

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 3rd September 2024 in the Village Hall

PRESENT:

Cllr. R. Saunders (Chair), J. Abbott, C. Bays, P. Jones, P. Olney, 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 requested an update on installation of the bollards in The Furlong. Cllr. Abbott advised that they were ordered in July and delivery could take three months but they should be installed by the end of December.

2. Apologies Cllr. Fardon (personal)**3. Declarations of Interest:**

Cllr. Olney for item 18f) as a Trustee of the Old School. Cllr. White for item 18g) as the applicant. Cllr. C. Worker for item 21 as Council representative to Villager Bus. Cllr. Walker for item 22g) as a relative of an allotment tenant.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd July 2024:

Resolved: to adopt the minutes.

5. Clerk's Report:

Highways – Bedford BC had confirmed that white lines would be repainted but there was no date yet for the work. The alleyway between Grenidge Way and Dewlands flooded again 07.07.24. and a drain was blocked in Church Lane. Clerk had asked Bedford BC to clear the drains. Residents were concerned about weeds growing along kerbs and blocking drains and Clerk had asked Bedford BC to clear. Weeds had been sprayed and would be cleared by the road sweeper. Residents had been informed. Residents were concerned about the condition of the Farsands footway and the path to Reynes Drive. Clerk reported to Bedford BC who advised that they would patch the footpath. Clerk had notified the resident

Trees – a tree fell at the Church Lane triangle 12.08.24. Council thanked Cllrs. R. Worker and R. Saunders who cut up and removed the wood from the road. Clerk asked Bedford BC to remove the debris and inspect the remaining trees which also looked rotten. Debris had been removed. The fallen tree at Stafford Bridge which was protruding onto the roadway was reported to Bedford BC and removed. Bedford BC had advised that that the overhanging tree in Hunts Path would be trimmed within the next three months and trees on Burleigh Place green would be crown lifted and dead wood removed. They had not previously cut the trees near Lovell Road bridge but would cut the foliage away from the sign and ask Highways to make a visibility safety assessment.

Fly tipping – rubbish dumped at the Lovell Road/Station Road roundabout, Lovell Road/Parrott Close bus stop, in Station Road and at the twin bridges reported to Bedford BC and removed.

Speed Watch – one vehicle speeding at event in Pavenham Road 03.07.24. Reported to police

Litter bins – all bins were emptied w/c 08.07.24. & 22.07.24. The bin at Station Road bus stop was missed w/c 05.08.2, some dog bins were missed w/c 28.08.24 and several bins were missed w/c 02.09.24. Reported to Bedford BC and Cllr. Jones had also forwarded a map of Oakley bins. Mess left at the Post Office was also reported to Bedford BC.

Quiz - profit for July quiz was £209.95

- 6. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd July 2024 :**
none

Action

7. Reports – ORA Meeting 16.07.24:

Cllr. T. Saunders and Cllr. Jones attended. ORA reported that various events had been held at the Club over the summer and the outside bar was up and running. Recent classic car nights had been cancelled due to the weather and the final night would be in September. A new boules container was being made as the current one had disintegrated (now installed). Motorcycle Club (OMC) events had been affected by the weather but OMC was looking to donate £2,000 to the East Anglian Air Ambulance in August and BMW would be returning for another dealer night. Poker had been very popular and club was considering holding a second session. Cllr. Saunders noted that the community litter pick would be held on 12.10.24. and OSSC offered to host.

8. East West Rail (EWR):

a) Local Representatives' Meeting 16.07.24.

Cllr. Olney attended and reported that the new CEO David Hughes introduced himself and explained that EWR was waiting for a steer from the new Government on consultation. Attendees were concerned about poor communication from EWR in the past and requested better engagement in future. BFARE would be contacting Government about their concerns over the northern route. Cllr. Walker noted that detailed drawings were now available online and Council was concerned that the Britannia Road car park would no longer be available for hospital parking. Clerk to raise concerns with Mr. Yasim MP, EWR and Bedford Hospital.

Action

Clerk

9. Police Report:

A local priority setting meeting had been held 26.07.24. Cllr. Jones attended and put forward parking enforcement/driver education around school drop off/pick up, general parking on footways/junctions and speeding plus drug taking/selling as Oakley priorities. Local priority was set as fear of anti-social behaviour leading to crime

There were 5 reported crimes in June, 2 assaults, 1 public fear offence, 1 attempted burglary and 1 theft of a motor vehicle, 1 in July, an assault in Station Road and none in the first half of August.

Coffee with a Cop event had been held at Milton Ernest Garden Centre on 31.08.24. & further events to be held 28.09.24. and 26.10.24. Police & Crime Commissioner was holding a Challenge and Accountability Meeting 18.09.24. and a Rural Crime Event in conjunction with the NFU on 06.11.24.

Action

10. Community Litter Pick:

Clerk had advised Scouts, Brownies, ATC, OSSC and Lincroft School that the community litter pick would be held 12.10.24. Scouts were interested in hosting the event and awaiting confirmation. OSSC had offered to host if the Scouts were unable to. Cllr. Bays noted that the Scout Leader had left and that Scouts would no longer be in a position to host. Clerk to ask OSSC to host and advertise the event.

Action

Clerk

11. Play Areas:

Contractor had advised that that play area repairs had been carried out but the wooden dowels on The Furlong multiplay were rotten and the threaded inserts in the beam twist round so it would be necessary to use coach bolts to permanently fix the problem at a cost of £195.00 + VAT.

Proposed by Cllr. Walker, seconded by Cllr. R. Worker that quotation for £195.00 + VAT be accepted

Resolved

Cllr. Walker noted that the strap for the disabled swing had been kept by a resident but suggested it should be on the swing to allow use at all times. Council agreed and Cllr. Bays to discuss with resident.

Action

Clerk

CB

12. Replacement Bins:

The dog bin in Highfield Road had disappeared and Bedford BC had advised that they were phasing out dog bins so would prefer it to be replaced with a dual-purpose bin. Council had agreed to replace the small blue bin at Lovell Road/Parrott Close bus stop as a new project for 2024/25 and Bedford BC had quoted £900 + VAT to supply and install two plaza bins. However, they recommended a jubilee bin for Highfield Road which is larger and quicker to empty at a cost of £700 + VAT. Concerning location in Highfield Road they noted that the litter bin could be sited where the dog bin was situated but the bin would be close to a property and the resident should be consulted.

Action

Alternatively, the bin could be put in the layby near Judges Spinney however as it was out of the residential area it might not be so well used. Council agreed that Judges Spinney was not a suitable location and that the bin could be sited away from the resident's property nearer to the entrance to the path.

Cllr. Abbott noted that he had Ward Funds available and suggested they could be used to install a jubilee bin on the Green, as this bin was often overfull and the existing plaza bin on the Green moved to Highfield Road. Clerk to ascertain whether this would be acceptable to Bedford BC and Council to consider again in October.

Clerk

13. Village Directory:

Resident had volunteered to produce the Directory and also to contact advertisers. Cllr. C. Worker had discussed the role with her and asked if she would need funding for a suitable IT system and awaiting a response. Council thanked Cllr. Worker. Clerk to invite resident to the October meeting to meet councillors and discuss IT systems. Cllr. White volunteered to ask Old Road Securities if they would be able to continue to sponsor the Directory printing costs in 2025.

Action

Clerk

PW

14. Tree Inspection Report:

Clerk had requested an inspection of all Council trees. Two tree surgeons had quoted £625 (no VAT) and £1,566.29 + VAT respectively to carry out an inspection. Third had carried out an inspection and quoted £1,970 + VAT to trim vegetation in The Furlong bund and shrubs on Parsonage Close green, crown lift, deadwood, rebalance and trim trees away from properties on Reynes Drive/High Street green, Grange green and Parsonage Close green and remove a declining maple at Riverside Meadow and a declining silver birch on Ruffs Furze green. Removal of the willow on the corner of the Green was included but the tree had partially collapsed in the meantime and had already been felled on safety grounds. Residents in Ruffs Furze were concerned that the maples on the green were too tall and swayed violently when windy. Tree surgeon advised that they appear in good health but had quoted £380 + VAT to reduce the height or £200 + VAT to raise and trim them back from the adjoining properties.

Action

Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. T. Saunders that quotations for £1,970 + VAT and £380 + VAT be accepted

Resolved

Clerk

15. Allotments:

Allotment tenants were concerned that bird waste has been dumped on the allotments despite the perpetrator being asked not to do so and had asked Council to arrange removal and for a camera on site to film further fly tipping. A lock had now been put on the allotment gate. Clerk noted notices would need to be put up advising that cameras were in operation. Clerk had requested quotations to remove the waste but none yet received.

Action

Cllr. White noted that an electronically closing gate would be needed to fully secure the site and volunteered to donate some components. Council agreed that a camera would not be necessary as the gate was now locked and tenants should be advised to photograph the perpetrator and his vehicle if he returned. The compost bin in which the waste was dumped should also be removed. As no quotations had been received to remove the waste, Clerk to investigate the cost of a small skip and Council to consider again in October.

Clerk

16. Highway Matters:

Chair was still concerned that the trees under the twin bridges had yet to be removed. Cllr. Walker advised that the order for removal had been signed and a contractor was being appointed. Cllr. Walker to chase again.

Action

Cllr. Walker noted that bushes were overhanging alleyways and councillors to forward details to Clerk who would ask householders to cut back.

JW

Chair noted that footway from Church to bridges was overgrown and Clerk to ask Bedford BC to cut back.

ALL

Clerk

17. Borough Council Report:

Cllr. Abbott reported that work had started on the Debenhams site and crazy golf had opened in Russell Park. The new SEND school was due to open in November and work had begun on Wixams station. The housing target for Bedford BC had also been slightly reduced. Cllr. Walker added that work had also begun on the Bedford/Milton Keynes Canal route which would initially be used as a cycle/walking path as there were insufficient funds for a waterway at present. Bottles no longer needed to be separated by colour in any recycling bins as they would be sorted at the depot. A decision on the Universal project was delayed by the general election and was now expected by the end of 2024. Mr. Fuller MP would be holding a drop in surgery from 12 noon – 1.30pm on 06.09.24. at Clapham Village Hall. Cllr. Walker to attend and reiterate concerns about EWR.

Action**18. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:****Decisions notified since Council meeting – 2nd July 2024**

Application No. **24/01020/FUL** - installation of velux windows to front at 2 Chapel Pound

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Withdrawn 10.07.24.

Application No. **24/00850/FUL** - one & two storey front, side & rear extensions with balcony to rear, insertion of window to ground floor side elevation and associated alterations at 7 Pavenham Road

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 11.07.24.

Application No. **24/00970/FUL** - single storey side extension at 43 Dewlands
Parish No objection
Comments:
Decision/Date: Permission 05.08.24.

Application No. **24/01193/TPO** - works to an oak tree at Langton, Church Lane
Parish No objection
Comments:
Decision/Date: Permission 08.08.24.

Application No. **24/01286/TPO** – re-pollard weeping willow to existing points at
Treetops, 55 High Street
Parish No objection
Comments:
Decision/Date: Permission 16.08.24.

Applications received since Council meeting – 2nd July 2024

Application No. **a) 24/01286/TPO** – re-pollard weeping willow to existing points at
Treetops, 55 High Street
Parish No objection
Comments

Application No. **b) 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

Application No. **c) 24/01435/TPO** - crown reduce ash tree at Lincroft Academy
Parish No objection
Comments

Application No. **d) 24/01487/LDE** - lawful development certificate for works at Hazel
Kaye, 40 High Street
Parish No objection
Comments

Application No. **e) 24/01561/TPO** - reduce or fell various trees in Judges Spinney
Parish No objection
Comments

Application No. f) **24/01559/TPO** - prune various trees at the Old School
 Parish No objection
 Comments

Application No. g) **24/01637/FUL** - demolition of existing garage & utility, erection of two storey front extension, first floor rear extension & single storey side extension at 20 Reynes Drive
 Parish No objection
 Comments

19. Planning Policy:

Bedford BC was consulting on a revised draft Statement of Community Involvement 2024. Clerk noted that Bedford BC would encourage those submitting proposals for larger schemes or schemes of a sensitive nature to undertake consultation with the local community and other stakeholders before submitting a planning application, even if not required, and was trying to reach under represented groups. They wanted to encourage digital responses but have sought to ensure there was equal opportunity for all to participate in the planning process. Council had no comments.

Action

20. Correspondence: none

Action

21. Grant Applications:

Villager Bus had requested a grant at Council’s discretion to support the Villager Bus. Total annual costs including setting aside funds towards a new bus were between £22,000 and £25,000 with the balance from other Parish Councils in North Beds, concession fare payments from Bedford Borough and the other local authorities they pass through. The Department for Transport also provided some funding towards fuel costs. Previous grants 2018 - £300. No information on how many Oakley residents use the service. Balance of £42,457 at 31.08.23. but the accounts for 2022/23 were somewhat distorted by the purchase of the new bus which was in progress at the end of the financial year. Balance at 31.08.22. was £697. Clerk noted that £500 was included in the budget for the Villager Bus.

Action

Proposed by Cllr. White, seconded by Cllr. Jones that £450 be donated

Resolved – Transport Act 1985 updated

Clerk

22. Finance Matters:

Action

a) accounts to pay

Income and balances:

NatWest Bank - Current account balance at 31.08.24.	£17,712.92
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 31.08.24.	£2,398.69
Nationwide - Savings Bond	£63,147.25
Hampshire Trust - Savings Bond	£85,013.20

Received since last meeting:

Wood	Allotment rent	5.00	
Worker	July quiz	265.95	
NatWest	Interest	3.14	
	Total	274.09	

Payments Already Made:

			Chq. No.
	Rent for upper rooms July and August	307.66	s/o
Old School	Salaries July and August payment	3,176.42	s/o
Bedfordshire Pension Fund	July payment	539.95	1949
Paice	Expenses April - June	63.71	1950
Bedford BC	Grass cutting Q1	2,714.92	1951
BATPC	Affiliation fees 2024/25	562.00	1952
CPRE	Membership 2024/25	36.00	1953
White Hart Press	Printing Summer Newsletter	925.00	1954
CPM Playgrounds	Play equipment repairs	723.60	1955
	Hire of hall 21.06.24. & 26.07.24. for quiz	112.00	1956
Oakley Village Hall	Bedfordshire Pension Fund August payment	539.95	1957

Payments Made:

	Managing Linch Furlong, Orchard, Riverside and Brockwell Meadows 2024	2,300.00	1958
Knight	Printing Autumn Newsletter	865.00	1959
White Hart Press	Payroll administration April - September	126.00	1960
D M Payroll Services	Insurance 2024/25	2,701.34	1961
Gallagher	Hire of Committee Room 03.09.24.	22.50	1962
Village Hall	Total	£15,716.05	

Clerk noted that Bedford BC had now advised that election costs would total £1,538.86 rather than £3,026.89 which had been previously invoiced. Clerk had requested a revised invoice and awaiting receipt.

Council was content to pay once the revised invoice received

Clerk

b) insurance renewal

Council insurance was due for renewal on 01.10.24. at a cost of £2,701.34 under the long-term agreement.

Action

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Walker that insurance premium of £2,701.34 be paid

Resolved

Clerk

c) purchase of new flag for commemorative events

Residents who fly a flag at the War Memorial on official occasions had requested a new flag. A hand stitched flag would cost around £50 and a cheaper flag around £25.

Proposed by Cllr. R. Worker, seconded by Cllr. Bays that £50 be allocated for a new flag. Monies to be taken from the War Memorial maintenance budget

Resolved

Clerk

d) installation of defibrillator cabinet

One contractor had quoted £125 + VAT to remove & dispose of the old cabinet and fit and reconnect the new cabinet to the electricity supply. Others had not quoted.

Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. T. Saunders that quotation for £125 + VAT be accepted

Resolved

Clerk

e) completion of 2023/24 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.

f) special area charges

Bedford BC had commissioned a review of Special Expenses to ensure that residents in parished areas do not pay twice for the same service. Clerk had circulated a draft return.

Proposed by Cllr. Bays, seconded by Cllr. Jones that return be forwarded

Resolved

Clerk

g) allotment rent 2025

Allotment rents were increased to £18 for a half plot and £36 for a full plot in 2020/21. and had remained at that level since. Council currently had three names on the waiting list.

Proposed by Cllr. R. Worker, seconded by Cllr. Abbott that rents be increased to £40 for a full plot and £20 for a half plot in October 2025

Resolved

Clerk

23. **Date of Next Meeting:** 1st October 2024