

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 5th May 2026 in the Village Hall

PRESENT:

Cllr. S. Fardon (Chair), J. Abbott, C. Bays, P. Jones, R. Saunders, T. Saunders, R. Worker, the Clerk, Mrs. Paice and 2 members of the public.

1. Election of Chair:

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that Cllr. Fardon be elected as Chair.

Resolved

Council thanked Cllr. Fardon for her work as Chair in 2025/26. Cllr. Fardon signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chair

2. Election of Vice Chair:

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Bays that Cllr. R Saunders be elected as Vice-Chair

Resolved

Council thanked Cllr. R. Saunders for his work as Vice-Chair in 2025/26. Cllr. R Saunders signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Vice-Chair.

3. Public Open Session:

Chair thanked the resident who had offered Council a tree to plant.

Cllr. Abbott reported that a resident had raised concerns about poor visibility because of parked cars at the Lincroft/Reynes Drive junction and had requested double yellow lines around the bend. Council to discuss at June meeting.

Clerk

4. Apologies: Cllr. Olney (illness), Cllr. Walker (personal), Cllr. White (illness)

5. Declarations of Interest: Cllr. Worker for item 14 as a member of the Speed Watch Team. Cllr. Abbott for item 17a) as a resident of The Furlong. Cllr. Bays for item 22i) as a relative of the website manager. Cllrs. Abbott & Bays for item 22j) as members of the Scout Group.

6. Co-option of New Councillors:

One resident had volunteered to join the Council. She made a brief presentation and Council agreed to co-opt her.

Cllr. Amber Hine signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Action

7. Appointment of Advisory Group Members and Council Representatives on other bodies:

Finance Advisory Group: Chair, J Abbott, J Walker, R Worker

Planning Advisory Group: C Bays, P Jones, P Olney, R Saunders, J Walker

NDP Group: P Olney, J Walker, R Worker

Allotment Group: A Hine, P Olney. Former Cllr. Nicholas to continue as allotment manager

Speed Watch Group: R Worker. Former Cllr. Phillips to continue as co-ordinator

Village Roads Co-ordinator: P White, J Abbott

Footpaths & Waste Bins: P Jones

Oakley Directory: A. Hine, Mr. Chalker (resident)

Oakley Recreational Association: J Abbott, T Saunders,

Village Hall: P White

Oakley Rural Day Care Centre: P Olney

Education Charity Trust: J Walker (Reserve R Worker)

The Villager Community Minibus: C Bays

Tree Warden: R Saunders

Youth Club: S Fardon

Resolved to appoint

8. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 7th April 2026 and the Council Meetings held on 3rd March and 7th April 2026:

Resolved: to adopt the minutes.

9. Clerk's Report:

Highways – potholes in Ruffs Furze had been reported to Bedford BC. Bridleway 2 off Highfield Road had been closed temporarily from 10.03.26. for up to six months for railway works.

Grass cutting – cutting began 24.03.25. and work had been good to date. Clerk had thanked Bedford BC.

Brockwell Meadow – the licence to use in 2026/27 had been signed by the Kindergarten.

Trees – concerns had been raised about a tree in Parsonage Close and Clerk had asked the tree surgeon to inspect this and all Council owned trees. Cllr. Jones had offered to replace the apple tree on Ruffs Furze Green that had died and Council thanked her.

Speed Cameras - 39 notices of intended prosecution were issued in February, 37 for speeds up to 40mph and 2 for speeds between 41mph and 45mph. 46 notices of intended prosecution were issued in March, 39 for speed up to 39mph, 3 for speeds between 40mph and 42mph, 3 for speeds between 44mph and 46mph and 1 for a speed of 50mph.

Speed Watch – there were nil returns from the events in Church Lane 04.03.26, Reynes Drive 13.03.26. and Highfield Road 23.04.26. Two vehicles were speeding at the event 19.03.26. in Pavenham Road and two at the event 24.03.26. in Pavenham Road. Reported to police. The event on 09.04.26. was cancelled due to lack of volunteers.

Rural Skips – these would be in the village later than usual because of the roll out of food waste collections

Litter bins – all bins were emptied w/c 17.03.26. & w/c 13.04.26. None except those at the twin bridges were emptied w/c 30.03.26. Riverside Meadow and Station Road/Reynes Drive bins were missed w/c 27.04.26. Reported to Bedford BC. Bedford BC had apologised for the missed collections and the bins were emptied the next day.

Bottle Banks – the bottle bank at Stevington Country Walk would be removed 11.05.26. following the success of glass recycling in orange bins

New Play Equipment – Clerk had met one company on site at The Furlong to discuss replacing the climbing unit and would be meeting others in May.

Seats at the Weir – the seats had been refurbished by the Parrott family and Council thanked them. Clerk to formally thank them.

Primary School places – Bedford BC had confirmed that the new school on the Clapham Milton Road development was no longer needed as there are many spaces in both Oakley Primary and Ursula Taylor, Clapham and students from the new development would go to either. It might be decided to build a nursery on the land allocated for the school as there is a shortage of places for pre-school children in North Bedfordshire but Clapham PC would like to build a new Village Hall there with nursery provision attached if funding could be found.

Quiz – profit for March was £240.00 and for April £253.50.

Clerk

10. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on 7th April 2026 and the Council Meetings on 3rd March and 7th April 2026: none

Action

11. Reports:

Action

a) ORA meeting 21.04.26.

Cllrs. Abbott & T. Saunders attended. The ORA were very pleased with the extension and refurbishment. 2026 events were Classic Cars 14.04.26, 12.05.26, 09.06.26, 14.07.26, 11.08.26 and 08.09.26. (6pm - 8:30pm); Cider and Hog Roast Festival 24.05.26; AFC Oakley “Roley Moore Tournament” 06.06.26; School’s Out 17.07.26. (expected to finish early evening); Oakley Motorcycle Club “Bike of the Year” 30.07.26. (live band, though smaller in scale than previous years); Oakfest 29.08.26. (1pm – 9pm); Soul Music Event 30.08.26. (2pm – 7pm); Fireworks 07.11.26. (5pm - 9pm) and Christmas Market & Fayre 12.12.26. (with buskers and potentially a choir). The information had been emailed to neighbours and Oakley Parish Council. An external contractor had been appointed to do the high-level maintenance of the field. Cllr. Saunders congratulated all on how fantastic the new facilities looked and Cllr. Abbott asked if Bedford Borough Council had followed up about noise mitigation. They had and it would be put into a new strategy.

Matt Kemp was the new Chair of AFC Oakley and AFC Oakley was the largest grassroots club in Bedfordshire with 42 teams and over 500 players. 329 attended the first classic cars meeting in April and they were working hard to ensure there is a smooth and quiet exit of vehicles as young people liked to film vehicles leaving the event.

Motorcycle Club membership was currently 370 and the Club was hosting a charity drive on 17th May, involving a procession of approximately 200 bikes. OSSC housed the best pool facilities in the league. Darts was going well and they were investigating whether a PDC darts player could attend OSSC for an evening. Sunday and Wednesday poker nights were also well attended.

b) Good Neighbours Scheme launch 24.03.26.

Cllrs. Walker & Worker attended. Mr. N. Walker was the Chair of the Scheme and cards had been distributed in the village and put on notice boards. There had been little take up as yet.

b) Bedford BC Network Meeting 30.03.26.

Cllrs. Bays & Jones attended. There were updates on Bedford BC finances and food waste collection programme plus EWR but nothing particularly relevant to Oakley.

12. East West Rail (EWR):

The final route wide consultation began on 14.04.26.until 09.06.26. and would provide latest designs and information including new high-resolution images of stations and fly-through animations of route sections; details on a phased construction period to deliver parts of the project earlier; new stations/upgrades to existing stations; proposed service patterns and carriage lengths to meet the demand for Universal theme park. Public events were being held along the route with one at King's House, Bedford on 23.05.26. from 11.00am – 6.00pm. Clapham PC would be holding a local meeting to discuss on 17.05.26. 3.30pm – 5.30pm.

Cllr. Abbott noted that EWR was listening to feedback on environmental/mitigation issues and the Bletchley to Bedford section was the priority to accommodate the Universal theme park.

Action

13. Police Report:

There were no reported crimes in the second half of February, 5 in March, 1 assault with injury and 1 assault without injury in Highfield Road, 1 assault with injury in Dewlands, 1 burglary in The Furlong and 1 stalking offence and 1 assault without injury in the first half of April.

The next Coffee with a Cop at Milton Ernest Garden Centre would be held on 09.05.26.

Action

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

Whites had provided a quotation for £96.00 + VAT for 2 batteries and £7.50 + VAT for 5 110 - 130mm jubilee clips. The brackets were custom made so would need to be purchased from the company that had quoted £263.64 + VAT + £60 carriage. Speed Watch Team had advised that they could manage without the clips and brackets at present.

Action

<p>Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. T. Saunders that the quotation for £96.00 + VAT be accepted Resolved</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>15. <u>Play Equipment Inspection:</u> Quarterly inspection had indicated that the seat at The Furlong needed re-staining and the work had been carried out as part of a previous quotation. On the Green, a new spring sleeve on the seesaw, a post bung, a new post on the log house, a new grass mat under the zip wire and soil around the MUGA were needed and the contractor had quoted £625 + VAT to carry out the repairs Proposed by Cllr. Bays, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that the quotation for £625 + VAT be accepted Resolved</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>16. <u>Revised Lease for Land at Oakley Weir:</u> Solicitor had advised that they had revised the lease to change the payment schedule to quarterly rather than annually and to include the requirement for Council to provide a copy of their public liability insurance to Oakley Properties each year. Proposed by Cllr. Worker, seconded by Cllr. Bays that amendments be accepted Resolved Chair to sign the revised lease</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Chair</p>
<p>17. <u>Highway Matters:</u> a) parking in The Furlong Clerk had written to all residents asking for their opinion on removal of the bollards. Three residents supported removal, one suggested congestion at the entrance was a bigger problem and no others had responded. Council confirmed their decision to ask for the bollards to be removed.</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>b) proposed waiting restrictions in Station Road To improve traffic flow at peak times and road safety, Bedford BC had proposed no waiting at any time on both sides of the bend by the old station and no waiting Monday to Friday 08:00 to 16:30 each side of the Reynes Drive junction on the west side of the road, each side of the footpath into Lincroft on the west side of the road and between nos. 92 and 96 on the west side of the road. Councillors were concerned about moving the problem elsewhere but agreed to support the proposal on safety grounds.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>Cllr. R. Saunders was concerned that the hedge on the Station Road/Lovell Road junction was restricting visibility at the mini roundabout and white lines had yet to be repainted Bromham side of the twin bridges. Clerk noted that Lincroft Academy had advised that the hedge was outside their boundary so Cllr. Abbott to ask Bedford BC to inspect and would pursue the white lines</p>	<p>JA</p>

Cllr. Jones commented that the pothole by the mini roundabout needed repairing and white lines repainting at the Lovell Road bridge pinch point.
 Cllr. Abbott noted that Highways was aware of the state of the road near the Post Office and would be repairing the crossroads during the Summer.

JA
 JA

18. Borough Council Report:

Cllr. Abbott reported that the Best Value inspection was ongoing and results would be reported in June. A cross-party Finance Improvement Group had also been established and the Borough was trying to reduce the overspends on Children’s and Adults’ Services. Borough Councillors would have Ward Funds in 2026/27 amounting to £1,910 per councillor. Powers of local planning authorities were being reduced as applications for over 150 houses were now sent directly to the Secretary of State for a decision. Changes to delegation rules would not have a great impact on Bedford BC but NDPs were now carrying less weight. Bedford BC had no 5 year land supply or up to date Local Plan so was vulnerable to development. Work had begun on the new Local Plan and the Plan had to be completed by November 2029. The Borough was asking developers to consult with local residents. An additional Council meeting would be held on 27.05.26. to agree a response to the EWR consultation and Bedford BC was trying to have the EWR car park moved from Queens Park. Changes to bus services would not affect Oakley. A dance studio would be taking over the Borough owned part of the Beales building and enforcement action had been taken against B&M to tidy the front of their store. The River Festival would be held 18 & 19.07.26.

Action

19. Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:

Decisions notified since Council meeting – 7th April 2026

Application No. **26/00166/TPO** - fell one Robinia at|1 The Spinney, Parsonage Close
 Parish Comments: No objection
 Decision/Date: Withdrawn 16.04.26.

Applications received since Council meeting – 7th April 2026:

Application No. **a) 26/00558/FUL** - front porch extension at 38 High Street
 Parish Comments: No objection

Application No. **b) 26/00703/TPO** - fell one tree and deadwood/prune others at The Spinney, Church Lane
 Parish Comments: No objection

Application No. **c) 26/00761/FUL** - change of use of land to an area of outdoor play in association with the Kindergarten and erection of single storey rear pergola extension to the existing main building, together with enhanced landscaping at Oakley Kindergarten
 Parish Comments: No objection

20. Planning Policy:Action**a) Housing Needs Survey report**

BRCC's draft report had been circulated and NDP Group would be discussing with BRCC on 14.05.26. Council had no comments.

b) Meeting with agents for Station Road development

Councillors and NDP Group had met agents for the Station Road development 11.03.26. Snowdon Homes would build the houses and Guinness Partnership would manage the site. The homes would be either social rent (21 properties) or shared ownership (19 properties) with social rent tenants taken from the Borough waiting list and shared ownership from 10% - 75% available to anyone. NDP Group requested that a small number of properties be allocated to those with a local connection to Oakley. Guinness would need grant funding from Homes England to complete the site and Homes England were not in favour of local allocations but Guinness supported the idea and agreed to pursue with them.

There would be 16 visitor spaces and 102 parking spaces in total in line with Bedford BC parking requirements. Snowdon Homes would be discussing the site with the schools and there would be a Traffic Regulation Order to prevent parking on the internal road. Council suggested designating the road as a School Street so only residents could access it at certain times. Council had asked for a condition preventing construction traffic from turning left out of the site and a prohibition on movements during school drop off/pick up times. Snowdon Homes confirmed that traffic would turn north out of the site and timing would be considered.

Council and NDP Group considered that the play area was dangerously positioned next to the entrance roundabout and suggested it should be more central or at the bottom of the site and Guinness would consider. Network Rail would need to decide the height and glare of lighting and approve the boundary fence because of the closeness of the site to the railway. NDP Group suggested that the development design mirror the design of Grange Close opposite.

Council and Bedford BC were concerned about management company charges for open space maintenance. Guinness used management companies and managed some sites themselves and Council suggested they discuss with Bedford BC. Council was also concerned about sewage flooding and Guinness agreed to pursue with Anglian Water. Guinness was looking to obtain planning permission by the end of 2026 and to start building in March 2027. The site would take two years to complete from the first enabling work to the final planting.

Council agreed that Clerk to ask agents for feedback on the points raised.

Clerk

21. Correspondence:

Action

a) resident request that Oakley become a First Aid Village

First Aid Villages had a trained first aider in every street. St. John's Ambulance had advised that the cost of training 12 volunteers would be £445 + VAT. Clerk noted that this had not been included in the budget.

Council agreed to put an article in the Newsletter to gauge interest in the scheme and Cllr. Worker to pursue with the Good Neighbours Group.

Clerk
RW

b) resident request for the bench at Judges' Spinney to be replaced

Resident had advised that the bench at Judges' Spinney was rotting and should be replaced. Council agreed to suggest the site for the next application for a memorial bench and Clerk to ask Bedford BC to inspect the condition of the existing seat.

Clerk

22. Finance Matters:

Action

a) accounts to pay

Income and balances:

NatWest Bank – Current account balance at 30.04.26.	£36,397.77
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 30.04.26.	£2,444.10
Nationwide – Savings Bond	£68,096.18
Hampshire Trust – Savings Bond	£85,013.20

Received since last meeting:

Bedford BC	Precept - first half	£32,075.00
HMRC	2025/26 VAT reclaim	£4,514.20
Worker	April quiz	£306.00
NatWest	Interest	£1.71
Nationwide	Interest 2025/26	£2,308.08
	Total	£39,204.99

Payments Already Made:

Chq. No.
/online

Old School	Rent for upper rooms April	153.83	s/o
Salaries	April payment	1,496.81	s/o
Pension Fund	April payment	500.03	online

Payments Made:

CPM Playgrounds	Playground repairs	1,392.00	2108
Oak. Properties	Rent for playing field 2026/27	1,019.24	2109
Betts	Internal audit	165.00	online
Oakley Village Hall	Hire of Hall 07.04.26. & 24.04.26.	82.50	online
Lewis	2025/25 salary arrears	£8.20	online
	Total	£4,817.61	

b) Internal Audit report

Internal audit had been carried out 17.04.26. Auditor had no matters to bring to Council's attention. Council thanked the Clerk.

c) Annual Governance Statement

Council considered the Annual Governance Statement and Proposed by Cllr. T. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Bays that the Annual Governance Statement be approved.

Resolved

Clerk and Chair signed section 1 of the audit return.

Clerk

d) 2025/26 end of year accounts

Clerk had circulated accounts.

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. R. Saunders that the accounts and section 2 of the audit return be approved.

Resolved

Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and Chair signed accounts.

Clerk and Chair signed section 2 of the audit return.

Clerk

e) Annual review of risk assessment policy

Clerk had circulated a draft risk assessment for 2026/27, which was unchanged. Chair suggested that the wording for the planning section be amended and the risk reduced to High/Medium, the playground risk severity be increased to High and references to "resident" be amended to "residents" to cover larger incidents. Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. Bays, that the risk assessment be adopted with the Chair's amendments

Resolved

Clerk

f) Annual review of internal audit system

Clerk had circulated a draft Audit Plan for 2026/27. Terms of Reference remained unchanged.

Proposed by Cllr. Bays, seconded by Cllr. Jones that the Audit Plan be adopted

Resolved

Clerk

g) Review of direct debits & standing orders

Proposed by Cllr. T. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Jones that Council continue to make monthly standing order payments for salaries and £153.83 to the Old School for rent of rooms, an annual direct debit payment of £420 to Bedford BC for the allotment site rent and to pay variable direct debit payments to Anglian Water for allotment water and the Information Commissioner for data protection fees

Resolved

Clerk

h) transfer of monies from Nationwide

Council had agreed to use £10,000.00 of the s.106 monies to replace the climbing unit in the Furlong play area and 95 days' notice was required to transfer the funds.

Proposed by Cllr. Worker, seconded by Cllr. Bays that Cllrs. R. Saunders and Walker sign the transfer request.

Resolved

Clerk

i) website renewal

Website manager had quoted £1,285.00 (no VAT) to host and manage the website for 2026/27 which included £60.00 for 12 months fully hosted mailbox and £25.00 to retain the previous oakleyvillage.co.uk domain name for a year.

Councillors had also been advised to use .gov.uk email addresses and the website manager had quoted £396.00 p.a. to set up and support. Microsoft 365 Business Basic, would charge £4.60 +VAT per user/month and Council would be responsible for management. Companies such as EVCO Services would provide Microsoft 365 with full support including access to a helpdesk.

Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. Worker that the quotations for £1,285.00 and £396.00 be accepted

Resolved

Clerk

j) distribution of quiz funds

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Bays that monies be given to for the Day Centre for their Christmas events and the remainder split equally between the Scout Group, the Brownies/Rainbows, the Messy Churches, AFC Oakley Junior Football, the ATC and the Speed Watch Group. The home for disabled residents had neither acknowledged nor thanked Council for their donations and so were removed from the list.

Resolved

Clerk/
RW

k) Clerk's Expenses

Proposed by Cllr. Abbott, seconded by Cllr. Bays that expenses of £65.77 for the period January to March 2026 be paid

Resolved

23. **Date of Next Meeting:** 2nd June 2026