

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 in the Methodist Church Hall

**PRESENT:**

S. Fardon (Chair), J. Abbott, C Bays, P. Jones, P. Olney, R Saunders, J Walker, P. White, C Worker the Clerk, Mrs. Paice and 1 member of the public

**1. Election of Chair:**

Proposed by Cllr. Walker, seconded by Cllr. Abbott that Cllr. Fardon be elected as Chair

**Resolved**

Cllr. Fardon signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chair and noted that as she had a full time job involving regular travel, she would not be available Monday to Friday during office hours. She thanked Cllr. Walker for taking on the role of Acting Chair following former Cllr. Phillips resignation due to ill-health.

**2. Election of Vice Chair:**

Proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Walker that Cllr. R Saunders be elected as Vice-Chair

Proposed by Cllr. C Worker, seconded by Cllr. Olney that Cllr. R. Worker be elected as Vice-Chair

**Resolved** by a majority of 5 to 2 with 1 abstention that Cllr. R Saunders be elected (Cllr. Saunders left the room for this item)

Cllr. R Saunders signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Vice-Chair.

**3. Acceptance of Office**

All councillors, except one who was away, had completed the Acceptance of Office. Council noted their thanks to Ms. Taylor who had not been elected on this occasion.

**4. Public Open Session:**

Resident of The Furlong reported that a meeting had been held with Bedford BC, Manager for Traffic Operations and Cllr. Abbott 11.05.23. Bedford BC advised that bollards and H bars would not resolve the parking issues and suggested double yellow lines. Lines could be lighter in colour and narrower, therefore less intrusive, but would still be enforceable. Resident suggested that lines would be needed at the entrance to The Furlong, outside the flats & nos. 18, 19 and 24 or, alternatively, as the play area was little used, part could be converted to parking. Councillors were concerned that yellow lines might move the problem further along the road and set a precedent for other areas where parking was difficult. Cllr. Abbott commented that notes on windscreens had been ineffective and Bedford BC would forward a formal

proposal. Council to consider at the June meeting. Cllr. Walker commented that Council should be aware of these issues when detailed plans for the sites allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan came forward.

Resident requested that central white line on the Church Lane bend be repainted. Clerk had asked Highways to do so.

Clerk  
ALL

5. **Apologies:** T. Saunders (personal), R. Worker (personal)

6. **Declarations of Interest:**

Cllrs. Abbott & White for item 11 as members of the OSSC. Cllr. Bays for item 11 as a relative of the Chair of ORA. Cllr. C Worker for item 11 as a relative of a member of the OSSC. Cllr. Abbott for Open Forum and item 15 as a resident of The Furlong. Cllr. C Worker for item 22c) as a neighbour of the applicant. Cllr. Saunders for item 23 as a landowner. Cllr. White for item 26a) as Chair of Village Hall Committee. Cllr. Bays for item 28g) s a relative of the website manager.

Council agreed that members who had declared an interest should leave the meeting for that item.

7. **Advisory Group Members and Council Representatives on other bodies:**

Finance Advisory Group: Chair, J Abbott, J Walker, R Worker

Planning Advisory Group: C Bays, P Jones, P Olney, R Saunders, J Walker

NDP Group: P Olney, J Walker, R Worker

Allotment Group: P Olney. Former Cllr. Nicholas would continue as allotment manager

Speed Watch Group: R Worker. Former Cllr. Phillips would continue as co-ordinator

Village Roads Co-ordinator: P White, J Abbott

Footpath & Waste Bins: P Jones

Oakley Directory: T Saunders, C Worker

Oakley Recreational Association: P Jones, T Saunders, R Worker

Village Hall: P White

Oakley Carnival Committee: C Bays, C Worker

Education Charity Trust: J Walker ( Reserve R Worker)

The Villager Community Minibus: C Worker

Oakley Rural Day Care Centre: P Olney

Tree Warden: R Saunders

Youth Club: S Fardon

**Resolved** to appoint

8. **Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting and Council Meeting both held on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023 :**

**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes.

**9. Clerk's Report:**

Highways – drains were still blocked in the High Street and Bedford BC had advised that the gullies in the village had been cleared but the work brought to light a number of issues with the system, including a problem with the main storm sewer. System would be jetted as a first step to resolving. Potholes in Ruffs Furze and along A6 slip road had been reported to Highways and repaired and Clerk had asked for the white line in Church Lane on the bend adjacent to church be re-marked as vehicles were driving in the centre of the road.

Parking – photograph of a vehicle completely blocking footway in High Street was forwarded to the police, who visited on several occasions but the vehicle had been moved. If it returns police will revisit

Speed Cameras – 1 notice of intended prosecution was issued in February and 4 in March, for speeds up to 41mph

Speed Watch – there were nil returns for the events on 07.03.23. in Lovell Road, 24.03.23. in Reynes Drive and 12.04.23. in Pavenham Road. 7 speeding vehicles, including one bus, were recorded for the event on 15.03.23. in Highfield Road. All reported to police.

Brockwell Meadow Access Licence – Kindergarten was content with the licence and both Kindergarten and Council had signed.

Bulky Waste Collection – skip would be coming to Oakley on 03.06.23. and would be sited in Reynes Drive from 11.30am to 15.30pm.

Community Litter Pick – Bedford BC was unable to support any events until August/September therefore the litter pick to be held 16.09.23. OSSC had kindly offered to host and Scouts, Brownies and ATC had been notified.

Fly tipping - metal dumped by the bin in Church Lane, scooter by the bin on the Green and a sofa in Dewlands had been reported to Bedford BC and removed

Tree works – Bedford BC had inspected trees between Ruffs Furze & Dewlands and confirmed that they were in good health so would not be trimmed. Tree in Ruffs Furze which was dropping branches would be trimmed in due course.

Grass cutting - Lovell Road verge, Station Road verge near The Grange, Ruffs Furze green, Reynes Drive/High Street green and The Furlong had not been mown on first cuts. Clerk had chased Bedford BC who had now cut all areas and reminded them that all grass should be cut at the same time. Clerk to remind contractor not to cut the bank in Westfield Road whilst in flower.

Clerk

**10. Matters Arising from the Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting and Council meeting 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023: none**Action

**11. Reports:-****Oakley Recreational Association Meeting 21.03.23.**

Cllr. Jones noted that the meeting began with reports from the organisers of the various activities. ORA was seeking a grant to help improve the quality of the football pitch and although they had lost a long-term sponsor, another had come forward. 222 residents had paid for membership this year to date, half of last year's total of 444. ORA would hold their usual Easter Egg run and other social events including a Coronation event.

Maintenance of the tennis court and boules pitch was discussed and Cllr. Jones also raised parking during football matches and suggested that a variety of sports other than football could be provided for young people. ORA considered this would be difficult to arrange. Cllr. T Saunders had suggested a grass court on the Playing Field between May and September if the current court was too expensive to maintain but this would be impractical as a court would need fencing. Cllr. Walker noted that residents were concerned about matters other than the tennis court and that Council needed to represent the views of villagers.

Next ORA meeting was 16.05.23. and ORA had also suggested a separate meeting between Council and ORA to discuss issues. As new councillors had been appointed to represent Council, it was agreed that Chair would write to ORA explaining that Council wanted to hold a meeting with the new representatives first, offering apologies for the meeting on 16.05.23. and agreeing to a separate meeting at a date to be arranged.

Chair

**12. East West Rail (EWR):****Parish Meetings**

Next local representatives' meeting would be scheduled once the route announcement had been made. EWR had also offered to hold individual parish meetings and Council had requested one. Details to be arranged. Cllr. Walker noted that the Mayor would be meeting with EWR and was taking advice on whether the project could be paused.

Action**13. Police Report:****a) visit to Methodist Church Coffee Morning 30.03.23.**

Youth Club did not want police to attend so they had intended to visit the Methodist Church coffee morning on 30.03.23. but had been called away to an incident elsewhere. Visit to be rearranged.

Action

Clerk

**b) meetings with Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner**

Deputy PCC would like to meet with council cluster groups if councils could provide a venue. Council wanted to meet and Clerk to suggest Village Hall.

There were eight reported crimes in March, 3 malicious communications, 2 public fear offences, 1 harassment, 1 possession of cannabis and 1 criminal damage to a vehicle and 6 in April, 2 assaults with injury, 1 controlling or

Clerk

coercive behaviour, 1 public fear offence, 1 stalking and 1 unspecified offence.

**14. Brockwell Meadow:**

**a) residents' site visit**

Contractor had planted wildflowers with the Kindergarten and had volunteered to hold a residents' meeting to show what is happening on site one Sunday morning once trees are in leaf and flowers have germinated. Clerk to ask contractor to arrange a date avoiding school holidays.

Action

Clerk

**b) damage to access path**

Resident was concerned that a contractor working in Bevery Close had accessed Brockwell Meadow via the bollard and damaged the verge. Neither Clerk nor the contractor had lent a key to anyone and the bollard was still locked and undamaged. Contractor had advised that he was cutting the Meadow weekly at present to keep an eye on the site. Cllr. White had inspected the damage and advised that there were no treaded tyre tracks and that the soil needed raking back.

**15. Repairs to Fences:**

**a) The Furlong**

Part of the wooden fence adjacent to the bund at the rear of The Furlong was leaning and Clerk was awaiting one quotation to repair. Other contractors had not responded.

Action

Clerk

**b) entrance stone wall in Lovell Road**

Clerk was awaiting one quotation. Other contractors were unable to carry out the work or had not responded.

Clerk

**16. Play Equipment:-**

**a) playground inspections**

Inspection had indicated that fixings needed tightening on the swing and the seat needed re-staining at The Furlong. On the Green, fixings needed tightening on the MUGA, bolt caps needed replacing on the silver climbing frame, surfacing under the group swing and zip wire needed replacing and the spring cover on the seesaw had split and needed replacing. Gaps were beginning to appear at the joins in the wetpour and would need to be monitored. Wet pour under multiplay had been repaired – see item 15b).

Contractor had quoted £1,155 + VAT to carry out the repairs

Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. Olney that quotation for £1,155 + VAT be accepted

**Resolved**

Action

Clerk

<p><b>b) repairs to wetpour and gate at the Green</b></p> <p>Wetpour on the Green play area had been vandalised and the gate would not close so contractor had repaired as health and safety issues at a cost of £195 + VAT and £60 + VAT for the work respectively. Council ratified the payments.</p> <p>Contractor had advised that the gates on the Green are old and have a spring mechanism that made it impossible to ensure the gates close in the correct time and stay closed. He advised the gates be replaced with red hydraulic gates (as on The Furlong) where the timings could be adjusted. Contractor had quoted £1,750.00 + VAT to remove and dispose of each old gate and supply and fit new gate. Clerk noted that £7,000 had been budgeted for play equipment repairs in 2023/24. Councillors R Saunders &amp; White noted that they could dispose of the gates and Clerk to ask if this would reduce the cost. Council agreed to consider in January if monies still remained in the budget.</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>17. <u>Allotments:</u></b></p> <p>Former Cllr. Nicholas had repaired the allotment water taps at a cost of £46.36 (no VAT) for parts. Cost included one spare valve and Council thanked Mr. Nicholas and ratified the payment.</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>18. <u>Tree Works:</u></b></p> <p><b>a) horse chestnut at Reynes Drive green</b></p> <p>Bedford BC had approved trimming back the horse chestnut at Reynes Drive green rather than felling it so work had been carried out on 11.12.04.23. for £370 at the same time as the work on the oak trees. Council ratified the payment.</p> <p><b>b) tree inspection</b></p> <p>Clerk had requested an inspection of all the Council trees and had received two quotations. One quotation for £2,295 + VAT would remove dead wood from the field maple and sever the ivy on all trees at Reynes Drive green, remove dead wood from silver birches on Ruffs Furze green, reduce the field maple away from the streetlight &amp; crown lift 3 silver birches at Parsonage Close and crown lift 3 ashes, fell dead willow and remove deadwood from various trees on the Green. One for £870 (no VAT) would remove the sorbus because of bark failure/delamination throughout the canopy and trunk and remove the silver birch with very low canopy health and a dead top/declining leaders on Ruffs Furze green; remove the sorbus due to bark delamination at Parsonage Close; remove low and dead limbs from the horse chestnut, field maple and 2 ashes, reduce the cherry with a crack in trunk and fell the lime tree and previously pollarded goat willow on the Green; remove the sorbus on Grange Green; remove the cracked poplar at Riverside meadow; trim back vegetation at The Furlong and clear brambles under juvenile trees and trim back various small branches along pathway at Linch Furlong.</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Clerk</p>

<p>Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. White that quotation for £870 (no VAT) be accepted but Clerk to ask contractor if goat willow could be retained if not dangerous as young people enjoyed climbing on it</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p>	Clerk
<p><b>19. <u>Memorial Bench in Ruffs Furze:-</u></b></p> <p>Resident had requested a memorial bench on Ruffs Furze green. Clerk had forwarded Council's Memorial Furniture policy and resident was content with the conditions. Council was content for a bench and Cllrs. Bays and Jones to meet with the resident on site to discuss a suitable location.</p>	<u>Action</u>  CB/PJ
<p><b>20. <u>Highway Matters:</u></b></p> <p><b>Clearing of leaves</b></p> <p>Clerk had requested quotations to clear leaves from footways and received two for £35 + VAT per man per hour including rubbish removal and one for £45 + VAT per hour including removal of leaves. Clerk noted that £8K was included in the budget for tree and ground works. Now that the Borough had a new Mayor, Council agreed to wait until Autumn to see if leaves were cleared.</p>	<u>Action</u>  Clerk
<p>Cllr. White noted that litter picker was not wearing a hi-vis jacket when litter picking in Station Road recently. Clerk to remind her to do so and to walk towards traffic where there were no footways.</p>	Clerk
<p><b>21. <u>Borough Councillor's Report:</u></b></p> <p>Cllr. Abbott reported that the new Mayor was Cllr. Wootton and there were now 46 councillors with himself and Cllr. Walker the councillors for the new Clapham &amp; Oakley Ward. Council had no overall control with 14 labour, 13 Conservative, 13 Liberal Democrat, 3 Green Party, 2 independents and a by-election to be held on 29.06.23. in Wyboston. Next Full Council was 17.05.23. when the new Executive and future direction of the Borough Council would be announced. Planning Services had performed better in recent months with 80% of major and 90% of minor applications determined within the time limits. The enforcement team was also working well now. The appeal against refusal of housing off Pavenham Road had been dismissed. Cllr. Walker added that, as a rural councillor, the Mayor valued the rural area and wanted to work with parishes so would be attending a Council meeting in every parish. Portfolio remits would remain unchanged for the present, as the Chief Executive was restructuring, except for Childrens and Schools which had been expanded to include Families. Once the restructure was complete portfolio remits would be reviewed. A new SEND school had been signed off on the Robert Bruce school site and construction would begin at the end of May.</p>	<u>Action</u>

**22. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:****Decisions notified since Council meeting – 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

Application No. **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:

Decision/Date: Permission 08.03.23. for oaks to be pruned and horse chestnut to be reduced in height by 4 to 5 metres, cutting back to viable growth points rather than removed

Application No. **23/00269/TPO** - reduce willow tree in rear garden to previous points at Shires Fold, 55A High Street

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 13.03.23.

Application No. **23/00301/FUL** - Two storey rear extension & loft conversion with concealed dormer at 1 Parrott Close

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 04.04.23.

Clerk noted that legal development certificates had been issued for the garage conversion and new attached garden store at 55A High Street and the garage conversion with front window, side door access and window to new WC at 76 Lincroft.

**Applications received since Council meeting – 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

Application No. **a) 23/00640/TPO** - works to a group of sycamores and an elm at 1 The Spinney, Parsonage Close

Parish No objection

Comments

Application No. **b) 23/00778/FUL** - single storey side extension at Courtyard Barn, The Drive

Parish Objection on the grounds that the proposal would spoil the appearance of the area, which has only four cottages of character and is on the periphery of the listed Oakley House.

Application No. **c) 23/00889/FUL** - single storey front and rear extensions at 7 Parsonage Close

Parish No objection

Comments



**c) representation at Planning Inquiry into refusal of 21/02394/MAO** - up to 40 dwellings, vehicular and pedestrian access, green infrastructure including open space and landscaping, related drainage and other infrastructure works at land off Station Road

Bedford BC had advised that concerns about noise from the railway and highways layout had been resolved with the appellant and the contents of the legal agreement were expected to be resolved before the Inquiry opened. Therefore, it was expected that the Inquiry would be reduced to a single day, including the site visit. Cllr. Olney suggested writing again to the Mayor, Chief Officer for Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Growth and Planning Officer reiterating Council's view that that the appeal should be dismissed as additional housing is not allocated in the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) nor required by Bedford BC Local Plans 2030 and 2040. Cllr. Abbott noted that the reserved matters application could be called in to the Planning Committee when submitted and that the appeal against refusal of housing in Pavenham Road, which had recently been dismissed, had given significant weight to the NDP. Clerk to write.

Clerk

Agents for the allocated site in the High Street had asked about Council's response to the appeal and Clerk to advise that Council was continuing to object on the grounds that additional housing was not allocated in the NDP nor required by Bedford BC Local Plans 2030 and 2040.

Clerk

### 23. Planning Policy:-

**a) meeting with Bedford BC to discuss path along Highfield Road in connection with 21/00332/EIA - development of up to 500 homes off Milton Road, Clapham**

Cllr. Walker reported that she and Clapham councillors met with Highways to discuss a footway along Highfield Road which both Councils considered essential for the safety of pedestrians, particularly school students, once the 500 houses were built. Highways had advised that a footway would cost around £200K and developers would not provide that amount of money. Developers had also advised that Lovell Road was too narrow for a dual cycling/walking path along the verge and the cycle path would need to be on the road. Both Clapham and Oakley pressed the need for both paths and Highways agreed to pursue with developers.

**b) Bedford BC - Neighbourhood Plan review workshop**

Cllr. Olney reported that the workshop considered how Neighbourhood Plans (NDPs) could be reviewed. Oakley had already reviewed their Plan in 2022. Workshop also noted that the Local Planning Authority has a key role in applying NDP policies to individual applications planning applications. Cllr. Olney to circulate the spreadsheet from the workshop.

PO

<p><b>24. <u>Correspondence:</u></b>  <b>resident request for designated bin for litter pickers to use</b>  Resident who voluntarily picked up litter in Church Lane had requested a bin in which to put the rubbish as she was unable to dispose of it and bags left by litter bins would not be collected by Bedford BC when bins were emptied. Council was concerned that a bin would encourage fly tipping as had happened at the bottle bank and agreed Clerk to ask Bedford BC if they would collect sacks left at a pre-arranged location and date. Clerk to advise resident and litter picker.</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Clerk Clerk</p>
<p><b>25. <u>General Power of Competence:</u></b>  Council had resolved on 07.05.19. to use the General Power of Competence (GPC) and was required to resolve at each annual meeting in a full election year that they remained eligible or did not. Council still met the criteria to use the GPC as the number of councillors elected was more than two-thirds of the number of seats on the Council and the Clerk was qualified. The GPC would allow Council to spend money on a wider range of projects provided they act lawfully, comply with statutory duties, do not circumvent restrictions in existing powers and obtain necessary permissions from other authorities. Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. Jones that Council continue to use the General Power of Competence  <b>Resolved</b></p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>26. a) Oakley Village Hall</b>  Oakley Village Hall had requested £2,650 for a new fence between the Hall and neighbouring property as the current fence was very dilapidated and the neighbour had complained about it. Total cost of the project was £2,616.00. The Hall had in the last 12 months funded new flooring, curtains and the majority of the interior redecoration and this had significantly reduced their financial reserves. Previous grants – 2009 - £500 towards driveway tarmac, 2016 - £864 for external decoration of the Village Hall, 2018 - £400 towards new boiler for the Hall, 2020 - £264 for tree management, 2021 - £1055 for new lighting in the Foyer, corridor and Committee room, May 2022 - £1,000 for tree works and September 2022 - £1,000 towards Hall redecoration. All 8 Committee Members were Oakley residents. Balance of £19,171.25 plus investment of £13,084.71 at 31.03.23. but since then the Hall had paid the balance of decoration costs (£2,426.80) and still had to pay the balance on the curtains (£2,700)  Proposed by Cllr. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Jones that £1,000 be granted  <b>Resolved</b> S. 137 donation</p>	<p>Clerk</p>

**b) Country Days**

Country Days had requested a grant of £1,000 for their combined Easter and Summer outdoor learning courses. The courses are open to 7 -11 year olds and designed to develop skills which enhance their educational and emotional development and foster an interest in and a love of the natural environment particularly for students who have little or no access to the countryside. Total cost of project was £41,350.00 and balance would be obtained from fundraising, donations and other funders. Previous grants – £100 in May 2022 for their summer 2022 programme. 20 children that either live in Oakley or come from the primary schools in the area had attended the courses. Balance of £72,083 at 30.06.22. £69,626 reserve and £2,457 profit from the courses Proposed by Cllr. Walker, seconded by Cllr. Jones that £50.00 be granted  
**Resolved** S. 137 donation

Clerk

**27. Finance Matters:**Action**a) accounts for period up to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023****Income and balances:**

NatWest Bank - Current account balance at 30.04.23.	£36,753.80
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 30.04.23.	£7,294.30
Nationwide - Savings Bond	£61,006.43
Hampshire Trust - Savings Bond	£85,013.20

**Received since last meeting:**

Oakley PCC	Directory advertising	35.00
Bedfordia	Directory advertising	70.00
Woodworth	Directory advertising	40.00
OMC	Directory advertising	20.00
Whites	Directory advertising	70.00
Almond	Directory advertising	70.00
Barton	Directory advertising	70.00
Lovell Homes	Directory advertising	35.00
NatWest	Interest	6.18
HTB	Interest	636.19
Nationwide	Interest	1006.69
Bedford BC	Precept - first half	28,430.00
Franklin	Allotment Rent	1.00
Village Hall	Directory advertising	20.00
Post Office	Directory advertising	30.00
Carpet Bowls	Directory advertising	7.00
NLW	Directory advertising	20.00

Bedford Bricklaying	Newsletter advertising	216.00
Elite Roofing	Newsletter advertising	120.00
Oakley Building Services	Newsletter advertising	432.00
NatWest	Interest	5.69
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£31,340.75</b>

<b>Payments Already Made:</b>			<b>Chq. No.</b>
Old School	Rent for upper rooms April & May	307.66	s/o
Salaries	April payment	1262.49	s/o
Bedford BC	Quarterly grass cutting payment	2,617.75	1843
BATPC	2023/24 affiliation fees	546.00	1844
Oakley Village Hall	Hire of hall 04.04.23.	36.00	1845
Bedfordshire Pension Fund	April payment	506.74	1847
<b>Payments Made:</b>			
Kompan Ltd	Replacement roundabout	9,517.45	1848
CPM Playgrounds Ltd	Repairs to wetpour and gate	846.00	1849
Riches	Internal audit	135.00	1850
	Fees for licence allowing Kindergarten to access Brockwell through fence	1,317.80	1851
Woodfines LLP	Parts for allotment taps		1852
Nicholas			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£17,139.25</b>	

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

#### **b) Internal Audit report**

Internal audit had been carried out 22.04.23. Auditor had no matters to bring to Council's attention. Council thanked the Clerk.

#### **c) Annual Governance Statement**

Council considered the Annual Governance Statement and Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. White that the Annual Governance Statement be approved.

#### **Resolved**

Clerk and Chair signed section 1 of the audit return.

**d) 2022/23 end of year accounts**

Clerk had circulated accounts.

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Abbott that the accounts and section 2 of the audit return be approved.

**Resolved**

Responsible Financial Officer and Chair signed accounts.

Clerk and Chair signed section 2 of the audit return.

**e) Annual review of risk assessment policy**

Clerk had circulated a draft risk assessment for 2022/23. The NDP review and additional cyber security insurance had been added.

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Olney, that the risk assessment be adopted

**Resolved**

Clerk

**f) Annual review of internal audit system**

Clerk had circulated a draft Audit Plan for 2023/24. Terms of Reference remained unchanged

Proposed by Cllr. Olney, seconded by Cllr. Jones that the Audit Plan be adopted

**Resolved**

Clerk

**g) Website renewal**

Bays Media had quoted £1,200 to continue to host and manage the website for 2022/23, £60 for hosting mailboxes and £20 for the domain name renewal totalling £1,280 (no VAT)

Proposed by Cllr. Olney, seconded by Cllr. Jones that the quotation for £1,280 be accepted

**Resolved**

Clerk

**h) Review of direct debits & standing orders**

Council had agreed at the April meeting to increase the litter picker/bus shelter cleaner's salary standing order to £393.91 per month w.e.f 01.04.23. However, NatWest had failed to action the instruction to reduce her March salary payment to recover underpaid pension contributions and she had therefore asked for the standing order for £383.69 to remain in place until the debt was cleared. In accordance with paragraph 7 of Council Standing Orders, Cllrs. Jones, Saunders, Walker and White proposed a special resolution that the decision in Item 7 of Council Minutes 04.04.23. be amended and the standing order remain at £383.69

**Resolved**

Clerk

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. White that Council continue to make monthly standing order payments of £153.83 to the Old School for rent of rooms, annual direct debit payment of £420 to Bedford BC for allotment rent and to pay variable direct debit payments to Anglian Water for allotment water

**Resolved**

Clerk

**i) Clerk's expenses**

Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. White that expenses of £29.83 for the period January to March 2023 be paid

**Resolved**

**28. Date of Next Meeting: 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023**