

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 2nd July 2024 in the Village Hall

PRESENT:

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

1. **Public Open Session:** none

2. **Apologies:** J. Abbott (business), C. Bays (personal), P. White (business)

3. **Declarations of Interest:**

Cllr. Walker for item 17a) as a neighbour of the applicant. Chair and Cllr. Olney for item 19a) as members of Youth Club Committee. Cllr. Olney for item 19b) as a Trustee of the Day Centre

4. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th June 2024:**

Resolved: to adopt the minutes.

5. **Clerk's Report:**

Highways – Bedford BC had confirmed that trees on Burleigh Place green and the tree in the Church Lane verge would be inspected and that the tree overhanging the footway in in Copthorne Close would be cut back by the end of the Summer. The silver birch in Ruffs Furze had been inspected and was in good overall health. It was the Borough's policy to allow trees to reach their natural height and species such as silver birch did not respond well to being reduced in height. Clerk had requested that the trees in Ruffs Furze/Dewlands alleyway be trimmed as they were close to residents' properties and the tree on the small green in Grenidge Way overhanging the footway and alleyway be cut back. Clerk had also asked residents in the High Street and Church Lane to cut back overhanging bushes. Clerk had asked for the footway in Lovell Road to be repaired and an order had been raised for the work and for the weeds/nettles to be cleared from the path from Station Road to the Methodist Church. The flooding on Grenidge Way path had now been resolved but there were no updates on the bollards in The Furlong or repainting white lines in Church Lane and the High Street.

Parking - Clerk had asked Lincroft School to remind parents about parking considerately and police to revisit the area. Police would be visiting the School again. The School had also contacted the Borough Enforcement Team who would visit again and the police and would issue another reminder to parents/carers

Fly tipping and graffiti – monitor dumped behind the Oakley sign on Lovell Road and graffiti on Station Road bus shelter had been reported to Bedford BC and removed.

Speed Watch – nil return for events in Reynes Drive 06.06.24. and Lovell Road 17.06.24. Reported to police

Litter bins – all bins emptied w/c 10.06.24. & 24.06.24.

Quiz - profit for June quiz was £194.16.

Directory – Cllr. C. Worker had met with a resident who had volunteered to produce the Directory. The resident had software that she could use and Cllr. Worker had asked Oakley IT to contact her. Council thanked Cllr. Worker.

Riverside Meadow – CPRE had confirmed that funding for a hedge in Riverside Meadow had been agreed and planting to take place in the Autumn.

Tulip bulbs – Clerk had collected free bulbs from Bedford BC for planting in the Autumn

- 6. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th June 2024 :** Action
none

- 7. Reports – Bedford BC Network Meeting 25.06.24:**
Cllr. Walker reported that the meeting discussed best practice community engagement particularly in the rural area. Chair & Cllr. Jones had not been invited and Cllr. Walker to ensure they are included on the circulation list in future. Updates had not been available because of purdah during the election period. Next meeting was 26.09.24. JW

- 8. East West Rail (EWR):** Action
a) Local Representatives’ Meeting 23.05.24.
No update until after the General Election.

- 9. Police Report:** Action
There were 5 reported crimes in the first half of June, 2 assaults, 1 public fear offence, 1 attempted burglary and 1 theft of a motor vehicle.
The Rural Team had changed with and now comprised Inspector Russell Goldsmith, Sergeant Sarah Cluff, PCs Mark Hancock and Peter Lawson and PCSO James Dancer.
Clerk had attended the Coffee with a Cop event at Milton Ernest Garden Centre 08.06.24. and reiterated the problems with Lincroft parking

- 10. Grass Cutting:** Action
Council had continued to receive complaints about the grass cutting. A Borough supervisor had inspected the work and advised that advising that grass was growing very quickly so was longer than normal. One of the machines was off the road for a few days in May so several days were lost. Staff were constantly on the Oakley contract and the strimmer operative had been changed and would work closely with the ride-on mower. Clerk had requested indicative quotations for 2025 and one contractor had advised that the cost would be significantly higher than for the current contract. Awaiting a quotation from another.

Bedford BC had not agreed to a reduction in the first quarter cost. Councillors noted that the standard had improved and agreed not to pursue a discount. Chair suggested that Council might need to consider an extra cut in May/June when the new contract was considered.

Clerk

11. Community Litter Pick:

Bedford BC had advised that equipment would be available 12.10.24. for a community litter pick. Clerk to advise Scouts, Brownies, ATC, OSSC and Lincroft School.

Clerk

Cllr. C. Worker noted that the Council and volunteer litter pickers were doing an excellent job.

12. Play Area Inspections:

Quarterly inspection had indicated that missing fixings needed replacing on the cradle swing seat and tightening on the multiplay at The Furlong. On the Green, rough edges needed smoothing on the log climber, fixings needed tightening and missing bolt and cap replacing on the small slide, missing cap needed replacing on the seat, damaged sleeve chain needed replacing on the zip wire and 10 linear metres of raised wet pour edge needed replacing around the log climber. Fixings on the swing had already been replaced for safety reasons.

Contractor had quoted £603 + VAT (including £400 + VAT for the wetpour) to repair

Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. R. Worker that quotation for £603 + VAT be accepted

Resolved

Clerk

13. Defibrillators:

Parish Clerks and Community Heartbeat Trust (CHT) had provided additional information on registering defibrillators. CHT had advised that there was no one map that showed all defibrillators and Council sites were registered with the Ambulance Service. New sites registered with Webnos are registered by them on Circuit. DHSC requires defibrillators to be registered on Circuit as part of the grant conditions, so Clerk had registered the Methodist Church unit with Circuit and would register with Webnos too.

Clerk

Cllr. C. Worker had written an article on defibrillators and where they were located for the Newsletter and an article would be included once a year. Clerk to produce a map of defibrillator sites for the website and notice boards.

Clerk

The cabinet on the unit at the Village Hall had deteriorated and needed replacing and CHT had quoted £450 + VAT + £25 delivery for an unlocked cabinet or £550 + VAT + £25 delivery for an oval lockable cabinet or £750 + VAT + £25 delivery for a round lockable cabinet. Councillors noted that units had been stolen from or damaged in unlocked cabinets elsewhere.

Proposed by Cllr. C. Worker, seconded by Cllr. Walker that a lockable cabinet be purchased at a cost of £550 + VAT + £25 delivery

Clerk

Resolved

14. Riverside Meadow Lease:

Lease for Riverside Meadow had expired and Oakley Properties were willing to renew on the same terms with an increased rent of £250 p.a. (currently £100 p.a.). Clerk had requested a quotation for legal costs to renew and awaiting a response.

Proposed by Cllr. Walker, seconded by Cllr. Jones that lease be renewed with a rent of £250 p.a. plus legal expenses

Resolved

Clerk

15. Highway Matters:

Cllr. Walker noted that she had raised the white lining work with the Portfolio Holder. He had agreed that the bends in Church Lane were dangerous but there was no budget for highway maintenance work at present and monies would need to be found. Monies would be included in next year's budget. Contract had been signed for work to remove trees from the river.

Chair noted that bollards at the Station Road roundabout had been damaged. Clerk had reported them to Bedford BC and Chair to check if they had been repaired.

Resident was concerned about overhanging trees in Lovell Road obscuring the road sign and reducing visibility for drivers exiting their properties. Clerk to report to Bedford BC.

Action

Chair

Clerk

16. Borough Council Report:

Cllr. Walker reported that there was little business being conducted because of the election purdah. The Executive Meeting 19.06.24. had approved the Town Centre Delivery Programme, the Cultural Programme as part of Bedford Cultural Partnership and the Greyfriars Supplementary Planning Document. The roundabout at Greyfriars would be removed as part of the plan. Monies to fund the Bedford end of the Bedford/Milton Keynes Canal was agreed although it would take time to construct and would be used as a cycleway initially. Tennis courts had been upgraded with a grant from the LTA, who required booking in advance as a condition of the grant. Funding for Wixams station had been agreed and, if the Universal project proceeded, they would contribute significant monies to expand the station. Plans for the Universal site had been submitted in June and it would be for Government to make a decision on them. Cllr. Walker advised that the Debenhams site would initially be occupied by "meantime" businesses including a new health hub. Chair noted that Robinson Pool was much improved and Bedford was excellent for cycling.

Action

17. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:**Decisions notified since Council meeting – 4th June 2024**

Application No. **24/00872/S73** - change of use from hairdressers/beauty salon to dwelling house and external alterations, including variation of approved plan condition 2 attached to 21/01036/FUL, to allow for changes to the internal layout and elevations at 40 High Street

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 13.06.24. (CIL liable)

Application No. **24/00970/FUL** - single storey side extension at 73 Dewlands

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 26.06.24.

Application No. **24/00392/FUL** - Demolition of existing garages and erection of new detached block with gym at ground floor with storage and office space at first floor at Parklands, The Drive

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Application withdrawn

Applications received since Council meeting – 4th June 2024

Application No. **a) 24/01093/FUL** - single storey front extension at 10 Dewlands

Parish No objection

Comments

Application No. **b) 24/01193/TPO** - works to an oak tree at Langton, Church Lane

Parish No objection

Comments

Application No. **c) 24/00661/MAF amended** - demolition of existing temporary teaching blocks, associated site compound buildings & office/meeting area bungalow to accommodate a new fit for purpose 3 storey teaching block at Lincroft School

Parish No objection

Comments

Clerk noted that a Lawful Development Certificate had been issued for the single storey rear/side extension and internal changes to the utility room walls at Oakview Westfield Road so planning permission was not required.

d) Bedford BC planning training 17.07.24.

Cllrs. Bays to attend and proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Walker that attendance fee of £35.00 be paid

Resolved

Clerk

18. Correspondence: none

Action

19. Grant Applications:

Action

a) Oakley Youth Club had requested a grant of £3,000 to provide funding for the Club from July 2024 to August 2025. Total cost estimated of £5,350 with the balance from entrance fees, tuck shop and quiz. Previous grants 2023 - £3,000, 2022 - £3,000, 2021 - £1,500, 2020 - £4,500, 2019 - £4,500. Average weekly attendance was 24 but the Youth Club was closed between January and April whilst new staff were recruited. Balance of £2,501.72 at 01.06.24. with salaries of approximately £700 for June and July to be paid.

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that £3,000 be granted

Resolved - s. 137 donation

Chair thanked Council on behalf of the Youth Club and noted that the new team was working well. They would be trialling opening the Youth Club once a fortnight during the Summer holiday.

Clerk

b) Oakley Day Centre had requested a grant at Council's discretion to cover the cost of running the day centre. Client fees only cover a portion of expenditure and they relied on donations and grants for continuing their care for frail and elderly North Beds residents. Previous grants – £500 in each of – 2023, 2022, 2021, 2019, 2016, 2014 during the last 10 years. Six Oakley residents attended of which one normally attends three days per week and another 2 days. Balance of £97,718 at 31.03.23. with reserves of £89,614 to enable the Centre to operate for two years if no grants or funding received and to pay for redundancies if it had to close or urgent relocation costs if the Old School was no longer available. Income in 2022/23 was £50,757 and expenditure £55,364 Proposed by Cllr. R. Worker, seconded by Cllr. Jones that £750.00 be granted

Resolved - s. 137 donation

Clerk

20. Finance Matters:

Action

a) accounts to pay**Income and balances:**

NatWest Bank - Current account balance at 30.06.24. £33,122.35

NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 30.06.24. £2,392.69

Nationwide - Savings Bond £63,147.25

Hampshire Trust - Savings Bond £85,013.20

Received since last meeting:

Worker	June quiz	250.16	
Hyden	Allotment rent	5.00	
Bearcroft-Young	Allotment rent	5.00	
NatWest	Interest	2.66	
	Total	£262.82	

Payments Already**Made:**

			Chq. No.
Old School	Rent for upper rooms June	153.83	s/o
Salaries	June payment	1588.21	s/o
Anglian Water	Allotment water	32.61	d/d
Bedfordshire Pension Fund	June payment	539.95	1943

Payments Made:

V C Property Maintenance	Replace rotted posts on the Green	474.00	1944
Village Hall	Hire of Hall 17.05.24. for quiz and Committee Room 02.07.24.	78.50	1945
	Total	£2,867.10	

b) Clerk's Expenses

Proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that expenses of £63.71 for the period April to June 2024 be paid

ResolvedAction

Clerk

21. **Date of Next Meeting:** 3rd September 2024