

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 in the Village Hall

**PRESENT:**

Cllr. S. Fardon (Chair), J. Abbott, C. Bays, P. Jones, P. Olney, R. Saunders, T. Saunders, P. White, C. Worker, R. Worker, the Clerk, Mrs. Paice and 4 members of the public.

**1. Election of Chair:**

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Abbott that Cllr. Fardon be elected as Chair.

**Resolved**

Cllr. R. Saunders Council thanked Cllr. Fardon for her excellent work as Chair during 2024/25. Cllr. Fardon signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chair

**2. Election of Vice Chair:**

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. White that Cllr. R Saunders be elected as Vice-Chair

**Resolved**

Council thanked Cllr. R. Saunders for his work as Vice-Chair in 2024/25. Cllr. R Saunders signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Vice-Chair.

**3. Public Open Session:**

Resident requested yellow or white lines on the corners in Lincroft at the junction of nos. 37 and 65. Students used the path opposite to access the schools and recently two had nearly been knocked down. Inconsiderate parking also blocked residents' driveways and emergency vehicles. Council noted that their policy was only to support yellow lines where there was a safety concern and they did not want to merely move the problem – see item 17.

Resident reported that the recently fitted bollards in The Furlong were already splitting. Resident and Cllr. Abbott would send photographs to the Clerk who would pursue with Bedford BC.

Resident was concerned that Stagecoach bus 51 would be discontinued in July as residents used it to travel to work. Cllr. Jones read a statement from Cllr. Walker advising that it was a commercial decision by Stagecoach and Borough Cllr. Gribble was trying to find an alternative. If the Borough subsidised the route they would have to lose other routes. Cllr. Abbott noted that he was meeting with Grant Palmer and Stagecoach shortly and Grant Palmer was looking to retain an hourly service in Oakley throughout the day. Station Road was not well served and it might be necessary to use Ward Funds to upgrade some of the bus stops on the verges. Bedford BC was also trying to put on more services to Lincroft School to prevent further traffic congestion.

JA/Clerk

Resident was concerned about fly tipping in the pull in near Stafford Bridge and suggested a physical barrier to prevent parking there. Cllr. Abbott noted that Bedford BC would prosecute fly tippers and could install signs and use a mobile camera if it was a regular problem. Clerk to ask the litter picker to check the area and pursue a mobile camera with Bedford BC.

Clerk

4. **Apologies:** J. Walker (illness)

5. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr. Olney for item 17b) as a neighbour. Cllr. White for item 21 as Chair of the Village Hall Committee. Cllrs. Abbott & Bays for item 22i) as members of the Scout Group

6. **Appointment of Advisory Group Members and Council Representatives on other bodies:**

Finance Advisory Group: Council Chair, J Abbott, J Walker, R Worker

Planning Advisory Group: C Bays, P Jones, P Olney, R Saunders, J Walker

NDP Group: P Olney, J Walker, R Worker

Allotment Group: P Olney. Former Cllr. Nicholas would continue as allotment manager

Speed Watch Group: R Worker. Former Cllr. Phillips would continue as co-ordinator

Village Roads Co-ordinator: P White, J Abbott

Footpaths & Waste Bins: P Jones

Oakley Directory: Resident

Oakley Recreational Association: J Abbott, T Saunders, (Reserve P Jones)

Village Hall: P White

Oakley Carnival Committee: now disbanded

Oakley Rural Day Care Centre: P Olney

Education Charity Trust: J Walker, R Worker

The Villager Community Minibus: C Worker

Tree Warden: R Saunders

Youth Club: S Fardon.

**Resolved** to appoint

7. **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 and the Council Meetings held on 4<sup>th</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025:**

**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes.

8. **Clerk's Report:**

**Highways** – Bollards in The Furlong were finally installed on 03.04.25. New householders in Lincroft had apologised for the previous owners' removal truck damaging the verges further and had offered to repair. The verge had been damaged during works to clear the Pavenham Road ditch and the contractor had returned and repaired. The collapsed wall in the alley from Lincroft to Station Road had been reported to Bedford BC.

Hedge planting – the event to plant a new hedge in Riverside Meadow 15.03.25. had been successful with 220 whips set. Council thanked Cllr. R. Worker and the Brownies for their help. CPRE had inspected the hedge and paid over a small maintenance grant of £144.00.

Grass cutting – cutting began 24.03.25. and work had been good to date. Clerk had thanked Bedford BC.

Brockwell Meadow – licence to use in 2025/26 had been signed by Kindergarten.

Speed Watch – 1 vehicle was speeding at the event in Highfield Road 04.03.25, nil returns for the events 20.03.25. in the High Street and 28.03.25. in Lovell Road. Reported to police. Clerk had chased Bedford BC to install the new equipment poles in the High Street, Highfield Road and Reynes Drive.

Fly tipping - wood dumped at Church Lane/Dewlands junction and glass, a bin and a bowl dumped in Lincroft alleyway had been reported to Bedford BC and removed.

Graffiti – stone entrance wall in Lovell Road had been graffitied and Clerk had asked Bedford BC to clean.

Rural Skips – skip would be in Oakley on 10.05.25. from 11.30 – 15.00 in Reynes Drive. Details of locations in other villages were on the website and notice boards.

Litter bins – all bins were emptied w/c 03.03.25, all except a half full bin at Riverside emptied w/c 17.03.25, all emptied w/c 31.03.25. and w/c 14.04.25. but bin not closed at High Street/Reynes Drive on both occasions. Cllr. Jones had removed rubbish stuck under it and Council thanked her. All bins emptied w/c 28.04.25.

Quiz – profit for March was £242.24 and for April £254.00

VE Day 80 Beacon - beacon event would be held on Clapham Playing Field on 08.05.25. from 8.30pm and had been advertised on the website and notice boards.

9. **Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 and the Council Meetings held on 4<sup>th</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025:**  
At the Annual Parish Meeting a resident had asked how often minutes on the website were read. Website Manager advised that there were 253 downloads of 04.03.25. minutes, 343 of 02.12.25. minutes and 523 of 07.01.25. minutes

Action

10. **Reports:**

**a) ORA meeting 18.03.25.**

Cllrs. Jones and R. Worker attended. ORA reported that their financial status was sound and they were looking to increase the number of events they held. They intended to hold events on each Bank Holiday Sunday in 2025 and Classic Car events would be held the second Tuesday of each month from April – September. New “swing gates”, barriers and matting to aid the Classic Car events would be installed at the entrance to the field.

Action

Motorcycle Club AGM was 20.03.25. and a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary event would be held on 02.08.25. Members would also be visiting every village that contains “Oakley” in their name 05–07.09.25. The annual Roly Moore Football Tournament would take place on 07–08.06.25. “Sunday Night” poker season had ended but Wednesday evening games started 19.03.25.

Council advised the Chair and Committee that the Parish Council was still awaiting a copy of the ORA Financial Accounts for 2023/4 which they were entitled to receive. ORA Chair noted that this was an oversight and he would address the issue urgently. Cllr. Jones had received a resident complaint about poor parking and dangerous road activity around the playing field and in the Church Lane area on a Saturday morning. ORA Chair commented that the football season was soon to end, due to high numbers of cars attending Village Hall events there was often “overspill” from their car park and there was limited action the ORA/OSSC could take having already highlighted the need for considerate car parking with all attendees. He suggested that any discussions held should include representatives from the Village Hall Committee. Next meeting 20.05.25.

**b) Bedford BC Network Meeting 02.04.25.**

Cllr. Bays & Jones attended. Bedford BC provided an update, advising that the Corporate Plan had been adopted and apologising for delays in responding whilst officers had been dealing with the Cleat Hill emergency. Town & Parish Councils were encouraged to read the Community Engagement Strategy and support Bedford BC in engaging with their residents. Councils were also asked to share details of their events and sign up to the Borough Newsletters. A presentation was given on the Code of Conduct and questions answered about investigations. The importance of remaining neutral in social media posts was reiterated.

Mayor advised that the 2025/26 budget had passed; he wanted to improve broadband for villages with poor connection; he had discussed housing, growth and the infrastructure and transport improvements that would be needed with EWR and glass and food waste collections were being trialled. Councils were encouraged to inform the Borough if they wanted to be involved early in the roll out. In response to questions, Bedford BC explained the process for assessing rural conservation areas, that the Mayor had raised delays to Wixams health centre with the Minister and would discuss with developers; the Mayor and officers were committed to combating and educating about knife crime in conjunction with police and the voluntary/community sector and littering and poor maintenance on the A421 entrance and the retail parks would be pursued. Bromham PC thanked Bedford BC for clearing trees from under bridges. Next meeting 10.07.25.

<p><b>11. East West Rail (EWR):</b>  <b>Parishes' Meeting 17.03.25. &amp; 14.04.25.</b>  Cllr. Jones reported that at the meeting on 17.03.25. each Parish Councillor stated the particular objections to the EWR in their area. Concerns included increased flooding, gas explosion from pile driving given the recent issue at Cleat Hill, excessive noise of the pile driving, construction disruption and noise and serious loss of wildlife area and wildlife itself. Bromham and Oakley were concerned about additional traffic through the villages during construction and all about removal of patient parking at the hospital and that the NHS should be expected to pay for the new multi storey car park. Participants noted that many local residents were not aware of these problems and therefore did not take much notice and probably did not respond to the non-statutory enquiry. No meeting 14.04.25.</p>	<u>Action</u>
<p>Clerk noted that the next Local Representatives Meeting (LRG) was 26.05.25. and that EWR had separated LRGs into Enhanced LRGs (wards and parishes within the red line boundary) and Community LRGs (part of the previous LRG structure but outside the red line boundary). Oakley remained in the Community LRG. Clerk to ask Clapham PC for a report on the Enhanced Group meeting 06.05.25.</p>	Clerk
<p><b>12. <u>Police Report:</u></b>  There were 3 reported crimes in February, 2 assaults with injury in Highfield Road and 1 theft of a vehicle, 3 in March, 1 assault with injury, 1 criminal damage and 1 theft from a vehicle and 2 sexual offences in April.  The next Coffee with a Cop at Milton Ernest Garden Centre would be held on 10.05.25.</p>	<u>Action</u>
<p><b>13. <u>Play Equipment Inspection:</u></b>  Quarterly inspection had indicated that the seat at The Furlong needed restraining. On the Green, the wetpour around the seesaw and swings was damaged, grass mats needed repairing around the silver climber, supernova and wooden multiplay and fixings were loose on the log climber and wooden multiplay.  Awaiting quotation from contractor to carry out repairs  Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. T. Saunders that quotation be accepted once received  <b>Resolved</b></p>	<u>Action</u>
<p><b>14. <u>Installation of New Seat in the Orchard:</u></b>  Council had agreed that former members of Gardening Club could put a seat in the orchard in November 2023. £636.00 was available and members wished to purchase a memorial bench at a cost of £549.50 (including £91.58 VAT) so that £86.50 remained for installation. Two quotations for £295.00 + VAT and £280.00 + VAT to install had been received so insufficient funds were available.</p>	<u>Action</u>

Members had asked if Council could fund the balance or use the monies for new trees or daffodil bulbs. Clerk suggested that the monies could be used to contribute to the new seat on the Green instead and Gardening Club members were content.

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that the monies be used for a seat on the Green

**Resolved**

Clerk

**15. New Play Equipment & Seat for the Green:**

Action

Council had agreed to spend £5,317 from the Parrott Close development on a new seat and play equipment for the Green. Gardening Club would also donate £636 towards the cost of the seat. Clerk advised that a 1.2 m recycled plastic seat with a memorial inscription would cost £457.92 + VAT and installation. Kompan balance beams were available at £460 + VAT & £1,270 + VAT and play panels at £1,520 + VAT or £1,820 + VAT + 12% delivery charge for all plus installation. Kompan charged a minimum daily rate so it would be cheaper to arrange our own installation. Hags had quoted £468 + VAT, delivery and installation for a rope balance and £1,107 + VAT, delivery and installation for a balance beam.

Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Jones that a memorial seat be purchased at a cost of £457.92 + VAT and installation, a balance beam be purchased at a cost of £1,270 and a play panel at a cost of £1,820 both + delivery and VAT

**Resolved**

Clerk

**16. Village Hall Land:**

Action

Solicitor acting for the purchaser of the house adjacent to the Hall had contacted Council about a strip of land at the entrance to the Hall. The Village Hall Committee had confirmed that they owned the land on which the Hall was built and Cllr. Abbott advised that in the Call for Sites the strip was shown as owned by Oakley Properties to enable access to the playing field. Cllr. White noted that the strip was inside the neighbour's fence and had in the past been used to access OSSC. Council therefore had no interest in the land.

**17. Highway Matters:**

Action

**a) school parking**

Residents were concerned about school parents/carers' vehicles parking inconsiderately and blocking driveways. They had expressed concerns about safety to Council especially as the expansion of Lincroft would only exacerbate the situation. A Highways representative had been due to attend this meeting to discuss but was unavailable. Council agreed to invite a representative from Highways to attend the June meeting.

Clerk

**b) request for adjustment to street light times in Brockwell**

Bedford BC had asked if Council would support a resident's request for the street light outside 13 Brockwell be switched off at 12.30am instead of midnight for safety reasons as she returns from work after they are turned off.

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. C. Worker that Council support the resident's request

**Resolved**

Clerk

**c) new bin for Reynes Drive/High Street**

Bedford BC had advised that the bin had been hit by a vehicle and was damaged beyond repair. They suggested Council replace it with a large Jubilee bin near the Post Office.

Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. White that a new Jubilee bin be installed on the Post Office side of the Reynes Drive/High Street junction

**Resolved**

Clerk

Cllr. R. Saunders noted that volunteer litter picker bags had not been collected and had been damaged by the grass cutters. Clerk to pursue with Bedford BC.

Clerk

**18. Borough Council Report:**

Action

Cllr. Abbott reported that Cllr. Walker was temporarily Deputy Mayor whilst Cllr. Weir recovered from surgery. VE Day 80 events would be held in Harpur Square at 10.30am on 08.05.25. and throughout the day on 11.05.25. A wreath laying ceremony at Clapham was also being held at 10.30am on 08.05.25. Consultation was underway on reconfiguration of the road layout at Greyfriars and pharmaceutical services available in Bedford Borough. Solar panels had been installed on Queens Street car park and a new Solar Together group buying scheme opened on 01.04.25. The Bamberg Beer Festival would be held 23-25.05.25. Grants were available from the Wixamtree Trust for organisations in Bedfordshire and from the Panacea Society to assist those living in Bedford. Charging for green bins was being considered because of £5 million of additional short term debt and food waste collections were being rolled out. The raised walkway at Lovell Road railway bridge was being removed as a pump had been installed to resolve the flooding issue. Cllrs. Abbott & Walker were concerned about the safety of pedestrians and had requested railings as the Clapham developers were unlikely to upgrade the footway for several years. Council agreed to support the request for railings

Clerk

**19. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:****Decisions notified since Council meeting – 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

Application No.	<b>23/02494/MAO</b> – outline application with all matters reserved except access, for residential development of up to 10 dwellings, site access and highway works, associated infrastructure, green infrastructure ecological habitats, amenity green space, demolition of existing outbuildings and ancillary works at land north of High Street
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Parish Cllr. Abbott to ask if the application could be called into the Planning  
 Comments: Committee on highway grounds.  
 Decision/Date: Permission subject to a Planning Obligation 20.03.25.

Application **25/00207/FUL** - two storey front extension & open porch at 61 Ruffs  
 No. Furze  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments:  
 Decision/Date: Permission 21.03.25.

Application **25/00095/FUL** - single storey front/side extension, conversion of  
 No. garage to office and minor alterations at 29 Dewlands  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments:  
 Decision/Date: Permission 24.03.25.

Clerk noted that a certificate had been issued confirming that the garage conversion at 1 Town Farm did not require planning consent.

#### **Applications received since Council meeting – 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025:**

Application **a) 25/00224/FUL** - front porch at 3 Reynes Drive  
 No.  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments:

Application **b) 25/00599/LBC** - refurbishment works following a flood at Reynes  
 No. Cottage The Drive  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments:

Application **c) 25/00822/FUL** - loft conversion above garage including addition of  
 No. 2 no dormer windows at 17 Brockwell  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments:

Clerk noted that the OSSC had contacted Council to advise them that they would be submitting an application to extend the Clubhouse. Council would comment on the planning application once received.

**20. Correspondence:** none

Action



**21. Grant Applications:**

Oakley Village Hall had requested £2,263.20 or a grant at Council's discretion for new kitchen units. Total cost of the project was £2,263.20 and the Hall would fund any shortfall from reserves. Previous grants were received in 2009, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023. All 9 Committee Members were Oakley residents and the balance at 31.08.24 was £15,563.53 plus investments of £14,677.37. The Village Hall would not need the grant if an ongoing application to Morrisons was successful.

Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. R. Worker that £1,000 be granted if no monies were received from Morrisons.

**Resolved** by a majority of 8 in favour, 1 objection and 1 abstention – S. 137 donation

Action

Clerk

**22. Finance Matters:**Action**a) accounts to pay**

<b>Income and balances:</b>	£35,911.89
NatWest Bank – Current account balance at 31.03.25.	£2,419.94
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 31.03.25.	
Nationwide – Savings Bond	£63,147.25
Hampshire Trust – Savings Bond	£85,013.20

**Received since last meeting:**

Beale	Allotment rent	£10.00
HTB	Interest	£51.57
HTB	Interest	£3,563.57
HMRC	2024/25 VAT refund	£4,728.86
Bedford BC	Precept – first half	£30,550.00
Worker	April quiz	£303.00
Nationwide	Interest	£2,640.85
NatWest	Interest	£2.42
<b>Total</b>		<b>£41,850.27</b>

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

Old School	Rent for upper rooms April	153.83	s/o
Salaries	April payment	1,594.22	s/o
Pension Fund	April payment	563.48	2023

**Payments Made:**

Bays Media	2025/26 website management	1,280.00	2024
	Removal of trees by bridges and works		
JDT Contracts	at allotments	1,176.00	2025
VC Property	Replacement bollards on Green	474.00	2026
Betts	2024/25 internal audit	160.00	2027
Village Hall	Hire of Hall & Committee Room	141.00	2028
<b>Total</b>		<b>£5,542.53</b>	

**b) Internal Audit report**

Internal audit had been carried out 11.04.25. Auditor had no matters to bring to Council's attention. Council thanked the Clerk.

**c) Annual Governance Statement**

Council considered the Annual Governance Statement and Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. White that the Annual Governance Statement be approved.

**Resolved**

Clerk and Chair signed section 1 of the audit return.

Clerk

**d) 2024/25 end of year accounts**

Clerk had circulated accounts.

Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. Jones that the accounts and section 2 of the audit return be approved.

**Resolved**

Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and Chair signed accounts.

Clerk and Chair signed section 2 of the audit return.

Clerk

**e) Annual review of risk assessment policy**

Clerk had circulated a draft risk assessment for 2025/26, which was unchanged. Proposed by Cllr. Bays, seconded by Cllr. Abbott, that the risk assessment be adopted

**Resolved**

Clerk

**f) Annual review of internal audit system**

Clerk had circulated a draft Audit Plan for 2025/26. Terms of Reference remained unchanged

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Bays that the Audit Plan be adopted

**Resolved**

Clerk

**g) Review of direct debits & standing orders**

Proposed by Cllr. T. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. White that Council continue to make monthly standing order payments for salaries and £153.83 to the Old School for rent of rooms, annual direct debit payment of £420 to Bedford BC for allotment rent and to pay variable direct debit payments to Anglian Water for allotment water

**Resolved**

Clerk

**h) website renewal**

Website manager had quoted £1,280.00 (no VAT) to host and manage the website for 2025/26 which included £60.00 for 12 months fully hosted mailbox and £20.00 for 12 months oakleyvillage.co.uk domain name renewal and which was the same price as the previous year.

Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that the quotation for £1,280.00 be accepted

**Resolved**

Clerk

**i) distribution of quiz funds**

Council had agreed to contribute to the Christmas dinners for the Day Centre and the home for disabled residents in the High Street again.

Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. White that £150 each be given to for the Day Centre and the home for disabled residents and remainder split equally between the Scout Group, the Brownies/Rainbows, the Messy Churches, AFC Oakley Junior Football and the ATC.

**Resolved**

Clerk

**j) Clerk's Expenses**

Proposed by Cllr. T. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Bays that expenses of £44.70 for the period January to March 2025 be paid

**Resolved**

**23. Date of Next Meeting: 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025**