
RUSPIDGE & SOUDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

Parish Councillors Present:

Cllrs. Jo Smith Chairman, Norman Snell, William Acland, Tony Matthews.

County Councillors Present:

Cllr. Beki Hoyland

District Councillors Present:

None Present.

Parish Council Clerk – Roland Dowding

Apologies:

Cllrs. Helen Medcraft, Graham Morgan, Bernie O’Neill.

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:

Adrian Peacey.

RUSPIDGE WELFARE TRUST (RWT)

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

6.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes.

6.2. No other business.

Public Participation

Adrian Peacey – Mr. Peacey questioned why the surface of the Blue Rock Trail at the Ruspidge end of the trail is at times so muddy and what action is being taken. Cllr. Smith answered the question under the agenda item, 6.13. Mr Peacey also questioned why the Hod Boy sign on the Blue Rock Trail had yet to be replaced. The Chairman informed Mr Peacey the sign is currently with the printers, and we are hoping to see it back in place ASAP.

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

6.2. No declaration of personal or prejudicial interest was declared.

6.3. **Minutes** - the minutes of the council meeting held on the **9th of May, 2023** were **ACCEPTED** as a true record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

6.4. **Matters Arising** – There were no matters arising from the minutes.

6.5. **District Councillor Reports**

Report is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.

6.6. **County Councillor Reports**

Report is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.

Note, Cllr. Hoyland confirmed a meeting was held with Cllr. Philip Robinson, Tom Main and members of the public present to discuss concerns over the lack of public transport throughout the parish and district. The minutes of the said meeting are to be circulated to parish council members. Cllr. Smith noted that issues around public transport is a national issue and advised the public present to also start lobbying their local MP.

6.7. **Planning** – completed schedule is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.

6.8. **Financial Matters** - Following a report by the Treasurer the council **APPROVED** the accounts presented for the **June** payment totalling **£10,985.43**, this figure is inclusive of confidential expenditure.

6.9. **AGAR COMPLIANCE** – Section one, assertions two & six. Members confirmed consideration of the internal audit arrangements had been undertaken, alongside Financial Regulations and Risk Assessments that had been adopted at the February 2023 meeting.

6.10. **AGAR SECTION ONE** – Council unanimously approved by resolution, the Audit Annual Return Section One, Annual Governance Statement 2022/23. The Chairman, Mrs Jo Smith & Clerk Mr Roland Dowding duly signed the document in the presence of the members present.

6.11. **AGAR SECTION TWO** - Council unanimously approved by resolution, Section Two, Accounting Statements 2022/23. Signed & dated by the Clerk Mr Roland Dowding prior to the meeting. The Chairman, Mrs Jo Smith duly signed the document in the presence of the members present.

6.12. **EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS** – Members noted and agreed to the public rights period from the 15th of June to the 26th of July.

6.13. **BLUE ROCK TRAIL (BRT)** – Cllr. Smith informed the members and the public present that she had reviewed all of the documents related to the BRT. Cllr. Smith highlighted that it is not just the walkable surface area of the trail that requires attention, the banks adjacent to the trail and the buttresses are in poor condition. A BRT committee meeting has not been held since December 2016, due to there not being an elected committee. An annual survey should be undertaken on the banks of the brook, along with banks and buttresses adjacent to the trail. No formal written record can be found that a survey has ever been undertaken and certainly not by an expert in the required field. Cllr. Smith stated and wanted it made clear that if a survey did take place there is no written record of it. Summarising, when the initial report for the formation of the BRT was submitted in the late 1990s, a letter from a Consultant Civil & Structural Engineer dated 1996, for a rigorous analysis of the supporting walls was estimated to be in the region of £8,000 to £9,000. Cllr. Smith quoted the Consultant Civil & Structural Engineer's letter as stating, despite the costs involved, there still might not be able to give

any assurances as to the stability of the walls and buttresses. In November 1996 it was recommended an investigation be undertaken to understand the nature of the ground to which the walls give support. Considering these requirements and the financial considerations, Historic England has been contacted for further advice in how to proceed due to the historic nature of the area. At the time of the meeting Cllr. Smith had yet to receive a reply. Funding sources are being explored. A proposal is being drafted by Cllr. Smith to put out to Consulting Engineers, to obtain a concise Engineers report. Funding will need to be obtained for any further investigation work to be undertaken. Cllr. Smith is looking into potential works to scrape the mud back from the trail, particularly at the Ruspidge end of the trail. Community Payback is being contacted to enlist their services with this task. A meeting is being held with them on the 27th of June at 11:30 am at the BRT to discuss this task further. It has been stated that due to the nature of the location of the BRT, a limited amount of machinery can access the location, further complicating the work required to the surface of the trail. Additional complications of access will need to be overcome via the Forestry Commission. The project is ongoing.

- 6.14. **SOUDLEY VILLAGE HALL** – Waste Removal Grant Amend. Members present agreed to amend the purpose of the grant as a contribution towards the repair of the Lower Rd bridge to the Village Hall, on the proviso that the Village Hall cannot apply for a further grant for waste removal on Soudley Village Hall Recreational Field.
- 6.15. **COUNCILLOR VACANCIES** – Members agreed for the clerk to produce posters of a suitable nature advertising for members of the public to become a Councillor. Distribute said poster in both paper and digital format. Members to attend local events, fetes, coffee mornings etc, to run a stand and directly engage with the public to canvas for suitable members. Further consideration of this topic and a marketing campaign to be considered.
- 6.16. **Correspondence** - The council **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following correspondence:
The Parish Councillors accepted all relevant correspondence has been forwarded via email to all members.
- 6.17. **Next Meeting** - the next meeting of the council is to be held in the **Ruspidge Memorial Hall** at **7.00 pm Tuesday, 11th July 2023**. The agenda deadline is **Monday, 3rd July, 2023**.
- 6.18. **Exclusion of the Press and the Public** - the council **RESOLVED** that for any remaining business of a confidential nature, the press and the public should be excluded from the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 10.xi (2020).

The meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.

Signed:.....Chair.

Dated:.....

APPENDIX

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

P0595/23/LD1

Brook Farm , Tramway Road, Soudley, Gloucestershire.

Application under Section 191 to establish the use of the erected shed and stables is lawful.

Parish Response. No Objection.

Decisions notified by the Planning Authority

P0452/23/FUL

Former St Whites Primary School St Whites Road Cinderford Gloucestershire GL14 3DH
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	District Decision	Date
No Obj	Consent	25/05/2023

P0227/23/FUL

28 Buckshaft Road Ruspidge Gloucestershire GL14 3DU
Erection of single storey extension to include workshop.

Parish Comment	District Decision	Date
No Obj	Consent	31/05/2023

County Councillor Report June.

Cllr. Hoyland.

Report to Parish Councils for June 2023

Soudley: I am thinking that it may be worth your while applying for the blue rock trail to be put on the definitive map, potentially as a restricted byway. If you are interested in this I am happy to work with you on it.

Roads: I would be interested to know what your thoughts are on speed limits in your parish, all thoughts welcome, please either tell me in the meeting or e mail or call me as you wish. Your personal view is very welcome, but I would also be interested if the Parish Council has a collective view. I am attaching the current GCC road safety policy for background reading if you wish.

Road works [Roadworks - Highways \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](http://gloucestershire.gov.uk)

Cinderford Road between Blakeney and Soudley is still closed, access to the Dean Heritage Centre is maintained from the Soudley end. It is due to open again early July.

Roman Road between Soudley and Wenchford is due to closed between the 13th June and the 29th June. I have made Streetworks aware that having the Roman Road closed for two weeks whilst the other road is also shut will cause long detours. I am hopeful the works on The Roman Road will be delayed so there is only one closure here at a time.

Verge maintenance: The visibility cut is due to start on the 19th June in the district with a full cut starting in mid-August. I have been talking to Nathan Chout about this as I know the growth down narrow lanes gets out of control during the summer months. I have agreed to use some of the highways local money to buy in some extra hedge cutting after bird nesting season to cut it back hard so that hopefully the ingress onto the roads will be less next year.

I would like to remind you that there is a **community maintenance team** that we can call on. If you have work do let me know. I have asked that they concentrate on making sure pavements are clear for pedestrians to stay safe over the summer months, hopefully you will see them out strimming.

There is a county wide scheme coming through our area over the next few months called a **jet patcher**. A machine that will go along a road and fill in low level defects. It is suitable for areas such as an estate where the road surface has the top layer wearing away but not potholes that are big enough to report. There will also at some point be a team coming through called find and fill which should hopefully deal with the slightly larger holes that we still below the reportable threshold. Do let me know if there is a road that is particularly bad, but I think Nathan Chout has a pretty good overview. Here's hoping this will make a general improvement to our roads.

Busses: I have been working with a group of residents to see what options are available for public transport between Blakeney and Cinderford to take in Soudley and Ruspidge, this is ongoing, do get in touch if you are interested in this. We delivered a petition at full council hand have been talking to cabinet members, officers and Lydney Dial a ride to seek solutions.

I have also secured an extra stop for the Robin at Awre village hall. Feed back on your experience with the robin would be appreciated.

Motions at full council in May

Biodiversity: Council declared that alongside the reducing carbon it was important to recognise biodiversity needed to be considered as part of all GCC's decision making. That a biodiversity week would be hosted to support schools, business, parish and town councils get involved with maintaining the biodiversity of the county. [Wild Gloucestershire campaign launched to promote biodiversity - Gloucestershire County](#). Or find the link below to the weekly newsletter helping residents with actions they can take to tackle issues to do with climate change and biodiversity, it is a very useful tool that would be good to share widely.
[Councilhttps://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKGLOUCESTERSHIRE/bulletins/354e518](https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKGLOUCESTERSHIRE/bulletins/354e518)

Care Leavers: The independent review of children's social care published in May 2022 recognised that outcomes for people with care experience were often negative and that @care experience @ should be a protected characteristic. The council resolved to incorporate this into all policies in the equality impact assessment and work with local partners such as schools and the NHS to ensure this is a piece of work that has impact for the good of those most disadvantaged.

Community Meals: that community meals need to be sustainably funded and that Scrutiny continues to get updates.

Carers

In support of Carers Week (5 to 11 June) the county council and NHS in Gloucestershire want to say thank you to unpaid carers and encourage them to have a conversation with the Gloucestershire Carers Hub to see what is available to support them.

<https://gloucestershircarershub.co.uk/> Carers hub, where to find help if you are an unpaid carer.

Summer Fire Safety

As part of the Fire Kills campaign, Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) is asking people across the county to stay safe this summer as they make the most of the weather and enjoy the great outdoors, whether camping, cooking, or exploring. **Open Fires**

If you must have an open fire:

- It should be downwind, at least 10m from the tent.
- Clear dry vegetation, such as leaves and twigs and form a circle of earth around the fire.
- Build a stack that will collapse inwards whilst burning.
- Do not leave fires unattended.
- Make sure that fires are fully extinguished after use.

If a fire should breakout:

- Call the local fire and rescue service and give the exact location.
- If necessary, give a map reference.
- If this is not possible a landmark such as a farm or pub etc, will help them locate you.

Grass and forest fires spread rapidly:

- Never throw cigarette ends out of a car window – they could start a fire and ruin surrounding countryside.
- Don't leave bottles or glass in woodlands. Sunlight shining through glass can start a fire. Take them home or put them in a waste or recycling bin.

If you discover a fire:

- Do not be tempted to investigate.
- Leave the area as quickly as possible and call 999 and ask for the fire and rescue service.
- Do not return unless the fire and rescue service tells you that it is safe to do so.

Cllr. Morgan

This month the main issues facing Cinderford & Ruspidge from a County Council point of view is the loss of regular bus services for Ruspidge & Soudley, so this week myself and my County Council colleague Cllr Beki Hoyland County Councillor for the Soudley area took a small delegation of local parishioners from Ruspidge & Soudley to see Cllr Phil Robinson Cabinet Member and Tom Main the officer responsible for public transport at Shire Hall.

Other issues facing the area are the closure of St Annals Road Cinderford where complaints have been made as to the reason for the closure, and the fact that some residents were not notified.

Cinderford Clerk and I along with the Roland Dowding Clerk from Ruspidge & Soudley and with Ruspidge & Soudley Cllr Bill Acland, we raised several issues with Andrew Middlecote Forest Highways Manager, we are going to continue these meetings on a regular basis as they prove very useful.

In Ruspidge we were told by Andrew that a TRO has been raised for double yellow lines at the junction of Railway Road with St Whites Road, this is because of illegal parking making this junction very dangerous, a request has been made for a TRO for double yellow lines above the entrance to Edmonds Way again to Combat dangerous parking, Roland was asked to list the work that needs to been done with regard the linesman gang in Ruspidge.

In Cinderford we are exploring the request for a bus shelter in St Whites Road where some 36 students from Cinderford and Ruspidge wait for School Transport, we are still looking into the placing of the Speedwatch Camera, which really should go in St Whites Road where school children have been hit by vehicles when crossing the road to school.

In Cinderford several Roads have been put in the programme for Resurfacing they are College Road, Station Terrace, Upper Bilson Road, and we have asked for Elm Dean Denecroft to also be considered.