

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022 in the Village Hall

**PRESENT:**

J Walker (Chair), J. Abbott, S. Fardon, M. Frampton, P. Jones, S. Nicholas, R Saunders, P. White the Clerk, Mrs. Paice, representative from Forest of Marston Vale and 0 members of the public

1. **Public Open Session:** none
2. **Apologies:** P. Olney (illness)
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr. Nicholas for item 16 as an allotment tenant. Chair for item 16 as a relative of an allotment tenant. Cllr. Abbott for item 17 as a resident of The Furlong. Chair & Cllr. White for item 21 as members of the OSSC. Cllr. White for item 23b) as known to one of the contractors quoting.
4. **Co-option of New Councillors:**  
Mrs. Sawford had volunteered to join the Council but was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. Co-option was therefore deferred to the January meeting.
5. **Minutes of Council Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022:**  
**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes.
6. **Clerk's Report:**  
Highways – flooding at Lovell Road bridge had been reported to Bedford BC with a request to raise the footway and Clerk had again asked Highways to clear blocked drains along the High Street, Church Lane, Lovell Road and in Station Road. Clerk had also asked Highways to repair the verge in Reynes Drive damaged by their contractor during the Bevery Close footway works and had requested Anglian Water put a sensor on the sewage manhole at the bus stop by the Old School which was lifting in heavy rain. Following a request for yellow lines in Lincroft, Clerk had asked Highways to consult residents.  
Parking – Clerk had reported vehicles blocking the footway in Station Road to police who were pursuing.  
Speed Watch – nil return for events 08.11.22. in Church Lane & 25.11.22. in High Street reported to police.  
Litter bins – bins had all been emptied in November  
Dog bins – Bedford BC would reconsider siting a dog bin near Lovell Road bridge.  
Brockwell Meadow – no date yet for delivery of trees for the meadow.

Action

Clerk

Christmas lights – lights had been switched on 03.12.22. Lights at the crossroads were not working and Clerk to ask contractor to resolve. Council thanked Mrs. White for providing an Advent wreath.

Clerk

**7. Matters Arising from the Minutes of 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022: none**

Action

**8. Reports:**

**Network Meeting 17.11.22.**

Chair reported that the Zoom connection failed and the meeting had to be abandoned part way through. Bedford BC advised that photo ID would be required for all future national and local elections because of concerns about fraud and if residents had no ID they would need to register. Postal votes would not require ID as separate checks were carried out on these. Chair to include in March Newsletter. BRCC gave a presentation on their Good Neighbour Scheme. Councillors noted that residents in Oakley helped each other on an informal basis and a scheme in the past had not been used. Bedford BC had been allocated £2,296,175 over three years from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which included monies for capital projects in the rural area. No further details were yet available.

**9. East West Rail (EWR):  
Response from DfT**

Action

In response to Council’s request that EWR be cancelled, EWR had replied on behalf of DfT. They had advised that EWR was a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and EWR would be submitting a Development Consent Order to secure the planning and permitted development powers needed. There would be a further statutory consultation when issues could be raised and EWR aimed to become a net-zero carbon railway and was committed to protecting the environment. Chair and Cllr. Olney had attended a BFARE meeting with Mr. Fuller MP 05.12.22. and reported that Mr. Fuller had contacted various Ministers and they were required to respond to MPs’ questions although it was usual practice for constituents’ queries to be passed to EWR for reply. The Treasury supported growth as it would bring money into Government and in Mr. Fuller’s opinion University dons, MPS, Chair of Astra Zeneca and the Mayor of Bedford were pressing for EWR but he considered there was no business case at present for the Bletchley to Cambridge section. Opinions differed in the Cambridge area. BFARE reported that Ms. West (EWR CEO) was not interested in costings for viaducts and tunnels but would follow up on comments that costings had not been provided for the removal of the clay. Moving forward, Mr. Fuller MP would chase the Treasury on the business case and finding pressure points; BFARE would pursue the issue of differences between EWR engineers and strategists; councillors would continue to request clarification on the need for 6 lanes out of Bedford; BFARE would pursue interest in alternatives to the EWR route; BFARE would meet with Greater

Cambridgeshire Partnership and would follow up the Bedford Borough, Central Beds and Huntingdonshire Local Plans. Council agreed that they would continue to funnel their concerns through BFARE as they provided a cohesive voice and a group had more influence than individuals. Council would, however, continue to raise issue separately when necessary.

Cllr. Abbott reported that there were currently no trains between Bedford and Bletchley as the company running the service had failed and a replacement bus service was in operation. He added that, in his opinion, monies were not likely to be available for EWR for several years.

Cllr. Jones to attend the next Local Representatives' Meeting on 07.12.22. when active travel, first mile/last mile and accessibility & inclusion would be discussed. More information at <https://communityhub.eastwestrail.co.uk/>.

**10. Police Report:**

There were two reported crimes in November, 1 assault with injury in Station Road and 1 malicious communications offence in Dewlands.

OPCC had passed Council's complaint about the length of time taken to answer 101 calls to police. Police had advised that they were extremely busy and were trying to deal with 101 enquiries as quickly as possible. They suggested using Bedfordshire Police website - <https://www.beds.police.uk/> to report a crime or chat to online operators for more assistance.

Village Hall had reported anti-social behaviour and drug taking in the car park to police. Councillors noted that suspicious vehicles had also been seen in the churchyard and Clerk to ask police to patrol this area too.

Action

Clerk

**11. Licence for Kindergarten Access to Brockwell Meadow:**

Solicitors had apologised for the delay on Kindergarten access licence and advised that they required a signed acknowledgement letter and £100.00 on account for the necessary disbursements before proceeding.

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Fardon that payment of £100.00 be made

**Resolved**

Chair and Cllr. Jones signed the acknowledgement letter

Action

Clerk

**12. Environmental Policy:**

Neighbourhood Plan Group had drafted an Environmental Policy which had been circulated to councillors. Cllr. Fardon was concerned that it was too proscriptive and would be impractical to implement. Council agreed. Clerk to consult BATPC for advice and draft a revised policy. Council to discuss again in January.

Action

Clerk

**13. Work to Tree at Reynes Drive/High Street junction:**

Bedford BC had asked the tree surgeon to carry out an intrusive survey to determine if the decay in the horse chestnut at Reynes Drive/High Street was deep into the main trunk and they would then advise on either a reduction or a removal. Awaiting result of the survey.

Proposed by Cllr. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Jones that Clerk be authorised to obtain quotations and accept the lowest if the tree was in a dangerous condition

**Resolved**

Clerk

**14. Defra tree planting scheme:**

Representative from The Forest of Marston Vale explained that previously they had only worked in the Forest area but were now delivering a project for Defra which covered a three mile area around the Forest. Grants were available for anyone who wanted to plant trees and had 0.1ha i.e. space for 100 trees available. Grants would cover the cost of trees, tree protection and maintenance. Representative confirmed that land did not need to be accessible to the public and that the scheme was part of the Government’s response to climate change and the need to replace lost trees. Trees supplied would be suitable for the local soil conditions and would usually be native, broad leaved species. Sites would be assessed by the Forestry Commission and trees would not be planted on productive agricultural land. Scheme would continue for two more years. Council did not have land available for 100 trees but Chair would advertise in the March Newsletter. Chair thanked representative for attending the meeting.

Action

**15. Play Equipment Annual Inspection:**

The annual inspection had been carried out and at The Furlong the dog grid needed cleaning and ground reinstating to remove a trip hazard; swing seat connectors and swing fixings needed tightening; moss/algae needed removing from the play panels and the wooden seat and multiplay needed sanding and re-staining.

Trees were also overhanging equipment and awaiting quotations to crown lift to 2m.

At the Green, cracks in the tarmac needed repairing; redundant post should be removed; gate timings needed adjusting; dog grid needed clearing; fence needed repairing; area around seats needed reinstating; logs on the climber needed replacing and weeds removing from the surfacing; table tennis tarmac needed repairing; grass mats needed repairing around the zipwire and cloth removing from the cable; timber needed re-staining on the wooden climber; surfacing needed repairing around the seesaw, vegetation needed removing and hoop replacing on the MUGA and a new sign erected stating that the equipment is not intended for children less than 3 years old with a warning not to climb on the framework or nets not to hang on the ring, not to wear rings or other jewellery and including name and telephone number of the administrator to call in case of accident. Inspection also noted that signs at both sites should include the site

Action

name/address. Graffiti needed removing from the silver multiplay and playhouse and fixings/bolt caps needed replacing on the seats, log climber, group swing, silver multiplay, climbing frame and wooden climber.

Roundabout boards needed replacing but fixings had been welded so it was not possible to replace the boards underneath. Surfacing also needed extending to meet current requirements and Council would be replacing the item in 2023. Wooden parts of the slide had rotted and contractor had removed the item. Estimated delivery date for the new slide was 19.12.22.

Contractor had quoted £1,460 + VAT to repair equipment and tarmac including replacing three logs on the log climber but noted that wood staining would need to be done when hot, dry weather returned

Proposed by Cllr. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Frampton that quotation for £1,460 + VAT be accepted and that Clerk to obtain quotations for new signs

**Resolved**

Clerk

**16. Allotments:**

Action

Waste had been fly tipped at the entrance to the allotments. Clerk had reported to Bedford BC but they do not remove waste from private land. Cllr. Nicholas commented that locking the gate would be the only way to prevent fly tipping. Council discussed whether a skip should be hired annually for allotment waste, if necessary, and the cost spread amongst tenants. The gate would need to be locked whilst the skip was on site.

Clerk had obtained quotations for skips and the cheapest 2 yard was £134.17 + VAT, the cheapest 4 yard £165.00 + VAT

Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. Frampton that quotation for £163.00 + VAT be accepted

**Resolved**

Clerk

**17. Highway Matters:**

Action

**request to turn off streetlights in The Furlong 00:00 – 05:30**

Bedford BC had received a request to turn off streetlights in The Furlong from 00:00 to 05:30 as in the rest of the village (except for main roads) and had asked for Council's view. Cllr. Abbott noted that lights used to be off at night until new leds were installed. Council had no objections.

Clerk

Chair reported that the streetlight outside the Village Hall had fallen over. Cllr. Abbott noted that he had witnessed it being hit by a vehicle and passed the registration to Bedford BC who were looking to recover the cost of a new light through the motorist's insurance. He added that a streetlight in Pavenham Road had also been hit by a vehicle and Highways would be replacing.

Councillors reported that a hedge in Grenidge Way was overhanging the path and Clerk to ask the resident to cut back.

Clerk

**18. Borough Councillor's Report:**

Cllr. Abbott reported that at Full Council on 30.11.22. a £7million overspend had been noted due to the current economic situation. £5million could be transferred from the capital budget but the remaining £2 million would need to be found from elsewhere. Most councils were in a similar position. Government had announced that Council Tax could be raised by 5% in 2023 and Bedford BC was considering. The problems with the traffic lights outside Bedford Modern School had been investigated and Manton Lane would need to be dug up over Christmas to repair the fault. Because of the constant need for repairs, the A6 would be rebuilt/resurfaced in 2023. No new leisure services contract had yet been agreed. Secondary School capacity was being reviewed and it was more likely that Biddenham School would take additional pupils than Lincroft in this area. A feasibility study was being carried out on the Debenhams site to try and convert it into smaller units and open up the site to reveal the listed buildings behind.

Action**19. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:****Decisions notified since Council meeting – 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

Application No. **22/02098/FUL** - erection of detached garden room at 29 Station Road

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 09.11.22.

Application No. **22/01144/FUL (amended)** - new fencing to separate Lincroft Academy and Oakley Primary School and additional parking at the front on existing grassed area

Parish MUGA had been removed from application and Council had no objection to fence and parking.

Decision/Date: Permission 09.11.22.

**Applications received since last Council meeting – 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

Application No. **a) 22/02547/FUL** - first floor side/rear extension over existing ground floor, single storey rear extension replacing conservatory & associated alterations at 43 High Street

Parish No objection

Comments

Cllr. Abbott had no information yet on why application 22/00744/MAO – residential development of up to 12 dwellings including access at land off Pavenham Road had not been refused immediately as it was outside the Settlement Policy Area and did not conform to the Neighbourhood Plan.

<p><b>20. <u>Planning Policy:</u></b></p> <p><b>a) review of Neighbourhood Plan</b></p> <p>Neighbourhood Plan Group had reviewed the Plan policies and supporting documents during Summer 2022 and agreed that no changes were needed at present. The Neighbourhood Plan (NDP) would conform with the 2040 Local Plan and studies carried out by the Borough Council to support that Plan as no additional housing, above that already identified, was needed in Oakley up to 2040.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Saunders that the review be approved</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p>NDP Group would report to Bedford BC and update the Oakley website. Council thanked them for their work on the review.</p> <p>Cllr. Fardon was concerned that NDPs were not being given sufficient weight by the Planning Department. Cllr. Abbott confirmed that they were always given weight.</p> <p><b>b) Bedford BC – consultation on Trees Supplementary Planning Document</b></p> <p>Bedford BC was consulting on the scope of its Trees Supplementary Planning Document, which would cover tree protection, planning application requirements, tree aftercare and trees in the highway. Council was content</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>21. <u>Correspondence:</u></b></p> <p><b>ORA – tennis court to be used for parking during winter months</b></p> <p>ORA had advised that they were looking to use the tennis court for parking during winter months and replacing the fence in the long term with a fence that could be removed in winter and replaced in summer. Netball court was not used and tennis court rarely therefore parking was a better use of the space. Councillors were concerned that a facility paid for with public monies would be converted to parking and had asked Bedford BC for advice. Cllr. Abbott commented that the matter had not been discussed at the most recent ORA meeting and he would raise at the next meeting. However, it was the OSSC who managed the field on a day-to-day basis. He would also raise the reinstatement of the field where contractors were working on an adjacent property. He noted that the ORA was discussing renting parking at Lincroft and the Church to try and reduce the parking problems and had indicated that they wanted the boules pitch to remain. Cllr. Frampton noted that the letter to Council had stated that the tennis court was rarely used but as a neighbour he could confirm that it was well used in the Summer.</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr. Fardon, seconded by Cllr. Jones that Council should express disappointment that a facility paid for from public monies had been converted to a car park without any consultation, should state their desire that the Club continued to offer a broad range of facilities for the village and ask that the ORA publicise the facilities in the Newsletter</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> Chair to include an article in the Spring Newsletter</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Clerk</p>

**22. Grant Applications:**

Action

Oakley Kindergarten had requested a grant of £2,500.00 for a dividing screen between the toddler and pre-school areas. Total cost of project at £3,000.00 and balance would be obtained from Amazon Smile donation - £104.90, Easy Fundraising donations - £321.65 and Halloween Fundraiser - £73.45. Grants of £1K had been made in 2019, 2020 and 2021. All staff were Oakley residents and 80% of children and there was a balance of £229,037.96 at 31.12.21. of which £212,762.39 was allocated for the new build. Clerk noted that £900 remained in the grant budget of which £18 would be required for the poppy wreath.

Clerk

Proposed by Cllr. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Abbott that £500.00 be donated  
**Resolved** – S.137 donation

**23. Finance Matters:**

Action

**a) accounts for period up to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**Income and balances:**

NatWest Bank - Current account balance at 31.10.22.	£36,402.58
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 31.10.22.	£7,265.72
Nationwide - Savings Bond	£59,999.74
Hampshire Trust - Savings Bond	£84,377.01

**Received since last meeting:**

Bergin	Allotment rent	17.00
Wright	Allotment rent	21.30
Holyoak (Webster)	Allotment rent	82.42
Walker A	Allotment rent	21.30
Gater	Allotment rent	42.60
Peacock	Newsletter advertising	216.00
Oakley IT	Newsletter advertising	216.00
Lane & Holmes	Newsletter advertising	432.00
Hair for All Occasions	Newsletter advertising	432.00
David James	Newsletter advertising	60.00
NatWest	Interest	2.37
Bergin	Allotment rent	17.00
Wright	Allotment rent	21.30
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,542.99</b>

**Payments Already**

**Chq.**

**Made:**

**No.**

Old School	Rent for upper rooms November	153.83	s/o
Salaries	November payment	1181.72	s/o
Paice	Back pay 2021/22 and 2022/23	642.64	1812



Bedfordshire Pension Fund	November payment	632.27	1813
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**Payments Made:**

	Installing and removing Christmas lights	3,918.00	1814
Christmas Decorators	Annual play equipment inspection	262.62	1815
Play Inspection Company	Levelling new allotments	234.00	1816
Warners of Bedford	Membership renewal	177.00	1817
SLCC	Remembrance wreath	18.00	1818
RBL Poppy Appeal	Hire of room 06.12.22.	18.00	1819
Village Hall	<b>Total</b>	<b>£7,238.08</b>	

**Resolved:** to approve the accounts for payment

Clerk

**b) grass cutting 2023/24**

Clerk had requested quotations from seven contractors for grass and hedge cutting and received three – one for £218,576 (Clerk had queried the cost and contractor had confirmed it was correct), one for £12,000 p.a. + VAT for a three year contract and one for £9,612.01 p.a. + VAT for a two year contract.

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Frampton that the quotation for £9,612.01 + VAT for two years be accepted

Clerk  
Clerk**Resolved**

Clerk to remind contractor that chemicals should not be used on verges.

**c) employer pension fund contributions 2023 - 2026**

Bedfordshire Pension Fund had advised that employer contributions for 2023 – 2026 would rise from 25.8% currently to 26.8%.

Proposed by Cllr. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Fardon that the increase be accepted

Clerk

**Resolved**

Chair and Cllr. Jones signed the employer agreement accepting the change.

**d) review of bus shelter cleaner & litter picker performance & wages**

Council was content with the performance of the litter picker and bus shelter cleaner and Clerk to thank her for her work. Living wage to increase w.e.f. 01.04.23. to 10.42 per hour equating to £387.28 per month

Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. Frampton that salary be increased to £387.28 per month w.e.f. 01.04.23.

Clerk

**Resolved**

Bus shelter cleaning wage was within the living wage but proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Abbott that it be increased by 5% to £36.75 per month

**Resolved**

Clerk

**e) budget 2023/24**

Clerk had circulated a draft budget for 2023/24. New projects suggested for 2023/24 were a new log climber or post and chain climber (from CIL monies) and 2 large new bins. Brockwell Meadow improvements would be funded from Directory advertising income.

- 21. Date of Next Meeting:** 3rd January 2023 – Finance Group  
10th January 2023