
RUSPIDGE & SOUDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the MEETING held on Tuesday 14th October 2025.

Parish Councillors Present:

Cllrs. Tony Matthews, Helen Medcraft, Norman Snell, Paul Firth, Denis Bagwell-Johnson.

County Councillors Present:

Ray Donaghue.

Beki Hoyland.

District Councillors Present:

Non-Present.

Parish Council Clerk – Roland Dowding.

Apologies:

Cllrs. William Acland Chairman, Bernie O'Neill, Andy Moore, Richard Burton.

Standing Declarations of Interest

- a) Ruspidge Memorial Hall - Insignificant personal interest by Cllr. Denis Bagwell-Johnston.
- b) St Whites School - Insignificant personal interest by Cllr. William Acland.
- c) Soudley Village Hall - Insignificant personal interest by Cllr. Norman Snell.

Public Present: Nicky Packer, Priya Shukla, Barbara Pond.

R&SPC Public Participation: Presentation by Barabara Pond, representing Community Action In Gloucestershire GRCC. Housing report attached as part of the appendix to these minutes.

Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council. The Parish Council stated that they agreed in principle to take the next steps to explore the delivery of affordable housing in the parish.

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

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

10.3. **Minutes** - The minutes of the council meeting held on the **9th of September, 2025** were **ACCEPTED** as a true record of the meeting and were duly signed by the acting Chairman, Cllr. Tony Matthews.

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

10.5. **District Councillor Reports**

Reports are attached as an Appendix to these minutes.

10.6. **County Councillor Reports**

None Present, No reports submitted.

- 10.7. **Planning** – The completed schedule for **October** is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.
- 10.8. Following a report by the Honorary Treasurer, Cllr. Norman Snell the council **APPROVED** the accounts presented for **October**, payment totalling **£7,307.18**. These figures are inclusive of confidential expenditure. A financial report is included for October in the appendix to these minutes.
- 10.9. **Budget Transfers**
- Transfer from Contingency Budget **£ 250.00** to balance Street Furniture Budget. Member approval requested. Approved.
 - Transfer from Contingency Budget **£ 1,000.00** to balance Street Defibrillator Budget. Member approval requested. Approved.
- 10.10. **Presentation of 2026/27 Draft Budget** – Members noted the addition of six new contingency budget categories for long term capital maintenance of play areas, IT peripherals, Defibrillator maintenance, long term staff sickness, legal administration fees and election fees. The RFO, Mr. Roland Dowding noted, budget calculation is still ongoing and will be presented again in November and final approval will be sought at the January 2026 meeting.
- 10.11. **Community Speed Watch SNEYD WOOD** – Cllr. Tony Matthews enquired with GCC Cllr. Ray Donaghue as to the possibility of an installation of sleeping policemen/speed bumps along Sneyd Wood Rd. Cllr. Donaghue agreed to investigate the possibility with the relevant authority at GCC Highways.
- 10.12. **Ruspidge Defibrillator Cabinet** – Members unanimously approved replacement and installation of a new cabinet at Ruspidge. Estimated Cost for purchase and install, £1,100.00.
- 10.13. **Liaison's Report for Soudley Village Hall** – Cllr. Norman Snell presented his report.
- Lydbrook training bank, concert held in the SVH, well attended and popular.
 - Sunday 9th November, bonfire & fireworks display, £5.00 entry fee.
- 10.14. **Liaison's Report for Ruspidge Memorial Hall** – Cllr. Denis Bagwell-Johnston presented his report.
- RMH Committee roles currently undergoing change.
- 10.15. **Correspondence** - The council **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following correspondence:
The Parish Councillors accepted all relevant correspondence has been forwarded via email to all members.
- 10.16. **Next Meeting** - the next meeting of the council will be held in the **Soudley Village Hall** at **7.00 p.m. Tuesday, 11th November 2025**. The agenda deadline is **Monday, 3rd of November 2025**.
- 10.17. **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 8:30 p.m.

Signed:.....Chairman.

Dated:.....

APPENDIX

FINANCIAL REPORT for the meeting in: October 2025					
1. Reconciliation of Account as at:		end September 2025			
Ledger		£		Bank	£
Balance b/f		121,405.69	(Treasurers)	Community A/c.	1,040.69
Lloyds Bank Interest		30.74	(Reserves)	Comm Inst. Access A/c.	85,464.39
FoDDC Precept		34,255.00		Unity Current A/c	906.00
Unity Trust Bank Interest		359.81		Unity Inst Access A/c	63,805.44
Total		156,051.24		Total	151,216.52
Less Expenditure Sept		4,834.72			
Balance		151,216.52		Balance	151,216.52
2. Accounts for Payment		# = Paid in September but on October's ledger.			
Payee	No	Total £	VAT	Narrative	
#* Solutions In Technology	(1) DD	42.00	7.00	Broadband Cease/Migration Charge	
# EE Ltd	(2) DD	16.07		Mobile Phone	
Module IT	(3) DD	19.79	3.30	Inv-018565. Voip, Evolve IP & Additional Charges	
# GritBins.net (Kingfisher Dire	4	227.03	37.84	Grit Bin Soudley	
Module IT	5	92.80	15.47	Inv-018550. IT Support & Microsoft Office	
TEEC	6	194.39	32.40	Web Hosting & Domain - Reoccurring Charges Annual	
Tim Harris	7	555.51		St Clean, Park Reports, Defibs, Bus shelters, BRT Cutting, Cullimore Bridge safety Checks.	
Tim Harris	8	247.05		Soudley Grit Bins, Bells Place Grass Cut, Woodland View Grass Cutting.	
Merlin Waste	9	360.00		Dog Waste Bins Empty	
Cinderford Town Council	10	530.64	88.44	Inv-405 Office Rent & Service Charge	
Complete Landscapes	11	1,104.00	184.00	Parish Grass Cutting	
Soudley Village hall	12	24.00		Inv-2025-131 Hall Rental	
Soudley Village hall	13	25.00		Inv-0026 Grounds maintenance Play Area	
Clerks & Councils Direct	14	93.00		Clerks & Councils Subscription Renewal.	
Community Heart Beat	15	984.00	164.00	Defib Cabinet Ruspidge	
# Lloyds Service Charge	(16) SC	4.25		Bank Service Charge	
Cinderford Youth FC	17	500.00		R&SPC Grant Payment	
TOTAL		5,019.53	532.45		

<u>Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council</u>			
<u>Planning Schedule October, 2025</u>			
<u>Planning Reference</u>	<u>Parish</u>		
<u>Site Address & Detail</u>	<u>Comment</u>		
P1086/25/TE	No Comment		
Telecommunications Equipment.			
Application for determination as to whether prior approval is required for further details			
Sneyd Wood Road Cinderford Gloucestershire			
Prior notification for the installation of 1no. 20m 'Phase 8' monopole, 6no. antennas, 2no. 0.3m dishes, 1no. GPS Node and 4no. ground-based equipment cabinets (1no. wraparound and 3no. others) and ancillary development thereto			
P1010/25/FUL	Objection		
Wenchford Weirs Blackpool Brook Blakeney Gloucestershire.			
Removal of both weirs, including the wing wall structures and re-grading of weir and associated work			
<i>I object to this application on the grounds that the application does not provide sufficient details regarding the works being carried out. If it was purely a matter of reinstatement work back to its original form when built, then there would be no objection. This application seems to indicate otherwise with insufficient explanation as to why not.</i>			
P1168/25/FUL	No Objection.		
64 Ruspidge Road, Ruspidge, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.			
Demolition of garage and erection of new garage with workshop above and associated landscaping			
<u>Planning Reference</u>	<u>Parish</u>	<u>District</u>	
<u>Site Address & Detail</u>	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Date</u>
P0841/25/FUL	No objection	Consent	12/09/2025
Zion Chapel Tramway Road Soudley Gloucestershire GL14 2UG			
Change of use from holiday let use to residential dwelling.			

County Report, October 2025.

Contact me on
beki.hoyland@gloucestershire.gov.uk
07815660013

Roads

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.

Closed Roads

6th – 14th October Church Road Soudley. Severn Trent.

20th Oct. -25th October. New Road, Whitecroft to Lydney for tree work

27th and 28th October. Awre Road from Blakeney, for ditching.

10th -14th November Roman Road, Soudley. Resurfacing. (See *note below!)

17th November – 20th November Bream High Street. (Near the coffee shop) Gas works.

17th -18th November Sutton Road (Littledean to Soudley). Ditching.

24th -25th November Popes Hill (lower road) reinforcing the bank.

25th Nov -27th November. Lydney Road from Yorkley for ditching.

16th -19th December Dean Road, (Newnham to Littledean, below The Grange) patching.

5th January – 28th August 2026 New Road Whitecroft to Lydney. Geotechnical works.

Note: Carriageway resurfacing: Road from Upper Soudley to Blackpool Bridge junction, for approximately 5 Days (excl. weekends) between the hours of 07:00 to 19:00. The PROPOSED start and end dates are currently **Monday 10th November 2025 until Friday 14th November 2025, however, keep an eye on the web page detailed below or the signs on site for any short notice changes.*

Local Nature Recovery Strategy Consultation - get involved!

The public consultation for the Gloucestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy is now open! It will run from 8 September 2025 to 19 October 2025.

What is it? A Local Nature Recovery Strategy is a spatial strategy required by the Environment Act 2021, which will guide where and how nature recovery can best be achieved in the County. By law, each Local Nature Recovery Strategy must:

- include a statement of biodiversity priorities
- include a local habitat map
- be reviewed and republished every 3 to 10 years.
- If you would like to ask more questions and learn more about this, you can attend one of the drop-in sessions online.

Get involved with the consultation [👉 here](#)

Funding Opportunity: Let me know if you know of some excellent local initiatives that could do with a small amount of money to support them to keep giving to their communities. I am particularly interested in those that help build connections to nature and food growing.

[Council to invest £1.1 million to support grassroots projects](#)

Gloucestershire County Council is set invest £1.1 million to create a new Grassroots Neighbourhood Fund that will allow each county councillor to invest £20,000 into local grassroots projects.

[Government responds to Green Group motion regarding the nationalisation of Thames Water](#)

Emma Hardy, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs has responded to the Green Group motion from July's Full Council meeting regarding the case for nationalising Thames Water and the wider UK water industry. The response can be read [here](#).

Council to continue lead on support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Cabinet agreed plans for Gloucestershire County Council to continue its joint leadership of the Department for Education's (DfE) Southwest Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Change Partnership Programme. The programme places Gloucestershire in a unique position to test new approaches and influence the DfE by providing feedback on its proposed reforms.

Connect to Work launches in Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire County Council announces the launch of the 'Connect to Work' scheme which officially started operating in July 2025. Funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Connect to Work is one of a series of measures which aims to support people back into work.

Council creates over 1,500 new childcare places in Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire County Council has helped to create over 1,500 new childcare places since April 2024, including 526 Early Years places and 1,128 Wraparound childcare places.

Have your say on Gloucestershire's digital future

Gloucestershire County Council is inviting residents, businesses and community groups to help shape a new vision for the county's digital future. Public engagement will run until Monday 20 October and residents can provide their opinions [online](#).

Consultation launch of Gloucestershire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Gloucestershire County Council is announcing the launch of a public consultation for the county's first Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The consultation process began on the 8 September and runs for six weeks, closing on Wednesday 15 October. Feedback can be provided [online](#).

Discounted compost bins for Gloucestershire residents

Starting a compost heap in summer has the benefit of heat. This is an essential element for speeding up composting. Summer offers faster decomposition due to naturally high temperatures, which support bacteria activity. Gloucestershire residents are able to get £15 off eligible bins on the [website](#).

Additional news from the Country Council can be found [here](#).

Local Government Reorganisation Update

Proposals for the LGR are continuing to be considered by each of the seven councils. A public consultation on the options (a single unitary council for the whole county, two unitary councils split east (Cheltenham, Tewkesbury and Cotswold) and west (Gloucester, Forest of Dean and Stroud), and a 'Greater Gloucester' unitary council plus a unitary council for the remainder of the county) is expected to be run by government early in 2026 before a decision is likely to be made by mid-2026.

For more information, please visit the dedicated local government reorganisation site: <https://futuregloucestershire.org.uk/>

GCC Meetings

Full Council

The latest full council meeting took place in Wednesday 10th September. The full recording can be viewed [here](#).

Motions passed:

1. Beki Hoyland seconded a motion calling for the Adopted Children & Special Guardianship Support Fund to be maintained, rather than being cut and short term timeframes put in place as is being proposed by this government.
2. Green Group motion for Gloucestershire County Council to support the application by the Forest of Dean District Council to have its area designated as a [UNESCO Biosphere](#).

A motion raised by Reform to review the planning status of hotels for migrant accommodation was rejected.

Cabinet

This month's Cabinet meeting took place on Wednesday 17 September. Issues discussed included:

1. The establishment of the 'Grassroots Neighbourhood Fund', see above.
2. The procurement process for the supply, installation and maintenance of 229 new and replacement advertising enabled bus shelters and 15 free-standing units (FSUs). (I have been pushing for this contract to exclude advertising for 'junk food' and high carbon activities such as flights)
3. Reports on Gloucestershire's Childcare Sufficiency Duty and Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring.
4. Funding for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Change Partnership Programme.
5. Approval of the appointment of an external improvement partner to support Gloucestershire County Council's (GCC's) Adult Social Care service to deliver the objectives of GCC's "Prevent, Reduce, Delay" transformation workstream.
6. Arrangements to increase capacity to manage Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards applications.
7. Approval of highways works in relation to the Forest Road Lydney Geotechnical Stabilisation Scheme and a highways framework agreement relating to the provision of construction works in respect of highways, structures, drainage and geotechnical schemes.
8. The procurement and award of a contract for the provision of body removal services on behalf of Gloucestershire Coroner service.

Full minutes and reports can be found [here](#) and a recording of the meeting can be viewed [here](#).

Also held during September, with representation from the Green Group on all of them as opposition members, often chairing them, were meetings of the:

- Environment Scrutiny Committee,
- Adult, Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee;
- Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- Pensions Committee,
- Economic Strategy Scrutiny Committee
- Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Police and Crime Panel,
- Planning Committee
- Audit and Governance Committee.

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

The Green Pledge Project celebration event

You are warmly invited to a day of celebration which includes sharing project highlights, workshops, exhibitions, talks, document displays, storytelling and a musical performance inspired by birdsong. 🎵

You can find out more about the [Green Pledge Project here](#).

When? 🗓️ Saturday 25 October, between 10am - 4.30pm at the Heritage Hub, Alvin Street, Gloucester GL1 3DW

Cinderford & Ruspidge County Councillor Report October 2025

Cllr. Ray Donaghue.

Neighbourhood Watch Scheme – We have a meeting set at The Wesley for November 18th (Tuesday). Could everyone please let anyone who may be interest know and to contact me. I have emailed the flyer to go with the report.

Speedwatch – I am helping coordinate a local speedwatch campaign. Dave Holland has agreed to give us 2 cameras to ensure speed – one for Steam Mills and one for the High St.

Town Centre Regeneration – Catherine Lines (the new Market Towns Officer) is building a plan to improve the centre. I have been in meetings and arranging meetings with the different services and officers to look at how we can tidy up the highways and appearance of the town centre. We have met with Cabinet members for Highways and Business. CTC are passing on some plans for housing, redevelopment and traffic calming that got shelved under previous administrations, I am arranging a meeting with the different partners who manage the streets with a strong goal of improving the centre and the highways.

Fixmystreet – we now have a volunteer started. This will help greatly with the above. We are taking the lead in putting in reports and trying to hold the authorities to account for what they are responsible for.

PSPO (Public Spaces Protection Order) – Working with CTC and the Police to attempt to get this in place for the Belle Vue Ctr and possibly consider the centre. They are difficult to get but we are looking at it. Ongoing.

We have a new fund that County Councillors can access (see press release below) I am going to try and focus on the regeneration of the town centre and highways with this fund if that possible but I am open to other ideas and causes.

I have been advocating for charities that are in GCC buildings at risk of closure.

Other constituent work includes: highways, planning, school transportation, ASB and policing issues.

Other work I have been doing at a GCC level is:

I have been nominated as shadow spokesperson for Highways.

I have started helping the new MEAM (make every adult matter) initiative for complex rough sleepers/service users.

Some useful press releases:

Councillor-led grassroots fund to boost health and wellbeing across Gloucestershire.

A new Councillor-led grant scheme will soon be launched, to support grassroots initiatives seeking to improve health and wellbeing across Gloucestershire.

Launching on Wednesday 22 October 2025 – the Grassroots Neighbourhood Fund will deliver funding to community initiatives that will have a positive impact on health and wellbeing and our local communities. This includes projects that:

- Promote and encourage health and wellbeing for all.
- Promote access to nature and/or the environment.
- Promote healthy lifestyles.
- Improve digital inclusion.
- Encourage safer neighbourhoods and community cohesion.
- Enable people to build social connections and contribute to reducing social isolation and loneliness.
- Have a focus on individuals or groups who may be at higher risk of experiencing inequalities because of their life circumstances.

The grant scheme will run for 18 months, and each Councillor will have up to £20,000 to support projects in their electoral division.

Full details of the scheme criteria, application process, and Councillor FAQs will shortly be available on the GCC website.

Help improve SEND support: take the 2025 Parent Carer Survey



Communications Service

generic mailbox

2 min read



[SEND Survey Please Share!](#)

If you are a parent carer of a child or young person aged between 0 to 25 years old with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) who is receiving education or support in Gloucestershire, then this survey is for you.

If you know a family with SEND, please let them know about this survey, which is open until Friday 5 December 2025.

The Annual Parent Carer Survey is our way of hearing from SEND families. It is an anonymous questionnaire that asks for feedback about the education, health and care services and support available for children and young people with SEND.

We encourage SEND families to take this opportunity to share their views and experiences. It is helpful and important for us to hear about the advice, support and information they currently receive, how helpful it is, and how they think support and services can improve.

The information they share in the survey will help the SEND and Inclusion Partnership (SILAP) to better understand how to make continuous improvement to the services and offer for families.

Last year the survey was completed by 422 parent carers, predominantly from White British communities and with school-aged children between 5-16 years. The data was analysed and provided a baseline set of data for comparison. Feedback and views received have been responded to via the [‘You Said, We Did’ Annual Report](#).

Widening participation

This year we are working closely with schools, settings, community connectors, family hubs and dozens of organisations in Gloucestershire’s SEND community to hear from all communities across the county. In widening participation in the survey, we are especially encouraging those families with children in Early Years and those with young people aged 16-25 to engage.

In co-production with Gloucestershire Parent Carer Forum and SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service) we have applied learning from last year, so this year’s survey is shorter and easier to complete. Average completion time is 12 minutes.

How do I complete the survey?

The survey is open from Monday 6 October and remains open until Friday 5 December at 5pm.

By clicking the following link, you can complete the [Annual Parent Carer Survey 2025](#).

Who do I contact if I would like a physical copy of the survey or have any queries?

The survey can also be made available as a hard copy. To request a hard copy of the survey please contact localoffer@gloucestershire.gov.uk.

Who can I speak to if I need help with completing my survey?

If you need additional support in completing this survey, you can contact Gloucestershire Parent Carer Forum at info@glosparentcarerforum.org.uk or by messaging their [Facebook page](#).

There are other organisations that can support. Details can be found on [‘Support for Families with SEND’, Gloucestershire’s Local Offer part of Glos Families Directory](#).

Read more about the survey in the October’s edition of the Families in Partnership newsletter:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/families-in-partnership-newsletters/families-in-partnership-newsletter-october-2025/>

Consultation on School Admission Arrangements for 2027/2028

Gloucestershire County Council is inviting feedback on proposed changes to the admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools for the academic year 2027/2028.

Under the School Admissions Code 2021, admission authorities must consult on their arrangements at least every seven years,

or sooner if changes are proposed. Although the last consultation was held in 2023, we have received feedback about confusion surrounding the “sibling” criterion, particularly for families with children attending companion Infant and Junior schools.

To improve clarity, we are proposing revised wording to the oversubscription criteria. The key changes include:

- Infant/Primary Schools: Sibling priority will now explicitly include children with siblings at the companion Junior School.
- Junior Schools: Priority will be given to children attending the companion Infant School, and sibling priority will include those with siblings at the companion Infant School.

The consultation aims to ensure families better understand how places are allocated when schools are oversubscribed. Schools and families are encouraged to review the proposed changes and share their views. The consultation is open from 1 October to 12 November 2025.

For more information and to take part in the consultation, please visit [Have your say Gloucestershire](#)

Childcare Places Expansion

As part of the childcare expansion programme, the council has helped to create 1,654 new places. These include 526 Early Years places and 1,128 Wraparound childcare places.

From 1 September 2025, children aged between nine months and four-years-old may be eligible for up to 30 hours per week of funded childcare to support parents or guardians to return to work.

Wraparound childcare is designed for primary school age children and provides school term care from 8am until 6pm. The Government ambition is for this to be available for all primary children that have this requirement.

To achieve this, the council has supported local providers to open new settings or to create more early years places in existing settings and supported schools and other providers to offer childcare outside the regular school day.

In the Annual Childcare Sufficiency Duty Report 2025, which is set to be approved at a meeting of Gloucestershire County Council’s Cabinet on September 17, it was revealed that the county’s care for young children is in a strong position compared to the average nationally.

68.2% of children in Gloucestershire were found to have attained a good level of development by the time they reach the end of Reception year at the age of five, compared to 67.7% nationally.

The take up of universally funded childcare for children aged three and four has a take up of 95.3% in Gloucestershire, compared to 94.9% nationally.

The quality of childcare in Gloucestershire is high, with 100% of childminders and 96.5% of day care providers meeting Ofsted inspection standards at last inspection.

The report also states that, despite the challenges faced by the sector locally and nationally, there are currently enough childcare places available within the county. The council is working hard to help meet any localised gaps in provision.

Any parents or guardians who are unable to find childcare places, should contact providers listed on the Glos Families Directory. Visit www.familyhubs.gloucestershire.gov.uk to view the directory and a range of other useful information and support.

The council continues to work hard to ensure there are enough places for children with SEND and that they can be effectively supported by providers. Parents or guardians with questions about childcare for children with SEND should contact the Early Years advice line on eyesadvice@goucestershire.gov.uk. Providers can also contact the Childcare Business Team if they have concerns, either about expanding or the number of children on their waiting list eybusinesssupport@goucestershire.gov.uk.

District Councillor Report – Richard Burton – October 2025

Over 2200 comments received in response to Forest of Dean Local Plan

The Forest of Dean Revised Draft Local Plan continues to take shape, with the Council receiving over 2200 comments in response to the latest consultation to help decide the future direction of the plan.

To support the long-term needs of the district through to 2043, the emerging Local Plan sets out a strategic framework designed to address climate change, safeguard the distinctive natural environment of the Forest of Dean, and deliver a balanced provision of facilities, employment opportunities, and essential services.

In line with updated government housing requirements, the new local plan strategy must accommodate the delivery of over 13,000 new homes by 2043, an increase of approximately 6,000 homes compared to previous targets.

District Council asked residents to challenge themselves this Recycle Week

Recycle Week, 22–28 September, was an opportunity to celebrate recycling successes in the Forest of Dean and to raise awareness of how we can all reduce waste and lessen our impact on the environment. Forest of Dean District Council encouraged residents to get involved by challenging themselves to see how much more they can recycle.

54% of household waste in the Forest was recycled in 2024-25, which is 10% above the national average. However, analysis of the district's refuse shows that half of what is being binned – by weight – could have been recycled. The biggest culprit is food, but many other materials that are recyclable at the kerbside are being put into bins too, such as foil, yoghurt pots, shampoo bottles and glass bottles.

New road signs improve safety for pupils at three Forest of Dean schools

New road safety signs have been installed outside three primary schools in the Forest of Dean to improve safety for pupils and their families by discouraging parking near school entrances and on pavements.

The initiative, funded by the Forest of Dean Community Safety Partnership, of which Forest of Dean District Council is a statutory member, has resulted in new road safety signs being placed outside Berry Hill Primary School, Tutshill C of E Primary School, and English Bicknor C of E Primary School.

Local Government Reorganisation

This process grinds on, with limited information and little justification. The District Council is expending a lot of officer and councillor time without, it seems, much reward. We have contacted the minister and made our views known, that we object to the idea and the implementation. The latest is that we were presented with a highly detailed four hundred page document with less than twenty-four hours to make comments.

As far as I know, the issue of where Parish and Town councils fit in to the new structure is still not clear. The plan appears to be that Neighbourhood Partnerships will be set up and Parish and Town councils will have a seat or seats on them, but it seems that most of the people on the Neighbourhood Partnerships will be appointed by the chair from local community groups.

Don't take any of the above as fixed, the whole thing, including the size and location of the new Unitary Authority, is yet to be determined

