

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 4th July 2023 in the Village Hall

PRESENT:

S. Fardon (Chair), J. Abbott, C Bays, P. Jones, P. Olney, R Saunders, T. Saunders, J Walker, P. White, C Worker, R. Worker the Clerk, Mrs. Paice and 0 members of the public

1. Public Open Session:

Cllr. Bays reported that residents were concerned about pedestrians being knocked by vehicles on the twin bridges. Councillors noted that the old County Council had been prepared to put traffic lights on the bridges but only around 50% of residents supported lights so the scheme was not pursued. The bridge was due to be closed in October for repairs and Council would ask for “pedestrians in the road” signs to be put up then. Bedford BC had previously commented that lights encouraged rat running as motorists were certain of being able to cross.

2. Apologies: none**3. Declarations of Interest:**

Cllr. White for item 9 as a colleague of the contractor. Cllr. Walker for item 10 as a Borough Councillor & 12 as a member of Messy Church.. Cllr. Abbott for item 10 as a Borough Councillor, 11a) as a resident of The Furlong & 12 as Group Scout Leader. Chair for item 11b) as a resident in Lincroft and 12 & 17a) as Youth Club Secretary. Cllr. R. Worker for item 11c) as a Speed Watch member. Cllr. Olney for item 17a) as Youth Club Chair. Cllr. White for item 17b) as Chair of Village Hall Committee.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th June 2023 :

Resolved: to adopt the minutes.

5. Clerk’s Report:

Highways – Clerk had asked Highways to repair the pothole in Church Lane by the bend. Bedford BC had cleared the drain at Lovell Road bridge w/c 05.06.23. and A6 would be closed for repairs and resurfacing July – October 2023. Southbound closure from Clapham north slip road to the Great Ouse Way roundabout 24.07.23. to 01.09.23. and northbound closure from the Great Ouse Way roundabout to Oakley north slip road 21.08.23. – 27.10.23. Southbound closure would be opened before the northbound closure commenced.

Speed Cameras – there were 23 notices of intended prosecution issued in April, 22 for speeds up to 40mph and 1 for a speed of 41mph and 12 in May, 10 for speeds up to 40mph and 2 for a speed of 41mph.

Speed Watch – there was a nil return for the event 12.06.23. in Highfield Road and 1 vehicle travelling at 44mph was recorded for the event on 28.06.23. in Pavenham Road. All reported to police.

Tree Works – to be carried out 06/07.07.23. Clerk had advised residents in Grange Close that the tree near their property had been inspected and was in good health and Council would only trim trees when they are diseased, pose a health and safety risk or are blocking streetlights given the importance of trees in reversing climate change and biodiversity loss. However, residents can cut back any branches that are overhanging their property to the boundary line.

Fly tipping – bottles dumped at Stevington Country Walk bottle bank and rubbish bags at Riverside Meadow reported to Bedford BC who removed. Litter picker had cleared loose rubbish at Riverside Meadow and in the play area on the Green.

Fence at The Furlong – work to be carried out w/c 03.07.23.

CIL monies – Bedford BC had agreed that monies from developers of Parrott Close, which was due to be spent by June 2024 could be ring fenced until June 2025 to contribute to a path along Highfield Road.

Newsletter deliveries – Clerk had thanked residents who had delivered Newsletters for Council

6. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting 6th June 2023: none

Action

7. East West Rail (EWR):

Action

a) public meeting 13.06.23. to discuss Bedford to Cambridge route

Cllrs. Abbott & Walker attended and reported that there was no new information apart from the chosen alignment. EWR commented that they had considered a southern route, which had not been published, but had discounted it because of environmental and flooding concerns. However, environmental and flooding were also concerns for the northern route selected. 65 houses would be demolished and compensation would be set at market price + 10% but compensation would not be paid if properties were not sold to EWR. Mr. Fuller MP was continuing to oppose the scheme as he considered it was not value for money.

b) representation at and topics for future Local Representatives' Meetings

EWR had asked whether the number of councillors each parish could bring to a meeting (currently one) should be changed and for topics for future discussion (active travel and Bedford Hospital already requested). Councillors were content with one representative as Borough councillors also attended and agreed traffic management during construction and environmental mitigation as future topics for discussion

Clerk

<p>8. <u>Police Report:</u> Police & Crime Commissioner had requested top 3 priorities and preferred day and time for an annual parish councils' meeting in October. Cllr. Jones volunteered to attend and Council priority was that police continued to respond quickly to any anti-social behaviour incidents in the village. PCSO to visit Methodist Coffee Morning 20.07.23. There were 4 reported crimes in the first half of June, 2 assaults without injury in Dewlands, 1 harassment and 1 theft in Lincroft</p>	<p><u>Action</u> Clerk</p>
<p>9. <u>Repairs to Gate at Riverside Meadow:</u> Contractor had advised that an additional £25.00 (no VAT) had been spent as a larger post was needed to support the gate. Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Abbott that £25.00 be paid Resolved</p>	<p><u>Action</u> Clerk</p>
<p>10. <u>Grass Cutting:</u> Bedford BC had offered a discount of £100 on the quarterly invoice of £2,403.01 + VAT due to the poor standard of work to date. Clerk noted that since the request for a discount was made further complaints had been raised about the churchyard and green not being strimmed and damage to a resident's hedge. Clerk had again asked for mowing and strimming to be carried out in the same week. Clerk noted that the grass and bushes at Station Road/Lovell Road junction which were preventing motorists in station Road seeing traffic in Lovell Road were not part of the Council contract but Clerk had asked Bedford BC to trim on safety grounds or ask the landowner to do so. Councillor Abbott noted that operatives were leaving for better jobs so the team was very short staffed. Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that the discount of £100.00 be accepted Resolved</p>	<p><u>Action</u> Clerk</p>
<p>11. <u>Highway Matters:</u> a) double yellow lines in The Furlong Bedford BC had advised that bollards and H bars would not resolve the parking issues and suggested double yellow lines. Awaiting a formal proposal from Highways and Cllr. Abbott was chasing. b) parking in Lincroft Clerk had asked Bedford BC to review the entrance to Lincroft again on safety grounds and Bedford BC had advised that when they previously consulted on yellow lines there were many objections as residents do not have off street parking.</p>	<p><u>Action</u> JA</p>

They suggested that yellow lines would move the problem further along the road and the alternative of removing grassed areas to make parking spaces would mean the loss of important green space and mature trees and would also cost in excess of £100,000. Therefore, it was highly unlikely that funding would be made available for such a scheme. Councillors noted that students often crossed the road along this section of Lincroft and removing parking could speed up the traffic. Clerk to advise resident.

Clerk

c) posts for speed indicator device in Highfield Road & High Street

Speed Watch group had requested posts in the 40mph section of Highfield Road and High Street to enable them to monitor speeds continuously for a week and build up speed profiles over a period of time, which could support the case for a footway along Highfield Road. Cllr. Abbott had funded posts in Highfield Road 30mph zone and Lovell Road from his Ward Fund and monies had not been included in the 2023/24 budget although funds were available from the contingency. Cllr. Abbott noted that posts would cost around £250 each and he and Cllr. Walker volunteered to provide from their Ward Fund. Clerk to ask Speed Watch where in the High Street they would like a post.

JA/JW
Clerk

Cllr. Abbott suggested that a 20mph zone would be helpful in the Reynes Drive area. Such schemes would need to be paid for from Ward Funds and he and Cllr. Walker to ascertain the cost.

JA/JW

Cllrs. Abbott & White had walked round village with representative from Highways 30.06.23. and Ruffs Furze and alleyways between Dewlands and Ruffs Furze would be patched. Pothole edges were now being sealed so repairs should last longer.

Councillors noted that hedges were overhanging footways in Reynes Drive and Station Road and Clerk to ask for them to be trimmed.

Clerk

Drains in the High street and Station Road were also blocked and Clerk to report to Highways.

Clerk

12. Monthly Parish Council Quiz:

Action

Cllr. R. Worker had received 70 expressions of interest and suggested that quizzes be held at the Village Hall on Fridays 15.09.23, 20.10.23, 17.11.23. and 08.12.23. initially. There would be six members per team at a cost of £3.00 per person. Following the deduction of costs monies raised would be ring fenced and distributed to selected village organisations in March each year - Youth Club, Oakley Scout Group, Oakley Brownies and Rainbows, Oakley Messy Churches and AFC Oakley Junior Football. Cllr. R. Worker suggested that a raffle could also be held at Christmas. Cllr. White offered to donate printing costs from his businesses and Council thanked him.

Proposed by Cllr. Olney, seconded by Cllr. T. Saunders that proposal be accepted with a review in November 2023 and monies distributed in March 2024

Resolved Council thanked Cllrs. R. & C. Worker

RW/
CW

13. Play Area Inspection Report:-

Inspection had indicated that rough wood on the multiplay at The Furlong needed smoothing, fixings on the swing needed tightening and the seat needed re-staining. Contractor had already repaired the seat and the swing. At the Green, fixings needed replacing on the MUGA and bolt caps on the climbing frame, rough edges needed smoothing on the wooden multiplay and graffiti removing, the spring cover on the seesaw needed replacing and bin needed securing on its foundations. Gaps in the surfacing around the group swing, spinner bowl, springer fish, swings, zip wire and slide needed repairing. Gaps in the surfacing around several other items would need to be monitored. Contractor had already replaced fixings, bolt caps and spring cover and repaired the grass mats under the swing and zip wire. Contractor had quoted £2,185 + VAT for the remainder of the repairs, £1,800 of which was to repair the wetpour and had advised that as the wet pour is shrinking inwards there were no guarantees how long the repairs would last.

Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Jones that the quotation for £2,185 + VAT be accepted

Resolved

Action

Clerk

14. Borough Councillor's Report:

Cllr. Abbott reported that the final make-up of the Council, following the Wyboston by-election, was 14 Conservatives, 14 Liberal Democrats, 13 Labour, 3 Greens and 2 Independents. Final Committee roles could therefore be allocated. There was a £2.2 million deficit in the Borough finances and an update would be provided at the first full Council meeting on 12.07.23. The Summer of SEND activities had begun and the Kite & Motoring Festival, Italian Festival and Bedford Park concerts had been very successful. BedFringe would be held 20 – 30.07.23. A new group buying scheme for solar panels had been launched

- <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/environmental-issues/sustainability/sustainability-projects/solar-together-bedfordshire> and the Borough was asking residents to water new trees. Cllr. Abbott had been re-elected as Chair of the Planning Committee and the make-up of the Committee was very similar to previously. The Clapham development was unlikely to come before the Committee until the end of 2023.

Cllr. Walker reported that the £2 bus fare scheme was being extended until October and the first hearing of the Local Plan Examination had been completed. The second stage would be held in September. The Fusion leisure services contract needed replacing by January and the Mayor was working on this. The poor state of Fusion finances was exerting more pressure on the Borough funds. Bedford BC was trying to keep the Town Centre cleaner by pressure washing and tidy up the Bus station area to make it more welcoming.

Action

15. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:**Decisions notified since Council meeting – 6th June 2023**

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

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 13.06.23.

Application No. **23/01013/TPO** - remove 2 dead pines and a dying sycamore over the power cables at Westfield Lodge, Westfield Road

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 21.06.23.

Application No. **23/00974/FUL** - single storey rear extension at 1 Farrows Close

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 22.06.23.

Clerk noted that application 23/00778/FUL for a single storey side extension at Courtyard Barn, The Drive had been withdrawn.

Applications received since Council meeting – 6th June 2023

Application No. **a) 23/01013/TPO** - remove 2 dead pines and a dying sycamore over the power cables at Westfield Lodge, Westfield Road

Parish No objection

Comments

Application No. **b) 23/01149/FUL** - single storey annexe for ground floor accessible bedroom and ancillary accommodation at Milford House Westfield Road

Parish No objection

Comments

Application No. **c) 23/01174/TPO** - remove deadwood from acacia & reshape lower canopy at Church Close, Church Lane

Parish No objection

Comments

Application No. **d) 23/01373/TPO** - prune horse chestnut crown away from lawn/rear of house by 1-1.5 metres & thin remainder by 20% at 10 Brockwell

Parish No objection

Comments

e) **Planning Inquiry 20.06.23. 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

Cllrs. Olney & Walker attended and made the case for Council and the Neighbourhood Plan (NDP) Group and another resident/member of the NDP Group also spoke. The site visit was made at school finishing time and the Inspector was very thorough, discussing each of the conditions and walking round the village. Bedford BC had not asked questions or defended their refusal of the application. A decision was expected at the end of July. The vision splays for the new roundabout included land at Grange Close and Clerk to check whether this was Highways land, as the Borough had stated, or Council land. Council was disappointed not to have been consulted on the Highways issues and Clerk to write to the Portfolio Holder and Head of Planning expressing Council's dissatisfaction at the lack of consultation and asking to be involved in the design process for the site as this was detailed in the NDP. Clerk to thank resident/member of the NDP Group for his contribution to the Hearing.

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

16. Correspondence:

Chair noted that Council would pass a resident's concerns about the ORA to the Committee at their next meeting and Council representatives would report back to the September Council meeting.

Action

17. Grant Applications:

a) Oakley Youth Club

Oakley Youth Club had requested a grant of £3,000 for July 2023 – August 2024. Projected annual expenditure was £5,345 and the balance at 01.06.23. was £2,472.45 with salaries for June and July some new equipment and purchases for an end of term party still to be paid.. Council had granted £3,000 in 2022, £1,500 in 2021 and £4,500 in 2020. There were 25 - 35 attendees a week, since March 2023 all but one from Oakley. Clerk noted that £5,450 remained in budget. Cllr. C. Worker was concerned that the donation did not provide value for money. Cllr. Walker noted that the Youth Club was begun in response to problems with anti-social behaviour and had proved successful but would not be able to continue without Council support.

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that £3,000.00 be granted

Resolved S. 137 donation

Action

Clerk

b) Oakley Village Hall

Oakley Village Hall had requested a grant of £1,380.00 to block the side passage with a fence at the back and lockable gate at the front as it was being used for drinking and drug taking. Total cost of the project was £1,380.00. Previous grants in 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, plus Council had granted £1,000 in May 2023 towards a new side fence. All 9 Committee Members were Oakley residents and balance of £19,171.25 plus investment of £13,084.71 at 31.03.23. Since then the Hall had paid the balance of decoration costs (£2,426.80) and the balance on the curtains (£2,700).

As £2,450 remained in budget & other organisations were expected to apply for grants,

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Abbott that application be deferred to January 2024

Resolved

Clerk

18. Finance Matters:

Action

a) accounts for period up to 30th June 2023**Income and balances:**

NatWest Bank - Current account balance at 30.06.23.	£21,422.12
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 30.06.23.	£7,308.28
Nationwide - Savings Bond	£61,006.43
Hampshire Trust - Savings Bond	£85,013.20

Received since last meeting:

Metrosigns	Directory advertising	70.00
ATC	Directory advertising	20.00
Oakley Building Services	Directory advertising	55.00
Just Inline	Directory advertising	70.00
Right at Home	Directory advertising	70.00
Bays Media	Directory advertising	20.00
Tudor Rose	Directory advertising	70.00
Preece	Allotment rent	1.00
NatWest	Interest	6.90
	Total	£382.90

Payments Already Made:

Salaries	June payment	2072.24	Chq. No.	s/o
Anglian Water	Allotment water	24.01		d/d
Oakley Day Centre	S. 137 donation	500.00		1861

Smith	Riverside Meadow gate repairs	275.00	1862
Bedfordshire Pension Fund	June payment	506.74	1863
Payments Made:			
CPM Playgrounds Ltd	Playground repairs	1,386.00	1864
Fenland Leisure Products Ltd	2023 playground inspections	244.80	1865
Tomkins	Tree works at Reynes Drive/High Street	740.00	1866
Smith	Riverside Meadow gate repairs	25.00	1867
Oakley Village Hall	Hire of Committee Room 04.07.23.	18.00	1868
Total		£5,352.15	

Clerk noted that RBL had not cashed the cheque for the poppy wreath which was now out of date. Clerk had contacted RBL and warned them the cheque was due to expire and offered a replacement cheque if they had lost it but they had not responded.

Proposed by Cllr. R. Worker, seconded by Cllr. Bays that cheque number 1818 for £18.00 be written off

Resolved

Council would offer to pay for the 2022 wreath with the 2023 payment.

Clerk
Clerk

Resolved: to approve the accounts for payment

Clerk

b) Clerk's expenses

Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. R. Worker that expenses of £205.59 for the period April to June 2023 be paid

Resolved

19. Date of Next Meeting: 5th September 2023