

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 2nd December 2025 in the Village Hall

PRESENT:

Cllr. S. Fardon (Chair), C. Bays, P. Jones, R. Saunders, J. Walker, P. White, the Clerk, Mrs. Paice and 3 members of the public.

1. Public Open Session:

Three residents were concerned about drainage, parking, layout, materials and maintenance of the Open Space on the development off the High Street (application 25/02085/MAR), particularly as the slope of the site had not been taken into account and so potential flooding issues had not been addressed – see item 14a).

2. Apologies: J. Abbott (business), P. Olney (illness), T. Saunders (personal), R. Worker (personal)

3. Declarations of Interest: Cllrs. Bays for item 7b) as a relative of OSSC officers/staff. Chair for item 11 as a member of the Youth Club Committee

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th November 2025:

Resolved: to adopt the minutes.

5. Clerk's Report:

Highways – Cllr. Jones had removed leaves on the footway adjacent to the Green and Council thanked her. Residents had requested hard standing at the bus stop opposite The Drive. Bedford BC had advised that they did not have the resources to provide hard standing. Residents had also asked for white lines to be re-painted and for a hedgehog sign on Church Lane at the Ruffs Furze junction. Passed to Bedford BC. Lovell Road had been closed 14.11.25. due to flooding under the railway bridge. Cllr. Walker noted that the pump kept silting up and the supplier had gone out of business so Highways had included a project to divert the water in the 2026/27 Borough Capital Programme. Bedford BC had issued a confirmation notice for diversion of part of Bridleway 7 in Oakley and Bridleway 27 in Clapham.

Speed Watch – nil return from event 07.11.25. in Highfield Road, 6 vehicles speeding in Highfield Road 40 mph zone 17.11.25. Reported to police

Litter bins – bin at Lovell Road was not emptied w/c 24.11.25. and reported to Bedford BC. Bedford BC had acknowledged the report and asked crews to deal

Trees – works to tree at The Furlong play area had been carried out

Quiz – profit from the November quiz was £208.78

6. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th November 2025: none

Action

7. Reports:**Action****ORA Meeting 18.11.25.**

Cllrs. Abbott & T. Saunders attended. ORA provided unaudited accounts for 2024/25, which had been circulated. Halloween disco 03.11.25. was successful but a loss leader for OSSC. There was one observation about inconsiderate parking in Dewlands, despite the signs and warnings, for the Fireworks event. Cllr. T. Saunders noted that concern had also been raised with Council that attendees had parked in the churchyard when the Church had a concert that evening. Cllr. Abbott to provide contact details for the church, so OSSC and the church could liaise more closely in future. Christmas Fair would be held on 13.12.25. and OSSC was still considering how the new extension would be funded. Motorcycle Club had a record membership of 586 members and would be presenting a further £6K to the Air Ambulance on 27.12.25. Wednesday & Sunday poker sessions were well attended. ORA suggested that the Memorandum of Understanding between Council and ORA be reviewed by a small group of councillors and OSSC committee members in the New Year to ensure that it was fit for purpose. The noise mitigation group wanted to know how Bedford BC dealt with noise issues for their events. A Freedom of Information request had been submitted which had not yet been answered and Cllr. Abbott would follow up.

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

EWR had issued updated proposals following analysis of the 2024 consultation, which included a discontinuous electrification system, a relocated multi-storey car park and a new platform at Bedford Station, more passenger services (up to five per hour plus freight trains), four stations only on the Marston Vale line, relocation of St. John's station, relocation of the new multi-storey car park from the east of Bedford station to a site west of the station, accessed from Ford End Road and additional land at Ashburnham Road for the construction compound. EWR was considering moving the track between Clapham and Ravensden to the east enabling reduction of the depth and width of the cutting by building the railway at a lower point in the hill, changing the position of the Great Ouse northern abutment and refining plans for track drainage and access routes to help maintain views along the river and along Clapham Road, and mitigate any potential issues with surface water flows.

Bromham bridge would still be extended to accommodate two additional tracks. The next consultation was expected to be held in Spring/Summer 2026, when flood mitigation measures would be published. The Planning & Infrastructure Bill would remove the requirement for statutory consultation.

9. Police Report:**Action**

There was 1 reported crime in the second half of October, criminal damage to a vehicle in Station Road and 2 in the first half of November, a harassment offence and a public fear offence in Parrott Close. Next Coffee with a Cop would be at Milton Ernest Garden Centre 20.12.25.

Action

Clerk

CB
Chair

Action

Clerk

Clerk
Clerk

Clerk

Chair noted that there were slippery leaves on the footway from Lovell Road to the Church and Clerk to ask Bedford BC to clear

13. Borough Council Report:

Borough Cllr. Walker reported that finance was still a major issue. Lane closures would be in place on the A6 24 hours a day 7 days a week for drainage works from 05.01.26. for approximately 30 days. The damaged/broken barriers would be repaired at the same time. There had been more incidents of screws on the road and two new ASB officers had been appointed for the Town Centre, paid for by Government, who would liaise with police. Queens Park bridge was not repairable and would be taken down in January. The Borough had considered a temporary bridge but the river was too wide. Christmas markets and an outdoor cinema were being held 06. & 07.12.25.

Action**14. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:****Decisions notified since Council meeting – 4th November 2025**

Application No. **25/01722/TPO** – remove dead wood and reduce various trees at Trees Church Lane

Parish Comments: No objection

Decision/Date: Permission 17.11.25.

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

Parish Comments: No objection

Decision/Date: Permission 28.11.25.

Applications received since Council meeting – 4th November 2025:

Application No. **a) 25/02085/MAR** - reserved matters except access for a residential development of up to 10 dwellings, site access and highway works, associated infrastructure, green infrastructure including sustainable drainage, ecological habitats, amenity green space, demolition of existing outbuildings and ancillary works, pursuant to outline permission 23/02494/MAO

Parish Comments: Objection on the grounds that:-

1. parking - 17 spaces are shown on the drawings with only two visitor spaces, which is insufficient and access to plot 2 would be difficult. The Oakley Neighbourhood Plan Design Brief for the site states that parking should be integral to the layout of each house.

2. drainage - calculations are based on CCTV surveys from 2021 and should be updated. Also, levels are not indicated on the drawings and the slope of the site would suggest that not all the run off water will be collected before entering the High Street, the lowest point on the site. Flooding will thus be caused at the narrowest point in a narrow road, which already regularly floods after heavy rain. Again, because of the slope of the site, properties at the back of the development will be vulnerable to flooding and additional hardstanding required for more parking spaces will exacerbate the drainage issues.

3. layout - the red line around the site does not follow the boundary and the visibility splays need checking. The lack of levels and ridge heights on the drawings give a misleading context with neighbouring properties. House no. 8 extends into the tree protection zone and there are no bungalows on the plans although these were promised when Oakley PC met with the previous owners of the site. Oakley Neighbourhood Plan policy DH1 requires new housing to complement and integrate with the local surroundings in terms of scale, height and massing. In addition, access to the road from the bin store for house no. 4 is around plot no. 3 so bins will potentially be left in front of the property. The plans state that twenty additional trees will be planted but there is no indication where these will be sited and street lighting is not mentioned. Given the slope of the site streetlamps could adversely affect neighbouring properties.

4. materials - a single red brick is out of keeping with neighbouring properties and the horizontal timber boarding is not found elsewhere in Oakley. Oakley Neighbourhood Plan policy DH2 states that new development must complement the existing character of the village using high quality and durable materials to complement the existing palette of materials used in the surrounding area.

5. Open space maintenance - there is no indication how the open spaces and tree belts on the site will be maintained. Oakley PC would not want trees to be allocated to individual householders and then subsequently removed

Council also agreed to ask the new owners of the site to discuss their plans with Council

Action
Clerk

Application No. **b) 25/02167/LBC** - for render to rear extension and retrospective removal of 1 wall nib in lounge/diner at 27 Station Road

Parish Comments: No objection

15. Planning Policy:

Neighbourhood Development Plan Review - Housing Needs Survey (HNS)
NDP Group had met 05.11.25.to discuss the HNS. They agreed that the purpose of the HNS should be made clearer in the covering letter; the covering letter should advise if/when the results would be published; housing needs “could” not “would” be in addition to those developments already approved in the NDP and that the first question in the survey itself should be removed as the reference to fourteen houses gave the impression that this number had been decided. They also agreed that a month should be given to return the HNS (the same as the previous HNS) and a reminder sent out on social media after three weeks to prompt responses. A report from BRCC giving response rates every week would also enable the Group to carry out additional promotion within the village if numbers were low.

Action

Clerk had asked for a revised draft incorporating these changes and for the HNS to be distributed the second week in January 2026.

A revised draft with an increased cost of £2.140 + VAT (to cover additional printing) had been forwarded with question 1 retained but with an explanation that a typical rural exception site ('local needs' affordable development) was up to 14 homes but was based on demand from the community. NDP Member suggested it make clear that a review of the current NPD was being undertaken. Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Jones that the revised quotation and revised draft with clarification that a review of the current NDP was being undertaken be accepted

Resolved

Council also agreed to write to Mr. Fuller MP and ask if any weight was now being attached to Neighbourhood Plans.

Clerk

Clerk

16. Correspondence:

Cllr. White noted that the Lincroft student hit by a car was on the pedestrian crossing in Clapham not under Lovell Road bridge as had been reported.

Action

17. Grant Applications:

a) Villager Bus

Villager Bus had requested £250 to support their running costs. Total running costs were around £3,000 p.a. plus they need to set aside funds towards a new bus. Balance from other Parish Councils in North Beds, Bedford Borough and occasional hires. Previous grants of £450 in 2024 and £300 in 2018. No information on how many Oakley residents use the service but they regularly pick up passengers in Oakley and have recently changed the routes that pass through Oakley so that more passengers are boarding in the village. Balance of -934 on running costs but £61,560 total cash assets at 31.08.25.

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. White that £250 be donated

Resolved

Clerk

b) Good Neighbours' Scheme

The Good Neighbours Scheme had requested £600 for insurance/DBS checks, a mobile phone and contract and printing for publicity/promotion. As a new group, they had no other source of income. Fifteen volunteers and three committee members were all Oakley residents. Council was concerned that £600 was too high an initial donation as a previous scheme had not been used. Proposed by Cllr. White, seconded by Cllr. Bays that £300 be donated

Resolved

Clerk

18. Finance Matters:Action**a) accounts to pay****Income and balances:**

NatWest Bank – Current account balance at 31.10.25.	£27,250.51
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 31.10.25.	£2,434.73
Nationwide – Savings Bond	£63,147.25
Hampshire Trust – Savings Bond	£85,013.20

Received since last meeting:

Gallagher	Allotment rent	£48.06
Almond Garage		
Doors	Newsletter advertising	£108.00
Glos Gardening	Newsletter advertising	£216.00
NAO Cleaning	Newsletter advertising	£54.00
NAO Cattery	Newsletter advertising	£54.00
Oakley Angels	Newsletter advertising	£144.00
Lane & Holmes	Newsletter advertising	£432.00
Peacock	Newsletter advertising	£216.00
At Your Side Care	Newsletter advertising	£432.00
Testa	Newsletter advertising	£108.00
Worker	November quiz	£257.78
NatWest	Interest	£1.77
Total		£2,071.61

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

Old School	Rent for upper rooms November	153.83	s/o
Salaries	November payment	1,500.62	s/o
Day Centre	S.137 donation	500.00	2067
Creative Support	S. 137 donation - quiz	200.00	2068
Day Centre	S. 137 donation - quiz	200.00	2069
Pension Fund	November payment	576.35	2070

Payments Made:

White Hart Press	Printing Winter Newsletter	865.00	2071
Oakley Village Hall	Hire of rooms in November	75.25	2072
Total		£4,071.05	

b) review of bus shelter cleaner & litter picker performance & wagesAction

Council was content with the performance of the litter picker and bus shelter cleaner and Clerk to thank her for her work. Living wage to increase w.e.f. 01.04.26. to £12.71 per hour equating to £472.39 per month
Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Bays that salary be increased to £472.39 per month w.e.f. 01.04.26.

Resolved

Clerk

Assuming 30 minutes per shelter per month at national living wage, bus shelter cleaning wage would increase to £44.49 per month w.e.f. 01.04.26.

Proposed by Cllr. Bays, seconded by Cllr. Walker that wage be increased to £44.49 per month w.e.f. 01.04.26.

Resolved

Clerk

c) amendment to standing order

Following the 2025 pay award, the standing order for the Clerk's salary would need to be changed.

Proposed by Cllr. Bays, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that standing order be amended to £1,062.35 p.m.

Resolved

Clerk

d) new projects 2026/27

No specific projects had been included in the draft budget.

Proposed by Cllr. Walker, seconded by Cllr. White that £10K be allocated from the s.106 monies for the maintenance of The Furlong and other open spaces to be used to replace the wooden multiplay in The Furlong play area

Resolved

Clerk

19. **Date of Next Meeting:** 6th January 2026 - Finance Advisory Group
13th January 2026 - Council Meeting