

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 7th April 2026 in the Village Hall

PRESENT:

Cllr. S. Fardon (Chair), J. Abbott, C. Bays, P. Jones, R. Saunders, T. Saunders, J. Walker, P. White, the Clerk, Mrs. Paice and 1 member of the public.

1. Public Open Session:

Chair had received correspondence from a resident about the St. John Ambulance First Aid Village project, whereby at least one person on every street is trained in life saving skills. The resident had suggested pursuing in Oakley. Clerk to investigate the cost and whether the Good Neighbours Scheme would be interested in being involved.

Clerk

Cllr. Walker reported that the bin in the play area on the Green had not been emptied. Clerk to report to Bedford BC.

Clerk

2. Apologies: P. Olney (personal), R. Worker (personal)

3. Declarations of Interest: none

4. Sites for New Trees:

CPRE had offered councils a commemorative oak tree and Cllr. Worker had agreed a location in Riverside Meadow with the contractor for the site. CPRE had advised that they could not delay planting until the Autumn and had planted the tree on 02.04.26.

A resident had offered to donate two Persian Ironwood trees to Council. Council's contractor had suggested planting them on the Green but as they grow to 30m tall and 15 m wide councillors agreed that they would be too near houses and play equipment. Clerk to thank the resident and ask if she had any sites in mind for the trees.

Clerk

5. Funding for Speed Watch Batteries, Brackets & Clips:

Speed Watch Team had requested funding for new batteries, brackets & clips for the Viacount. They had obtained a quotation for £146.08 + VAT for the batteries and Clerk had received a quotation of £384.64 + VAT for the brackets and clips although carriage would be subject to change because of fuel price volatility. Clerk noted that Council had not budgeted for new Speed Watch equipment and so it would need to be funded from the contingency.

Councillors were concerned about the cost and Cllr. White offered to try and source cheaper alternatives. Council therefore agreed to defer to the May meeting.

Clerk

6. Highways – future maintenance of average speed cameras:

Bedford BC had advised that the maintenance and effectiveness of average speed cameras was under review. They would continue to fund the calibration and maintenance of cameras in the 2026/27 financial year and would not therefore require a contribution from councils at present. However, the cost of maintenance was significant and they had asked for Council's views on the cameras' effectiveness and if all the Oakley cameras were still needed. Clerk noted that future maintenance would cost around £20,000 for four sets per annum.

The Speed Watch Team had commented that they were surprised the numbers of offences recorded per month by the Borough Council was so low given the data they had recorded and that the cameras did not work as well when accelerating and braking were routine between the two camera sites. They also had real concern about high speeds being achieved in short sections of all roads. Cllr. Walker commented that Station Road and Church Lane cameras were poorly sited but the police had determined their positions. Councillors agreed that Pavenham Road and Lovell Road cameras were needed given the volume of traffic and number of offences but Church Lane and Station Road were not. Council agreed to ask Bedford BC for support to maintain the Pavenham Road and Lovell Road cameras and to leave the others in place as a deterrent.

Carlton PC had requested Council's views on maintenance costs for cameras and Clerk to forward.

Clerk

Clerk

7. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:**Decisions notified since Council meeting – 3rd March 2026**

Application No. **25/02057/S73** - variation of condition application for erection of prefabricated building for Oakley Pre-School in paddock to the rear of Oakley Methodist Church, including variation of conditions 12 and 13 attached to 21/03047/S73 (which replaced 18/02691/FUL) to adjust the hours of operation and to substitute the 2022 Noise Management Plan

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 31.03.26.

Clerk noted that a certificate to confirm the lawful implementation of planning permission 23/01149/FUL for Milford House, Westfield Road had been issued on 26.03.26.

Applications received since Council meeting – 3rd March 2026:

Application No. **a) 26/00472/FUL** - conversion of the loft space above the garage including addition of 2 no. dormer windows at 17 Brockwell

Parish No objection

Comments:

Application No. **b) 26/00458/FUL** - demolition of The Gables, existing garages, car port and erection of replacement bungalow, garage and car port (Self Build) at The Gables, Westfield Road

Parish No objection

Comments:

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

NatWest Bank – Current account balance at 31.03.26.	£5,555.02
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 31.03.26.	£2,442.39
Nationwide – Savings Bond	£63,147.25
Hampshire Trust – Savings Bond	£85,013.20

Received since last meeting:

Hazel Kaye	Newsletter advertising	£432.00
Worker	March quiz	£292.50
NatWest	Interest	1.89
	Total	£726.39

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

Old School	Rent for upper rooms March	153.83	s/o
Salaries	March payment	1,500.62	s/o
Pension Fund	March payment	576.35	2103
HMRC	Quarterly PAYE	993.10	2104
Churchill	Installing play equipment	1450.00	2105
Anglian Water	Allotment water	45.84	d/d

Payments Made:**Online payments**

Bedford BC	Quarterly grass cutting payment	2,956.69
Fenland Leisure		
Products Ltd	2026/27 play inspections	410.40
Oakley Village Hall	Hire of rooms in March	68.50
Information		
Commissioner	Data protection renewal	52.00
Paice	Salary arrears 2025/26	322.03
	Total	£8,529.36

9. Date of Next Meeting: 5th May – Annual General Meeting