
RUSPIDGE & SOUDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the MEETING held on Tuesday 11th November 2025.

Parish Councillors Present:

Cllrs. William Acland Chairman, Tony Matthews, Nicky Packer.

County Councillors Present:

Beki Hoyland.

District Councillors Present:

Non-Present.

Parish Council Clerk – Roland Dowding.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Helen Medcraft, Norman Snell, Paul Firth, Denis Bagwell-Johnson, Bernie O'Neill, Andy Moore, Richard Burton, Ray Donaghue.

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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: Priya Shukla, Tony Smith.

R&SPC Public Participation: None.

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

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

11.3. **Minutes** - The minutes of the council meeting held on the **14th of October 2025** were **ACCEPTED** as a true record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman, Cllr. William Acland.

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

11.5. **District Councillor Reports**

Reports are attached as an Appendix to these minutes.

11.6. **County Councillor Reports**

Reports are attached as an Appendix to these minutes.

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

- 11.8. Following a report by the RFO Mr. Roland Dowding, representing the Honorary Treasurer, Cllr. Norman Snell the council **APPROVED** the accounts presented for **November**, payment totalling **£5,425.93**. These figures are inclusive of confidential expenditure. A financial report is included for November in the appendix to these minutes.
- 11.9. Budget Transfers
- Transfer from Contingency Budget **£ 400.00** to balance Street Furniture Budget. Member approval requested. Approved.
- 11.10. **Presentation of 2026/27 Draft Budget** – Members noted and approved the addition of £500.00 added to the miscellaneous budget, to cover Parish Council annual rental of Ruspidge Welfare Trust land.
- 11.11. **Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC)** – Questions arising from GRCC’s October presentation to council.
- GRCC requests members identify available land for affordable housing within the Parish. Land put forward, with current planning permission, land at St Whites farm, Land at in Ruspidge at the Eastern United Colliery site.
 - GRCC will do a parish walkabout once a draft list of potential sites for housing is drawn up. it is requested councillors could join GRCC to do this. Cllr’s Tony Matthews & Nicky Packer will liaise with GRCC on this task.
 - Would the Parish Council like to nominate a representative/ representatives (working group) that GRCC can engage with directly on this or would they prefer to involve all Councillors at all times. Cllr’s Tony Matthew & Nicky Packer will be the Parish Council’s representatives with GRCC.
- 11.12. **Liaison’s Report for Soudley Village Hall** – In the absence of Cllr. Norman Snell and Cllr. Snell’s request the Clerk, Mr. Dowding report that this year’s fireworks and bonfire night were well attended, but this will be the last year that the hall has an actual bonfire.
- 11.13. **Liaison’s Report for Ruspidge Memorial Hall** – deferred.
- 11.14. **Correspondence** - The council **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following correspondence:
The Parish Councillors accepted all relevant correspondence has been forwarded via email to all members.
- 11.15. **Next Meeting** - the next meeting of the council will be held in the **Ruspidge Memorial Hall** at **7.00 p.m. Tuesday, 13th January 2025**. This venue is provisional and yet to be booked and confirmed. The agenda deadline is **Monday, 5th of January 2025**.
- 11.16. **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 7:45 p.m.

Signed:.....Chairman.

Dated:.....

APPENDIX

FINANCIAL REPORT for the meeting in: November 2025					
1. Reconciliation of Account as at:			end October 2025		
<u>Ledger</u>		£		<u>Bank</u>	£
Balance b/f		151,216.52	(Com Acc)	Lloyds Current A/c.	1,861.68
Bank Interest Lloyds		33.70	(Comm Inst Acc)	Lloyds Inst. Access A/c.	78,498.09
HMRC. VAT Refund		1,059.14		Unity Current A/c	906.00
				Unity Inst Access A/c	63,805.44

<u>Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council</u>			
<u>Planning Schedule November, 2025</u>			
<u>Planning Reference</u>	<u>Parish</u>		
<u>Site Address & Detail</u>	<u>Comment</u>		
P1244/25/PJ14PA	No Obj		
own and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015			
St Whites Primary School , Sneyd Wood Road, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.			
Prior notification for the Installation of roof mounted Solar PV at St White's Primary School			
P1353/25/TPO	No Obj		
21 Abbots View, Ruspidge, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.			
Undertake the following works to 2 x Beech to the west of 21 Abbots View and 2 x Oak to the south of 21 Abbots View, covered by G2 of Tree Preservation Order number DFTPO 51.			
Reduce crowns of the four trees by 3 metres from their tops and 2 meters from their lateral spread. Raise crowns of the four trees by up to 6 metres, but not by removing their large			
Lower limbs			
P0329/25/OUT	Withdrawn		
Land West Of 31 Buckshaft Road Ruspidge Cinderford			
Outline Planning application for a proposed 2 bedroom detached dwelling with ancillary works. (All matters reserved)			
	<u>Parish</u>	<u>District</u>	
<u>Site Address & Detail</u>	<u>Comment</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Date</u>
P0910/25/FUL	No Obj	Consent	04/11/2025
35 Buckshaft Road, Ruspidge, Cinderford, Gloucestershire.			
Erection of a single storey side extension and first floor rear extension with associated works. Demolition of existing garage.			
P1086/25/TE	No Comment	Approval not required	23/10/2025
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			

District Councillor Report – Richard Burton – November 2025

Council takes proactive step to secure future of Snigs End Conservation Area

The Snigs End Conservation Area, located within the parishes of Staunton and Corse, has been added to Historic England's 2025 Heritage at Risk Register - a move taken by the council as a proactive step towards protecting and enhancing the area's historic character.

The inclusion follows a detailed review commissioned by the Local Planning Authority to assess the condition of all conservation areas across the district. The review identified several issues affecting the historic character of Snigs End within its distinctive rural setting, such as the condition of buildings and the impact of gradual changes such as alterations to the original Chartist plots, unsympathetic alterations to the Chartist cottages and loss of traditional features.

Partners on board to support Forest of Dean Biosphere bid

Forest of Dean District Council continues its work with residents, businesses and partners including Gloucestershire County Council with the aim of becoming the UK's 8th designated biosphere.

A motion tabled by Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Cllr Chris McFarling at a recent Gloucestershire County Council meeting received overwhelming backing from members and will see the County Council provide additional funding and resources to support the Forest of Dean District Council's Biosphere bid.

It is important to note that such designation does not introduce any new legislation or statutory controls and does not have powers to remove access rights powers or stop development. This means that the historic right to Free Mine, which allows individuals certain traditional mining rights in the Forest of Dean, remains fully intact. Biosphere designation does not alter these rights, nor does it impose new restrictions on mining activities.

Forest of Dean District Council welcomes Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review findings

Forest of Dean District Council has welcomed the findings from the Local Government Association's (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review, which recognised the significant progress the council has made in delivering its improvement plan and building on the recommendations made during the original 2024 Peer Challenge.

The review, carried out on 3 September 2025, found that the council had either completed or made progress on all of the actions set out in its action plan.

The LGA praised the council for its commitment to delivery, strong sense of community, and positive organisational culture, describing progress as "brilliant."

The Progress Review highlighted the council's openness, collaborative approach, and commitment to learning, noting that councillors and staff "expressed pride in their place" and were working hard to "create thriving communities for now and for future generations."

New EV car club pilot launches in Coleford

Residents of the Forest of Dean now have access to a new, flexible transport option in Coleford thanks to a 12-month electric vehicle (EV) car club pilot, led by Forest of Dean District Council.

The pilot gives residents a cost-effective, low-carbon alternative to private car ownership by making a Nissan Leaf car club vehicle available to hire via an app. Bookings can be made for as little as one hour, providing a convenient and sustainable transport solution for short trips or occasional use.

The EV will be based initially at Railway Drive Car Park in Coleford, with the pilot marking the first step towards the council's long-term vision of creating a district-wide mobility hub – including e-bike hire and expanded EV access across the district's other market towns of Cinderford, Newent and Lydney.

The scheme has been made possible through a successful £20,000 funding bid to the Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body. The car will be operated via the Hiyacar platform, which also supports peer-to-peer car sharing.

District Councillor Report. November. Bernie O'Neill.

Cllr Burton has written a very good report with, as you would expect, a very Green slant, and I thank him for it.

Local Government Reorganisation

This Thursday at full Council we shall be debating the current position regarding the review. Currently the situation is

- a) a whole County unitary authority, or
 - b) county split into 2...Forest, Stroud and Gloucester cityand Cheltenham, Cotswolds and Tewkesbury.
- Gloucester City aks have put forward an option for a Greater Gloucester Unitary.

The outcome will be presented to Government by the end of November for a decision.

Local Plan.

Government have indicated that the Forest should accommodate a further 6000+ houses (to over 13000) by 2041.

Options are currently being looked at including 1 or 2 large settlements in the district. The Green party have indicated their preference for this but locally this is not popular. We shall be considering these and other options on Thursday.

I continue to work on ward issues and the main ones are...

Forest Lodge. The refusal for this application was overturned by the planning inspectorate and Steve Hardcastle along Leith Tony and Ray and myself have been looking at ways in which this can be questioned. It is very complex but it could be that the ombudsman may be a way forward.

I thank very much the work that Steve and Tony have put into this.

County Report, November 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

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

13th November -14 november. Awre road out of Blakeney, near level crossing. Ditching.

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

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

25th November -26th Bridges road Blakeney. Severn Trent.

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.*

Forest Forum: Water in Our Forest

[Forest Forum: Water in Our Forest Tickets, Sun 23 Nov 2025 at 13:30 | Eventbrite](#) (free)

How does water operate in the Forest of Dean and how organisations are working together to benefit wildlife, woodland and reduce flooding.

The Water in Our Forest forum will start with a general overview by Forestry England regarding how water operates in Our Forest, given its unique geology and geography. The effects of climate change will be considered given the likelihood of dryer summers and wetter winters in future. Water is managed in catchment areas so the Environment Agency will explain how the partnership operating in the Severn Vale Catchment will be delivering the 'Forest to Sea' project. Various organisations will describe their individual projects, to illustrate how these component parts contribute to the overall objective of managing water better in future. These will include Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Gloucestershire County Council (with particular reference to flood alleviation works in Lydney), Dean Heritage Centre, Severn Rivers Trust and individual projects by Forestry England.

[New electric vehicles launched to support the Gloucestershire Equipment Loan Service](#)

Gloucestershire County Council has launched a new fleet of ten electric vehicles to help Gloucestershire Equipment Loan Service provide equipment to help adults with care and support needs to stay safe at home.

[Annual Parent Carer Survey to shape future SEND services](#)

The SEND Local Area Partnership invites all parents and carers of children and young people aged 0–25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to take part in its Annual Parent Carer Survey.

[Event showcases the support available from Family Hubs](#)

Gloucestershire County Council recently held an event to showcase how its Family Hubs network will provide support across the county for children, young people and families.

[‘Pass the Book’ – Gloucester’s library celebrates a historic day](#)

Gloucestershire County Council is delighted to announce the successful completion of the 'Pass the Book' event, which marked the transition from the old library on Brunswick Road to the new Gloucester Library at the City Campus in King's Square.

Neighbourhood Fund Launched

The new Neighbourhood Fund scheme to support grassroots initiative has now been launched. The scheme will deliver funding to community initiatives seeking to make a positive impact on health and wellbeing, access to nature, digital inclusion, community cohesion, and reducing inequalities.

The scheme will run for 18-months, and each Councillor will have £20,000 to support projects in their division. Groups eligible to apply include community and voluntary groups, registered charities, Community Interest Companies, Town and Parish Councils, sports groups, schools and academies and patient led groups. 'For profit' organisations are not eligible.

More information about the new scheme is available on the dedicated [webpage](#). Guidance for how to apply is available [here](#).

Greener Gloucestershire News

Save energy this winter 💡

Much of the energy we use on a daily basis comes from fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas). These are non-renewable sources of energy. Burning fossil fuels pollutes the environment and impacts air quality, which can damage our health. It releases carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that contributes towards global warming and climate change. There are now lots more sources of renewable energy, like wind farms and solar farms. These all take up space and need lots of resources to make them, so we still need to reduce the amount of energy we use.

We've put together some useful information about how you can save energy around the home, with no cost, low cost and some cost options depending on how much or little you'd like to do! We've also compiled a list of all the current grants and support that you may be able to access, depending on eligibility.

Take a look 🖱️ [Making your home more energy efficient | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

Local Government Reorganisation Update

[Future Gloucestershire : Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation in Gloucestershire.](#)

Or this link to a summary of the situation for town and Parish councils: [Local Government Reorganisation: Town & Parish Councils Briefing](#)

The full LGR proposals have now been released. The proposals include one for a Single Unitary Authority covering the whole of Gloucestershire and another for Two Unitary Authorities, with one covering the West of the county (Gloucester, Forest of Dean, Stroud) and other the East (Cheltenham, Cotswold, Tewkesbury). Gloucester City Council has also developed a separate proposal for a Greater Gloucester Unitary Council.

Councillors from across the county will now discuss the proposals and vote on their preferred option. At the County level, the debate and vote is scheduled for the next Full Council meeting on the 12th November. Cabinet will then decide on the final proposal to recommend to Government, by 28 November. Government will then begin its own consultation process before taking a final decision, expected in mid-2026.

GCC Meetings

The next **Full Council** meeting will take place on **Wednesday 12th November** where we will be discussing:

- LGR [Future Gloucestershire : Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation in Gloucestershire](#).
Or this link to a summary of the situation for town and Parish councils:

[Local Government Reorganisation: Town & Parish Councils Briefing](#)

- Council Strategy

As well as three motions:

- Road maintenance
- Ensuring children are considered in all decisions made by GCC
- Inheritance tax for farms.

Other meetings and events I have attended this month:

Environment Scrutiny, Fire and Rescue Scrutiny Committee, Appeals Panel, Corporate Parenting sub group, Foster Panel, part of moving the last book to the new library, visiting Cinderford Fire station, Forest of Dean Road Safety Group, visiting the site of proposed solar farm in Awre, meeting with all FoD County councillors and the District Council. The Wye Valley Landscapes, Our Forest, talking to officers and leaders about potential budget amendments and several meetings on LGR. Very happy to give more detail on any of this if you are interested.

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

Cinderford & Ruspidge County Councillor Report November 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. All councillors are welcome. We have a FB page and I would like to encourage everyone to join it and get as much community engagement as possible.

Speedwatch – I am helping coordinate a local speedwatch campaign. Our first session is later this month.

Town Centre Regeneration – Catherine Lines (the new Market Towns Officer) has built a plan to improve the centre. I have continued arranging meetings with the different services and officers to look at how we can tidy up the highways and appearance of the town centre. This is ongoing.

We are meeting (Catherine Lines and I and I believe CTC) with a representative of the BID (Business Improvement District) and the GCC cabinet member for Business to continue the work on improving the town centre.

Fixmystreet – we now have 2 volunteers. I plan to start a FB page to highlight some of the successes and failures and get more community engagement to help improve the area's service from Highways.

There have been some enquiries for the new fund County Councillors we can access (see press release below) I am still looking for more potential projects at this stage.

Advocating for charities that are in GCC buildings at risk of closure.

Parking have been doing night visits in the town centre in order to discourage dangerous parking at our request.

I have been lobbying to get the yellow lines that need doing around the town (particularly in the triangle) ahead of schedule. It's not guaranteed but hoping to get them redone this year.

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

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

I have started as the new shadow spokesperson for Highways.

I am arranging an in-depth scrutiny session (through the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee) on the local substance misuse service (called VIA) and their offer in rural areas such as ours.

There is a lot of focus on Local Government Reorganisation and we will be discussing this at the full council meeting on the 12th of November.

Some useful press releases:

Councillor-led grassroots fund to boost 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/>