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# RUSPIDGE & SOUDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES of the MEETING held on Tuesday 10th October, 2023**

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

**Parish Councillors Present:**

Cllrs. Vice Chairman William Acland, Norman Snell, Helen Medcraft, Tony Matthews.

**County Councillors Present:**

Cllr. Beki Hoyland.

**District Councillors Present:**

None Present.

**Parish Council Clerk** – Roland Dowding

**Apologies:**

Cllrs. Jo Smith, Andy Moore, Richard Burton, Bernie O’Neill, Graham Morgan.

**Standing Declarations of Interest**

A) Ruspidge Memorial Hall - Insignificant personal interest by Cllr. William Acland.

**Public Present:**

Adrian Peacey, Minette Smith, Anthony Smith.

**RUSPIDGE WELFARE TRUST (RWT)**

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

10.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes.

10.2 No other business.

**Public Participation:**

**Minette Smith** - Asked Council if there is any news on the Ruspidge/Soudley Rd closure. Cllr. Hoyland addressed the question informing the public and members present Gloucestershire Highways were currently in the process of commissioning and undertaking a survey. The PC confirmed they had not been informed of a date for the road to be re-opened.

**Anthony Smith** - Requested to know what action the PC had taken regarding the Ruspidge/Soudley Rd closure, and that the PC put additional pressure on GCC Highways by writing a letter of complaint. The VC, Cllr. Acland informed the public and members present, that the PC had sent emails out to Highways regarding the details of the Rd closure. It was agreed that a letter would be drafted by the PC, Mr Anthony Smith and Cllr. Hoyland also agreed to contribute to the writing of said letter. Said letter to be a joint press release. Mr Smith inquired as to the situation with the telecom mast in Soudley. Cllr. Matthews informed him Clarke Telecom had currently suspended the proposal. Cllr. Hoyland informed the public and members present that Clarke Telecom is currently looking at

alternative areas within Soudley, possibly in the Bradley Hill area. The PC has received no further formal proposals from Clarke Telecom.

**Adrian Peacey** - Requested the local press be contacted regarding the Ruspidge/Soudley Rd closure. Mr Peacey expressed strong concern over emergency service vehicles such as police, ambulance and fire services having access to the area. The barriers in place at the Ruspidge end of the Rd closure, Mr Peacey requested to know why the barriers at the start of the Rd closure in Ruspidge are traffic cones and insubstantial, he informed council vehicles are trying to get around the cones. The Rd closure is adding additional pressure on residents gaining access to an already limited bus service in the parish, Cllr. Snell noted Mr Peacey's concern and voiced his support regarding access to the buses. It is to be noted, that Mr Peacey voiced his concern, he believes the PC is not taking appropriate and enough action to support the public in these matters. Mr Peacey also noted that at the previous month's (September) PC meeting 'Standing Orders' were not being observed and he never had an opportunity to speak. Mr Peacey requested to know why an area of fencing had been placed at the Ruspidge end of the Blue Rock Trail, adjacent to the left side bank. VC, Cllr Acland informed him it was there to help keep back any detritus that was falling from the bank. Mr Peacey questioned if the barriers were substantial enough to prevent any rocks from reaching the trail. Mr Peacey stated that in his experience very few stones had ever fallen from the banks. Mr Peacey also queried the suitability of the ditches the PC had dug along the same area, stating that they had caught very little detritus and were full of water. The Clerk, Mr Dowding informed the public present, that the decision to place barriers along said stretch of the BRT bank was due to a visual survey undertaken by, for the accuracy of the minutes; MDHP Consulting Civil & Structural Engineers, the PC were advised to take precautions in the area of bank specified and barriers have been installed as a temporary measure. The PC is still deliberating on the Structural Engineer's advice. VC, Cllr. Acland reiterated, as per the Clerk's advice, that the PC is obligated to act on the advice of a qualified professional.

**Various** - After further deliberation between the public and council members regarding responsibility for the Highway's signage and the PC's powers to intervene, VC, Cllr. Acland called the public speaking to a close as standing orders were not being observed.

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 **12th of September, 2023** were **ACCEPTED** as a true record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Vice Chairman.

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

10.5. **District Councillor Reports**

*Report is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.*

10.6. **County Councillor Reports**

*Report is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.*

10.7. **Planning** – The completed schedule for **October** is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.

- 10.8. **Financial Matters** - Following a report by the Treasurer the council **APPROVED** the accounts presented for the **October** payment totalling **£7,088.83** this figure is inclusive of confidential expenditure.
- 10.9. **Ruspidge Memorial Hall - £125.00** Newsletter Grant request. For the printing and production of the following: Ruspidge Memorial Hall Newsletter. 2x A4 pages, printed on 4 sides. collated and stapled. Bi-monthly. 100 copies. The members present and one email vote by Cllr. J Smith, voted unanimously to approve the grant.
- 10.10. **Ruspidge Memorial Hall - £500.00** Community HUB Grant request. After reviewing the application, the Parish Council believes, that provision is already being provided through the village halls within the parish. Also, considering the limited funds remaining in the S.137 grants budget, The members present voted unanimously to decline support for the application.
- 10.11. **Hod Boy Sculpture** - Members present unanimously agreed that should an agreement be reached with the Dean Heritage Centre for the Hod Boy sculpture to be moved from the Blue Rock Trail and sited at the Dean Heritage Centre Soudley. Once the costs of removal and repairs to the sculpture had been met by the PC ownership of said sculpture would then belong to the Dean Heritage Centre.
- 10.12. **Ownership of the banks adjacent to the Blue Rock Trail** - The members present after being given the opportunity to interpret the Blue Rock Trail Deeds voted to decide if ownership of the banks adjacent to the BRT is owned by the Parish Council. It is the Clerk Mr Roland Dowding's belief that said banks are owned by the PC. The result of the vote is as follows: Cllr. J Smith (email vote) YES, owned by the PC. Cllr. W Acland, YES, owned by the PC. Cllr. T Matthews, NO, Not owned by the PC. Cllr. H Medcraft, NO, not owned by the PC. Cllr. N Snell, NO, not owned by the PC. The **NOs** have the vote at three to two, declaring that in interpreting the BRT Deeds, the Parish Council does not own the banks.
- 10.12. **Blue Rock Trail Ownership** – Members present voted on a proposal to transfer ownership of the Blue Rock Trail to Forestry Commission England. The vote was unanimously approved, with one vote cast by Cllr. J Smith via email.
- 10.13. **Correspondence** - The council **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following correspondence: The Parish Councillors accepted all relevant correspondence has been forwarded via email to all members.
- 10.14. **Next Meeting** - the next meeting of the council is to be held in the **Ruspidge Memorial Hall** at **7.00 p.m. Tuesday, 14th November 2023**. The agenda deadline is **Monday, 6th of November, 2023**.
- 10.15. **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 Schedules for October 2023.

<b><u>Ruspidge &amp; Soudley Parish Council</u></b>			
<b><u>Planning Schedule October, 20--</u></b>			
<u>Planning Reference</u>	<u>Parish</u>		
<u>Site Address &amp; Detail</u>	<u>Comment</u>		
<b>P1215/23/FUL</b>	No Obj		
Dean Vale, 4 Lower Road, Soudley, Cinderford. Erection of log cabin to provide home office/studio space (retrospective)			
<b>P1257/23/FUL</b>	Objection		
9 Peacock Lane, Ruspidge, Gloucestershire, GL14 3ET. Proposed use of existing summer house for annexed accommodation ancillary to main dwelling. (Part Retrospective)			
1 It is basically a glorified shed.			
2 No mention is made of services to the development ie sewage water electricity or gas.			
3 No mention of parking provision for the annexe.			
4 No mention of reason to have an 'annexe' whether it is for personal use or for letting to family or Air BNB etc.			
5 As a separate dwelling down a very narrow lane, concerned about traffic loading.			
<u>Planning Reference</u>	<u>Parish</u>	<u>District</u>	
<u>Site Address &amp; Detail</u>	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Date</u>
<b>P0811/23/FUL</b>	Objection	Refused	09/10/2023
1A/1B Ruspidge Road Ruspidge Cinderford Gloucestershire GL14 3AD Erection of third storey level to allow for creation of third flat with associated works			
<b>P0792/23/FUL</b>	No Obj	Refused	15/09/2023
Land To West Of 9 Hewlett Way, Ruspidge Road, Ruspidge, Gloucestershire. Erection of detached dwelling with associated works.			

## **District Councillor Reports.**

### **Cllr. Richard Burton**

I've attended full Council meetings, and Development Management Committees and site inspections as well as training courses on cyber security and a briefing on tourism.

I have been in touch with Democratic Services to get the new moto-cross code of conduct publicised.

The cabinet has been working hard on a new Local Plan, and issued a briefing about it for consultation within the District Council, but this has not been published yet.

The council supports the government initiative to increase council tax on second homes, which could help release them for local people.

### **Cllr. Andy Moore:** finance, assets and re-cycling.

Working hard on waste and recycling, with new contract signed.

Acquiring and disposing of property, managing our assets to best advantage.

With finance hat on and given the recent spate of local authorities effectively going bust, we are solvent but not complacent.

As part of the cabinet, working on the local plan.

## **County Councillor Reports.**

### **Cllr. Graham Morgan**

The main issue in the area is still the road closure between Ruspidge & Soudley where investigations are still ongoing along the road looking ground conditions.

The Clerks of both Cinderford & Ruspidge & Soudley have recently met with me as County Councillor, and Forest Highways Manager Andrew Middlecote, to discuss highways issues in both areas.

In Cinderford there will be a couple of Highstreet closures one for Severn Trent to replace a main valve, the other in the New Year for work on resurfacing pavements.

speeding remains an issue throughout the area.

**Cllr. Beki Hoyland**

**OCTOBER 2023 REPORT TO PARISH COUNCILS WITHIN THE BLAKENEY AND BREAM DIVISION**

**Please feel free to get in touch, I will do my best to help. [Beki.hoyland@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Beki.hoyland@gloucestershire.gov.uk)  
07815660013**

**ROADS AND TRANSPORT RELATED.**

**Here is a link to where to find out about road works <https://one.network/public>**

**Here is a link to where to report problems on the roads such as potholes and obstructions  
<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/your-highways-report-it/>**

RUSPIDGE ROAD UPDATE: THIS IS WHAT THE WEBSITE SAYS, "OBSTRUCTION IN CARRIAGEWAY, ROAD COLLAPSING INTO A LARGE VOID -FOLLOWING GEOTECHNICAL SURVEY THE ROAD WAS CLOSED TO MAKE SAFE." I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE CAVES UNDER THE ROAD ARE INTACT ON INSPECTION. HIGHWAYS ARE WAITING FOR A GEO TECHNICAL SURVEY THAT WILL COVER A LARGE STRETCH OF THAT ROAD. ONCE THAT IS COMPLETE THEN A TIME FRAME CAN BE PUT IN PLACE FOR THE REPAIRS. IN THE MEAN TIME THERE WILL BE A ROLLING CLOSURE ON THE ROAD. ALTHOUGH SUTTON ROAD IS NOT THE OFFICIAL DIVERSION IT HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE LIST OF ROADS THAT WILL BE GRITTED DURING THE WINTER MONTHS.

- **Drains on New Road, Bream, were reported and cleaned.**
- **On going drainage issues in the Maypole estate, Bream, are being worked through.**
- **Drains on Awre Road, Blakeney are being re designed to cope with water coming off the A48.**
- **I have been working with Residents of New Road Blakeney to survey traffic speeds to provide data towards a potential drop in speed limit**
- **I am in touch with Highways about the next survey on the Viney Hill Junction, again in the hope of having data to show that the police would support a lower speed limit there.**
- **I have been at the Forest of Dean Road Safety Liaison Group where we are working across Parish, FE, District, GCC, and the Verderers to get a 40mph limit in the Statutory Forest area like other areas such as The New Forest and Dartmoor.**
- **Reducing speeds will save lives and prevent serious injuries as well as creating a sense of place where people can feel safe to walk and cycle.**
- **I have asked Highways, in the shape of our local community Lengthsmen to go around the division cleaning road signs and making sure they are not over grown and visible.**
- **There is also a week in November where we will have them to prepare our pavements and drains for winter. Please do let me know if there are particular areas you would like them to concentrate on.**
- **Station Road in Newnham will be resurfaced during half term.**
- **Parkend Road, Bream is due to be resurfaced this financial year.**
- **The flail that is booked for a week will be coming round the division cutting hedges back further than the normal cut so that hopefully next summer the over hang will be less.**




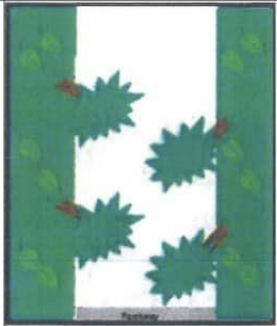
**It is the responsibility of land owners to maintain hedges, please can you let your residents know / remind them that it is their responsibility via your normal lines of communication. Below are a couple of infographics that could help.**

- **A NEW PATH: At the Commons and Rights of Way Committee on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October we were able to add a new path to the definitive map in Newnham. The right of way will not be maintainable at public expense but will run from Severn Terrace off Church Road northwards along the river to the carpark and beyond to the entrance to the White Heart Inn.**
- **A NEW BUS: Recent Cabinet decision on where new funding from central Government**

for busses the following are proposed: the existing 2 hourly service (72) between Chepstow and Lydney will be extended to Blakeney, Soudley, Cinderford and Mitcheldean. The Robin will be enhanced. These will be funded for two years on the basis that they will be self financing after that so we do need to use them as much as possible. I would appreciate that we can work together to promote the new service, The £2 single fair is set to remain in place which makes it affordable and flexible. Can we be creative in how we promote this new service once it starts?

Please support your community by keeping your hedges and trees tidy

## Highways

		<p>Please check that branches are not growing too low and causing a problem for vehicles – 5.5, clearance is recommended</p> <p>Leylandii hedges need regular maintenance throughout the year. If left until they become a nuisance, they are often unsightly when eventually cut back and do not recover their greenery.</p>
		<p>Service lanes and paths behind properties need to be kept clear too.</p> <p>Remember; refuse collectors and other services need 24/7 access.</p>

When undertaking any work to hedges and trees please be aware of regulations in respect of wildlife, such as nesting birds, planning and highways safety.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Sent on behalf of  
Highways Safety Inspection Team



Please support your community by keeping your hedges and trees tidy




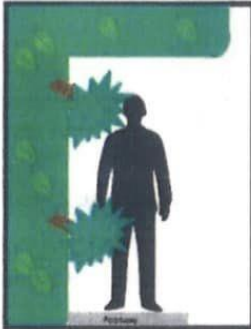


# Highways

As a landowner or occupier, it's your responsibility to make sure that trees, hedges and other vegetation growing on your land do not cause a safety concern or obstruction or users of the public highway.

It ties up valuable council resources if we have to take action to address issues over privately owned trees and hedges, so please ensure that the overgrowth of vegetation is not creating a hazard or nuisance for your community. This includes hedges, trees, shrubs, ground cover and weeds such as brambles and nettles.

Highway Inspectors are undertaken throughout the year and, where vegetation is found to be causing an obstruction of safety concern, you will be formally requested to take action within 14 days. This is in accordance with the Highways Act 1980.

To avoid this, please monitor the growth of vegetation throughout the year and take action before a hazard is created.

Right 	Wrong 	Explanation
		<p>Please check pavements are clear for everyone to use.</p> <p>Look out in particular for fast-growing plants such as brambles and nettles. Please note: These may be growing outside your garden fence but are still on your property.</p> <p>Please check vegetation is not obscuring the light from the streetlights or signs.</p>
		<p>Please make sure that ground-cover plants are not growing over the pavement.</p> <p>They hasten deterioration of the pavement surface, get in the way when maintenance work is being done and could be a trip hazard, particularly for visually impaired pedestrians.</p>

Follow us on Social Media for updates.



@GlosRoads



GloucestershireRoads



Telecoms Mast in Soudley.

**I have been in communication with Clark Telecom as well as the parish and village hall committee on this and the latest update I have is:**

**“Just to confirm the current application is suspended. We need to submit a report for Radio to select a new option , thereafter we would hold a survey at the new location and prepare a design etc.**

**This will be at least 4 weeks so I would ask for you to bear with us. We will endeavour to update you as we go.”**  
I will continue to stay in the conversation and am very happy to hear your views so that I can represent them.

- FULL COUNCIL ON WEDNESDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER SAW QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC ON HEART OF THE FOREST SCHOOL. THE RESPONSE IS THAT IT IS THE GOVERNORS OF THE SCHOOL THAT HAVE RESPONSIBILITY TO MAINTAIN A HAPPY HEALTHY SCHOOL AND THAT GCC ARE WORKING WITH THEM.
- **A question in on behalf of West Dean Parish council about VAS siting policy and the traffic numbers was responded to: “We regularly review our guidance when changes to national policy or guidance are made or when local issues are highlighted to us.** Traffic flows are only one of the criteria used to assess sites for VAS. Therefore, you do not need traffic flows over 4,000 vehicles if the other criteria have been met; but of course, the level of traffic flow can often be an indicator of the likelihood that a VAS is warranted and would have benefit. If you have any sites you would like considered, then please discuss this with your Local Highways Manager as this may not be the only option available to deal with the local concern. “
- **I have been working with West Dean Parish Council on the Street light reduction and will continue to as needed.**

Working Task Groups

- **Bus Task Group. On going conversations about busses, in particular between Cinderford, Soudley and Blakeney. But also more widely in a task group that has been listening and questioning Stagecoach and other bus operators as well as the Department for Transport. The report from that should be out by November.**
- **Rural Estates Task Group. Work on a report into the County Farm Estate is nearing completion and will be sent to Cabinet in November, looking at how the county farms can contribute to the wider aims of GCC. And feeding into the review of the Rural Estates Strategy.**

**I will share both the above reports with you once they are complete but both working groups have been very informative and I think I am representing us all to the officers of the County Council by taking part in them. If anyone would like to know more do please get in touch.**

#### **ADULT SOCIAL CARE FAIRER CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY ENGAGEMENT**

***To help inform a review of its fairer contributions charging policy, the council wants to hear the thoughts and views of those who currently use it. The council would also like to hear from those who may use the policy in the future to make sure the council’s policy works for people now and for years to come.***

Adult Social Care services are paid for by the county council with contributions from care users. Care users can be charged for their care and asked to make a contribution in line with their financial circumstances.

The council is keen to understand how the current charging policy supports individual choice, control over their care and how it could be better. It will be seeking views on the policy in terms of how accessible and fair it is, and whether it achieves its aim of empowering users.

People will be able to have their say by taking part in an online survey and by attending focus groups.

These groups are being facilitated by Evolving Communities, who specialise in stakeholder

engagement and insight linked to health and social care, throughout August. This feedback will then be analysed before it is published in October.

There will be no changes to the fairer contribution charging policy, and therefore no changes to how residents are assessed to pay for their care, until feedback has been received and the public has been consulted on potential changes.

To find out more and to take part in the survey visit [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/charging-policy](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/charging-policy) (*hard copies of the survey are also available upon request*)

### **Tree projects this winter**

Do you have an idea for a tree planting project this winter?

From orchards to hedgerows we have funding that could make your dream planting project a reality.

Find out more on our [land use webpages](#) and submit an [expression of interest](#) to get trees planted.

### **Can we make more use of repair cafes? Are we advertising them to the parish?**

If you need new items turning up, small holes patching or anything else, visit the repair cafe to find out how you could mend your broken ..... anything

You can find all the details of the [repair cafes in Gloucestershire on our website](#), [there are 16 cafes across the county](#), if you haven't visited one before make it your mission to go this year.

<https://www.gloucestershirerecycles.com/reduce/repair/repair-cafes/>

### **School Admission Consultation.**

Most Primary schools in our area are part of the GCC schools rather than run by Academy Trusts so do have a look or pass on to those that are interested.

<https://haveyoursaygloucestershire.uk.engagementhq.com/school-admission-arrangements-2025-consultation>

**Families in Partnership newsletter** – including information on Home to School transport, School admission policies, and help and support for families with SEND

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKGLOUCESTERSHIRE/bulletins/3733365>

The number of Children in care in Gloucestershire is nearly 900, nearly a third of these have to go out of county to be looked after because there are not enough places within county.

Family Hubs are being developed across the County to help all families with the challenges of parenting, how to make ends meet and general networking and support. I will keep you up to date on this exciting development.

Please watch and share this very moving short film that has been released about fostering with Gloucestershire County Council. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCNmSgIVZ7w>

