
RUSPIDGE & SOUDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the MEETING held on Tuesday 11th March, 2025.

Parish Councillors Present:

Cllrs. William Acland Chairman, Jo Smith, Norman Snell, Tony Matthews, Denis Bagwell-Johnson, Helen Medcraft, Lori-Leah Griffiths.

County Councillors Present:

None-Present

District Councillors Present:

None-Present.

Parish Council Clerk – Roland Dowding.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Bernie O'Neill, Paul Firth, Richard Burton, Andy Moore, Beki Hoyland, Graham Morgan.

Standing Declarations of Interest

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

Public Present:

Non-Present.

R&SPC Public Participation: No Public Speakers.

- 3.1. **Apologies** received and recorded from absent members.
- 3.2. No declaration of prejudicial interest was declared by members present.
- 3.3. **Minutes** - The minutes of the council meeting held on the **11th of February, 2025** were **ACCEPTED** as a true record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.
- 3.4. **Matters Arising** - There were no matters arising from the minutes.
- 3.5. **District Councillor Reports**
Reports are included as an appendix to these Minutes.
- 3.6. **County Councillor Reports**
Reports are included as an appendix to these Minutes.
- 3.7. **Planning** – The completed schedule for **March** is attached as an Appendix to these Minutes.

- 3.8. Following a report by Cllr. Norman Snell acting as signatory to the RFO, the council **APPROVED** the accounts presented for **March** payment totalling **£15,522.42**. This figure is inclusive of confidential expenditure. A financial report is included for this month in the appendix to these minutes.
- 3.9. **Budget Transfers.**
- Transfer from Contingency budget **£ 114.00** to balance IT/Web budget. Members approval requested. **Approved.**
 - Transfer from Contingency budget **£ 250.00** to BRT Maintenance budget. Member approval requested. **Approved.**
 - Transfer from Contingency budget **£ 30.00** to balance Office budget. Member approval requested. **Approved.**
 - Transfer from Contingency budget **£ 700.00** to balance Grass Cutting budget. Member approval requested. **Approved.**
 - Transfer from Contingency budget **£ 96.00** to balance Dog Waste budget, member approval requested. **Approved.**
- 3.10. **Allocated Reserve Transfer.**
Transfer from Blue Rock Trail – contingency reserve **£ 8,448.40** to BRT Maintenance budget. Member approval requested. **Approved.**
- 3.11. **Financial Regulations 2025** – Prior to signing the Financial Regulations for 2025 at the Parish Council's APM to be held in May. The members present reviewed the roles, responsibilities and financial limits stated within the model Financial Regulations. The Clerk/RFO Mr. R. Dowding will amend the document to the specifications agreed by Council. The document will be formally agreed at the May Parish Council APM.
- 3.12. **Internal Auditor** – Member approval requested, for the appointment of SJS Bookkeeping & Accountancy Service as Internal Auditor to the Council for the 2024/25 financial year. **Approved.**
- 3.13. **Review of Appointed Contractors** – The members will review the appointments of ongoing contractors within the Parish. Grass Cutting & Street Cleaning, etc. The members are confident of suitable & adequate performance of the currently employed contractors. Except for broadband & phone.
- 3.14. **Annual Review of Banking Arrangements** - for security and efficiency. The RFO, Mr. R. Dowding gave a presentation of the banking arrangements and took questions from the members present. After explaining the monthly payments and invoices are checked prior to payment being made by Cllr. Snell, who then checks the previous months payments against the bank statements and reconciliations. The members present are currently satisfied with the Parish Council's current banking arrangements.
- 3.15. **Dog Waste Bin** – Woodland View. Dog waste being put in the rubbish bin in the area. Request from the public for a Dog Waste bin to be sited in the area. Approved, to be implemented in the new financial year.
- 3.16. **February Quarterly Operational Inspections** – The members present confirmed receipt of February's operational inspection of the recreational areas, attended to by KOMPAN. The

Clerk informed the members that we are waiting on a quote back from KOMPAN to attend to the large swing's foundations at Ruspidge recreational ground. The members present were satisfied there are no other immediate areas of maintenance required.

- 3.17. **Community Speed Watch SNEYD WOOD** – Cllr. Tony Matthews reported, the top speed recorded as being 37mph. The camera's function had been queried by the Community Speed Watch Team, adjustments have been made by Auto Speed watch for the camera's calibration.
We are informed due to home office requirements, only vehicles being recorded exceeding the speed limit three times in one period can be reported to the Speed Watch Team. Reports, when necessary are duly submitted weekly to the Gloucestershire Speed Watch Team.
- 3.18. **Liaison's Report for Soudley Village Hall** – Cllr. Norman Snell informed the members present that the new boiler is now repaired at Soudley Village Hall and has been paid for in full.
- 3.19. **Correspondence** - The council **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** the following correspondence:
The Parish Councillors accepted all relevant correspondence has been forwarded via email to all members.
- 3.20. **Next Meeting** - the next meeting of the council will be held in the **Soudley Village Hall** at **7.00 p.m. Tuesday, 8th April 2025**. The agenda deadline is **Monday, 31st of March 2025**.
- 3.21. **Exclusion of the Press and the Public** - The council **RESOLVED** that for any remaining business of a confidential nature, the press and the public should be excluded from the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 10.xi (2020).

The meeting closed at 8.00 p.m.

Signed:.....Chair.

Dated:.....

APPENDIX

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Planning Consultations

Ruspidge & Soudley Parish Council

Planning Schedule March, 2025

<u>Planning Reference</u>	<u>Parish</u>
<u>Site Address & Detail</u>	<u>Comment</u>

NO PLANNING CONSULTATIONS RECEIVED THIS MONTH.

Decisions notified by the Planning Authority

<u>Planning Reference</u>	<u>Parish</u>
<u>Site Address & Detail</u>	<u>Comment</u>

NO PLANNING NOTIFICATIONS RECEIVED THIS MONTH.

District Councillor Reports

District Councillor's report, March 2025, Richard Burton

Local Government reorganisation

The Government announced its plan for local government devolution in December, with very little consultation and just before the long holiday period. There have been many high level meetings about what is going to happen e.g. the District Council being abolished and replaced with a unitary authority, Gloucester County merging with other counties, but nothing has yet been decided. Latest news is that GCC elections are going ahead. A matter of great concern is the role of Parish Councils, with the Devolution document being extremely unclear about what will happen to them.

Forest of Dean District Council Cabinet Members have agreed to recruit a new dedicated Market Towns Officer to work with partners to improve the vibrancy and vitality of the four market towns in the Forest of Dean. The Market Towns Officer at Forest of Dean District Council will assist with the delivery of the Forest of Dean District Council Plan and will support all three of the priorities listed:

Thriving Communities, Decarbonisation and Nature Recovery and Sustainable Economy.

The new position will sit within the Councils existing Regeneration team, and by having a full-time dedicated Market Towns Officer, the Council can provide strategic direction for town centre regeneration to the 4 town councils, who are largely run by volunteers and help co-ordinate the great work being created by grassroots organisations.

Forest of Dean District Council has agreed its budget for the next financial year, ensuring the continued delivery of high-quality local services and investment for the benefit of residents across the Forest of Dean. The past year has seen the Council working to bring several services back in house. Around 100 employees have now returned to direct council employment, having moved from Publica Group Ltd (Publica), allowing Forest of Dean District Council to take greater control of council services for the benefit of residents. There will be further services brought back under Forest of Dean District Council control in 2025 and the funding for the transition of employees has been completed without the use of any unearmarked reserves.

Forest of Dean District Council has begun upgrading Linkline services for residents to new digitally enabled equipment, ensuring users are ready for the changes to landline phone services in 2025.

Forest Linkline provides round-the-clock access to a trained operator, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It works with an alarm unit positioned in the resident's home that links to a personal pendant that can be worn around the neck, wrist or clipped to clothing. Should an emergency arise then the button is pressed, and a call is triggered to the monitoring centre. From there, a trained advisor will help

decide on the best course of action and ensure that the best possible action is taken so that help can be provided.

County Councillor Reports.

Cllr. Graham Morgan

In my report to both Councils I must say I am very pleased to have been involved in discussion with Cabinet Member Cllr Carole Allaway Martin Coleford County Councillor, that there will three new Care Homes to be built in Gloucestershire one of which is to be built in Cinderford, construction will start in the coming months on the Cinderford Facility and the site for the new Care Home will be on the former GIS site in Valley Road opposite Foxes Bridge Day Centre.

The County Budget was voted through in February with a General Tax Increase of 2.99% and a 2% increase in Adult Social Care, this will give a Budget increase from £616.871 Million in 2024/25 to £665.079 Million for 2025/26.

If you wish to see a further budget breakdown, please visit the County Council web site.

If you have a road defect please use <https://fixmystreet.gloucestershire.gov.uk> or give me a call on 01594 824244, we continue to meet with County Highways Andrew Middlecote and Steve Buffin with the Cinderford and Ruspidge Clerks, and our next meeting is on the 25th of March, please raise any Highway issues for these meetings with your Clerks.

Our major problem in both neighbourhoods continue to be the parking of vehicles, of which Cinderford is putting aside money for a TRO that we hope can cover a number of difficult areas, for any road closures you can visit <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/road/roadworks> plus I will send our clerks any closures that directly effect our areas.

Very Best Wishes Graham Morgan.