

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2025 in the Village Hall

**PRESENT:**

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

1. **Public Open Session:** none
2. **Apologies:** Cllr. S. Fardon (personal), P. Olney (illness), P. White (personal)
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllrs. Bays & Worker for item 7b) as relatives of OSSC officers/staff. Cllr. Walker for item 20d) as a relative of an allotment tenant
4. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025:**  
**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes.
5. **Clerk's Report:**  
Highways – a fallen tree branch in Brockwell, deep cracks in the Ruffs Furze alleyway, faded white lines at the crossroads and blocked drains in the High Street and Station Road had been reported to Bedford BC. Clerk had also requested Highways remove the fallen branch in the undergrowth on Station Road, cut back weeds and trees encroaching on the Church Lane footway and inspect the dead tree in the hedge. Clerk had asked a resident in Grenidge Way to cut back vegetation overhanging the alleyway. Lovell Road would be closed on 05.10.25. from 9am to 5pm for Network Rail works.  
Seat at the Weir – the family who donated the seats had offered to rebuild the broken seat and repair the remaining seat.  
Land at the Weir – solicitors had forwarded a new lease for signature.  
Speed Watch – 6 vehicles were speeding entering the village on Pavenham Road at the event on 11.07.25. and none in Church Lane on 17.07.25. No events were held in August.  
Litter bins – all bins had been emptied in July. Station Road bin was not emptied w/c 04.08.25. and bins at the bridges and Burleigh Place were left open. The bin at Burleigh Place was not closed and rubbish left strewn around the Post Office bin w/c 18.08.25. Several bins were not emptied and/or closed w/c 01.09.25. Reported to Bedford BC. Bedford BC had reminded the resident in the High Street not to leave bins in the road.  
Community Litter Pick – to be held 20.09.25. meeting at the OSSC at 10.00am  
Quiz – profit from the July quiz was £214.25 and from August £176.03. The quizzes had raised over £5,000 since they began in September 2023 and Council thanked Cllr. Worker for organising.

Good Neighbours' Scheme – posters had been put on the website and notice boards and a survey included in the Newsletter. Organiser had also visited the Cameo Group 02.09.25.

6. **Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 1st July 2025:**  
none

Action

7. **Reports:**

**a) Bedford BC Network Meeting 10.07.25.**

Cllr. Jones attended. Bedford BC provided an overview of the benefits from the Universal project including 28,000 new direct and indirect jobs. Infrastructure needed to be improved in the area and four-platform train station would be delivered at Wixams and added slip roads off the A421. Bedford BC confirmed that Universal had engaged with EWR. The A428 Social Value Fund and Community Funds were open for applications until January 2026. Bedford BC aimed to install 256 EV charging points across the Borough and invited expressions of interest for additional sites. Bedford BC would charge a concession fee, but Government had limited the amount of money that local authorities could make through the scheme and private companies (operators) would be retaining most of the revenue. Bedford BC would engage with UKPN on the viability of charge points being installed in rural areas. Within the tender, there was a high threshold of liability, so that any liability falls on the provider and this would also need to be the case if charge points were installed on land owned by parish councils. A new Monitoring Officer, Graham Watts and Head of Planning and Building Control, Gavin Chinniah had been appointed. A new Local Plan was now required because of Universal and would take 2 to 3 years to complete so NDPs would provide less protection, especially as there was no longer a 5 year land supply. NDPs would need to be updated and Cllr. Towler asked if CIL monies could be used for this.

**b) ORA Meeting 15.07.25.**

Cllr. Abbott attended and reported that the meeting was brief with few reports. A memorandum of understanding was being agreed with the Scout Group about the land on which the Scout Hut stood and a member of the Motorcycle Club had volunteered to join the Speed Watch Group. The issue with a neighbour about hedge cutting on the boundary of the field had been resolved to the satisfaction of both parties. A complaint had been made about loud music after 9.00pm but this was not caused by OSSC. The next meeting was 09.09.25.

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

EWR had advised that because of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, they were reviewing their plans, including the timing of the previously planned January 2026 Statutory Consultation and expected to provide further details this Autumn.

Action

EWR was carrying out surveys alongside the A6 and had put a stop on Borough housing development in areas such as Prebend Street and around Brew Point. Bedford BC had not been advised that EWR intended to demolish more houses in Ashburnham Road.

#### 9. **Police Report:**

Action

Cllr. Jones attended the priority setting meeting 31.07.25. Due to IT problems the prepared presentation was not available and no priorities were set. Attendees were encouraged to join Beds Connected <https://www.bedsconnected.co.uk/> for information on policing in the area. Cllr. Jones passed over Oakley priorities - speeding, particularly Highfield Road, Pavenham Road and Church Lane, drug dealing by the weir and parking in Station Road, Lovell Road, Reynes Drive and Lincroft during school term. Police were particularly concerned about drug dealing.

Cllr. Walker noted that two police officers were recently walking around the village asking residents about any concerns they had. CCTV cameras were to be put in Clapham because of screws being left on the road. A new PCSO would be replacing PCSO Dancer for the rural area.

There were 2 reported crimes in June, criminal damage to a business building in Church Lane and a public fear offence in Station Road, 7 in July, 2 sexual offences, 2 assaults in the High Street & Station Road, 1 malicious communications offence in Highfield Road, 1 public order offence in Station Road and 1 interfering with a vehicle in Flax Close and 3 in the first half of August, 2 assaults in Highfield Road and a harassment offence.

The next Coffee with a Cop at Milton Ernest Garden Centre would be held on 27.09.25.

#### 10. **Play Equipment:**

Action

##### **a) new 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. A further quotation of £1,620 + VAT had been received to install the play equipment and seat. £345.10 would therefore remain from the CIL monies. A more expensive play panel was available at an additional cost of £710 + VAT and installation would cost an additional £300 + VAT so Council would need to contribute £665.00

Bedford BC had extended the deadline for use of the CIL monies until 30.09.25. but advised that if the money was not spent by then they would take steps to recover it.

Proposed by Cllr. Bays, seconded by Cllr. Jones that a more expensive panel be purchased at a cost of £2,510 + VAT and the quotation for £1,920 + VAT for installation of the play equipment and seat be accepted

**Resolved**

Clerk

**b) quarterly inspection report**

Latest inspection report indicated that fixings were loose and seat needed re-staining at The Furlong. On the Green, surfacing around the seesaw, log climber, swings needed repairing and fixings on the log climber, junior multiplay and silver multiplay were loose. A chain on the swing had broken and Cllr. White had replaced as it was a safety issue. Council thanked him. Contractor had quoted £250 + VAT to carry out repairs excluding the surfacing which would be submitted separately

Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. T. Saunders that the quotation for £250 + VAT be accepted

**Resolved**

Clerk

**11. Tree Works:**

One of the stems on a tree on Grange green had failed and branches in the canopy of a smaller tree had also failed. Contractor had quoted £250 + VAT to remove the failed stem back to the main tree and reduce the remaining stems to previous pruning height and to reduce the small tree by 40%

Proposed by Cllr. Worker, seconded by Cllr. T. Saunders that the quotation for £250 + VAT be accepted

**Resolved**

Action

Clerk

**12. Replacement Bins:**

Council had agreed to replace the bin at the Reynes Drive/High Street bus stop with a large bin on the Post Office corner of Reynes Drive and Cllr. Abbott offered to fund from his Ward Fund.

Bedford BC had advised that the bin at the twin bridges was damaged but functional and had quoted £922.15 + VAT to replace it with a large Jubilee bin. The liner in the bin in the play area on the Green had also rotted and Bedford BC had quoted £80 + VAT to replace. The liner Council has did not fit that bin. As the bin at the twin bridges was used less in Winter and was still functional, Proposed by Cllr. Worker, seconded by Cllr. Bays that the quotation for £80 + VAT be accepted

**Resolved**

Clerk

**13. Repairs to Linch Furlong Sculpture:**

The sculpture by Pavenham Road entrance to Linch Furlong had collapsed. Cllr. White had examined and advised that new struts could possibly be welded on to it at a cost of £150 + VAT but further investigation would be needed. Council agreed to defer to the October meeting.

PW  
Clerk

**14. IT Policy:**

NALC had advised that in addition to requirements related to email management and website accessibility, there was a new audit requirement for smaller authorities to have an IT Policy w.e.f. 01.04.25. Clerk had circulated a draft policy.

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Abbott that the policy be adopted  
**Resolved**

Clerk

**15. Highways:**

Councillors reported that trees had been cut down adjacent to the Dewlands alleyway but soil had been left and weeds were growing over the path. Clerk to ask Bedford BC if the soil was on their land and, if so, to clear.

Chair noted that he had been informed that further work would be needed on the twin bridges which might require a road closure.

Action

Clerk

**16. Borough Council Report:**

Cllr. Walker reported that art workshops had been held over the Summer in the new family hub in the old Debenhams building and professionals working with young people were able to use the space. Four permanent reading trails had been launched in Bedford's parks and the library in conjunction with Julia Jarman. The Government's decision on Universal was expected in September and Bedford BC would be looking for parking controls in the Wixams area and controls on the number of Airbnbs in the area. Universal had started work that was possible without planning permission and were advertising jobs.

Cllr. Abbott added that Children's Services had been examined by OFSTED and needed improvement. Bedford BC was no longer buying the Lloyds building and the Council Tax reduction scheme had been rescinded. There was a moratorium on spending and a recruitment freeze except for frontline services because of financial pressures and an emergency budget was required. The lease on Blue Peris outdoor centre would also be relinquished as few schools were using the site. The Borough Council was working together to address the financial issues. A Live Longer Better programme for over 60s began on 01.09.25. and a series of guided walks was being held during September.

Action**17. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:****Decisions notified since Council meeting – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025**

Application No.	25/00904/FUL - proposed extension to front of clubhouse at Oakley Sports & Social Club, Church Lane
Parish	No objection
Comments:	
Decision/Date:	Permission 09.07.25.

Application No. **25/01078/FUL** - Two storey rear & side extension, single storey front extension at 104 Ruffs Furze  
Parish No objection  
Comments:  
Decision/Date: Permission 15.07.25.

Application No. **23/02666/FUL** - erection of one dwelling at land at rear of The Robins, 15 Pavenham Road  
Parish Objection on the grounds that the proposed new dwelling is not needed as sufficient housing has been provided through the Neighbourhood Plan 2; it would constitute back land development and building in the open countryside & it would set a precedent for further development off Pavenham Road which would impinge on a locally important view in the Neighbourhood Plan to the west along the river valley  
Comments:  
Decision/Date: Permission 21.07.25.

Application No. **25/00631/FUL (revised)** - one & two storey rear extension and cladding at Iona 41 High Street  
Parish No objection  
Comments:  
Decision/Date: Refusal 08.08.25. on the grounds that the flat roof would be out of keeping with the appearance of the existing dwelling and properties in the surrounding area, the proposed development would be of a low quality design standard and would constitute an incongruous and harmful feature within the street scene.

Application No. **25/01358/FUL** - single storey front, side & rear extensions and alterations to external finishes/ render at 78 Ruffs Furze  
Parish No objection  
Comments:  
Decision/Date: Permission 26.08.25.

**Applications received since Council meeting – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025:**

Application No. **a) 25/01292/MAF** for a solar farm on land east of Twinwood Road, Oakley and Clapham and land south east of Thurleigh Road, Milton Ernest and Thurleigh  
Parish No objection but concern about the loss of valuable agricultural land  
Comments:

Application No. **b) 25/01358/FUL** - single storey front, side & rear extensions and alterations to external finishes/ render at 78 Ruffs Furze  
Parish No objection  
Comments:

Application No. c) **25/00631/FUL (revised)** - one & two storey rear extension and cladding at Iona 41 High Street  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments:

Application No. d) **25/01044/LBC** - alterations to windows & doors in existing outbuilding, render to existing rear extension and replacement windowsills at 27 Station Road  
 Parish No objection  
 Comments:

Since the agenda was issued an application had been circulated for 68 affordable homes in Oakley Road, Bromham and Clerk to seek an extension to the deadline and Council to discuss in October.

## 18. **Planning Policy:**

### **Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Review**

NDP Group met 01.09.25. to discuss. Cllr. Walker advised that the Local Plan 2040 had been rejected by the Inspector largely because it did not cover Universal. There were insufficient houses in the Plan because Universal would be built on a site allocated for housing, their workers would need additional houses plus developers were not building as fast as had been anticipated. In addition, some land allocated for housing & schools could not be used because it had been frozen by EWR. The Inspector had suggested more smaller sites which could be built more quickly thus putting villages under pressure. All NDPs over 3 years old would therefore need to be reviewed and strengthened where necessary. A new Call for Sites would be issued by the Borough and Oakley would need to be able to challenge any new sites put forward. Bedford BC no longer had a 5-year land supply but would robustly defend against any speculative applications.

Group agreed that housing needs and infrastructure should be reviewed and a new Housing Needs Survey (HNS) carried out but green spaces would not need amendment. BRCC had quoted £2,090 + VAT to carry out a HNS

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Bays that quotation for £2,090 + VAT be accepted and the monies taken from the contingency fund

### **Resolved**

Group noted that if, following the HNS, it was necessary to allocate a new site, another Referendum on the NDP would be required and that the HNS could be used as evidence for the housing mix on the developments yet to be built in the village.

The review would need to consider the Planning & Infrastructure Bill and an independent review of the revised NDP would be desirable. No further grants were available for NDPs so Council would need to fund the review.

Action

Clerk

Cllr. Abbott noted that the Future Homes Standard 2025, which would require significantly higher energy efficiency standards, might encourage developers to build on land that had been allocated but not used.

### 19. Correspondence:

#### a) Central Bedfordshire Council – consultation on Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Bedfordshire

Central Bedfordshire Council was consulting on Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Bedfordshire to protect and restore nature. Specifically, it asked if respondents agreed with the areas and species targeted for action. There were no specific sites in Oakley apart from the river and Council had none to add.

Action

#### b) Village Hall Open Day 07.12.25.

To celebrate 30 years since the Hall was opened an Open Day was being held on 07.12.25. As one of the regular hirers, Council had been invited to provide a demonstration/display of their events to showcase the many ways the hall is used. Cllr. Walker suggested a presentation on Council's achievements over the 30 years and Council to discuss again in October.

Clerk

### 20. Finance Matters:

#### a) accounts to pay

##### Income and balances:

NatWest Bank – Current account balance at 31.08.25.	£20,303.16
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 31.08.25.	£2,428.63
Nationwide – Savings Bond	£63,147.25
Hampshire Trust – Savings Bond	£85,013.20

##### Received since last meeting:

Bedford BC	Grass cutting contribution	£1,836.72
Worker	July and August quiz	£488.28
NatWest	Interest	£4.28
<b>Total</b>		<b>£2,329.28</b>

##### Payments Already Made:

**Chq.  
No.**

Old School	Rent for upper rooms July & August	307.66	s/o
Salaries	July & August payment	3,001.24	s/o
Paice	Expenses April - June	55.27	2039
Youth Club	S. 137 donation	3,000.00	2040
Country Days	S. 137 donation	100.00	2041
Pension Fund	July payment	563.48	2042
JDT Contracts	Tree works	144.00	2043



	Hire of Hall and Committee Room		
Oakley Village Hall	in June & July	128.00	2044
Bedford BC	Quarterly grass cutting payment	2,956.72	2045
Pension Fund	August payment	627.85	2046

**Payments Made:**

	Maintaining Linch Furlong, Orchard, Brockwell Meadow & Riverside Meadow 2025	2,300.00	2047
Knight			
White Hart Press	Printing Autumn Newsletter	945.00	2048
DM Payroll Services	Half year payroll administration	172.80	2049
CPRE	Membership renewal	36.00	2050
Nicholas	Allotment tap repairs	16.00	2051
Oakley Village Hall	Hire of Hall 15.08.25. for quiz	42.00	2052
<b>Total</b>		<b>£14,396.02</b>	

**b) insurance renewal**

Council insurance was due for renewal on 01.10.25. and brokers had recommended a new three-year long-term agreement a cost of £2,751.52.

Proposed by Cllr. Worker, seconded by Cllr. Jones that Council enter a three-year agreement and an insurance premium of £2,751.52 be paid

**Resolved**

Council cyber insurance was due for renewal on 01.11.25. and brokers had recommended a policy at a cost of £339.36 for one year.

Proposed by Cllr. Worker, seconded by Cllr. Jones that quotation be accepted and an insurance premium of £339.36 be paid

**Resolved**Action

Clerk

Clerk

**c) Clerks' 2025/26 pay award**

National pay award for 2025/26 had been agreed. £15,586.48 p.a. was the new rate for scale point 30 for 14 hours p.w.

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Abbott that Clerk's salary be increased to £15,586.48 p.a. for 14 hours p.w. w.e.f. 01.04.25. in line with National pay award

**Resolved****d) allotment rent 2026**

Allotment rents were increased to £40 for a full plot and £20 for a half plot in October 2025 and all plots were currently in use.

Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. Bays that the cost of a full plot rise to £42 and a half plot to £21 in October 2026

**Resolved**

Clerk

**21. Date of Next Meeting: 7<sup>th</sup> October 2025**