

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 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 1 member of the public

**1. Public Open Session:**

Resident asked about replacement of the bin at the High Street bus stop and re-marking of the white line on the Church Lane bend. Clerk advised that a new bin had been ordered and Council was waiting for Bedford BC to install and she would chase Highways again to repaint the white line.

Resident was also concerned about the length of time Highways had taken to produce a proposal for yellow lines in The Furlong and commented that bollards would provide a better solution as they would not need enforcement – see item 11a).

**2. Apologies: none**

**3. Declarations of Interest:**

Cllr. Abbott for item 11a) as a resident of The Furlong. Cllr. Walker for item 13a) as a neighbour. Cllr. C. Worker for item 13c) as a relative of the applicant. Cllr. White for item 11b) as a resident of Reynes Drive and 15a) as a payee.

**4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 :**

**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes.

**5. Clerk's Report:**

Highways – Clerk had asked Bedford BC to inspect the tree overhanging properties in Ruffs Furze. Repairs had been carried out to the twin bridges and Clerk had asked for ruts in the verge to be filled whilst contractors were on site.

Parking – vehicles blocking footways in the High Street and Lovell Road had been reported to the police. Concerns about vehicles parking on the yellow lines at Reynes Drive/High Street had been passed to Parking Enforcement

Speed Cameras - there were 33 notices of intended prosecution in September, 32 for speeds up to 39mph and 1 for a speed of 44mph . No data yet for October  
Speed Watch – 9 vehicles were speeding on 05.10.23. and 2 on 19.10.23. all in Highfield Road. Reported to police

Flooding at Lovell Road bridge – Mr. Fuller MP had advised that Network Rail had informed him they were in communication with Bedford BC regarding liabilities involved in resolving the drainage issue under the bridge

Litter Bins – as the Pavenham Road bin base had continued to be used for dog waste bags the new bin had been installed there. Awaiting installation of new Lovell Road and High Street bins. Clerk had requested overflowing bin in Lovell Road be emptied

Brockwell Meadow – contractor would mulch round the trees and mow again once the weather was drier and had advised that as a result of the wet Summer most of the trees were growing well. Resident had complimented contractor on his work in the meadow this year and Clerk had let him know

Neighbourhood Planning – Cllrs. Olney & Walker to meet with Mr. Fuller MP 10.11.23. to discuss concerns that Neighbourhood Plans are not providing the community with the control over local development that was anticipated

Remembrance - Bedford BC had confirmed the road closure at the crossroads but no information from police whether they would be able to provide a presence at the Oakley event this year. Poppies had been put up and War Memorial tidied

Christmas Wreath – church had asked if Council would like to provide a wreath again this year. Cllr White to ask Mrs. White if she could provide

Defibrillator/CPR course – to be held 18.11.23. in the Village Hall from 10.00am to 11.00am

PW

**6. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023:** none Action

**7. East West Rail (EWR):** Action  
**Bedford BC Meeting 12.10.23.**

Cllr. Jones reported that the meeting at Clapham was introduced by the Mayor, who explained that he was trying to be very transparent about the case for or against the northern route which was currently the chosen EWR route. There was to be a further public consultation next year and, despite the fact he was very much against the northern route, he needed firm evidence to decide whether there was a business case for the railway coming through Bedford or really positive reasons for a different route to be selected.

There were 50+ attendees at the meeting and a panel of Bedford BC Department Heads to answer questions and receive evidence. Minutes were taken and reasons to oppose or possibly agree with the current choice noted.

Some attendees questioned whether the cancellation of the northern part of HS2 would impact on the decision for EWR. The Mayor thought it would increase the possibility of the rail link going ahead as East/West connectivity was favoured by the Government and it was a question of making a very good case for a different choice of route for next year’s consultation. Cllr. Abbott noted that the official position of Bedford BC was still to support the route alignment as there was no new evidence at present for Full Council to consider.

EWR had advised that they would shortly begin a programme of ground investigation surveys and Cllr. Jones noted that she had sent photographs of flooding in Clapham to EWR. Traffic surveys across the Borough were also being carried out by EWR.

Cllr. Walker commented that a meeting had been held between Mr. Merriman MP, Minister of State for Transport, Mr. Fuller MP, Mayor Wootton, BFARE and residents.

Mr. Merriman had visited villages affected by EWR and concerns about environmental damage, lack of trust in the project and value for money had been reiterated. The group also explained that there was no evidence that a southern route would cause flooding in Bedford as EWR had suggested. EWR had previously advised that the majority of Bedford residents supported the route because of the existing poor public transport system.

**8. Police Report:**

There were 8 reported crimes in September, 1 sexual, 1 residential burglary, 1 robbery of personal property, 1 possession of a blade/point, 1 public fear/alarm, 1 obscene publications offence and 2 criminal damage. There were 3 reported crimes in the first half of October, 2 residential burglaries and 1 criminal damage.

Cllr. Jones reported that the annual Police & Crime Commissioner’s Parishes’ Meeting had been held on 11.10.23. There were presentations by the Dog/Horse/Speed Watch and Safer Street co-ordinators and Ch. Supt. Whitted discussed current policing structure and strategy. Bedfordshire had more police officers than ever before but they were mostly young inexperienced officers, learning on the job. Police were working to improve retention of officers and response to calls and were developing a chat bot for reporting crimes. The ratings for Bedfordshire had improved substantially. Information was provided on rural crime teams and how police were trying to close the County Lines. Chair of Stewartby and Kempston Hardwick Council discussed police involvement in their BMX park which was helping to keep young people away from crime. Police would try and attend a meeting of every parish council but agreed that they had insufficient resources to monitor all the speed cameras in the County.

Action

**9. Parish Council Quiz:**

Cllr. R. Worker reported that 91 attended the September quiz and 82 in October and there had been positive feedback from both events. At 07.11.23. 66 had registered for the November event. The profit from the two quizzes was £393.57 and would be boosted by a Christmas raffle. If Council decided to continue with quizzes, Village Hall hire costs would increase to £56.00 per event w.e.f. 01.01.24. and £60 would be needed for printing quiz sheets. Proposed by Cllr. R. Worker, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that quizzes should continue for a further 6 months and be reviewed again in May 2024

**Resolved**

Council thanked Cllrs. R. and C. Worker for organising the events and Cllr. White for sponsoring the printing costs. Cllr. R. Worker to put an article about the quizzes in the December Newsletter.

Action

CW/  
RW  
  
RW

**10. Policy Documents:**

Council’s Community Engagement Strategy, Complaints Procedure, Document Retention & Disposal Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Grievance Policy, Equality & Diversity Policy, Environmental & Sustainability Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Information & Data Protection Policy, Memorial Furniture Policy, Newsletter Advertising Policy, Pension Scheme Employer Discretion Policy, Removable Media Policy, Social Media Policy, Training Policy, Tree Policy and Website Accessibility Policy were unchanged. Council was content with the documents.

Action

**11. Highway Matters:**

**a) double yellow lines in The Furlong**

Bedford BC had advised that bollards and H bars would not resolve the parking issues and proposed double yellow lines around the bend between nos.17 and 21. Councillors noted that there was not a safety issue in The Furlong and were concerned about moving the problem and enforcing yellow lines. Bedford BC would need to consult residents on yellow lines and if there were objections might not proceed but bollards could be installed without consultation. Cllr. Abbott had allocated monies from his Ward Fund for bollards or yellow lines. Proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that the proposal for yellow lines be rejected and Council write to all residents in The Furlong asking if they would support bollards along the odd numbered footway

**Resolved**

Action

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 still awaiting a response. Proposed by Cllr. Walker, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that yellow lines should not be pursued in the High Street as there was no safety issue there

**Resolved**

Cllr. Abbott would, however, ask for the H bar to be repainted.

Cllr. Abbott noted that residents in Reynes Drive, Station Road and Flax Close had contacted Borough Councillors about parking, particularly at the beginning and end of the school day. At present, only police could deal with parking on the junctions but yellow lines could be enforced by Bedford BC.

Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Walker that yellow lines should be requested on the Flax Close/Station Road junction as well as the Reynes Drive/Station Road junction

**Resolved**

Cllr. Abbott confirmed that sufficient monies had ben allocated from his Ward Fund for yellow lines on both sites as well as bollards in The Furlong.

JA

JA

JA

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

Cllr. Abbott reported that good progress was being made with the new SEND school and an event was held 13.10.23. to celebrate foster carers. A6 works had been delayed because the Armco barrier needed to be replaced. 6/7 bids had been received for the new leisure services contract and an announcement would be made 13.11.23. 200 new trees had been planted under the Trees for Streets scheme and Bedford BC was seeking volunteers to water them. Bedford BC was undertaking a peer review and the Council make up had changed as one Labour member had become an independent, so there were now 14 Conservative members, 13 Labour, 13 Liberal Democrats, 3 Greens and 3 Independents. £9million had been allocated for GP surgery buildings from £53million of borrowing.

Cllr. Walker added that the peer review had advised that the Borough Council needed to invest so the Town Centre, leisure services and the GP estate would be allocated funding. GP funding was pump priming and would be repaid. Bedford BC had not borrowed in recent years but needed to do so to invest and a Town Centre plan would be issued in January. The Beales/Debenhams site would be redeveloped with the library moving to Beales. The Mayor also wanted to build an all sport leisure complex by Aspects. Under the Change programme (a national programme to test changes to the SEND system) £6million had been allocated for local SEND projects and the Borough was the lead authority for the East of England. The 2023 Winter Wonderland would be relocated to Bedford Park and would include a skating rink. Mr. Fuller MP would be holding a surgery in the Old School on 11.01.23. from 6.00pm – 7.30pm and would meet parish councillors beforehand.

Action**13. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:****Decisions notified since Council meeting – 3<sup>rd</sup> October 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:

Decision/ Permission 26.10.23.

Date:

**Applications received since Council meeting – 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023**

Application No. **a) 23/01186/FUL** - single storey front extension at 10 Dewlands

Parish No objection

Comments

Application No. **b) 23/02271/FUL** - single storey front extension at 30 Ruffs Furze  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments

Application No. **c) 23/02309/TPO** - various tree works at Fox Covert, Westfield Road  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments

Application No. **d) 23/02317/FUL** - first floor side extension and side extension to existing loft at 41 Church Lane  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments

Application No. **e) 23/02318/FUL** - demolition of one garage and erection of detached dwelling at 76 Dewlands  
 Parish Objection on the grounds that the proposed new dwelling would constitute back land development; access to the remaining garages would be difficult as one garage in a block of attached garages would need to be demolished; the new dwelling would give a cramped appearance to the area and would have to use the remaining garage forecourts to access the property by vehicle and by foot and the proposed dwelling would be out of keeping with that part of Dewlands where all of the houses are semi-detached properties.  
 Comments

Application No. **f) 23/02360/FUL** for a one and two storey rear extension at Iona, 41 High Street  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments

**14. Correspondence:**

**a) CPRE – hedgerow planting project**

CPRE was seeking expressions of interest for from groups that had land or green space where hedgerows could be planted and from organisations that could share their skills and knowledge of hedgerow planting & management to help make the project a reality. Clerk to ask contractor if there was scope to plant new hedges in Riverside or Brockwell.

Action

Clerk

**b) Oakley Gardening Club - request to donate a seat in Community Orchard**

Gardening Club had been wound up and had offered to donate a recycled plastic seat in the Community Orchard with the balance of funds of £657.86. If any money remained, they would also donate a walnut tree and bulbs there.

Council was content provided allotment holders had no objections and Clerk to consult allotment manager.

Clerk

**15. Finance Matters:**Action**a) accounts for period up to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023****Income and balances:**

NatWest Bank - Current account balance at 31.10.23.	£26,859.25
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 31.10.23.	£7,342.97
Nationwide - Savings Bond	£61,006.43
Hampshire Trust - Savings Bond	£85,013.20

**Received since last meeting:**

Malodobry	Allotment rent	22.38
Bergin	Allotment rent	22.38
Clark (Jackson)	Allotment rent	67.14
Gilbert	Allotment rent	22.38
Whatley	Allotment rent	44.76
Skipper	Allotment rent	44.76
Chalker	Allotment rent	22.38
Day	Allotment rent	44.76
Day	Allotment rent	22.38
Elliott	Allotment rent	44.76
Denman (Whatley S)	Allotment rent	44.76
Devlin	Allotment rent	22.38
Preece	Allotment rent	18.00
Holyoak (Webster)	Allotment rent	44.76
Connect Maths	Newsletter advertising	60.00
Select Travel	Newsletter advertising	216.00
NAO Cattery	Newsletter advertising	54.00
NAO Cleaning	Newsletter advertising	54.00
Bacchus	Newsletter advertising	144.00
Testa	Newsletter advertising	108.00
Almond	Newsletter advertising	108.00
Peacock	Newsletter advertising	216.00
Oakley IT	Newsletter advertising	216.00
Oakley Angels	Newsletter advertising	144.00
Lane & Holmes	Newsletter advertising	432.00
Whites	Quiz printing	60.00
Worker	October Quiz	232.03
NatWest	Interest	9.32

**Total £2,541.33**

<b>Payments Already Made:</b>			<b>Chq. No.</b>
Old School	Rent for upper rooms October	153.83	s/o
Salaries	October payment	1482.58	s/o
Pension Fund	October payment	506.74	1891
<b>Payments Made:</b>			
CPM Playgrounds	Play area repairs	3084.00	1892
	Replacement fencing at twin bridges	667.20	1899
Whites Engineering			
Gallagher Insurance	Cyber Security renewal	318.08	1894
V C Property	Repairing entrance stone wall	354.00	1895
	Hire of Hall 15.09.23. & 20.10.23. for quiz and Committee Room		
Village Hall	07.11.23.	114.00	1896
Community			
Heartbeat Trust	Defibrillator pads	73.14	1897
Paice	Expenses July - September	117.42	1898
		<b>Total</b>	<b>6,870.99</b>

**b) write -off of uncashed cheque**

The Friends of the Old School had advised that they would not be cashing cheque number 1876 for £6.00 for hire of the meeting room as it was not worth a journey to the bank.

Proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Jones that cheque number 1876 for £6.00 be written off

**Resolved**

Clerk

**c) cyber security insurance renewal**

Brokers had advised Council to renew cyber security insurance with Coalition at a cost of £318.08 and insurance had been renewed to avoid being uninsured. Council ratified the decision.

Clerk

**d) new projects 2024/25**

Speed Watch Team had requested another solar SID at a current cost of £2,995.00 + delivery + VAT plus £350.00 + VAT for installation. Cllr. C. worker suggested a weight limit camera on the twin bridges. Clerk noted that Council had asked the Borough to consider what could be done to reduce the damage to the bridge and whether cameras to monitor the weight of vehicles would be feasible whilst they were repairing the bridges and they had advised that they were considering options and would update in three months.

Council agreed a replacement bin for the Lovell Road/Parrot Close bus shelter and councillors to send any further suggestions to Clerk.

ALL

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Cllr. Walker suggested Council investigate funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund for a pedestrian bridge adjacent to the twin bridges.

Clerk

**21. Date of Next Meeting: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023**