

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025 in the Village Hall

**PRESENT:**

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

1. **Public Open Session:** none
  
2. **Apologies:** Cllr. P. Olney (personal). Clerk noted that Cllr. C. Worker had resigned from Council as she was moving away. Council thanked her for her work as a councillor.
  
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Chair for item 16a) as a member of the Youth Club
  
4. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025:**  
**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes.
  
5. **Clerk's Report:**  
Highways – Bedford BC had confirmed that the gully at Lovell Road rail bridge had been cleared. Lovell Road would be closed overnight closure 12/13.07.25. for bridge inspection. Clerk had confirmed that Council has no CCTV cameras fitted to Highways electrical equipment.  
Hedges – CPRE had advised that hedging in Riverside needed to be kept free of weeds as part of the planting agreement. Included in the contract for Riverside Meadow.  
Speed Watch – 1 vehicle was speeding at the event 05.06.25, 2 at the event 19.06.25. all in Church Lane. The event 01.07.25. had to be cancelled due to illness.  
Litter bins – all bins had been emptied but the one by the bridges was left open Cllr. Jones had moved the rubbish jamming it and closed the door. Reported to Bedford BC. Council thanked Cllr. Jones. Council noted that the bin by the bridge was full again and Clerk to report to Bedford BC.  
Play equipment – contractor had advised that playground repairs (agreed at the May meeting) would cost £200. Cllr. White had replaced broken links on the inclusive swing chain and Council thanked him.  
Quiz – profit for June was £191.02  
Tulip bulbs – Clerk had collected free bulbs from Bedford BC
  
6. **Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025:**  
none

Clerk

Action

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

**Parishes Meeting 16.06.25.**

Cllr. Jones attended. Clapham PC emphasised the importance of local parishes staying involved in EWR. They proposed using summer events to inform residents and offered to share printed maps and information. They had also prepared a summary for village magazines. Construction around Bedford might start in 2027-2028, with the project potentially completed by 2030-2031. Clapham PC & Stewartby PC suggested involving local MPs and organizing meetings with EWR representative. Stewartby PC was particularly concerned about the impact of Universal Studios and their desire to move Stewartby Station. Bedford BC and Cllr. Jones had reiterated the flooding problems at Clapham to EWR. Next meeting 15.09.25.

Action

**8. Police Report:**

There were 3 reported crimes in May, 2 sexual offences (no addresses) and 1 malicious communication in The Furlong and 1 in the first half of June, criminal damage to a business building in Church Lane. The next Coffee with a Cop at Milton Ernest Garden Centre would be held on 05.07.25.

Action

**9. Play Equipment:**

Two quotations to install the seat had been received for £290 + VAT and one for £295 + VAT. One quotation had been received for installing both the seat and play equipment for £3,490 + VAT. Clerk had queried the amount and the contractor had advised that the cost was due to the play panel posts needing to be fixed 1 metre into the ground. Kompan had quoted £3,600 + VAT to install just the play equipment. £5,953 was available from the CIL monies and Gardening Club donation and the seat and play equipment would cost £3,987.90 total. One contractor had not responded Council agreed that Clerk should seek a further quotation from the play equipment contractor.

Action

Bedford BC had extended the deadline for use of the CIL monies until 31.07.25. but advised that if the money was not spent by then they would take steps to recover it. Cllr. Walker to pursue a further extension with Bedford BC.

Clerk

Proposed by Cllr. Bays, seconded by Cllr. T. Saunders that the equipment be purchased and the cheapest quotation to install be accepted

JW

**Resolved**

Clerk

Cllr. R. Saunders noted that one of the seats on the path to the weir had been uprooted and was not salvageable. Cllr. Walker offered to by a new seat from her Ward Fund and Cllr. White to discuss with a local contractor filling the holes where the old seat had been fixed.

JW

PW

<p><b>10. <u>Tree Works:</u></b>                  One resident was concerned about dead wood in a tree on the Green and another about the ash tree overhanging his property in Grenidge Way. The tree surgeon had inspected both and advised that the deadwood is low risk as it is normal to have some deadwood in the canopy. He recommended a harder reduction of the ash tree back past the property line at a cost of £180 +VAT                  Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Worker that the quotation for £180 + VAT be accepted  <b>Resolved</b></p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>11. <u>Highways:</u></b>                  Councillors noted that bins were still being left on the road in the High Street, causing a hazard to traffic. Clerk to pursue again with Bedford BC.                  There was a fallen branch in the undergrowth on Station Road and Clerk to ask Highways to remove.                  Weeds and trees were encroaching on the Church Lane footway and Clerk to ask Highways to cut back. There was also a dead tree in the hedge, which Clerk to ask Bedford BC to inspect.                  Vegetation was overhanging the alleyway in Grenidge Way and Clerk to ask the householder to trim.</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>12. <u>Borough Council Report:</u></b>                  Cllr. Walker reported that the Borough Flood Officer had walked the length of the riverbank and identified potential flood risks. The weir was one so the Environment Agency had been asked to clear the area. The Planning Inspector had advised that the Local Plan 2040 could not be approved as it did not address the impact of Universal Studios therefore Bedford BC would need to restart the process. As a result, there would no longer be a 5 year land supply and it was vital that Neighbourhood Plans were reviewed and remained relevant. The process to create a new Local Plan would take around three years and there were insufficient sites in the 2030 Plan to provide sufficient housing so a new Call for Sites would be required. Chair noted that Pavenham was delaying consultation on their NDP to ensure it aligned with national and Borough policies and CPRE was concerned about the impact of the new Planning &amp; Infrastructure Bill. Cllr. Walker advised that the NDP would need to reference the Bill. Cllr. Walker noted that Universal would be submitting a planning application over the Summer and the Borough would be holding additional Council meetings to consider. Also, Midland Road had now re-opened.</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p>
<p><b>13. <u>Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:</u></b>  <b>Decisions notified since Council meeting – 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025</b>                  Application No.     <b>25/00224/FUL</b> - front porch at 3 Reynes Drive                  Parish Comments:    No objection                  Decision/Date:        Permission 06.06.25.</p>	

Application No. **25/00822/FUL** - loft conversion above garage including addition of 2 no dormer windows at 17 Brockwell  
Parish Comments: No objection  
Decision/Date: Permission 11.06.25.

**Applications received since Council meeting – 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025:**

Application No. 25/01078/FUL - two storey rear and side extension, single storey front extension at 104 Ruffs Furze  
Parish Comments: No objection

**14. Planning Policy:**

**Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Review**

Eight members had confirmed that they wished to remain on the NDP Group. Following the Spending Review, Locality would not be accepting applications for new grants or technical support for NDP reviews so funding for planning consultants would need to be obtained elsewhere. Cllr. Walker noted that Bedford BC was looking to see if they could provide support but this would be in the form of advice/briefings rather than money. Clerk suggested that Council would need a new Housing Needs Survey and Clerk to ascertain the cost from BRCC.

NDP Group to meet in September to consider a review.

Council noted that both the High Street and Station Road housing sites had been sold.

Action

Clerk  
Clerk

**15. Correspondence:**

BRCC had suggested meeting to discuss a Good Neighbour Scheme in Oakley. There was previously one in the village but it folded because no-one was using it. Council agreed Clerk to meet BRCC to discuss and put an article in the Newsletter.

Action

Clerk/  
Chair

**16. Grant Applications:**

**a) Oakley Youth Club**

The Youth Club had requested a grant of £3,000 to provide funding for the Club from July 2025 to August 2026. Total cost was estimated at £5,350 with the balance from entrance fees, tuck shop and the reserve. Previous grants were received annually between 2009 and 2024 and £3,000 donated in 2024. Average weekly attendance had been patchy in 2024 because maternity leave and child care issues meant the Youth Club was only open spasmodically and closed for the year at the end of May. The team should be back in place in September and able to provide a well-functioning and reliable Youth Club. The balance at 01.06.25 was £2,087.99.

Proposed by Cllr. White, seconded by Cllr. Walker that £3,000 be granted, with the proviso that the balance be refunded if the Youth Club closed

**Resolved** S.137 donation

Action

Clerk

**b) Country Days**

Country Days had requested a grant of £1,000 for their summer courses, which include a high proportion of FSM, Pupil Premium and SEND children. The total cost of providing the courses was £62,484 and the balance would be obtained from fundraising, donations and other funders. Previous grants were £50 in 2024 and 2023, £100 in 2022. 10 children that either live in Oakley or come from the primary schools in the area had attended the courses. The balance at 31.12.23. was £89,607 as they aimed to hold sufficient reserves to run courses for the following year.

Proposed by Cllr. White, seconded by Cllr. Jones that £100 be granted

**Resolved** S.137 donation

Clerk

**17. Finance Matters:**

Action

**a) accounts to pay**

**Income and balances:**

NatWest Bank – Current account balance at 30.06.25.	£28,615.96
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 30.06.25.	£2,424.39
Nationwide – Savings Bond	£63,147.25
Hampshire Trust – Savings Bond	£85,013.20

**Received since last meeting:**

Gardening Club	Donation	£636.12
Worker	June quiz	£240.02
NatWest	Interest	£2.26
<b>Total</b>		<b>£878.40</b>

**Payments Already Made:**

			<b>Chq. No.</b>
Old School	Rent for upper rooms June	153.83	s/o
Salaries	June payment	1,500.42	s/o
Pension Fund	June payment	563.48	2035
Anglian Water	Allotment water	77.00	d/d

**Payments Made:**

White Hart Press	Printing Summer Newsletter	865.00	2036
BATPC	2025/26 affiliation fee	583.00	2037
HMRC	Quarterly PAYE	942.82	2038
<b>Total</b>		<b>£4,685.55</b>	

**b) Nationwide tax residency and citizenship enquiry**

Nationwide was legally required to collect and report information on account holders' tax residency and citizenship. Clerk had completed the return and Council

**Resolved** to approve

Action

Clerk

**c) Clerk's expenses**

Proposed by Cllr. Bays, seconded by Cllr. T. Saunders that expenses of £55.27 for the period April to June 2025 be paid

**Resolved**

**18. Date of Next Meeting: 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2025**