

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025 in the Village Hall

**PRESENT:**

Cllr. S. Fardon (Chair), C. Bays, P. Jones, R. Saunders, J. Walker, P. White, C. Worker, R. Worker, the Clerk, Mrs. Paice, the Mayor of Bedford Borough (part) and 0 members of the public

**1. Public Open Session:**

The Chair thanked the Mayor for attending. He reported that monies were particularly needed for Social Services and schools and a new budget had recently been agreed. School results were improving and he thanked Cllr. Walker for her work as Cabinet member for Valuing Families: Children's services. A flood defence reserve had been created, which could be accessed as needed and a Flood Alliance set up to obtain grant funding. Footfall in the Town Centre was increasing and the four hours free parking in some car parks was helping. The Borough was spending large amounts on pothole/road repairs throughout the Borough and cleaning and removing graffiti in the town. Old speed cameras were gradually being replaced and Council should apply to Highways for replacements. The Chair asked about the Borough's key priorities and the Mayor noted that it was the Universal Studios project and that he was working to reach an agreement. The Oxford/Cambridge Arc was still on the agenda and the Borough was meeting with other Council leaders and the Government. East West Rail (EWR) would change the North Bedfordshire area dramatically but he was committed to maintaining the rural identity of the northernmost part of the Borough. Councillors were concerned about access to the hospital during EWR construction and parking there and the Chair commented that a holistic approach to projects was needed. For example, there was no overview of the expansion of Lincroft School which considered the wider effect on the village and its residents. Councillors also asked about the solar farm at Twinwoods and the Mayor advised that it was likely to go ahead as it would be visible to very few residents.

**2. Apologies:** J. Abbott (illness), P. Olney (illness), T. Saunders (business)

**3. Declarations of Interest:**

Cllr. Bays for item 23 as a member of Cubs

**4. Minutes of the Meetings held on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025:**

**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes.

**5. Clerk's Report:**

Highways – further concerns were raised about the damage to verges in Lincroft and also in Dewlands and Grenidge Way. Clerk had reported to Bedford BC and suggested temporary posts in Lincroft to allow the verge to recover. Bedford BC had agreed that repairs were needed but due to weather and operational workloads verges would not be repaired until Spring. Parking Services could not take action against vehicles driving over the footway but vehicles parked on the verge in a no verge parking zone could be reported on 01234 718359 or text only 07553895403 and they would send someone as soon as they were available. Cllr. Walker confirmed that the Borough would send letters to those parking on the verge. Clerk had chased Highways to repair the path from Reynes Drive to Dewlands and reported potholes in the High Street, Station Road, Westfield Road and Highfield Road. Bedford BC was aware of the problem with the drain in the High Street and would investigate. They would also consider white lining in Church Lane but it could not be done on cold, wet or gritted roads so was usually done in Spring. Bollards in The Furlong would be installed now by the end of March as they were not a priority. Various roads would be closed for the Oakley 20 race 23.03.25.

Trees – Clerk had chased Bedford BC to remove trees blocking the footway at Stafford Bridge and they had now been cleared. Resident was concerned about trees at the entrance to Grenidge Way which had not been trimmed and were potentially under their property. Bedford BC had advised that they were not part of Highway and advised resident to consult Land Registry. Another resident was concerned about trees being cut down on the Green. Clerk explained that the trees were dead or damaged and new trees have recently been planted in Riverside and Brockwell Meadows.

Speed Watch – nil return for the event 05.02.25. in Station Road, 1 vehicle speeding during the event 13.02.25. in Lovell Road, 6 during the event 24.02.25. in Pavenham Road and 1 during the event 04.03.25. in Highfield Road. Reported to police.

Fly tipping - petrol dumped in the High Street bus shelter and plastic sheets dumped at the twin bridges had been reported to Bedford BC and removed.

Litter bins – one half full at Riverside was not emptied w/c 06.01.25, one half full in Station Road was not emptied w/c 20.01.25, one half full in High Street was not emptied w/c 03.02.2. and all emptied w/c 03.03.25.

Quiz – profit for January was £287.00 and for February £226.00.

Village planting – Trevor and Christine Turvey and Paul and Sheila Phillips, who had been looking after the Highfield Road sign border and the ring at the crossroads respectively for around 25 years were no longer able to do so. Clerk to thank them on behalf of Council. New volunteers would be needed to plant in May and Clerk to ask allotment holders.

Clerk



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| <p><b>12. <u>Replacement Litter Bin Liner:</u></b><br/>Bedford BC had advised that the liner in the bin at Riverside was damaged. A replacement liner had been purchased at a cost of £86.82+ VAT so that it would continue to be emptied and Council ratified the purchase. Cllr. White kindly offered to replace the liner.</p>  | <p><u>Action</u><br/><br/>PW</p>                   |
| <p><b>13. <u>CPRE Hedge Planting:</u></b><br/>Council had consulted the contractor and agreed to plant hedging in Riverside Meadow. A contract had been signed with CPRE and a planting day with Brownies organised on 15.03.25. Contractor had subsequently raised concerns that trees would need to be removed and the hedge would be too near the neighbour's fence and the sewer pipe. Cllrs. R. Saunders and R. Worker had met contractor 01.03.25. and agreed a site for the hedge which would be far enough away from the fence and sewer pipe.</p> | <p><u>Action</u></p>                               |
| <p><b>14. <u>Willow Vale Trees:</u></b><br/>Business in Willow Vale had asked for the dead trees in the hedge be removed and the overhang trimmed back.<br/>Clerk had received one quotation for £120.00 + VAT to prune a few dead trees, leaning over in the hedge and various limbs away from the access road. Contractor noted that the flail had removed most of the overhanging hedge. Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. R. Worker that quotation for £120.00 + VAT be accepted<br/><b>Resolved</b></p>                                | <p><u>Action</u><br/><br/>Clerk</p>                |
| <p><b>15. <u>VE Day Beacon:</u></b><br/>Beacons were being lighted nationally for VE Day 80 (08.05.25.). Cllr. Walker reported that Clapham had secured a new site at the top of Milton Hill and had registered it as an official site. They would be inviting Oakley for a joint event.</p>   | <p><u>Action</u></p>                               |
| <p><b>16. <u>Kindergarten Licence:</u></b><br/>2024/25 licence was due to expire on 04.04.25.<br/>Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Bays that licence be renewed for one year on the current terms and Clerk to issue new licence<br/><b>Resolved</b></p>   | <p><u>Action</u><br/><br/>Clerk</p>                |
| <p><b>17. <u>Highway Matters:</u></b><br/><b>Request for yellow lines in Lincroft</b><br/>Because of problems with school parking a resident had requested yellow lines on the bottom part of Lincroft. Council policy was only to request yellow lines where there was a safety issue and in this case did not consider that there was so agreed not to pursue.<br/>Cllr. White noted that the pothole repairs in the High Street were very poor and Clerk to pursue with Highways</p>  | <p><u>Action</u><br/><br/>Clerk<br/><br/>Clerk</p> |

**18. Borough Council Report:**Action

Cllr. Walker reported that the Borough Council was proposing to dim all streetlights, except those at junctions, by 30% as the reduction was imperceptible and it would reduce carbon emissions. Cllr. Jones had joined a demonstration tour on 28.02.25. and confirmed that 30%, 50% and 70% reductions were not visible but no very dark areas were visited. Cllr. Walker confirmed that Bedford BC was not proposing to dim more than 30% and that all lights could be adjusted centrally.

Trees and grass had been cut back in Church Lane and residents and Council were content with the work. Bedford BC was no longer in the first wave of Councils to be considered for new regional authorities as there was disagreement about which Councils should be included. Work was ongoing on the Debenhams site and the Borough was still trying to find a meantime tenant. The part of the site off Silver Street had been refurbished and the Tourist Information Office, the box office for the Corn Exchange and a toilet had opened there. The basement would be used for storing an art collection. Changes to St. Paul's Square were being funded by Government and would join the Town Centre and river areas and be more pedestrian friendly. A new right turn onto the Embankment would also be created as part of the work. Bedford BID would cease to operate on 31.03.25. but a Town Centre Council of businesses had been established to replace it.

The new SEND school had opened on 10.02.25. There were currently 60 students, many of whom had previously had to travel out of the Borough and 200 could be accommodated in due course.

Glass recycling in orange bins was being extended and food waste recycling would be introduced.

**19. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:****Decisions notified since Council meeting – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

Application No. **24/02237/TPO** – reduction of horse chestnut at Longways, The Drive

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 20.02.25.

Parish **24/01706/FUL amended** - two storey side extension & front porch, new

Comments: access and parking at 13 Church Lane

Decision/Date: No objection

Permission 28.02.25.

**Applications received since Council meeting – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025:**

Application No. **a) 25/00095/FUL** - single storey front/side extension, conversion of garage to office and minor alterations at 29 Dewlands

Parish No objection

Comments:

Application No. **b) 25/00207/FUL** - two storey front extension & open porch at 61 Ruffs Furze  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments:

Application No. **c) 24/01706/FUL amended** - two storey side extension & front porch, new access and parking at 13 Church Lane  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments:

Cllr. White noted that residents were concerned that Parklands, The Drive was being extended beyond the limits of the planning consent and Clerk had asked Planning Enforcement to investigate.

## 20. Planning Policy:

### a) Bedford BC Local Plan 2040 workshop

Cllrs. Jones & Olney attended the Bedford BC meeting to discuss Local Plan 2040 on 21.01.25. Bedford BC had advised that NDPs needs to be updated and the NDP Group had requested clarification as the Oakley Neighbourhood Plan (NDP) had been reviewed in 2023. The latest update to national policy had not really changed anything for NDPs but a Planning Reform Working Paper had recently been published. Council agreed that they did not need to review the NDP again before any new planning legislation or the new Local Plan2040 was agreed. Clerk to remind Planning that the Oakley NDP had been reviewed. Cllr. Walker advised that an extension had been agreed to the Local Plan 2030 so the Borough still had a five year land supply and no new housing would be needed in Oakley up to 2040.

### b) Highfield Road footway

Bedford BC had advised that a footway along Highfield Road was now one of the planning obligations for the Clapham development and they would therefore be content to consider granting an extension to the CIL payback period, if Council agrees to spend the CIL funds on the footway. They confirmed that the decision on how to spend the money was with Council. Council ratified their decision to spend it on play equipment as £5,317 would make little difference to the estimated £200K cost of a path and Clerk to notify Bedford BC.

Action

Clerk

**21. Correspondence:****Lincroft School consultation on expansion of physical capacity**

Council had held a public meeting 12.02.25. to discuss the consultation. Residents were concerned about staff parking, parent/carers blocking residents' driveways, parking on bends and verges so crossing roads was dangerous for pedestrians and leaving engines idling. They suggested drop off points at the edge of the village or a pull in at the School and parking in the field opposite. Mr. Spencer, Executive Principal of Lincroft Academy explained that the consultation was required by DfE and was only concerned with capacity issues not planning matters so would not be forwarded to Bedford BC. He advised that all staff would be parking on site once the building work was completed, the School was looking at interim mitigation for Station Road and was working with School Transport to ensure there were enough bus places for additional students. He was not in favour of drop off points as they would just move the problem elsewhere. Cllr. Walker commented that the travel plan should cover parking but the field was privately owned by a Trust and they were unlikely to donate land to the School for parking. Communication with parents/carers and residents was also raised and Mr. Spencer advised that the Head regularly communicated with parents/carers and he was attending this meeting. The School also worked with Oakley Primary.

Council agreed to respond to the consultation, noting that they appreciated the need for additional school places but that the concerns of residents about parking and its impact on their ability to go about their daily lives should be addressed by the School. The increase in numbers would only exacerbate the issues and a holistic approach to the effect on the village was needed. Council would also ask Highways to attend a Council meeting to discuss parking around the schools.

ActionClerk  
Clerk**22. Grant Applications:**

Oakley Brownies had requested £500 towards the cost of arts, crafts, new indoor games equipment and other activities such as a science party. Total cost of the equipment/science party was £500 and they had previously received a grant of £251.49 in 2024 from quiz funds. Currently 12 out of 17 Brownies were Oakley residents, approximately 70%.

Balance at 31.08.24 was £1,003.63 and Brownies expected the balance at 31.08.25. to be approximately £300.

Proposed by Cllr. Walker, seconded by Cllr. Jones that £500 be granted.

**Resolved** – S. 137 donation

Action

Clerk

**23. Finance Matters:****a) distribution of quiz funds**

Council had agreed to donate 2024/25 quiz profits to the Scout Group, the Brownies/Rainbows, the Messy Churches, AFC Oakley Junior Football, the ATC, the Day Centre and the home for disabled residents in the High Street .

Action

Total profit for 2024/25 was £2,559.51. The Day Centre and disabled residents' home had already received £150 each for their Christmas celebrations so the remaining profit was £2,259.51.

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Walker that £2,259.51 be divided equally between each of the six groups and £376.58 be donated to each

**Resolved** s. 137 donations

Clerk

Council also agreed to invite members of the organisations to the March quiz and present the cheques then.

Council discussed how to distribute the funds from the 2025/26 quizzes and agreed to contribute to the Christmas dinners for the Day Centre and the home for disabled residents in the High Street again. Council to consider other organisations to receive donations at the May meeting. Chair advised that the Youth Club did not need further funding at present.

Clerk

Cllr. R. Worker noted that a company had offered to provide balloon hoops for photographs of quiz winners but Council agreed not to pursue as they did not want to be seen to be endorsing products.

**b) accounts to pay**

**Income and balances:**

NatWest Bank - Current account balance at 28.02.25.	£13,385.00
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 28.02.25.	£2,414.96
Nationwide - Savings Bond	£63,147.25
Hampshire Trust - Savings Bond	£85,013.20

**Received since last meeting:**

Bedford BC	Ward Fund payment for bins	817.00
Bedford BC	Ward Fund payment for ditch clearance	770.00
ORA	Newsletter advertising	432.00
Whites ES	Newsletter advertising	108.00
Tula Tables	Newsletter advertising	108.00
NatWest	Interest	2.31
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,237.31</b>

**Payments Already Made:**

**Chq. No.**

Old School	Rent for upper rooms January & February	307.66	s/o
Salaries	January & February payment	3,246.40	s/o
Pension Fund	January payment	553.02	1998
Bedford BC	Quarterly grass cutting payment	2,714.89	1999
Glasdon	Replacement bin liner	104.18	2000



**OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL 04.03.25.****9.**

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D M Payroll Services	Payroll management	126.00	2001
	Hire of hall 17.01.25. and		
Oakley Village Hall	Committee Room 07.01.25.	64.00	2002
	Inspection and repair of play		
CPM Playgrounds	equipment	498.00	2003
Pension Fund	February payment	553.02	2004
 <b>Payments Made:</b>			
Warners of Bedford Ltd	Clearing Pavenham Road & allotment ditches	1,884.00	2005
Oakley Scout Group	Donation from quiz proceeds	376.58	2006
1st Oakley Brownies	Donation from quiz proceeds	376.58	2007
Methodist Church (Messy Church)	Donation from quiz proceeds	376.58	2008
Oakley PCC (Messy Church)	Donation from quiz proceeds	376.58	2009
AFC Oakley (Juniors)	Donation from quiz proceeds	376.58	2010
ATC	Donation from quiz proceeds	376.58	2011
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£12,310.65</b>	

**24. Date of Next Meeting: 01.04.25. Annual Parish Meeting**