

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 3rd October 2023 in the Village Hall

PRESENT: S. Fardon (Chair), J. Abbott, C. Bays, P. Jones, R Saunders, J. Walker, P. White, C. Worker, R. Worker the Clerk, Mrs. Paice, the Mayor of Bedford Borough (part) and 0 members of the public

1. Public Open Session:

Chair noted that a resident was interested in a group buying energy scheme and she would advise him to include an article in the Winter Newsletter.

Cllr. White reported that the bottle bank at Stevington Country Walk was overflowing and Clerk to ask Bedford BC to empty. He suggested cameras at the site and Cllr. Walker to pursue with Bromham Borough Councillors

Clerk/
JW

2. Apologies: P. Olney (illness), T. Saunders (business)

3. Declarations of Interest:

Cllrs. Jones & R. Worker for item 8 as Council representatives to ORA and Cllr. Bays as a relative of the ORA Chair. Cllr. Abbott for item 15a) as a resident of The Furlong.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th September 2023 :

Resolved: to adopt the minutes.

5. Clerk's Report:

Highways – Clerk had reported the fallen tree in Church Lane to Bedford BC and the streetlight outside the Village Hall which was not working had also been reported to the Borough. Twin bridges were due to be closed on 24.10.23. for one week but work would be reviewed if the A6 works were not completed. Vehicles parking on the footways in Station Road, Lovell Road & High Street had been reported to the police. Lincroft School had notified police of their Open Evening 11.10.23. which would increase traffic in Station Road and had asked the Borough Enforcement Team to visit roads where parents/carers were parking dangerously/inconsiderately.

Speed Cameras – 5 notices of intended prosecution were issued in June, 4 for speeds up to 40mph and 1 for a speed of 42mph. There was no data for July and August, 29 notices of intended prosecution were issued, 27 for speeds up to 40mph and 2 for speeds between 41 mph and 43mph.

Speed Watch – 5 vehicles were speeding on 27.09.23. in Pavenham Road, one at 50mph and police would be visiting the driver speeding at 50mph

Fly tipping – a box of broken glass left in Church Lane was reported to Bedford BC who had removed.

Brockwell Meadow – Bedford BC had now installed the fence between the meadow and new Kindergarten.

OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL 03.10.23.

2.

Quiz – there were 91 attendees at the first quiz on 15.09.93 and after the deduction of expenses there was a profit of £257.54. Whites Engineering had sponsored the printing costs and Council thanked them. They also thanked Cllrs. C. & R Worker for organising and running the event. Next quiz was Friday 20.10.23.

Remembrance - Clerk had applied to Bedford BC for the usual road closure at the crossroads and asked the police to man. Police had advised that that they might not be able to provide a presence at the Oakley event this year. The decision was for the community team who would prioritise according to limited resources. Clerk had advised benefice. Volunteer had offered to tidy memorial site before the service and Council thanked him

Christmas Lights – contractor had confirmed that lights would be installed for the switch on on 02.12.23.

6. **Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting 5th September 2023:** none Action

7. **Questions for the Mayor:**

Action

Chair commented that Oakley was a fantastic community and the Parish Council very productive. Mayor responded that he wanted to support and help parish councils. Council asked about the weighting given to Neighbourhood Plans. Council had raised their concerns with the Planning Department and Mr. Fuller MP as Oakley had been required to provide 25 – 50 houses and had allocated 10 at Parrotts Close, 30 off Station Road and 10 off the High Street. However, up to 40 had been granted on appeal at the Station Road site and Bedford BC had backed the appellants at the hearing. Bedford BC had agreed to discuss the outline application with Council when received but Council was concerned Neighbourhood Plans were not providing the community with control over local development. Mayor noted that the Planning Department had 10 planning officer vacancies in January but now had virtually a full complement so the service should improve. The Borough was under pressure to provide housing but he would ensure that parishes' views were heard. The Borough had met with Bedfordia and it was likely that a larger scheme for Station Road would be put forward again in the future. Councillors commented that infrastructure was insufficient for new housing, particularly water/sewerage. Mayor agreed that drains were inadequate and noted that the Borough was trying to improve S. 106 agreements so that proper facilities were provided. For example, monies had previously not been included for doctors' surgeries and consequently Wixams had no surgeries. The Local Plan would provide protection against further development until 2040 but the Twinwood scheme was also likely to be resubmitted in future. He encouraged parishes to keep traffic data to use to support appeal cases.

Council also asked about the Borough position on EWR. Mayor advised that he opposed the route alignment and he had met Wilden and Poets area residents. It was problematic getting EWR to fully understand the topography so independent studies were being carried out to assess the route. Bedford BC was also fighting for information on why the route needed to pass through Bedford and BFARE was meeting separately with officers to consider what action the Borough could take. Mayor did not know if Government still supported EWR. A residents' meeting was being held in Clapham on 12.10.23. and the Directors of Planning and Environment Services would be present so residents could question them.

Councillors asked if there was any penalty clause if work on the A6 overran. Mayor noted that additional problems had come to light e.g. with the Armco barriers so more work was required to complete the repairs properly. He commented that Bedford Modern School roundabout was a long running problem.

Mayor noted that he would call into a meeting again in future and was content for parishes to contact him about any issues. Chair thanked him for attending

8. Reports:

ORA Committee Meeting 19.09.23.

Cllrs. T Saunders & P Jones attended. Representatives from ORA and AFC Oakley provided updates on their organisations and a report was read from Oakley Motorcycle Club (OMC). ORA thanked Council for the representation of the ORA in the recent newsletter but asked for ORA views expressed in May to be further referenced by Council as this was "legally binding." Council declined with Chair commenting that the request was not clear, the sentiment of ORA views had been fully discussed at the joint meeting between Council and ORA in June and had been minuted then.

ORA and OMC had had a challenging summer with the weather having a financial impact on events. One complaint about pollution had been received about the steam rally. ORA had spent £7,000 on the changing rooms and £6,000 on tree works and had run a deficit over the summer months. ORA noted that Renhold Parish Council had commented that they wished they could offer the facilities Oakley can at the OSSC. ORA asked Council to check the Memorandum of Understanding as they did not think it entitled Council to attend ORA meetings, although they did not propose that this relationship was changed. Clerk noted that the right to attend the meeting was included in the lease not the Memorandum. Cllr. White commented that the ORA constitution used to allow anyone interested to attend ORA meetings.

AFC Oakley currently had 38 teams, comprising five adult teams and 33 youth teams. Parking was an important issue and they were liaising with the Village Hall regarding this and events taking place in the Hall. OMC had 493 members and had recently donated £2,200 to the Air Ambulance.

Action

Clerk

Borough Cllr. Simmons had raised concerns about motorcycles travelling through Bromham on a Thursday evening. ORA had replied that traffic on many roads in North Bedfordshire was increased currently due to the A6 closure and that if a motorbike was taxed and road legal, then it was able to travel on any public highway. OMC would remind members that they should ride responsibly. Cllr. Walker noted that she had not instigated the complaint but had advised Bromham councillors to contact ORA direct as they had requested. Cllr. Jones noted that tyre grooves had been left in the boule pitch and suggested barriers to protect it and commented that ORA was still advertising tennis in the Newsletter. ORA to review but commented that no correspondence had been received about the tennis court other than from Council. Cllr. Jones suggested that ORA should respond to Council when complaints forwarded. ORA had requested complaints be sent direct and Council could be used as an escalation point.

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| <p>9. <u>East West Rail (EWR):</u>
 Local Representatives' meeting 28.09.23.
 No report in Cllr. Olney's absence.</p> | <u>Action</u> |
| <p>10. <u>Police Report:</u>
 There were 3 reported crimes in the first half of September, 1 sexual, 1 residential burglary and 1 criminal damage to a property.</p> | <u>Action</u> |
| <p>11. <u>Grass Cutting:</u>
 Concerns had continued to be raised about the standard of grass cutting particularly on the Green but fewer than previously. Clerk had continued to ask for mowing and strimming to be carried out at the same time. Councillors noted that contractors did come back to missed areas and agreed that it was not appropriate to ask for another discount.</p> | <u>Action</u> |
| <p>12. <u>Litter Pick 16.09.23:</u>
 Litter pick had been very successful with 32 participants and over 20 bags of rubbish collected. Beavers/Cubs and ATC had attended and Clerk had thanked those who had provided email addresses. Council thanked Cllr. Walker for running the event. A bag of rubbish had been left at the Reynes Drive junction and Cllr. Jones to ask Bedford BC to remove.</p> | <u>Action</u> |
| <p>13. <u>Replacement Bins:</u>
 Council had agreed to replace the small blue bins at the High Street and Lovell Road bus stops with larger dual purpose litter/dog bins. Pavenham Road bin had also been damaged beyond repair and Bedford BC had quoted £550 + VAT per bin to install hard standing and replace. New bins would cost £306.00 + VAT to purchase direct. One contractor had been unable to quote to install and awaiting further quotations.</p> | <u>Action</u> |

Proposed by Cllr. White, seconded by Cllr. Jones that quotation for £1,650 be accepted as it represented good value for money

Resolved

Clerk

14. Annual Play Area Inspections:-

Action

The annual inspection had indicated that trees needed cutting back at The Furlong play area, litter/weeds and trip hazard needed removing from dog grids, sharp edges needed removing from the seat and multiplay, fixings needed tightening on the swing and multiplay and algae needed removing from the multiplay. On the Green, the gate was closing too quickly, the opening was too small and the rubber buffer missing, weeds/litter needed removing from the dog grid, bars were missing from the fence, grass had eroded round the seats, there was a trip hazard by the bin, bolt caps were missing from the seats, silver multiplay, group swing and log climber, fixings were missing from the silver multiplay and areas needed repainting, fixings on the slide, climbing frame, MUGA, wooden multiplay and seesaw needed tightening, algae/moss needed removing from the log climber and wooden multiplay, graffiti needed removing from the swings, MUGA, zip wire and climbing frame, surfacing needed repairing around the climbing frame, zip wire, group swing, small slide, log climber and wooden multiplay and weeds/vegetation removing from around the swings, MUGA and table tennis table, fabric on zip wire cable needed removing, soundproofing on the wooden multiplay slide had been removed and rough edges needed smoothing and bitumen surface on the MUGA needed repairing.

Clerk was awaiting a quotation to repair and proposed by Cllr. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Walker that £1,000 + VAT be allocated for the urgent work

Resolved

Clerk

15. Highway Matters:

Action

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. Cllr. Abbott had still not received a proposal and was pursuing with the Portfolio Holder. He noted that yellow lines would need to be enforced and Cllr. Walker commented that the Borough enforcement team would visit if requested. Council to discuss again once a proposal received.

Clerk

b) parking and yellow lines in the village

Council had asked Bedford BC for a proposal for yellow lines in the High Street and at the Reynes Drive/Station Road junction and awaiting a response. Council had previously agreed that yellow lines should only be used where parking posed a danger as they were concerned that they would only move the problem into another area. Council to consider again once the Borough's proposal received.

Clerk

c) replacement lenses for average speed cameras

Lenses had deteriorated over time and would need replacing. The cost was £3,705 and Cllrs. Abbott & Walker had offered to pay from their Ward Fund. Cllr. Walker confirmed that Bedford BC did not have monies to replace if the Ward Fund was not used.

Proposed by Cllr. R. Worker, seconded by Cllr. Jones that Cllrs. Abbott & Walker’s offer be accepted

Resolved

Council thanked Cllrs. Abbott & Walker

16. Borough Councillor’s Report:

Action

Cllr. Abbott reported that tenders for the new leisure services contract closed on 04.10.23. A6 repairs were due to finish 24.10.23. and he had requested better information for residents about the works. A Town Centre Vision had been published and a more detailed plan would follow. The Borough was also consulting on a Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2027.

Cllr. Walker added that the Borough was holding a meeting at 5.30pm on 12.10.24. at Clapham Village Hall to discuss EWR and residents had been asked to register beforehand using the QR code on notice boards and the website. The Better Transitions for All programme would provide information for children starting primary school and two family hubs would be opened (one in Bedford, one in Kempston) for young people up to age 19 or 25 with special needs. The Borough had been allocated monies from the Government Rural Prosperity Fund to improve connectivity with grants limited to £25K. An exhibition would be held in Harpur Square on 10.10.23. for World Mental Health Day and Bedford Christmas lights would be switched on 25.11.23.

17. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:

Decisions notified since Council meeting – 5th September 2023

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

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 26.09.23.

Applications received since Council meeting – 5th September 2023

Application No. **23/01982/FUL & 23/01983/LBC** - demolition of existing timber framed rear conservatory structure at 31 Station Road

Parish No objection

Comments

18. Planning Policy:**a) update from agent for new development off High Street**

Agents had revised their proposals for the site reducing the number of dwellings proposed from 13 to 10, which would ensure access, parking and turning could be easily provided at the reserved matters application stage. The proposed drainage basin would form a shallow pond around 1m deep which would be dry most of the time and would only contain standing water during heavy periods of rain. Fencing would be addressed at the reserved matters stage. Agent had also forwarded a revised layout plan which included bungalows but again, the housing mix would not be decided until the reserved matters stage.

b) Mr. Fuller MP offering to discuss Council's concerns about Neighbourhood Plans

Clerk had forwarded Council's concerns that Neighbourhood Plans were not providing the community with the control over local development that was expected and he had offered to discuss with councillors at one of his surgeries. Clerk to ask Cllr. Olney if she would like to attend as Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Group. Cllr. Walker would also attend.

Clerk/
PO/ JW**19. Correspondence:****Slow Ways – request for assistance in surveying local walking routes**

Slow Ways was a CIC aiming to check and verify that local walking routes are accessible and had requested assistance in surveying local walking routes. Cllr. Abbott commented that Oakley was the centre of many walking routes from neighbouring villages and Cllr. Jones to ask the Cameo Walking Group if they were interested in surveying. Cllr. Abbott noted that the route to Pavenham was being diverted to avoid the boggy area.

Action

PJ

20. Finance Matters:**a) accounts for period up to 30th September 2023****Income and balances:**

NatWest Bank - Current account balance at 30.09.23.	£31,023.39
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 30.09.23.	£7,333.65
Nationwide - Savings Bond	£61,006.43
Hampshire Trust - Savings Bond	£85,013.20

Action**Received since last meeting:**

Fordham	Allotment rent	22.38
Hutson C	Allotment rent	22.38
Hutson P	Allotment rent	44.76
Munro	Allotment rent	22.38
Jackson J	Allotment rent	22.38

Sellars	Allotment rent	22.38
Nicholas	Allotment rent	44.76
Morton	Allotment rent	22.38
Rooney	Allotment rent	22.38
Marshall	Allotment rent	44.76
Taylor	Allotment rent	22.38
Percival	Allotment rent	44.76
Exon	Allotment rent	22.38
Young	Allotment rent	44.76
Gallagher	Allotment rent	44.76
Wright	Allotment rent	22.38
Wright	Allotment rent	44.76
Frankland	Allotment rent	18.00
Seager	Allotment rent	44.76
Bedford BC	Precept - second half	28,430.00
Worker	September Quiz	257.54
NatWest	Interest	8.44
Total		£29,318.24

**Payments Already
Made:**

			Chq. No.
Old School	Rent for upper rooms September	153.83	s/o
Salaries	September payment	1482.58	s/o
Gallagher	Insurance renewal	2660.40	1882
Pension Fund	September payment	506.74	1883
Anglian Water	Allotment water	96.70	d/d

Payments Made:

Mazars LLP	2022/23 external audit	378.00	1884
Community Heartbeat Trust	Defibrillator battery	357.00	1885
Play Inspection Company	Annual play area inspections 2023 management of Linch Furlong, orchard, Riverside & Brockwell	297.00	1886
Knight	Printing Autumn Newsletter and quiz sheets	2350.00	1887
White Hart Press	Hire of hall 12.07.22, 14.11.22. & 15.05.23.	985.00	1888
Methodist Church	Hire of Committee room 03.10.23.	60.00	1889
Village Hall		18.00	1890
Total		£9,345.25	

b) conclusion of audit

External auditors were content with the accounts and had no matters to draw to Council's attention. Closure of the audit had been advertised. Council thanked Clerk.

c) half yearly budget review

Receipt and payment figures had been circulated and Clerk noted that most expenditure would fall in the second half of the year. Income was as budgeted except Bedford BC had increased their contribution to the cost of grass cutting by £512 and monies from the quizzes had not been included. Expenditure was as expected except that the solicitors' fees for the Kindergarten lease were £473 higher than originally estimated and CIL expenditure was £4,200 more than budgeted as less than expected was spent on play equipment in 2022/23.

d) Clerk's expenses

Proposed by Cllr. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Jones that expenses of £117.42 for the period July to September 2022 be paid

Resolved

21. Date of Next Meeting: 7th November 2023