

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 7th October 2025 in the Village Hall

PRESENT:

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

1. **Public Open Session:** none
2. **Apologies:** Cllrs. J. Abbott (illness), C. Bays (business), P. Olney (illness), P. White (personal)
3. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr. Worker for item 7 as a relative of an OSSC staff member.
4. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd September 2025:**
Resolved: to adopt the minutes.
5. **Clerk's Report:**
Highways – fallen branches on Station Road verge had been reported to Bedford BC and removed. Clerk had also asked Highways to repair the two holes of sunken tarmac in Lovell Road. There would be temporary overnight closures of the A6 at Bletsoe and 40 mph speed reductions on Riseley Road to the A6, A6 Bletsoe to the Avenue, Bletsoe, C26 Bletsoe from the A6 Rushden Road, Sharnbrook to UC33 Mill Road, Thurleigh between 09.10.25 and 30.10.25.
Speed Watch – September session cancelled as too few members available. The team was still chasing Bedford BC to install the new camera poles.
Litter bins – bins at the Old School bus stop, Parrotts Close bus stop, Dewlands bus stop and opposite Linch Furlong were not emptied w/c 01.09.25. Bins at Riverside and Burleigh Place were also left open. All bins were emptied w/c 15.09.25. and w/c 29.09.25. but bins at Riverside and Burleigh Place were left open again. Reported to Bedford BC. Bedford BC had confirmed that there was sufficient Ward Funding in place for the new bin by the Post Office and the replacement liner for the bin on the Green so Cllr. Abbott's funding would not be needed.
Fly tipping – rubbish dumped in Highfield Road reported to Bedford BC and cleared
Play Area Gate – a child was injured by the gate to the play area on the Green. Clerk asked the contractor to adjust gate as soon as possible. Contractor had advised that gates could be removed as there were dog grids in place but Council preferred to keep the gates to prevent children running out of the site. Cllr. R. Saunders suggested padding the top of the gate and Clerk to discuss with the contractor.

Clerk

Linch Furlong – UK Power Networks had cut back trees that were tripping the power supply

Quiz – profit from the September quiz was £199.20.

Village Hall – their application for the UKSPF grant was unsuccessful so they were requesting the donation from Council approved at the May meeting.

Good Neighbours' Scheme – a reminder and copy of the survey document had been put on the website.

Remembrance Service – road closure had been requested and a poppy wreath ordered.

Christmas wreath – Council had been invited to provide a wreath for the display in the Church and Cllr. R. Saunders to ask Cllr. White if Mrs. White would be able to make a wreath again.

RS

6. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd September 2025: none

Action

7. Reports:

b) ORA Meeting 09.09.25.

Cllrs. Abbot & T. Saunders attended and reported that it had been a challenging summer for the fields and options for a hydrant were being explored for next summer. Lazy Sundays, School's Out event and the R&B & Garage night were successful and satisfactory noise tests had been carried out for the latter. Upcoming events were the Children's Halloween Disco (31/10/2025), Fireworks Night (01/11/2025), Christmas Fayre and Market (13/12/2025) and New Year's Eve (31/12/2025). ORA might approach Council for a grant for the Christmas Fayre. Accounts had been ratified by the trustees and once they had been signed off by members, they could be shown to Council. No update on the extension. AFC Oakley now had 43 teams from U6-U18 with over 500 players. Parking was only an issue when the Village Hall had a booking and their guests overflowed into the village. Poker nights continued to be successful. Motorcycle Club currently had 571 members and had raised just short of £54,000 for the EAAA. Councillors thanked the OSSC for hosting the community litter pick.

8. East West Rail (EWR):

No updates from EWR and the parishes' EWR meeting scheduled for 15.09.25. had been cancelled.

Action

9. Police Report:

There were no reported crimes in the second half of August and 2 in the first half of September, 1 assault with injury in Station Road and a stalking offence. Next Coffee with a Cop would be at Milton Ernest Garden Centre 25.10.25.

Action

Action

Clerk

Action

Clerk

Action

Clerk

Action

Clerk

Action

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

Action

Action

Bedford BC was concerned that land at Little Barford could form part of the New Town and the housing allocation there would be lost.

Some of the replacement speed cameras were experiencing signal problems and had been taken down to be fitted with new SIM cards.

Bedford BC needed to make savings in 2026/27 and had proposed to close the Rural Grant Fund, Ward Fund and Climate Change & Community Chest Funds, introduce charging for green bin collections, remove the Community Speed Watch van and reduce verge cutting amongst other savings. The proposals would be out for consultation from 20.10.25. to 18.11.25. Sharnbrook Primary, Robinson Pool, the Leisure Village and leisure complex and asset refurbishment had been removed from the Capital Programme and Wixams Station, Bedford Commercial Park and Town Centre Regeneration schemes had been reduced. Free parking in Lurke Street and Allhallows multi-storey car parks was also being suspended. Cllr. Walker noted that expenditure on Social Care was high but as a statutory service had to be provided.

The Bedford Town Centre Advisory Board had met for the first time and Cllr. Walker noted that Bedford BC would step back once it was established.

Kerbside Glass Recycling throughout the Borough would begin on 01.12.25, a consultation on bus services was open until 19.12.25, Queens Bridge remained closed because of structural decay and Bedford Lock was being refurbished. Cllr. Walker noted that there was no decision yet by Government on Universal.

16. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:

Decisions notified since Council meeting – 2nd September 2025

No applications decided since the last meeting. Clerk noted that Bedford BC had no objection to UK Power Networks installing a terminal pole and HV underground cable on land east of Willow Vale Cottages, Pavenham Road

Applications received since Council meeting – 2nd September 2025:

- a) **25/01681/MAO** - outline planning application with all matters reserved except access, for the erection of up to 68 affordable dwellings, and all ancillary works at land east of Oakley Road, Bromham
Objection because the site is outside the SPA in open countryside and would result in the loss of best agricultural land.

Application No. **b) 25/01722/TPO** – remove dead wood and reduce various trees at Trees Church Lane
Parish No objection
Comments:

Application No. c) **25/01292/MAF** - solar farm with ancillary infrastructure on land east of Twinwood Road, Oakley & Clapham and land south east of Thurleigh Road, Milton Ernest and Thurleigh

Parish Comments: Concern about food producing farmland being used for solar farms, which could be placed on car parks and large commercial buildings instead.

Application No. d) **25/01861/TPO** - reduce a silver birch by 1.5m at Langton, Church Lane

Parish Comments: No objection

17. **Planning Policy:**

Neighbourhood Development Plan Review - Housing Needs Survey

Concerns had been raised by councillors and the NDP Group that neither the BRCC's draft HNS, nor the covering letter, clearly identified the housing requirements for the village up to 2040. Also, they did not clearly indicate that any housing needs identified would be over and above the dwellings currently allocated up to 2040 and the reference to fourteen houses was confusing. Clerk noted that BRCC had advised that they can reference the sites in the NDP in the housing report but as no development has taken place, it would still be current resident who would be surveyed. Also, the report would take into account that any affordable homes on these sites would not have a local connections clause allocated to them, so dependent on what/if any housing need was identified though the HNS, they would be able to consider whether the new homes were likely to meet this exiting local need or not. Chair suggested the name of the Survey be changed as it currently suggested there was a housing need. Council agreed that the NDP Group should meet to discuss before going back to BRCC and Clerk to arrange a meeting.

Action

Clerk

18. **Correspondence:** none

Action

19. **Finance Matters:**

Action

a) accounts to pay

Income and balances:

NatWest Bank – Current account balance at 30.09.25.	£39,651.91
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 30.09.25.	£2,430.87
Nationwide – Savings Bond	£63,147.25
Hampshire Trust – Savings Bond	£85,013.20

Received since last meeting:

Bedford BC	Precept - second half	£30,550.00
Morton	Allotment rent	£24.03
Marshall	Allotment rent	£48.06
Fordham	Allotment rent	£24.03
Willars	Allotment rent	£24.03
Kearney	Allotment rent	£44.03
Sellars	Allotment rent	£24.03
Bearcroft-Young	Allotment rent	£96.12
Beale	Allotment rent	£24.03
Skipper	Allotment rent	£48.06
Munro	Allotment rent	£24.03
Exon	Allotment rent	£24.03
Taylor	Allotment rent	£48.06
Nicholas	Allotment rent	£48.06
Worker	September quiz	£248.20
NatWest	Interest	£2.24
Total		£31,301.04

Payments Already Made:

			Chq. No.
Old School	Rent for upper rooms September	153.83	s/o
Salaries	September payment	1,500.62	s/o
Gallagher	Cyber insurance 2025/26	339.36	2053
Gallagher	General insurance 2025/26	2,751.52	2054
Pension Fund	September payment	576.35	2055
Anglian Water	Allotment water	91.65	d/d

Payments Made:

HMRC	Quarterly PAYE	1,043.22	2056
Kompan	New playground equipment	5,080.32	2057
Play Inspection Company	Annual inspection	341.82	2058
BATPC	Planning Training	40.00	2059
Oakley Village Hall	S. 137 donation	1,000.00	2060
	Hire of Committee Room 01.09.25. (NDP) & 02.09.25. Hire of Hall		
Oakley Village Hall	19.09.25. for quiz	79.00	2061
Total		£12,997.69	

b) completion of 2024/25 audit & 2025-26 email requirements

External auditors were content with the accounts and had no matters to draw to Council's attention. Closure of the audit had been advertised. Council thanked Clerk.

Action

Auditors had advised that for the 2025/26 audit councils would need either a .gov.uk or .org.uk email address. Website manager had advised that Council would need to apply for a .gov.uk domain, create an account and pay direct. He also suggested moving the website over to the new domain but keeping the current one and redirecting to the new .gov.uk domain. Website manager had obtained a quotation from EasySpace for £35.00 + VAT per year, with terms available from 1 to 10 years. In addition, a DNSSEC (Domain Name System Security Extensions) would be required at £16.00 + VAT per year, also available for 1 to 10 years. Website manager was considering whether it would be possible to simply change the email address as opposed to creating a new mailbox and undertaking a migration project. Clerk noted that many councils use CloudNext (an SLCC approved supplier) to host their .gov.uk websites and an account would cost £99.99p.a. Council agreed to discuss again in November.

Clerk

c) half yearly budget review

Receipt and payment figures had been circulated. Income was as budgeted except that there was no income from the Directory as the magazine had not been published, investment interest received from 2024 was higher than expected and £780 had been received in grants and donations from CPRE for the Riverside hedge and the former Gardening Club for a new seat on the Green. Expenditure was as expected except that monies allocated for repairs to play equipment and bus shelters and for the allotments had not yet been needed.

d) Clerk's expenses

Proposed by Cllr. T. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that expenses of £69.33 for the period July to September 2025 be paid

Resolved

20. Date of Next Meeting: 4th November 2025