

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025 in the Village Hall

**PRESENT:**

Cllr. Fardon (Chair), J. Abbott, 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** C Bays (illness), P. White (personal)
3. **Declarations of Interest:** none
4. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024:**  
**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes.

**5. Clerk's Report:**

**Highways** – verges in Lincroft damaged by vehicles driving over them, pothole in Reynes Drive and the drain in Ruffs Furze alleyway blocked with cement had been reported to Bedford BC. The Borough would prosecute the offender who blocked the drain if they could trace them. Clerk had asked again about re-painting white lines on the bends in Church Lane and the request to remove wet slippery leaves on Church Lane footway had been passed to the street cleansing team for action. Bedford BC was waiting for UKPN to reconnect the lamp column at the junction of Lovell Road and the Old School.

**Trees** – Historic England had advised that no site visit was necessary for removal of trees by the twin bridges but they should only be felled to ground level or above and care should be taken to avoid causing accidental damage to the structure and ground disturbance. Contractor had been informed. Trees had been felled and left on Pavenham Road footway by Stafford Bridge, completely blocking it. Reported to Bedford BC and chased. Bedford BC had confirmed that hedges would be cut after Christmas.

**Speed Watch** – nil return for events 05.12.24. in Reynes Drive and 17.12.24. in Pavenham Road. Arwyn Hughes, one of the founder members of Speed Watch, had sadly passed away and Council expressed their condolences to his family and friends.

**Litter bins** – all bins were emptied during December

**Quiz** – profit for December was £462.40 including a donation for raffle prizes

**Christmas Lights** – new lights at the crossroads had been well received. Bulbs had failed on several occasions at the Church and Council thanked Cllr. White for re-setting them. Contractor had advised that some old bulbs might need to be replaced and he would audit them once they were removed.



Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Jones that the quotation for £375 + VAT be accepted  
**Resolved**

Clerk

**12. Play Area Inspection Reports:**

Action

Most of the items found in the December quarterly inspection had already been picked up in the annual inspection. Contractor had quoted £355 + VAT to carry out repairs not agreed at the November meeting, including £180 + VAT for the replacement slide bar. Seats could not be painted nor tarmac repaired until Spring.

Inspection advised that group swing hanger needed dismantling and checking and zip wire cable checking.

Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. Walker that the quotation for £355 + VAT be accepted

**Resolved**

Clerk

**13. Highway Matters:**

Action

**improvement of footway between Lovell Road and Church**

Chair had suggested improvement to the footway between Lovell Road and the Church be included in the 2025/26 budget. Cllr. Walker noted that Ward Funds were still available and could be used. Council agreed that Bedford BC should be asked to trim the trees hard back and remove the grass encroaching onto the path. Cllrs. Abbott & Walker to pursue with Highways.

JA/JW

There was no progress on the flooding under Lovell Road bridge as Network Rail had not responded to the Borough's solicitor's letter. Once the development at Clapham began the footway would be upgraded but, in the meantime, Bedford BC was considering installing a pump

Cllr. Abbott advised that Church Lane and Westfield Road had been swept and Highways was dealing with the overflowing drain in the High Street. He was also organising a village inspection.

JA

Cllr. R. Saunders was concerned about water on the road from the Stevington/Bromham turn to the bridges as there had been three accidents recently. Cllr. Abbott advised that all but one of the gullies had been cleared and CCTV would be used to investigate the problem with the remaining blocked drain. There might also be another Anglian Water leak.

**14. Borough Council Report:**

Action

Cllr. Abbott reported that Bedford BC had been awarded additional monies for buses so proposed cuts had been reversed. A review of bus routes in North Bedfordshire would be carried out in February so there might be changes to services as a result. Full Council was meeting 15.01.25. to agree the capital programme. Car parking charges would increase by 10% but free parking would continue on Sundays and in Allhallows and Queen Street car parks.

Police had opened a hub in the bus station and changes had been made to the Executive. Cllr. Weir would take over as Finance Portfolio Holder, Cllr. Gribble would move to Environment, Highways & Transport and Cllr. Foster would take on the new Corporate Services Portfolio. A new regional authority was being discussed and the Deputy Mayor was representing Bedford BC in the discussions see [Browse meetings - South Midlands Authorities Board | Milton Keynes City Council](#)

Cllr. Walker added that there had been delays to the opening of the new Kempston School as the Trust who would run it had yet to take over but it would be open by 10.02.25. Demolition of the Robert Bruce School had begun but had to be done in sections because of bats in the building. BPHA housing would be built on the area not used by the new school. All but two families had moved back into their homes at Cleat Hill and all had gas monitors. The moratorium on ground source heat pumps continued and EWR test drilling had been halted. The Flood Group Forum had been rescheduled for 12.02.25. and Cllr. Jones volunteered to attend.

PJ

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

**Decisions notified since Council meeting – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024**

Application No. **23/02730/FUL & 23/02731/LBC** - demolition of existing rear lean to single storey extension and erection of single storey rear extension. Internal modification works to the ground and first floor at 29 Station Road

Parish: No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 20.12.24.

Parish: **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

Comments:

Decision/Date: No objection  
Permission 23.12.24. (CIL liable)

**Applications received since Council meeting – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024: none**

**16. Correspondence:**

**Bedford BC Public Spaces Protection Orders for dog control**

Bedford BC was considering extending Public Spaces Protection Orders for dog control for a further three years to 2028 and had asked if parishes would like any new areas included. There were currently no sites in Oakley but the young children’s play areas were fenced and dogs not allowed on the Green. Clerk noted that any new exclusion sites would need to be enclosed. Dogs On Leads Orders could be requested for open spaces but there was already a notice on the playing field. Council agreed that no new orders were needed in Oakley.

Action

Clerk

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

NatWest Bank - Current account balance at 31.12.24.	£27,393.34
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 31.12.24.	£2,409.93
Nationwide - Savings Bond	£63,147.25
Hampshire Trust - Savings Bond	£85,013.20

**Received since last meeting:**

Walker	Allotment rent	42.30
Hyden	Allotment rent	20.00
Gallagher	Allotment rent	42.30
Kearney	Allotment rent	15.00
Worker	December Quiz	518.40
Priory Medical	Directory Advertising	70.00
Bays Media	Directory Advertising	25.00
NatWest	Interest	2.85
	<b>Total</b>	<b>735.85</b>

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

Old School	Rent for upper rooms December	153.83	s/o
Salaries	December payment	1,623.20	s/o
OSSC	S. 137 grant	500.00	1990
Bedfordshire Pension Fund	December payment	553.02	1991

**Payments Made:**

Christmas Decorators	2024 Christmas lights and new lights	5,871.60	1992
JDT Contracts	Works to Council trees	2,364.00	1993
CPM Playgrounds	Play area repairs	1,194.00	1994
HMRC	Quarterly PAYE	163.80	1995
Oakley Village Hall	Hire of Hall 15.11.24. and 13.12.24. for quiz and Committee Room 02.01.25. and 07.01.25.	142.00	1996
Mrs A E Paice	Expenses October – December	48.76	1997
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£12,614.21</b>	

Councillors were concerned about the continual failure of the Christmas lights at the Churchyard and Clerk to pursue with the contractor.

Clerk

**b) budget and precept 2025/26**

Clerk had circulated a draft budget. Expenditure in 2024/25 was likely to be as budgeted except that approximately £2,500 of the tree works budget, £3,000 of the contingency and miscellaneous monies and the £3,500 budgeted for Riverside, Linch Furlong and bus shelter repairs had also not been needed. The Finance Group suggested that the CIL money be re-allocated to the new projects for 2025/26 as the developers of the Clapham site were not prepared to assign monies for a new path along Highfield Road. Following the failure of some bulbs at the Churchyard over Christmas, they also suggested that replacement Christmas lights be funded from Directory income.

Income was expected to be as budgeted except that investment interest was expected to be more due to continuing high rates in 2024 and monies received from the quiz was more than expected. This was offset by an expected reduction in Newsletter and Directory advertising receipts as businesses had closed, moved or stopped advertising.

The Finance Group recommended two new items of expenditure be included - a new seat in the fenced play area on the Green (£600) and new play equipment (£4,000) including VAT. Improvements to Brockwell Meadow would continue to be funded from Directory income.

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that the amended budget be adopted and a precept of £61,100 be set for 2025/26

**Resolved**

Chair & Clerk signed the precept request

Clerk

**c) Clerk's expenses**

Proposed by Cllr. T. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Jones that expenses of £48.76 be paid for the period October to December 2024 be paid

**Resolved**

**18. Date of Next Meeting: 04.03.25.**