

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023 in the Village Hall

**PRESENT:**

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

1. **Public Open Session:** none

2. **Apologies:** none

3. **Declarations of Interest:**

Cllrs. Abbott & White for item 7 as members of the OSSC. Cllr. Bays for item 7 as a relative of the Chair of ORA. Cllr. C Worker for item 7 as a relative of a member of the ORA/OSSC. Cllr. R Worker for item 7 as a relative of a member of the ORA/OSSC. Cllr. Abbott for items 10a) and 13 as a resident of The Furlong. Cllr. White for item 10c) as a colleague of the contractor. Cllr. Walker for item 11 as a relative of an allotment tenant. Chair for item 13b) as a resident of Lincroft. Cllrs. Olney and Walker for item 18 as members of Messy Church. Cllr. Olney for item 19 as a Trustee of the Day Centre.

4. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 :**

**Resolved:** to adopt the minutes.

5. **Clerk's Report:**

Highways – yellow lines at the Post Office had faded and Clerk had asked Highways to repaint. Chair had reminded residents via the Newsletter to park legally and considerately. There had recently been a near miss in Church Lane on the corner and Clerk to chase repainting the centre white line. Clerk had also asked Bedford BC to repair the speed camera box in Lovell Road and Stagecoach to provide a timetable for the bus stop in Station Road and to put the new timetables effective from 04.06.23. on all the bus stops. Lovell Road would be closed overnight 20 – 23.06.23. for high friction surfacing.

Speed Cameras – no data yet available for April or May

Speed Watch – there were nil returns for events 11.05.23. in the High Street & Lovell Road. Event 22.05.23. in Reynes Drive cancelled due to illness All reported to police.

Disposal of Litter – Bedford BC had advised that rubbish sacks could be collected if reported to the Borough. Clerk had advised volunteer litter picker.

Play equipment – residents were concerned about a sharp edge on the slide on the Green and Cllr. White had volunteered to smooth as regular contractor was unavailable. Council thanked him

Clerk

Brockwell Meadow – awaiting a date for the residents’ guided walk  
Tree Works – tree surgeon had confirmed that the pollarded tree on the corner of the Green could remain but that the limbs should be shortened as a safety measure. Residents were concerned about deadwood in a maple tree on the Green and the size of the birch tree in Farsands. Tree surgeon had advised that he had quoted to remove a limb from the maple but if, when he removed this, rot was present in the trunk he would remove the tree at no extra charge. Bedford BC had inspected the birch and advised that it was in good health, clear of the highway, streetlight and nearby properties and so did not need pruning.

Memorial Bench – a position on Ruffs Furze green had been agreed with family who wished to donate a bench and they would forward details of their preferred bench in due course

Linch Furlong – Cllr. Jones had put photographs of plants and animals that could be seen on site in the notice board and Council thanked her.

6. **Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023:** none

Action

7. **Meetings with ORA:-**

Bedford BC had advised that it was a matter for each councillor to consider the Code of Conduct and decide if they had a local interest on any matters being discussed at the meeting but the Code did not require them to leave the room. However, if a councillor had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as defined in the Code, they would be required to withdraw. Council agreed that Cllr. R. Worker could continue to represent Council at ORA meetings as his relative did not attend and he was reporting the agreed Council view.

Council had met with ORA 01.06.23. ORA and Council both set out their positions. Council was a joint lessee with ORA for the Field and Council paid the annual rent to Oakley Properties to provide time for other arrangements to be put in place if the ORA folded. ORA was accountable to the Charity Commission and was responsible for the day to day running of the site. However, if residents raised issues about the ORA with Council, Council had a responsibility to pass these on and would do so. All wished to move forward constructively but ORA could not accept general third party complaints. If Council continued to receive complaints it could approach outside bodies such as Bedford BC Environmental Health and explain to residents the procedures these bodies required.

Council was concerned that the tennis court had been converted to parking but it was ORA’s decision how to manage the facilities. ORA was unhappy about the Newsletter article on the tennis court. They had responded to feedback and tried to satisfy complainants e.g. car rallies had reverted to monthly. However, given their financial pressures, all facilities, including the tennis court, needed to be multi use. ORA confirmed that the tennis court would not be used for parking during the Summer.

Chair to include an update on the tennis court in the September Newsletter and suggested ORA detail their activities in the Newsletter. ORA to consider. ORA explained the purpose and format of ORA meetings and the next meeting was 18.07.23. Council noted that grants were available to village organisations and ORA had received monies in the past but Council could not contribute to ongoing maintenance. ORA confirmed that they would be applying for a grant to repair the boules pitch once quotations for repairs were obtained. The meeting ended positively with both sides in agreement on how to work together.

PJ, TS,  
RW

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

**Local Representatives' Group meeting 05.06.23. to discuss Bedford to Cambridge route announcement**

EWR had announced 25.05.23. that alignment 1 which passed to the north of Ravensden and Wilden had been selected for the line between Bedford and Cambridge. A new station would be sited at Tempsford and six tracks would be needed out of Bedford so houses would have to be demolished.

Cllrs. Abbott, Olney and Walker attended the meeting 05.06.23. and reported that St John's Station would be moved closer to Bedford Hospital, which the hospital supported. However, parking for the hospital had not been resolved as the new station would be sited on the current hospital car park. EWR would continue to refine the route details and a statutory consultation would be held in 2024. A public meeting would be held at Manton Heights on 13.06.23. Information was on the website

<https://oakleyvillage.co.uk/news/east-west-rail-public-meeting> and Clerk to advertise on noticeboards too. There was still no business case for the route or documentation showing why the northern route was cheaper. Government supported the EWR project and EWR was confident that it would be built but Mr. Fuller MP continued to oppose the route as he considered it unviable. The Varsity hybrid route was raised again but EWR had discounted this because of environmental impacts and loss of public open space, particularly at Priory Park. Tempsford had been chosen for the new station to move it away from the black cat roundabout and closer to the Central Bedfordshire housing development in the area. Maps were unclear but EWR Chief Executive had advised that the viaduct near the Sainsbury roundabout would cross the river and A6 and then cross Clapham Road near the Anglian Water site.

Action

Clerk

**9. Police Report:**

Clerk had asked police to reschedule a visit to the Methodist Coffee Morning and awaiting a date when they are available.

There were 3 reported crimes in May, 2 assaults with injury in Station Road and Brockwell and 1 assault without injury in Lincroft

Action

Clerk

<p><b>10. <u>Repairs to Fences:</u></b>  <b>a) The Furlong</b>  Part of the wooden fence adjacent to the bund at the rear of The Furlong was leaning and Clerk had received one quotation to repair for £480 + VAT to supply and install 4 concrete spur posts to fence posts. Other contractors had not responded.  Proposed by Cllr. Walker, seconded by Cllr. Jones that quotation for £480 + VAT be accepted  <b>Resolved</b></p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>b) entrance stone wall in Lovell Road</b>  One contractor had quoted £395 + VAT to repair the wall in Lovell Road. Other contractors were unable to carry out the work or had not responded. Clerk had asked contractors to check the other entrance walls too but no quotations received. Cllr. Walker noted that other walls were in better condition.  Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that quotation for £395 + VAT be accepted  <b>Resolved</b></p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>c) wooden gate at Riverside Meadow</b>  The post on the gates at the church entrance to Riverside Meadow had broken and gates were hanging. As the gates were in danger of falling a quotation for £275 had been accepted on H&amp;S grounds to repair and the work had been carried out. Other contractors had quoted £395 + VAT and £700 - £800 + VAT to repair. Council ratified the payment.  Cllr. T. Saunders noted that the fence adjacent to the Bedford Arms needed repairing and Clerk to report to Oakley Properties.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>11. <u>Allotments:</u></b>  Allotment Manager had asked Council to purchase two large bags of mot to repair the potholes on the site at a cost of £142.50 + VAT  Proposed by Cllr. White, seconded by Cllr. Olney mot be purchased at a cost of £142.50 + VAT  <b>Resolved</b></p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p><b>12. <u>Grass Cutting:</u></b>  Council was concerned that various areas including the churchyard had not been cut properly or had been missed. Clerk had chased the contractors and they had returned to finish the work. Clerk had reiterated each time that all the village should be mown at the same time. Cllr. C. Worker noted that the strimming was very erratic and the grass very long at the Station Road roundabout. Clerk to continue to chase and to request Bedford BC reduce the first quarter invoice given the poor service.</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Clerk</p>

13. <b><u>Highway Matters:</u></b>	<u>Action</u>
<p><b>a) double yellow lines in The Furlong</b>  Cllr. Abbott &amp; the resident, who was concerned about parking had met with Highways on site on 11.05.23. Bedford BC had advised that bollards and H bars would not resolve the parking issues and suggested double yellow lines. Awaiting a formal proposal from Highways and Cllr. Abbott was chasing.</p>	JA
<p><b>b) parking in Lincroft</b>  Resident was concerned about parking in Lincroft between the entrance and no. 32 particularly at school dropping off/picking up times. Drivers could not see around the bend and there had been one collision, many near misses and motorists regularly had to go onto driveways or the footway to avoid oncoming vehicles. Cllr. Walker noted that residents had previously objected to yellow lines on this corner so Bedford BC had not pursued. Councillors agreed that there were similar problems in other parts of the village e.g. Station Road, Lovell Road and Reynes Drive and were concerned that yellow lines were urbanising and would move the problem further along a street. However, Council agreed to ask Bedford BC to review Lincroft again on safety grounds. Clerk would also ask police to speak to motorists parking dangerously near junctions in Reynes Drive.</p>	Clerk Clerk
<p>Council confirmed to new members that monies from the speed camera fines went to central Government and neither the Parish nor Borough Council benefited financially but cameras were installed for safety reasons.</p>	
14. <b><u>Parish Council Communication Strategy:</u></b>	<u>Action</u>
<p>Clerk had circulated a copy of the Council Communication Strategy. Cllr. R. Worker suggested that Council should promote their activities better in the Newsletter and on the website by including councillor profiles, photographs and their specific responsibilities and organisations on which they represented the Council.  Council agreed and Clerk to arrange.</p>	Clerk
15. <b><u>Monthly Parish Council Quiz:</u></b>	<u>Action</u>
<p>Cllr. R. Worker suggested Council run a quiz on a specified day each month in a specified venue with teams of six paying a fee per head and able to bring their own refreshments if necessary. Monies would be collected by Council, banked and at the end of the year donated equally to nominated village groups. Donations would benefit village groups and further demonstrate that the Council was proactive in supporting village activities. Cllr. R. Worker was content to run the quiz and Cllr. C. Worker had volunteered to assist. Council agreed Cllr R. Worker to investigate interest in the village and report back to July Council.</p>	RW

**16. Borough Councillor's Report:**

Cllr. Walker reported that the new Executive had taken up their posts and new Scrutiny Committees had begun to meet. Bedford BC was prioritising Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and, in addition to the new school, a Summer of SEND programme would be held with a range of activities for SEND families during the school holidays. Cllr. Walker had asked the Mayor to attend a Parish Council meeting and Clerk to arrange for July or September if the Mayor was available.

Cllr. Abbott reported that the first sitting of the Local Plan Examination would be held w/c 12.06.23. and the second in September. Government had not removed housing targets so the Plan was proceeding on the basis of published dwelling numbers required. Membership of the Planning Committee was largely unchanged and the first meeting of the new Committee would be held 19.06.23. Road repairs were being carried out in the villages and a trial of 4 hours free parking in All Hallows car park would begin shortly. The Kite and Motoring Festival was on 24/25.06.23. and the by-election in Wyboston on 29.06.23.

Action

Clerk

**17. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:****Decisions notified since Council meeting – 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

Application No. **23/00640/TPO** - works to a group of sycamores and an elm at 1 The Spinney, Parsonage Close

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 22.05.23.

Clerk noted that a legal development certificate had been refused for the siting of a caravan for ancillary use at Courtyard Barn, The Drive.

**Applications received since Council meeting – 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

Application No. **a) 23/00974/TPO** - single storey rear extension at 1 Farrows Close

Parish No objection

Comments

Application No. **b) 23/01057/FUL** - new hard standing play space located on existing soft play area at Lincroft Academy

Parish No objection

Comments

Application No. **c) 23/01047/LBC** - refurbishment of barn at Mallows, The Drive

Parish No objection

Comments

Application No.	d) <b>18/01284/FUL</b> – additional documents for construction and operation of a broiler rearing unit, including manure spreading map, at land north east of Westwood AD Plant, Rushden	Clerk
Parish Comments	Objection previously objected on the grounds that storing and spreading manure on fields adjacent to residential properties in Oakley would adversely affect residents by contributing to air pollution, create the potential for polluting the river and is contrary to the objectives of the NPPF. Council agreed to reiterate their objections.	
<p><b>e) representation at Planning Inquiry into refusal of 21/02394/MAO</b> - up to 40 dwellings, vehicular and pedestrian access, green infrastructure including open space and landscaping, related drainage and other infrastructure works at land off Station Road</p> <p>Bedford BC had advised that Statements of Common Ground had been agreed with the appellant on noise from the railway, highways layout and the contents of the legal agreement. Bedford BC had advised that as an outline application, only access was being considered and the exact number of properties and detailed layouts and designs would be agreed at the reserved matters stage if the appeal was successful. Council had written to the Appeal Inspector, Mayor, Chief Officer for Planning, Infrastructure &amp; Economic Growth and Planning Officer reiterating Council's view that that the appeal should be dismissed as additional housing is not allocated in the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) nor required by Bedford BC Local Plans 2030 and 2040. Inquiry would be held 20.06.23. and Cllrs. Olney and Walker to attend as representatives of the NDP Group and Council respectively.</p> <p>Cllr. Olney tabled a draft setting out the rigorous process undertaken by the NDP Group to allocate 30 houses for Station Road. Council was content.</p>		PO/JW
<b>18. <u>Correspondence:</u></b>	Messy Church had asked to use Linch Furlong on 27.06.23.for a picnic. Council had no objection and Cllr. Walker to confirm.	<u>Action</u> JW
<b>19. <u>Grant Applications:</u></b> <b>Oakley Day Centre</b>	Oakley Day Centre had requested a grant at Council's discretion to help run the Centre. Client fees only covered a portion of their expenditure and they relied on donations and grants for continuing their care for frail and elderly North Beds residents. Annual grants had been made since 2010 and £500 had been donated in 2022 and 2021. Four Oakley residents used the Centre, of which one normally attended three days per week and another two days.	<u>Action</u>

Balance of accounts at 31.03.22. was £102,315 plus reserves of £103,266 to enable the Centre to operate for two years if no grants or funding were received and to pay for redundancies if it had to close or urgent relocation costs if the Old School was no longer available. Income in 2021/22 was £52,310 and expenditure £50,782.

Proposed by Cllr. Walker, seconded by Cllr. Abbott that £500 be granted

**Resolved** S. 137 donation

Clerk

**20. Finance Matters:**

Action

**a) accounts for period up to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023**

**Income and balances:**

NatWest Bank - Current account balance at 31.05.23.	£24,587.47
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 31.05.23.	£7,301.38
Nationwide - Savings Bond	£61,006.43
Hampshire Trust - Savings Bond	£85,013.20

**Received since last meeting:**

Twinwood Events	Newsletter advertising	120.00
HMRC	2022/23 VAT Refund	4255.07
J D Landscapes	Directory advertising	70.00
Badminton Club	Directory advertising	20.00
Oakley Plant Hire	Directory advertising	130.00
NatWest	Interest	7.08
<b>Total</b>		<b>£4,602.15</b>

**Payments Already Made:**

**Chq. No.**

Salaries	May payment	1482.58	s/o
Paice	Expenses January - March 2023	29.83	1853
Oakley Village Hall	S. 137 donation	1000.00	1854
Country Days	S. 137 donation	50.00	1855
Bays	Website hosting & management 2023/24	1280.00	1856
Bedfordshire Pension Fund	May payment	506.74	1857

**Payments Made:**

White Hart Press	Printing Summer Newsletter	845.00	1858
BATPC	New councillor training x 4	140.00	1859
Oakley Village Hall	Hire of Committee Room 06.06.23.	18.00	1860
<b>Total</b>		<b>£5,352.15</b>	

**Resolved:** to approve the accounts for payment

Clerk

**21. Date of Next Meeting: 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023**