

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 1st October 2024 in the Village Hall

PRESENT:

Cllr. Fardon (Chair), J. Abbott, P. Jones, P. Olney, Cllr. R. Saunders, T. Saunders, J. Walker, P. White, R. Worker, the Clerk, Mrs. Paice and 1 member of the public

1. Public Open Session:

Resident who had volunteered to produce the Directory confirmed that she was content to contact advertisers as well as publish the magazine but would need additional IT support – see item 12.

2. Apologies C Bays (personal), C. Worker, (personal)**3. Declarations of Interest:**

Cllr. Walker for item 13 as a relative of an allotment tenant. Chair for item 16 as a business associate of one of the companies interested in quoting.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd September 2024:

Resolved: to adopt the minutes.

5. Clerk's Report:

Highways – the path between Grenidge Way and Dewlands was still flooding and Clerk had asked Highways to investigate again. Residents in Pavenham Road were also concerned about flooding and Clerk had asked Highways to clear the drains. Clerk had requested Bedford BC cut back the overgrown footway in Church Lane and remove vegetation left in the alleyway between Ruffs Furze and Dewlands. Oakley Road, Clapham would be closed during the daytime 28-30.10.24. and Clerk had requested a road closure for Remembrance Sunday.

Trees – broken branch in Lincroft and overhanging tree on green in Grenidge Way reported to Bedford BC. No update on the visibility safety assessment for the trees near Lovell Road bridge.

Hedge planting – CPRE was seeking volunteers to help plant the hedge in Riverside Meadow. Information posted on the website and Scouts, Cubs, Brownies & Rainbows notified. Scouts, Cubs and Brownies were interested in helping.

Speed Watch – nil returns for events 09.09.24. in Reynes Drive, 16.09.24. in Highfield Road 40mph zone and 24.09.24. in High Street. Reported to police

Litter Pick – Event to take place Saturday 12.10.24. from 10.00am to 12 noon. OSSC had volunteered to host and provide a hot drink and roll to all participant and Council thanked them. Event had been advertised on the website/FB & noticeboards and Scouts/Cubs, Brownies/Rainbows, ATC and Lincroft School had been notified. Brownies had confirmed they would be attending. Police had been informed of the event and would attend if anyone available.

Litter bins – bins were not emptied w/c 02.09.24. in Riverside Meadow, Pavenham Road, by the bus stop in Station Road and inside and at the end of the play area. The bin on the Green was also left open and rubbish around it. Bins all emptied w/c 16.09.24. but rubbish left in the one by Riverside and two cabinets left open. Pavenham Road bin was left in pieces after emptying w/c 30.09.24. Reported to Bedford BC who had advised that the problems will be dealt with

Quiz – no quiz in August and profit for September quiz was £164.68

6. **Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd September 2024** : none

Action

7. **Reports:**

Action

a) **ORA Meeting 17.09.24**

Cllr. T. Saunders and Cllr. Jones attended. ORA reported that large sums of money had been spent over the summer on football pitch restoration and cutting back trees which had been co-ordinated with neighbours. One complaint was received from a neighbour about bottles being thrown over the hedge onto his drive. The bottles were not sold at OSSC and Chair had replied to the neighbour and had received a positive response. Membership was at a record high and the car club had their final meet of the year on 29.09.24. The boules box had been replaced. Applications for tickets for the fireworks display would ask if applicants were walking or parking to ascertain parking requirements for future years. The event was limited to 2000 people and parking was available at Lincroft School. A small Halloween event would be held for members children. Poker club was growing and was concerned about damage to tables being stored outside. ORA was considering long term storage generally. AFC Oakley had 43 teams this year with 548 players from U6-U18 plus a men's and a veteran's team. Structural work inside the changing rooms had cost approximately £6,000. A Christmas fete and market would be held on 14.12.24. at OSSC and they would be seeking a grant from Council towards the cost of the event. Council had nothing to report.

b) **Network Meeting 26.09.24.**

Cllr. Jones reported that the Police & Crime Commissioner gave a presentation on his duties to set police strategy and the budget and on the crime plan for his next four years in office. Local police hoped to have another officer joining them shortly and they should be contacted for local problems but residents should use 999 for serious crime and 101 for less serious matters. Coffee with a Cop events had been successful but if there was an emergency they sometimes had to cancel at the last minute. There was a presentation on the PREVENT programme to protect vulnerable people from extremism and slides would be forwarded.

Bedford BC offered to circulate details of local events on their share platform. The Mayor discussed the current work to try and clear flood water especially from the A421. Universal Studios was in negotiation with the Government and it was hoped Government would support the project. Discussions had been held with the new CEO of EWR and consultations would take place once the Government had decided to give the go ahead to the project. The Mayor was happy to join a Parish Council meeting if Councils wished. Council agreed to invite him to the January meeting.

A question was asked about charging for green bins and the Mayor advised that Bedford BC was considering but although they were short of money, they were hoping to raise funds elsewhere. The trial to allow glass in recycling bins was working well and paying its way. A flood forum was to be held on 03.10.24. (now postponed as the Flood Team was still working on current flooding problems) and Highways was content to discuss issues with parishes to try and resolve. Next meeting 9th January 2025

8. East West Rail (EWR):

Clerk had forwarded Council's concerns about the removal of the Britannia Road car park during EWR construction to EWR, Bedford Hospital and Mr. Yasin MP. EWR had advised that the drawings published online were from 2022 and did not represent the current plans for the construction scheme. Bedford Hospital had commented that they lease the Britannia Road and other car parks from Network Rail and if/when these were taken back they would seek alternative nearby parking and/or build a multi-story car park onsite. Mr. Yasin MP had written to the Chief Executive of Bedfordshire Hospitals for more clarity on the situation and was seeking another meeting with David Hughes, EWR CEO to discuss this and other matters. Council agreed to write to Mr. Fuller MP too. No date yet for another Local Representatives' Group meeting. Cllr. Walker reported that the CEO would be walking the route w/c 21.10.24. Cllr. Jones noted that EWR wanted to survey the land by the river in Clapham but she had advised them that it was currently flooded.

Action

Clerk

9. Police Report:

There were 3 reported crimes in August, 1 trafficking of drugs, 1 malicious communications offence & 1 residential burglary and 3 in the first half of September, 2 assaults with injury and 1 controlling or coercive behaviour offence.

Next Coffee with a Cop event to be held 26.10.24. at Milton Ernest Garden Centre and Police & Crime Commissioner was holding a Rural Crime Event in conjunction with the NFU on 06.11.24.

Action

OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL 01.10.24.

4.

10. Play Areas:

Action

The wet pour under the climbing frame on the Green had been damaged. Contractor had quoted £285.00 + VAT to repair provided the hole did not get bigger

Proposed by Cllr. Walker, seconded by Cllr. Jones that quotations for £285 + VAT be accepted

Resolved

Clerk

11. Replacement Bins:

Action

Bedford BC was content to install a jubilee bin on the Green, as this bin was often overfull and move the existing plaza bin on the Green to Highfield Road at a cost of £817.15 + VAT. Cllr. Abbott had confirmed that he had Ward Funds available to cover the cost and Clerk had asked Bedford BC to go ahead. Cllr. White noted that the bin had been replaced by a used, rusting bin which was not a jubilee bin. Clerk to pursue with Bedford BC.

Bedford BC had quoted £450 + VAT to supply and install a new plaza bin to replace the small blue bin at Lovell Road/Parrott Close bus stop

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. T. Saunders that quotations for £450 + VAT be accepted

Resolved

Clerk

Clerk

12. Village Directory:

Action

Resident who had volunteered to produce the Directory advised that she had received all the paperwork from Cllr. C. Worker but had questions on the spreadsheet. Resident to contact Clerk to resolve. She would also need a Microsoft licence at a cost of £80 p.a.

Proposed by Cllr. White, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that Council pay for the licence

Resolved

Chair confirmed that resident could change the layout if she wished and thanked her for volunteering.

Clerk

Clerk

13. Allotments:

Action

Clerk was awaiting confirmation from allotment manager of the size of skip needed as he was considering using some of the fly tipped waste to mulch the orchard trees. Council to consider again once the size of skip decided. A lock had been fitted to the gate.

Clerk

14. Bollards on the Green:

Cllr. Jones had reported that one bollard on the Green was damaged. Contractor had inspected and advised that four bollards needed replacing and had quoted £790 + VAT to carry out the work. Other contractors had not quoted.

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. R. Worker that quotations for £790 + VAT be accepted

Resolved

Clerk

15. Replacement Trees:

Trees in Parsonage Close and on the Green that had died or fallen needed replacing. Clerk noted that native trees supporting wildlife would cost from £1.25 for 40 – 60cm up to £60 for 210+cm. Council discussed whether new trees were needed on the Green and Clerk to ask advice from the contractor managing Riverside and Brockwell Meadows. Chair would also ask residents if they wanted new trees in her next Newsletter article. Council had agreed to replace the Parsonage Close tree and Clerk to seek advice on suitable varieties.

Action

Clerk
Chair
Clerk

16. Grass Cutting 2025:

Current contract specified sixteen cuts per season, approximately two weekly from March to October; the length of grass after cutting to be between 2.5 and 5 cm; areas around obstructions to be strimmed, avoiding damage to trees etc; spray not to be used and grass to be blown/swept from footways on every cut. Clerk noted that significant extra monies would likely be needed for additional cuts. Council was content with current contract. Clerk to seek quotations and Council to discuss again in November.

Action

Clerk

17. Flood Action Group:

During recent flooding in Oakley, Clapham PC had helped out with sandbags and had suggested a joint Flood Group and that Oakley purchase their own sandbags. Clerk noted that emergency services now used aqua sacks which could be stored flat. Cllr. Walker suggested buying empty sacks and sand and offered to fund from her Ward Fund. Cllr. R. Saunders offered to store sacks and Cllr. White to discuss siting a locked sand bin at the Village Hall with the Village Hall Committee.

Action

PW

Council agreed to join a Flood Group with Clapham and Cllr. Walker would advise Clapham PC and advertise in the next Newsletter asking any residents if they wished to join.

JW

Chair noted that the Borough Flood Team had worked very effectively during the recent flooding and Clerk to thank them.

Clerk

Councillors suggested that dredging the river would help to avoid future problems but Environment Agency policy was not to do so as it adversely impacted wildlife and slowed the flow of rivers.

Cllr. R. Saunders noted that the electronic flood signs were still not working and Cllr. Walker advised that the batteries were not functioning and Bedford BC was considering changing them to mains power.

18. Website:

Resident had recently asked that a charity cycle ride with a request for donations be posted on the website. This was not something Council currently did and resident had been informed. Website manager had advised that he did not receive these types of requests. Council might need to know or check if requests were genuine and agreed not to pursue as residents could publicise events on social media.

Action

<p>19. <u>Christmas Lights:</u> Council noted that lights would be switched on at 5.00pm on Saturday 30.11.24, not 07.12.24. as advertised in the Newsletter. Contractor had been advised.</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p>
<p>20 <u>Highway Matters:</u> Cllr. White had received complaints about a tree on Reynes Drive green overhanging neighbouring property. Clerk noted that the trees on Reynes Drive Green would be trimmed as part of the works agreed in September. Tree in Copthorne Close had yet to be trimmed and Clerk to remind Bedford BC. Cllr. T. Saunders noted that the top of Westfield Road had flooded and Clerk to ask Bedford BC to clear the drains. Cllr. Walker advised that there was a programme for drain clearance but urgent blockages could be cleared immediately. Councillors noted that there was now more debris against the twin bridges and residents were suggesting clearing it themselves. Cllr. Walker advised that Bedford BC was still awaiting a date for the work from the contractors but would chase again. Cllr. Walker advised that there was no progress with Network Rail on flooding under Lovell Road bridge and Bedford BC was considering buying the raised footway, which was currently rented, buying pumps and bypassing Network Rail land.</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>JW</p>
<p>21. <u>Borough Council Report:</u> Cllr. Walker reported that the Executive had recommended Full Council adopt Bedford BC’s new Corporate Plan 2024/25 – 2027/28 and had voted against the current Bedford Bid scheme because of concerns about its ability to make a difference to the town centre’s vitality and sustainability. A new education strategy had been launched and the event was well attended. Bedford BC KS2 results had improved last year from 149/151 to 135/151 authorities. Cllr. Abbott added that the proposal to introduce charges for Telecare services had been dropped and a flood recovery programme was being put together. Bedford BC was seeking information from residents who had been flooded to build a picture of the nature of flooding events in the Borough. More number 25 buses were running and Bedford Beer Festival began 02.10.24.</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p>
<p>22. <u>Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:</u> Decisions notified since Council meeting – 3rd September 2024 Application 24/01435/TPO - crown reduce ash tree at Lincroft Academy No. Parish No objection Comments: Decision/Date: Permission 06.09.24.</p>	

Application No. **24/00915/FUL** - single storey side extension plus retention of rooflights, decking, 2 sheds and polytunnel at Courtyard Barn, The Drive

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 20.09.24.

Application No. **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:

Decision/Date: Permission 20.09.24.

Parish **24/01093/FUL** - single storey front extension at 10 Dewlands

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 25.09.24.

Applications received since Council meeting – 3rd September 2024

Application No. **a) 24/01681/FUL** - single storey rear extension and new front porch at 30 Dewlands

Parish No objection

Comments

Application No. **b) 24/01706/FUL** - two storey side extension and front porch at 13 Church Lane

Parish No objection

Comments

Application No. **c) 24/01826/TPO** – removal of 4 low branches of oak over garage & pruning of remaining crown at Archway Westfield Road

Parish No objection

Comments

23. Correspondence:

a) Bedford BC Survey on Part Night Lighting

Bedford BC had asked for comments on the effect of turning off streetlights at night. Council agreed that most residents were content and traffic accidents had not increased as a result. Council would prefer part time lights for new developments so the scheme was the same in the whole village but would not want part time lights on A roads.

Action

b) Bedford BC consultation on Statement of Gambling Licensing Principles

Bedford BC had advised that no issues had been brought to the attention of the Authority that would require major changes to the policy and the changes were mostly updating contact details. Council had no comments.

24. Finance Matters:Action**a) accounts to pay****Income and balances:**

NatWest Bank - Current account balance at 31.08.24.	£39,022.73
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 31.08.24.	£2,401.64
Nationwide - Savings Bond	£63,147.25
Hampshire Trust - Savings Bond	£85,013.20

Received since last meeting:

O for Coffee	Directory	70.00
Bellringers	Directory	20.00
OMC	Directory	20.00
ATC	Directory	20.00
Bedfordia	Directory	70.00
Hutson P	Allotment rent	42.30
Jackson J	Allotment rent	21.15
Hutson C	Allotment rent	21.15
Munro	Allotment rent	21.15
Kilby	Allotment rent	21.15
Oakley Build.	Newsletter advertising 2023	432.00
		29,100.0
Bedford BC	Precept - second payment	0
Worker	September quiz	220.68
NatWest	Interest	2.95
	Total	30,082.53

Payments Already**Chq.****Made:****No.**

Old School	Rent for upper rooms September	153.83	s/o
Salaries	September payment	1,588.21	s/o
Villager Bus	S. 137 donation	450.00	1963
Bedford BC	2023 Election costs	1,538.86	1964
Bedfordshire Pension Fund	September payment	539.95	1965

Payments Made:

Forvis Mazars LLP	External audit fee	378.00	1966
CPM Playgrounds	Play equipment repairs	234.00	1967
V C Property	Replacing Village Hall defibrillator		
Maintenance	cabinet	150.00	1968
Village Hall	Hire of Committee Room 01.10.24.	22.50	1969
	Total	£5,055.35	

b) cyber insurance renewal

Cyber insurance was due for renewal on 01.11.24. and Clerk was awaiting the renewal cost.

Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Jones that insurance premium be paid when received to avoid being uninsured, as it was due before the November meeting

Resolved

Action

Clerk

c) payroll provision

Payroll provider had advised that fees would need to increase in 2025/26 to £288.00 p.a. (currently £252.00) and contract amended so that a one off £10 fee would be charged for new starters added during the year, submission of P11D after year end would charged at £10 per employee, submission of declaration of compliance to the pensions regulator would be charged at £10 per submission and requests to roll back and re-run a completed payroll at £10 per re-run. Clerk noted that other quotations received in 2021 were all in excess of £288p.a.

Proposed by Cllr. R. Worker, seconded by Cllr. Abbott that quotation for £288.00 be accepted and new contract signed

Resolved

Clerk

d) half yearly budget review

Receipt and payment figures had been circulated. Income was as budgeted except the VAT refund was slightly more than expected and bank interest from 2023 was higher than anticipated. Expenditure was as expected except that pension contributions and rent for the playing field were higher than expected. 2023 election costs were budgeted in contingencies as the cost was unknown until September 2024.

e) Clerk's expenses

Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Walker that expenses of £129.02 for the period July to September 2024 be paid

Resolved

25. **Date of Next Meeting:** 5th November 2024