

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023 in the Village Hall

**PRESENT:**

J. Abbott, (Chair), S. Fardon, M. Frampton, P. Jones, S. Nicholas, P. Olney, R Saunders, P. White the Clerk, Mrs. Paice and 1 member of the public

**1. Public Open Session:**

Resident was concerned that the bollards and T bar had yet to be installed in The Furlong. A site meeting had been held with councillors on 07.06.22. and Council had supported the installation at their meeting on 12.07.22.

Chair noted that monies had been allocated but Highways still needed to make a site visit. Resident tabled a proposed plan and Chair to ensure Highways made a site visit within one month.

Resident was also concerned that, despite repeated reports, the drains in the High Street had yet to be cleared. Chair commented that he and the Clerk had also been reporting and chasing since September – see item 15c). Resident noted that the small rubbish bin at the High Street was often full and as it was used for dog waste was very smelly in Summer. He requested a larger bin further away from the bus shelter. Clerk advised that monies had been included in the 2023/24 budget to provide a larger bin.

JA

**2. Apologies: J Walker (personal)**

**3. Declarations of Interest: Cllr. Abbott for Open Forum and item 14b) as a resident of The Furlong.**

**4. Co-option of New Councillors:**

Resident had not attended the meeting therefore deferred to May elections.

Action  
Clerk

**5. Minutes of Council Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022:**

**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes.

**6. Clerk's Report:**

Highways – Clerk had asked Bedford BC to clear slippery leaves from footways and clear the path from Church Lane to the church. Clerk had also chased drain clearing throughout the village and asked householders to repair the fence leaning over the footpath from Church Lane and trim the overgrown hedge in Grenidge Way. A resident had met with Highways to discuss the blocked drain outside number 4 Highfield Road. Highways had decided to try and get a CCTV recording from inside the pipe to see if it had been damaged by recent bridge work and the problem now seemed to have been resolved. The water leak on Highfield Road had yet to be repaired by Anglian Water.

Speed Watch – nil return for event 02.12.22. in Station Road reported to police.  
Speed Cameras – 25 notices of intended prosecution had been issued in September and 37 in October. No data was available for November.

Parking – vehicles blocking Station Road footway reported to police.

Allotments – fly tipping had been removed and Council thanked Cllr. Nicholas who had loaded the skip during the snow.

ORA – Clerk had written to the ORA expressing disappointment that the tennis court, which was a facility paid for from public monies had been converted to a car park without any consultation, desire that the Club continued to offer a broad range of facilities for the village and asking that the ORA publicise the facilities in the Newsletter. Chair to raise at the next ORA meeting on 17.01.23.

JA

The Furlong – tree surgeon had lifted overhanging trees in the play area free of charge and Clerk had thanked him. Streetlights would be turned off between midnight and 5.30am from 10.01.23.

Christmas lights – timer at the crossroads had been set incorrectly and a resident had resolved. Clerk had thanked him. Cllr. Saunders noted that cables were dangling on the ground at the churchyard and Clerk to ask the contractor to remove as soon as possible.

Clerk

**7. Matters Arising from the Minutes of 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022: none**

Action

**8. Calendar of Meetings 2023/24:-**

04.04.23. Annual Parish Meeting	07.11.23.
09.05.23.	05.12.23.
06.06.23.	02.01.24. Finance Advisory Group
04.07.23.	09.01.24.
05.09.23.	05.03.24.
03.10.23.	02.04.24. Annual Parish Meeting

**Resolved** to accept

Clerk

**9. East West Rail (EWR):**

Action

**Local Representatives’ Meeting 07.12.22.**

Active travel and first/last mile were discussed. EWR would collaborate with Local Authorities to provide connectivity and sustainable travel from communities to stations e.g. secure cycle and scooter parking, cycle, e-cycle and scooter hire, active travel hubs, safer foot and cycle paths, ‘Way showing’ using apps and public realm improvements. An Advisory Panel for Active Travel and First Mile Last Mile would be set up in 2023. Inclusion and accessibility would be considered at an early stage and an Accessibility Advisory Panel was also being set up. Councillors were concerned about the lack of physical space for travel hubs etc. at Bedford Station, how they would be funded and requested concrete examples that had been provided for the Oxford to Milton Keynes section of the line. Councillors also queried how useful an app would be when there were no bus services in rural areas and whether a sound business case had

been made for the project. Next meeting in January would discuss freight and tractive effort (pushing/pulling capacity of locomotives).

Cllr. Fardon asked if there was any more that Council should do other than attend these and BFARE meetings. Council agreed that there was nothing until the route announcement was made. Cllr. Olney confirmed that she would continue to attend BFARE meetings.

#### 10. **Police Report:**

There were five reported crimes in December, 1 assault with injury in Grenidge Way, 1 assault without injury and 1 criminal damage in the High Street, 1 obscene publications offence and 1 theft of a cycle in Dewlands.

Clerk had asked police to patrol churchyard and Village Hall in connection with drug taking.

OPCC had issued their Annual Precept Survey see

<https://www.bedfordshire.pcc.police.uk/bedfordshire-pcc-consults-with-residents-about-police-budget-for-2023-24/>

Cllr. Olney noted that police used to hold liaison meetings with parishes and Clerk to request a community surgery in Oakley or for police to attend a Methodist Church coffee morning.

Action

Clerk

#### 11. **Speed Watch:**

Speed Watch Group had been recording the speed of every vehicle that passed and from the data had created speed profiles which enabled easy comparison of the range and distribution of speeds at that time and location.

In order to formalise the Speed Watch Group's activities, they had asked that Council approve these activities and the way the data is used. From time to time the Speed Watch Coordinator would update Council on Speed Watch activities and some of the data might be shared with residents and others through the Oakley Newsletter and website as deemed appropriate. None of the data would show any means of identification.

Proposed by Cllr. Frampton, seconded by Cllr. Jones that Group should continue to collect, analyse and publish data

**Resolved**

Action

Clerk

#### 12. **Licence for Kindergarten Access to Brockwell Meadow:**

##### a) **Kindergarten Licence**

Solicitors had asked for information about the fence between Brockwell Meadow and the Kindergarten to prepare the draft licence. Council was awaiting confirmation from Bedford BC whether they would replace the fence and Chair to chase.

Action

JA

**b) tree planting event**

Trees were ready for collection from Buckingham Nursey. Cllr. Olney suggested that former Cllr. Sansom was interested in continuing with the project and Clerk to ask if he would still be willing to collect the trees. A planting date would need to be arranged as soon as possible and Clerk to co-ordinate with contractor and organisations/residents who wished to help.

Clerk

Clerk

Cllr. Olney noted that the Linch Furlong notice board had yet to be filled with information about the site. She offered to donate a piece of board and Cllr. Jones volunteered to attach photographs. Information and a key were held by former Cllr. Sansom and Clerk to ask for their return.

Clerk

**13. Environmental Policy:**

Clerk had re-drafted an Environmental Policy which had been circulated to councillors. No advice yet from BATPC.

Action

Proposed by Cllr. Olney, seconded by Cllr. Fardon that Environmental Policy be adopted

Clerk

**Resolved**

**14. Repairs to Fences:**

Action

**a) path to weir in Church Lane**

Fence had been damaged by a vehicle and Clerk had asked police if the vehicle could be identified from the debris and partial number plate but they had advised that this was unlikely. Clerk had requested quotations to repair and two contractors to make a site visit shortly. Cllr. White to consider providing a quotation and Council to discuss an insurance claim once the cost of repairs was known.

PW  
Clerk

**b) The Furlong**

Part of the wooden fence adjacent to the bund at the rear of The Furlong was leaning and Clerk had requested quotations to repair. Council to consider again in March when quotations were available.

Clerk

**15. Highway Matters:**

Action

**a) flooding under Lovell Road bridge**

Clerk had asked Bedford BC to consider raising the footway to prevent students walking to school getting wet feet. Chair advised that Bedford BC was considering raising the path to the level of the kerb as a temporary solution until the developers of housing in Clapham created a dual purpose walking/cycling path along Lovell Road. Cllr. White suggested a barrier to prevent flood water splashing pedestrians and Chair would pursue but noted that funding might not be available. Clerk noted that housing in Clapham was not due to be completed until 2030.

JA

Chair noted that Bedford BC would continue to clear the pipe as far as they could but part of the drain was on Network Rail property and ran under the

JA

tracks so Network Rail had not repaired. Cllr. Saunders commented that the Borough Council had done what they could but asked if a submersible pump could be used. Chair to pursue.

**b) wet leaves on footways**

Clerk had asked Bedford BC to clear wet and slippery leaves from Church Lane, Station Road and High Street footways. Cllr. Fardon suggested including in the grass cutting contract but the work was Bedford BC's responsibility. Chair advised that Highways assessed the footways and cleared when the leaves became hazardous but he would chase.

JA

**c) blocked drains throughout village**

Clerk had asked Bedford BC to clear drains in Station Road, High Street, Church Lane and Lovell Road. Chair had been told that work would be completed within 8 weeks of reporting. As no work had been carried out he had now raised with the Director of Environment, who had advised that the work would be carried out this week and that Anglian Water would be instructed to repair the water leak on Highfield Road.

JA

Cllr. Olney suggested that drain clearing should be a Highways' priority.

**d) mud and debris on path from Church Lane to Lovell Road**

Clerk had asked Bedford BC to clear debris and cut back edges. Cllr. Fardon suggested including in grass cutting contract but the work was Bedford BC's responsibility.

**e) consideration of a path along Highfield Road to Judges Spinney**

The path was one of the CIL priorities in the Neighbourhood Plan. Finance Group had discussed whether £5,317 CIL monies that needed to be spent by June 2024 and which had been identified to replace the log climber or post and chain climber could be used for a path along Highfield Road. Clerk had asked Bedford BC if the deadline for using the money could be extended if it was ring fenced for this purpose and awaiting a response.

Clerk noted that a path would need to be wheelchair accessible and had asked Bedford BC about the feasibility and cost of a crushed stone path similar to that at Harrold/Odell Country Park and the Forest of Marston Vale and again awaiting a response.

Cllr. Olney reported a pothole on Station Road opposite Lincroft School and that the road was falling away at the edge. Clerk to ask Bedford BC to repair

Clerk

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

Cllr. Abbott reported that Christmas events had been successful. Full Council would be held 11.01.23. to agree the 2023/24 Council Tax. Base rate would increase by 0.89% plus 1.99% for adult social care therefore 2.88% in total.

Action

Police precept was likely to increase significantly by 6.1%. The deficit in Council finances had reduced with the rise in interest rates and work on the Local Plan was continuing. There was no update on future management of leisure facilities but the contract with Fusion was due to end shortly. Bedford BC was currently undertaking a feasibility study on secondary school places and Cllr. Walker had advised that they were considering whether Lincroft could increase its numbers by an additional 2 forms per year i.e. 60 extra students per year group. Any expansion would not be dependent on more houses in Oakley but would be sourced from the Borough's capital programme. Cllr. Abbott noted that Biddenham School had received a good Ofsted rating and had more capacity but Lincroft School needed improvement.

Cllr. Nicholas asked about housing numbers and associated infrastructure and Cllr. Abbott advised that as the 2040 Local Plan was well advanced, Bedford BC would need to retain the housing targets within it. However, there were no plans for new housing developments north of Clapham Road roundabout because of the lack of infrastructure to support them. Government policy was to build where people wanted to live and work which had resulted in more housing in the south of England.

Cllr. Fardon noted that there was graffiti on the sign at the mini roundabout and on the bypass sign. Clerk to ask Bedford BC to remove. Council discussed whether the culprit/s could be identified and Clerk to ask Lincroft School to mention in their newsletter.

Clerk  
Clerk

## 17. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:

### **Decisions notified since Council meeting – 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

Application No. **22/00893/FUL** - demolition of existing 2 storey dwelling, removal of existing pool & erection of new 2 storey dwelling with single storey rear annexe/garden room at Orchard Lea 15 Highfield Road

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 22.12.22. CIL liable

### **Applications received since last Council meeting – 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

Application No. **a) 23/00009/TPO** – targeted pruning of mature oak trees away from neighbouring property & removal of horse chestnut at Reynes Drive green

Parish No objection as Council owned trees

Comments

Application No. **b) 23/00012/TPO** – reduce oak tree in back garden to approximately 2m below previous points on the top & north east & south side and reduce the west side by 3m at 55B High Street

Parish No objection

Comments

Application No. c) **22/00744/MAO** – appeal against non-determination of outline application for a residential development of up to 12 dwellings including access, with all other matters reserved at land off Pavenham Road

Parish Comments Council agreed to confirm that the reasons for objection to application 22/00744/MAO remained as detailed in the letter of May 2022 and add that Council was extremely concerned that the site was so close to the River Great Ouse. Also, the applicant mentioned in the original application that the Neighbourhood Plan had not been reviewed since it was made 2 years ago. The NDP Group recently completed a review of the Neighbourhood Plan 2, as required by the NPPF. All policies were still valid, no amendments or changes were required at this time and Council had accepted the recommendations of the Group

Chair noted that Bedford BC was working on their appeal response. Officers would have recommended refusal and there was no reason why a decision had not been made within the allotted time frame other than lack of staff. Cllr. Olney requested that the application be heard by the Planning Committee so a formal refusal could be recorded and sent to the Planning Inspector. Chair to pursue.

Application No. d) **21/00332/EIA amended** – amended environmental impact assessment for demolition of existing structures & outline permission with all matters reserved except for access for up to 500 residential dwellings, land for a new 2FE primary school and early years/childcare facilities at land off Milton Road, Clapham

Parish Comments No additional comments

Clerk noted that a certificate had been granted to confirm that the siting of a caravan for ancillary use at Courtyard Barn, The Drive did not require planning permission.

**18. Correspondence:**

**a) Resident – request for son to pick litter as part of DofE bronze award**  
 Resident had requested son be allowed to pick litter between January and March as part of his DofE bronze award. Council already had a litter picker and Clerk noted that volunteers under the age of 16 would not be covered by Council’s insurance so School or DofE would need to insure the student. Council agreed that Clerk to discuss with litter picker to try and organise an area and time for the resident to cover.  
 Chair would donate a litter picker and hoop and Council thanked him.

Action

Clerk  
 JA

**b) Bedford BC – proposed Bedfordshire Bus Users’ Forum**

Bedfordshire Local Authorities had committed to creating a Bedfordshire Bus Users’ Forum covering Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton. The Forum would act as an umbrella organisation comprising representatives from any current bus user groups within the Bedfordshire area as well as transport representatives from Parish and Town Councils. Parish and Town Councils could choose to participate on an individual basis or to link together with neighbouring Parish or Town Councils, where common bus routes serve adjacent areas. Central Bedfordshire Council would be acting as the administrator of the Forum and a launch meeting would be held in late January/early February. Cllr. Jones noted that bus services did not connect with commuters trying to travel to and from the station and timetables were difficult to find.

**19. Finance Matters:**Action**a) accounts for period up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022****Income and balances:**

NatWest Bank - Current account balance at 31.12.22.	£30,162.96
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 31.12.22.	£7,272.31
Nationwide - Savings Bond	£59,999.74
Hampshire Trust - Savings Bond	£84,377.01

**Received since last meeting:**

Whites ES	Newsletter advertising	108.00
Joseph	Newsletter advertising	30.00
Day D	Allotment rent	21.30
Day C	Allotment rent	42.60
NatWest	Interest	4.78
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£206.68</b>

**Payments Already****Made:**

			<b>Chq. No.</b>
Old School	Rent for upper rooms December	153.83	s/o
Salaries	December payment	1262.49	s/o
Bedfordshire Pension Fund	December payment	495.13	1822
Woodfines	Fees for Kindergarten licence	100.00	1823
Anglian Water	Allotment water	115.45	d/d

**Payments Made:**

Kompan	Replacement slide	3,561.60	1824
Paice	Allotment skip	194.40	1825



	2023 rent for land at Oakley		
Oakley Properties	bridges	100.00	1826
Village Hall	Hire of room 03.01.23. & 10.01.23.	24.00	1827
HMRC	Quarterly PAYE	989.26	1828
Bedfordshire Pension Fund	January payment	495.13	1829
		<b>£7,991.29</b>	

**Total**

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

Clerk

**b) budget & precept 2023/24**

Clerk had circulated a draft budget. Finance Group had recommended the Clerk's allowance for use of her house was raised to £350 p.a. as it had not been increased since 2009/10 and that one new item of expenditure be included - £1,500 for two new large bins to replace the small bins at the High Street and Lovell Road bus stops. Improvements to Brockwell Meadow would be funded from the Directory income. As the Christmas lights at the churchyard had worked without problem following an initial trip they agreed that monies would be available from the contingency if needed in 2023.

£5,317 CIL monies that need to be spent by June 2024 had been identified to replace the log climber or post and chain climber but Group discussed whether this could be used for a path along Highfield Road. Clerk had asked Bedford BC if the deadline for using the money could be extended if it was ring fenced for this purpose and about the cost of a crushed stone path similar to that at Harrod/Odell Country Park. Awaiting a response.

Finance Group recommended a 1.9% increase in the precept to £56,860 which would increase the band D rate by 2% from £56.55 to £57.68.

Proposed by Cllr. Frampton, seconded by Cllr. Nicholas that budget be adopted and a precept of £56,860 be set for 2023/24

**Resolved**

Chair & Clerk signed the precept request

Clerk

**c) Clerk's expenses**

Proposed by Cllr. Nicholas, seconded by Cllr. Olney that expenses of £46.39 for the period October to December 2022 be paid

**Resolved**

Clerk

21. **Date of Next Meeting:** 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023