

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024 in the Village Hall

**PRESENT:**

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

**1. Public Open Session:**

Allotment manger advised that the working party on 27.10.24.had tidied the site and trimmed the hedges. Manager had turned the water off, repaired the taps and fitted a lock to the gate. Tenants would dispose of the bird waste in black bins and manure would be delivered to individual tenants not centrally in future. There were issues with the ash tree in the hedge, trees in The Furlong bund, the ditch and the orchard fence – see item 11. Manager thanked Council for their support.

**2. Apologies P. White (illness)****3. Declarations of Interest:**

Cllr. Walker for item 11 as a relative of an allotment tenant. Cllr. R. Worker for item 13 as quiz master and 15c) as a Speed Watch member

**4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024:**

**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes.

**5. Clerk's Report:**

Highways – UK Power Networks removed a wooden bollard and driven over the Green leaving tracks, to access properties in Grenidge Way. Clerk contacted UK Power Networks who advised that they have a right of access but will reinstate when work is completed. Bedford BC had advised that Highways was not responsible for the overgrown footway in Church Lane. Clerk has reminded them that the grass cutting agreement only covers mowing. Clerk had asked Highways to clear the drain at the top of Westfield Road. Apples had been removed from the tree on the Green by the same individual on two occasions and reported to police. Bedford BC had confirmed the diversion of Bridleway 13 in Milton Ernest and part of Bridleway 7 in Oakley.

Trees – resident was concerned that too little had been trimmed off trees on the small Grenidge Way green Clerk had asked Bedford BC to consider thinning them further. Another resident was concerned that trees in Ruffs Furze would drop branches onto parked vehicles and Clerk had asked Bedford BC to inspect again and consider trimming.

Speed Watch – nil returns for events 09.10.24. in Pavenham Road and 17.10.24. in Reynes Drive. Reported to police

Litter Pick – the event was successful with 16 sacks of rubbish collected. Clerk had thanked OSSC for hosting and providing refreshments and Brownies, ATC and non-Council resident for attending

Litter bins – all bins were emptied during October

Remembrance - Service would be held at the War Memorial at 10.50am on 10.11.24. and Clerk had applied to Bedford BC for the usual road closure at the crossroads. Police had advised that that they would not be able to provide a presence at the Oakley event this year. Clerk had thanked volunteer for tidying the War Memorial.

Quiz – profit for October quiz was £193.00

**6. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 1st October 2024**  
none

Action

**7. East West Rail (EWR):**

Government had confirmed their support for EWR and EWR would be running a non-statutory consultation from 14.11.24. to 24.01.25. Details at [www.eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024](http://www.eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024) In person events would be held in Bedford on 30.11.24. and 09.12.24. and at Wilden on 11.12.24. The route would be partially electrified but no further information from CEO’s walking of the route.

Mr. Fuller MP had received a response from EWR about hospital parking advising that the current proposals for the relocation of the Bedford St Johns station and track re-alignment would result in the loss of car parking in the Britannia Road and Melbourne Street car parks. However, EWR was committed to replacing any parking loss on a like-for-like basis and would provide their latest mitigation proposal at the next round of consultation.

Clerk to ask EWR where a multi storey car park would be sited.

Action

Clerk

**8. Police Report:**

There were 3 reported crimes in September, 1 trafficking of drugs, 1 malicious communications offence & 1 residential burglary and 3 in October, 1 assault, 1 malicious communications offence and 1 public fear offence. Coffee with a Cop event 26.10.24. at Milton Ernest Garden Centre was cancelled.

Action

**9. Play Areas:**

The wet pour under the climbing frame on the Green had been repaired. Annual inspection had indicated that at The Furlong, weeds/litter needed removing from dog grids, the seat needed repainting, moss needed removing from the multiplay & the swing and the swing connectors tightening. Fixings needed tightening on the multiplay and the tree needed raising above the equipment.

Action

On the Green, the slide top bar needed replacing. Algae/moss needed removing from the ship multiplay, log climber and around the slide and weeds/litter from dog grids. Ground needed reinstating around seats, gate closing needed adjusting, fixings were loose on the log climber, climbing frame, MUGA, ship multiplay and seesaw and the seesaw spring cover needed replacing. Bolt/post covers needed replacing on the log climber, group swing and silver multiplay and shackles on the swings. Paintwork needed treating on the multiplay and ship multiplay and graffiti removing from the multiplay and zip wire. Grass around the zip wire needed re-seeding. MUGA surfacing needed repairing around the posts and gaps were beginning to open in the wetpour surfacing around several items.

Contractor had quoted £515 + VAT to carry out repairs. Dog grids at The Furlong were not needed and were very slippery when wet. Contractor had quoted an additional £140 + VAT to clean these or £480 + VAT to remove and fill with soil and turf. Contractor was still awaiting a price for the replacement bar for the slide. Contractor advised that the MUGA posts had never had tarmac around them, they had been concreted and the concrete top had worn away over time. He suggested using an exterior floor screed to make flush with the tarmac and was investigating. Painting and grass seeding would need to be carried out in the Spring.

Proposed by Cllr. Bays, seconded by Cllr. Jones that quotations for £515.00 and £480.00 + VAT be accepted

**Resolved**

Cllr. Walker suggested that removal of the dog grids be staggered to allow the grass to grow and Council agreed.

Clerk

Clerk

**10. Replacement Bins:**

A large bin had now been installed on Grange Green in place of the dog bin but the bin at Reynes Drive/Burleigh Place was still not the jubilee bin Council ordered. Clerk had pursued with Bedford BC and been told that jubilee bins were currently out of stock but one would be installed when available.

Action

Clerk

**11. Allotments:**

Only one skip company would remove bird waste at a cost of £500 + VAT. Allotment tenants had agreed that this was too expensive and had suggested an incinerator instead. They were considering options.

Tenants had also requested that the trees on the allotment side of the Furlong and the ash tree in the hedge at the entrance be trimmed. Clerk had requested quotations and awaiting responses. Council to consider again in December. The fence between the allotments and orchard had rotted away and the allotment manager suggested removing it. Council agreed. The allotment ditch was overgrown and Clerk to obtain quotations to clear.

Action

Clerk

Clerk

**12. Replacement Trees:**

Clerk had discussed replacement trees for Parsonage Close and the Green with the contractor managing Riverside and Brockwell Meadows and he had suggested three oak trees for the Green and a field maple for Parsonage Close. He suggested small whips/trees as they tend to grow quicker and are less likely to be vandalised. If trees were mulched and the grass around them left to grow long they should be avoided by the grass cutters. Clerk noted that English oaks and field maples would cost £1.25 each for 40 – 60cm trees. Council agreed that 90cm trees at a cost of £1.65 each would survive better and Clerk to order three oaks. Cllr. C. Worker noted that the remaining tree in Parsonage Close was not thriving and the one that had died was close to houses, so Council agreed not to replace. Cllr. Jones volunteered water bags for the new trees and Council thanked her.

Action

Clerk

**13. Quiz Profit Donations:**

Council had agreed to donate some of the quiz profits to the Day Centre and the home for disabled residents in the High Street. Cllr. R. Worker suggested that funds be given for their Christmas lunches. Total profit at 31.10.24. was £1,349.11

Proposed by Cllr. R. Worker, seconded by Cllr. Walker that £150.00 be donated to each group

**Resolved** – S. 137 donation

Cllr. R. Worker to write an article in the Newsletter about the donations and Council thanked him and Cllr. C. Worker for running the quizzes.

Action

Clerk

RW

**14. Council 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

**15. Highway Matters:**

**a) clearing Pavenham Road ditch**

Bedford BC had asked Council to clear Pavenham Road ditch at The Furlong as Land Registry documents indicated that the ditch is on Council land. Clerk had requested quotations and received one for £770 + VAT to strim greenery along length of ditch, remove litter, dig out build-up of mud/soil to improve water flow and remove waste. Cllr. Abbott offered to reimburse the cost from his Ward Fund and Council thanked him.

Action

JA

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Walker that quotation for £770.00 + VAT be accepted but work be carried out with the allotment ditch clearance  
**Resolved**

**b) removal of trees adjacent to twin bridges**

Bedford BC had asked Council remove trees adjacent to twin bridges as roots would damage the structure of the bridges. The land transfer document showed that land transferred to Council excluded the piece by the bridge but it was shown as parish land on the Land Registry register. Clerk had requested quotations to remove and was awaiting responses. Cllr. R. Saunders noted that English Heritage would need to be contacted about any works that might impinge on the bridge and Clerk to pursue with Bedford BC.

Clerk

**c) replacement Speed Watch signs**

Several Speed Watch signs had disappeared from lamp posts and the Speed Watch Team had requested 4 replacement signs. Police no longer provided signs but they were available from Bedford BC at a cost £95 + VAT each. Clerk noted that monies would need to be taken from the contingency budget.

Chair commented that Council appreciated the work of the Speed Watch team but there were already speed camera signs and more signs were not needed in the village.

Proposed by Chair, seconded by Cllr. Jones that no signs be purchased

**Resolved** with 1 abstention

Clerk confirmed that she had not been contacted by Bedford BC about the new poles and brackets for Speed Watch and Cllrs. Abbott & Walker to pursue.

Clerk

JA/JW

Cllr. R. Saunders asked about progress on getting the flood signs working again. Cllr. Walker advised that the Borough was working towards running them from the mains in future so was not replacing the batteries in the meantime.

**16. Borough Council Report:**

Cllr. Abbott reported that the Local Nature Recovery Survey closed on 06.11.24. and the Christmas Lights event would be held in Bedford on 23.11.24. A “super authority” comprising Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire was being considered so Bedford BC might become a small part of a larger authority. A three week SEND inspection had begun 05.11.24. The Corporate Plan had been sent back to the Executive to be reformulated and would be discussed at the next Full Council on 27.11.24. The purchase of the former Lloyds Bank building had been called in because of concerns about the cost, given that it was in a poor state of repair.

Cllr. Walker commented that if the Universal project proceeded commercial property prices were expected to rise and so the Borough wanted to purchase the Lloyds site as soon as possible.

Action

It was intended to extend the Corn Exchange, relocate the library to the ground floor of Beales/Debenhams and use the remaining space for leisure/retail with accommodation above. Stewartby brick works had been purchased by a developer.

Following the explosion at Cleat Hill, Kimbolton Road was likely to remain closed for several more weeks. It was not known how far the methane seam extended so residents could not return to their properties. They were staying in hotels or with relatives/friends and work spaces had been set up in Borough Hall for those who worked from home. Additional transport had also been provided to take students to school. Bedford BC had applied for emergency funding from Government to cover these costs.

**17. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:**

**Decisions notified since Council meeting – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024**

Application No. **24/01681/FUL** - single storey rear extension and new front porch at 30 Dewlands  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments:  
 Decision/Date: Permission 22.10.24.

Application No. **24/01559/TPO** - prune various trees at the Old School  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments:  
 Decision/Date: Permission 23.10.24.

Application No. **24/01561/TPO** - reduce or fell various trees in Judges Spinney  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments:  
 Decision/Date: Permission 23.10.24.

Clerk noted that lawful development certificates had been issued confirming that works at Oakview, Westfield Road and 6 High Street did not require planning permission.

**Applications received since Council meeting – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024**

Application No. **a) 24/01861/TPO** – pruning of horse chestnut and maple at Tamarind, Westfield Road  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments

Application No. **b) 24/01987/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

**18. Correspondence:** noneAction**19. Finance Matters:**Action**a) accounts to pay****Income and balances:**

NatWest Bank - Current account balance at 31.10.24.	£36,916.30
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 31.10.24.	£2,404.50
Nationwide - Savings Bond	£63,147.25
Hampshire Trust - Savings Bond	£85,013.20

**Received since last meeting:**

Gilbert	Allotment rent	21.15
Taylor	Allotment rent	42.30
Skipper	Allotment rent	42.30
Sellars	Allotment rent	21.15
Percival	Allotment rent	42.30
Nicholas	Allotment rent	42.30
Seager	Allotment rent	42.30
Davis	Allotment rent	21.15
Morton	Allotment rent	21.15
Bearcroft-Young	Allotment rent	78.30
Malodobry	Allotment rent	21.15
Jackson	Allotment rent	63.45
Chalker	Allotment rent	21.15
Cox	Allotment rent	42.30
Preece	Allotment rent	21.15
Rooney	Allotment rent	21.15
Hamshere	Allotment rent	21.15
Marshall	Allotment rent	42.30
Elliott	Allotment rent	42.30
Elsby	Allotment rent	21.25
Osmond	Allotment rent	21.25
Miles	Allotment rent	42.30
Hull	Allotment rent	42.30
Weston	Allotment rent	21.15

Select Travel	Newsletter advertising	180.00
At Your Side	Newsletter advertising	432.00
Young	Newsletter advertising	20.00
Hair Occasions	Newsletter advertising	432.00
Oakley IT	Newsletter advertising	216.00
NAO Cattery	Newsletter advertising	54.00
NAO Cleaning	Newsletter advertising	54.00
O for Coffee	Newsletter advertising	144.00
Peacock	Newsletter advertising	216.00
Oakley Angels	Newsletter advertising	144.00
Testa	Newsletter advertising	108.00
Lane & Holmes	Newsletter advertising	432.00
Worker	October Quiz	249.00
NatWest	Interest	2.86
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,502.61</b>

**Payments Already Made:**

			<b>Chq. No.</b>
Old School	Rent for upper rooms October	153.83	s/o
Salaries	October payment	1,588.21	s/o
Gallagher	Cyber insurance renewal	334.88	1970
Bedfordshire Pension Fund	October payment	539.95	1971

**Payments Made:**

Bedford BC	Grass cutting payment Q2	2,714.89	1972
CPM Playgrounds	Repairing wetpour	342.00	1973
Play Inspection Company	Annual inspection	324.90	1974
SLCC	Membership renewal	190.00	1975
Oakley Village Hall	Hire of Hall 20.09.24. & 18.10.24. & Committee Room 05.11.24.	134.50	1976
Paice	Expenses July - September	129.02	1977
Phillips	Replacement flag	71.46	1978
<b>Total</b>		<b>£6,523.64</b>	

Clerk noted that the cost of the flag had increased by £9.55 and Cllr. Abbott volunteered to donate the balance. Council thanked him.

JA

**b) Clerks' 2024 pay award**

National pay award for 2024/25 had been agreed. £14,909.44 p.a. was the new rate for scale point 30 for 14 hours p.w.

Action



Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Jones that Clerk’s salary be increased to £14,909.44 p.a. for 14 hours p.w. w.e.f. 01.04.24. in line with National pay award

**Resolved**

Clerk

**c) new projects 2025/26**

Clerk noted that Bedford BC had agreed that CIL monies from the developers of Parrott Close could be ring fenced until June 2025 to contribute to a path along Highfield Road if not provided by the developers of the Clapham site. Cllr. Walker confirmed that there had been no progress with the Clapham developers and Council agreed to ask Bedford BC for an extension to 2026.

Cllr. Walker suggested new play equipment to replace the post and chain balance on the Green which had been removed and Cllr. Bays suggested a new seat for the fenced play area.

Chair noted that the Youth Club needed new staff members and Cllr. Walker advised that Clapham was using 4YP.

Clerk

Clerk

Chair

**20. Date of Next Meeting: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024**