • Soudley
- • Littledean
- • West Dean
- • Coleford

There will be a public consultation once the process starts. I will make sure that you all get early sight of it. There were two meetings of the Highways Local Panel which was formed to review how councillors work with our Local Highways manager. There is some concern that the money set for councillors to have some discretion over has been redirected into more general works and that the FoD will, again, be losing out on some finance. I will be sure to engage fully in the proposed process and argue for works that need doing to be given priority. **Please make sure that your parish priorities are given to me as they arise or on a regular basis so that I can make sure they are heard in the meetings proposed.**

The speed limit on the Speech House Road has been reduced to 50 mph against the recommendation of many local voices who thought that 40mph would be a safer speed as it has been proved that casualties have been increasing while the traffic travels at about 50mph

County News

Lib Dem administration chooses not to renew Gloucestershire Youth Climate Group

After two successful years, the Gloucestershire Youth Climate Group. The group was involved with climate action and advocating for youth voices in County Council decisions. They played an important role in scrutinising the Council's climate strategies, action plans and budgets. However, following budget reviews, the administration has decided not to continue with the programme.

GCC Cabinet approves *Stronger Futures* plan

Stronger Futures is a council-wide programme designed to 'modernise' GCC and make sure it is LGR ready. The plan is structured around three clear workstreams—Technology, Third-Party Spend and Organisational Design—which intend to strengthen the Council's financial position, digital capability and organisational readiness. However, the Green Group has questioned the administrations decision to progress with Microsoft as a key partner, given [the security concerns being raised by other European countries](#).

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service urges public to Be Water Aware as warmer weather approaches

Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) is urging people to take extra care in and around water as the weather starts to improve, as part of the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) annual Be Water Aware campaign.

New Crisis and Resilience Fund to provide support to families in crisis

Gloucestershire County Council has introduced the Crisis and Resilience Fund, a new programme providing support to families experiencing extreme hardship.

County Council exploring all options to provide long-term future for Lydbrook Bridge

Gloucestershire County Council is exploring all options to secure a sustainable, long-term future for Lydbrook Bridge in the Forest of Dean, ensuring the best possible value for local residents.

LGR Update

- The core LGR portfolio team is now in place: Emily McGuinness has been appointed as the Portfolio Director and Simon Higgins as the LGR Strategic Adviser.
- The implementation programmes have now been ‘stood up’ with ongoing work to outline how and what each programme would deliver over the next few years, balancing ensuring that the authority(ies) was ‘safe and legal’ to deliver and ambition for its development over a number of years.
- The Portfolio Plan has begun to identify critical milestones and interdependencies.
- Newtrality had been commissioned to scope service transition activity, including helping with collecting baseline data from all seven councils.
- Councils are currently discussing options for joint scrutiny arrangements to be approved by the Gloucestershire Leaders group.

GCC Meetings

There was no Full Council meeting held in April. The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday 13th May**. Cabinet met on 22nd April. At the meeting, the voted to approve:

- The *Stronger Futures* plan (see above)
- The *Local Growth Plan*, the councils economic plan for the next ten years which seeks to increase economic growth through being "unequivocally pro-business" and leaning into Gloucestershire’s “comparative advantage sectors” with growth potential, including cyber security, agritech and aerospace engineering.

The Greens question this approach. There is now unequivocal evidence that an economic strategy based on the pursuit of aggregate growth disproportionately benefits the rich and harms our natural environment. The Greens would instead pursue an economic strategy based on redistribution with investment targeted at industries with direct social and environmental benefit.

- The closure and disposal of Great Western Court Reablement Unit
- The Cotswold Canal Trust Stroudwater Renovation.
- Gloucestershire *Fire and Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan*.

Meetings were also held of the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Audit and Governance Committee, Constitution Committee.

Full recordings of all meetings can be found [here](#).

Clr Ray Donaghue

This is my first report as County Councillor, and I'm grateful for the support and encouragement I have received so far. I look forward to continuing to work closely with partners, residents, and community groups.

I really enjoy getting the best deal and more input for Cinderford & Ruspidge and I am very happy to advocate for residents whenever I can.

I really hope to do my small part in keeping the 2 areas as a nice place to live as possible and I want to be part of the solutions and not just part of the problems. I am often affected by the negativity that comes with the frustration and bureaucracy. I have met with hundreds of residents over the last year and I have been struck just how much they need and deserve hard working services and Councillors.

Over the next year I will work hard on whatever comes my way and I am sure there will be issues that are unexpected. Whatever happens or needs to be done, I believe things will improve the more we work hard and work together. I hope to do a lot of work on the state of our roads, the town centre and ASB in the coming months.

Below is a summary of the work I have been doing locally.

Key Activities Summary

Town Centre Regeneration

- Pushed for improvements including jet washing, refreshed road markings, and pavement works
- Funded new Heritage Stones to celebrate local history
- Worked with local media to promote regeneration efforts
- Collaborated with local councils and services to increase town centre cleaning and maintenance activity

Community Volunteering

- Joined FixMyStreet volunteers on local improvement projects
- Supported a new volunteer and helped plan small clean-ups and vegetation clearance
- Became a Flood Warden to support local resilience

Partnership Work

- Worked with Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), Forest of Dean District Council (FODDC), and partners to address deprivation challenges in the Forest of Dean
- Requested investigation into Brownfield Regeneration Grant opportunities
- Worked with local councils and services to deliver additional town centre tidying and cleaning

Speedwatch & Road Safety

- Helped coordinate Speedwatch sessions and encouraged wider participation
- Supported residents interested in receiving speed monitoring training
- Attended the Road Safety Group
- Founding member of the Highways Panel

Community Petitions & Advocacy

- Supported a major community petition for a pedestrian crossing in Steam Mills
- Continued working with the High Street Action Group on concerns regarding speed cushions near the hospital

Community Funding Support

- Assisted with successful funding bids benefiting:
 - Parks
 - Youth organisations
 - Wellbeing groups
 - Community facilities

Police & Community Safety

- Held regular liaison meetings with local police
- Preparing to join the Community Drugs Partnership
- Attended Neighbourhood Watch and Road Safety Group meetings
- Worked with partners to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB)

Casework & Local Issues

- Supported residents with highways, planning, and policing matters
- Participated in multi-agency work on:
 - Anti-social behaviour (ASB)
 - Trading Standards concerns
 - Forest High School updates
 - Discussions regarding the proposed Biosphere

Flooding & Infrastructure

- Continued work addressing flooding issues in Valley Road and Albion Road
- Supported early remedial works and efforts to secure further drainage surveys