

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 6th December 2011 at the Village Hall

PRESENT:

Mrs. Walker (Chairman), Mrs. S Fardon , Mrs. P Olney, R Baily, P Phillips, G Sansom, J Saunders, R Saunders, M. Taylor, P White the Clerk, 3 representatives from Bedford BC Highways and 1 member of the public

1. Public Open Session:

Some residents were concerned that the village was over lit and had suggested that the street lights be turned off between midnight and 5.30am for a trial period. The residents had met with Bedford BC to discuss and the lights could be modified at minimal cost which would be met by Bedford BC from the electricity saving. Residents' representative suggested that a trial be undertaken, to run for one year from spring 2012. Details could be included in the next Newsletter and a survey undertaken at the end of the year and the scheme modified or abandoned accordingly. Bedford BC noted that orange lights had already been changed to white lights which reduced light pollution and halved the cost. Switching them off between midnight and 5.30am would halve the cost again. Bedford BC advised that any consultation would need to be led by the Parish Council and that they would not impose a scheme on the village. They reserved the right to determine which lights were kept on (lights at sensitive junctions and on footpaths/alleyways would not be turned off for safety reasons) and the cost of turning lights back on if residents objected would need to be agreed between Bedford BC and the Parish Council.

Chairman was concerned that Council would be open to criticism if the trial was implemented without consulting all residents first. Milton Ernest was the only other village in the Borough that had turned off lights and they had consulted in their Parish Plan. Council therefore agreed that an article detailing the proposed scheme would be included in the Spring Newsletter, requesting any objections within four weeks of publication. The trial would also be discussed at the Annual Parish Meeting in April. Provided the majority was in favour, the trial would begin in May 2012. Bedford BC would forward a detailed scheme for inclusion in the Newsletter and attend the APM meeting.

2. Apologies: D Jones (business)

3. Declarations of Interest:

Cllr. Olney for item 19 as a trustee of the Day Care Centre.

4. Minutes of Council Meeting held on 1st November 2011

Resolved: to adopt the minutes.

5. Clerk's Report:

Highways – Bedford BC to meet Cllr. Baily about the bollard at the end of Burleigh Place. Clerk had requested weight limit sign near College Farm, Lovell Road be moved closer to the A6 to prevent lorries turning round in Lovell Road and had passed details of the HGV which demolished the bollard to Bedford BC.

Bin on Green – bin had been delivered

Overhanging bushes – residents had advised that they had now cut back overhanging bushes

Lovell Road rail bridge – graffiti had been removed.

Allotment tracks – awaiting quotations for levelling

Diamond Jubilee – Clerk had requested permission from Bedford BC to site joint beacon with Clapham on land at the top of Milton Road.

Hedge trimmer – Clerk had requested advice re. training and use of hedge trimmer at volunteer days. Awaiting a response

6. Matters Arising from minutes of Meeting held on 1st November 2011:

Cllr. Olney noted that the tree lighting ceremony had been very successful and well attended. She thanked those who had erected the tree and Clerk to write and thank churches for providing refreshments. A second tree could be considered in the 2012/13 budget.

Action

Clerk

7. Reports:

Liaison Group Meeting 24.11.11.

Although there was little scope to change the designations on Twinwood Business Park and Thurleigh Airfield at this stage of the consultation process, representatives agreed that Cllr. Walker should request planning briefs for both sites. Both briefs should permit development only on the existing building footprint, should restrict building heights to ensure no impact on the surrounding landscape and should take account of the impact of development on villages throughout North Bedfordshire, particularly of increased traffic. Planning Briefs would also assist in opposing unacceptable development. The Group agreed that parishes should consider

Action

the two sites in their Parish Plans, which although they were currently being ignored, would form the basis of the Neighbourhood Plan. Because of the number of parishes that wished to be involved in the Group it was decided that Ward Councillors would co-ordinate issues for discussion and parish councillors would only attend the meetings which discussed items specific to them.

8. Police Report:

PCSO Sharratt had been unable to attend. There were 6 recorded crimes during November of which 1 was nuisance phone calls, 1 was an assault, 2 were burglaries, 1 criminal damage to buildings and 1 criminal damage to a vehicle. A resident of Elstow had been arrested for the burglaries.

Cllr. Olney noted that speeding issues in the Borough had been raised by Bedford BC with the police. Volunteers to operate the hand held speed camera had to be trained by the police and the earliest date to train Oakley residents was February 2012.

Meeting with Sgt. Geary 05.12.11.

Clerk reported that Cllrs. Olney, Phillips & Taylor and the Clerk had a useful meeting with Sgt. Geary to discuss policing in Oakley and the wider rural area. Sgt. Geary advised that he was sergeant for the rural area and Kempston and all the PCSOs reported to him. There were now 5 response cars to attend crimes in progress, 5 sections of local police, with 8 officers for N. Bedfordshire, to follow up crimes and attend routine calls and 4 rural PCSOs based at Riseley so that coverage of the area should improve. Local police officers now worked 24 hour shifts rather than the majority working from 8.00am – 4.00pm as previously and were not allocated areas. PCSOs were nominally allocated areas but covered each others villages according to shift patterns. PCSO shift patterns were now very rigid to fit around local police team shifts. Specials were mostly used in the town centre. PCSO Sharratt would be asked to contact Chair and Cllr. Olney.

For minor incidents, residents should contact PCSO Sharratt on 842864 or jonathan.sharratt@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk. For nuisance youths, who were not an emergency, residents should ring 101. Sgt. Geary could be contacted on 275312 (no answerphone) or jason.geary@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk. Sgt. Geary reported to Insp. Everett who in turn reported to Ch. Insp. McCaffray.

Cllr. Olney was concerned about losing the links that had been built up. The Community Alcohol Partnership, which worked successfully with licensees, schools and the local community would soon cease to exist as a result of the Bedford BC cuts and the relationship with local young people established by the previous PCSO had been lost. Sgt. Geary advised that PCSOs were expected to walk round the villages to build up contacts and were now trained to carry out schools liaison work and would contact schools about alcohol issues. He also had formal monthly meetings with schools to discuss serious issues such as drug dealing. Sgt. Geary added that there were no major problems at present, there had been only 5 calls in the last 6 weeks but intelligence from the community was vital.

9. New Boule Pitch:

Cllr. Baily reported that quotations had yet to be received. He noted that £500 would be required for the boules themselves.

10. Disabled Access Swing:

Clerk had discussed with playground contractor who advised that insurance might not cover the swing if not attached to the manufacturer's frame. Awaiting insurance company's advice.

11. Blacksmith's Forge at Bedford Arms:

Council had received copies of the structural engineer's report and was awaiting details of the pipe work under the trees. The report confirmed the poor state of the building and Cllr. Baily suggested that it would need taking down and rebuilding if Council wanted to preserve it, which would not be economically viable. The large number of trees on the site would also be a significant cost for the village to maintain. Wells had been advised that, as a historic structure, the building could not be demolished but should be reduced in height to make it safe. They had subsequently asked if Council wished to take over responsibility for it once safe. Proposed by Cllr. Olney, seconded by Cllr. Sansom that Council was content in principle to take over the building but would need to reconsider once Wells had been through the appropriate planning and conservation procedures.

Resolved – Clerk to advise Wells

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Action

Clerk

Application No: 11/02124/TPO – prune back lateral branches on 1 yew & fell 3 yews at The Acorns, Church Lane
 Parish Comments: No objection
 Decision/Date: Permission 21.11.11.

Application No: 11/02129/FUL – part conversion of garage to living accommodation & single storey side extension to rear of garage at 12, Ruffs Furze
 Parish Comments: No objection
 Decision/Date: Permission 23.11.11.

Applications received since last Council meeting – 1st November 2011

a) Application No: 11/02355/FUL – single storey side extension incorporating inglenook fireplace & chimney at 20 High Street
 Parish Comments: No objection

b) Gypsy & Traveller Sites

Bletsoe PC had requested support for inclusion of sites in Bedford, Kempston & Elstow Storage Depot for consideration as gypsy & traveller sites.

Stevington PC had requested support for an open letter to the Mayor and press requesting urgent resolution of the gypsy & traveller site problem and reconsideration of Meadow Lane as a site. Council supported both and Clerk to advise Bletsoe and Stevington.

It was expected that the list of proposed sites would be published after Christmas and Bedford BC had been asked to carry out a further noise report on Meadow Lane as it seemed that there was no legal objection to the site that could not be resolved with bunding or fencing.

Action

Clerk

18. Correspondence:

- a) Oakley Scout Group – thank you for donation
 b) Bedford BC – temporary closure of Bedford High Street/Mill Street during Victorian Fair - noted
 c) Bedford BC – invitation to Chair to Bedford BC Carol Service. Cllr. Walker to attend

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JW

19. Grant Applications:

Cllr. Olney took no part in the discussion or vote. Oakley Rural Day Centre had requested a grant at Council's discretion to continue work to maintain clients' independence and quality of life. Balance of the £30,541 required would be funded from other supporting organisations. Three clients are Oakley residents.

Proposed by Cllr. Fardon that £750 be granted. Proposal not seconded.

Proposed by Cllr. Phillips, seconded by Cllr. White that £500 be granted

Resolved – s.137 donation

Action

Clerk

20. Finance Matters:

a) Accounts for period up to 6th December 2011

Income and balances:

NatWest Bank - Current account balance at 30.11.11.	£26,610.87
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 30.11.11.	£15,673.82
NatWest Bank – Bonus Saver account balance at 30.11.11.	£40,167.70
NatWest - Fixed Rate Bond at 30.11.11.	£140,000.00

Action

Received since previous meeting

Willcock - allotment rent	£12.00
Willsher - allotment rent	£12.00
Hobbs - allotment rent	£24.00
Russell - allotment rent	£24.00
Lacy - allotment rent	£12.00
Day - allotment rent	£24.00
Matthews - allotment rent	£12.00
Searle - allotment rent	£12.00
Smyth - allotment rent	£24.00
Marshall - allotment rent	£24.00
McNab - allotment rent	£12.00
Elliott - allotment rent	£24.00
Spary - allotment rent	£12.00

Parsons - allotment rent	£12.00
Hawking - allotment rent	£12.00
Marshall - allotment rent	£12.00
Hutson - allotment rent	£24.00
UK Power Networks - wayleave	£49.65
Total	£337.65

Payments Already Made:

Oakley Gardening Club - s.137 donation	£200.00	Chq. No. 702
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Payments Made:

Wildman Transport - emptying bottle bank 01.11.11. & 23.11.11.	£112.80	703
Anglian Water - allotment water May 2011 - October 2011	£108.80	704
Taylor's Commercial - Speeditree	£1,142.00	705
Glasdon UK - litter bin	£331.88	706
SLCC - membership renewal	£140.00	707
CPRE - membership renewal	£29.00	708
Oakley Village Hall – Committee Room hire 06.12.11. 3hrs @ £6/ph	£18.00	709
Clerk – salary and expenses 01.11.11. – 30.11.11.	£659.20	710
M Hobbs - bus shelter cleaning November	£18.30	711
J Walker – litter collection @ £42/wk (5 weeks)	£210.00	712
Whites Engineering – Christmas tree batteries	£153.60	713
Oakley Rural Day Care Centre – s. 137 donation	£500.00	714
Total payments this meeting	£3,623.58	

Resolved: to approve the accounts for payment.

Clerk

b) Purchase of dog waste bin for Highfield Road

Residents had requested a dog waste bin adjacent to the end of the footpaths. Bedford BC has to carry out a criteria check before agreeing to the installation of a bin and Clerk was awaiting the result. Cost of bin and installation was £195.00 + VAT from Bedford BC. Proposed by Cllr. Sansom, seconded by Cllr. Taylor that a bin be purchased provided check was satisfactory

Resolved

Action

Clerk

c) Grass Cutting Tenders 2012/13:

Clerk had sent documents to 6 companies and received 3 full tenders and a quotation for Linch Furlong and the orchard only.

	Verges	Linch Furlong	Orchard	Total
Granger	£6,270.00	£570	£320	£7,160.00
DSD	£5,736.50	£547	£260	£6,543.50
Warners	£5,390.00	£410	£140	£5,940.00
Knight	-	£480	£220	£ 700.00

Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Sansom that the quotation for £5,390 be accepted for the verges and the quotation of £700 be accepted for Linch Furlong and the orchard as the contractor was an expert in maintaining such areas

Resolved

Action

Clerk

d) Precept 2012/13

Clerk had circulated draft budget for 2012/13 for discussion at January Finance Meeting.

Action

21. **Date of next Council meeting:** 4th January – Finance Advisory Group
10th January 2012

Chairman