

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

PRESENT:

Cllr. S. Fardon (Chair), J. Abbott, A. Hine, P. Jones, P. Olney (part), R. Saunders, T. Saunders, J. Walker, the Clerk, Mrs. Paice and 6 members of the public.

1. Public Open Session:

As this was her last meeting, Chair thanked the Clerk for her work for the Council and gave Council's best wishes for the future. NDP Chair and Newsletter editor also thanked the Clerk for her work on the NDP and help with the Newsletter.

Resident was concerned about application 25/02085/MAR. The amended drawings were misleading as there were no scale bars, the slope of the site was not obvious, the tree belts were shown as smaller but the positions of the houses were unchanged and the crowns of the trees had not been taken into account. The visibility splays also appeared to extend into neighbouring properties and drainage issues had not been addressed. Cllr. Abbott advised that planning permission could be sought on land that was not owned by the applicant but the developer would need to be able to build a splay which satisfied Highways. Clerk noted that Bedford BC had advised Council that drainage would be dealt with under a condition of any permission. See item 16

2. Apologies: Cllrs. C. Bays (business), P. White (personal), R. Worker (personal)

3. Declarations of Interest: Cllr. Abbott for item 10 as a resident of The Furlong and item 16 as Chair of Bedford BC Planning Committee

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd June 2026:

Resolved: to adopt the minutes.

5. Clerk's Report:

Highways – Traffic Regulation Orders for Station Road waiting restrictions came into force 15.06.26. There would be temporary daytime closures of Station Road from Reynes drive to Oakley Primary School on 23.07.26. for tree works and in Lovell Road from 03.- 07.08.26. for carriageway patching. Work to widen the existing footway between Reynes Drive and Lovell Road would be carried out 03.08.26. – 04.09.26.

Speed Watch – there was a nil return for the event 09.06.26. in the High Street. Reported to police. The event scheduled for 25.06.26. was cancelled because of extreme heat

Litter bins – all bins had been emptied. Bedford BC had advised that they do not empty the bin in the alley between Dewlands and Grenidge Way so Council would not need to replace it. Cllr. Walker had asked if the bin could be replaced with a dual purpose bin and, if so, she would fund from her Ward Fund. Bedford BC had agreed and Council was content so Cllr. Walker to allocate money for a bin.

JW

Fly tipping – mirrored glass had been dumped in the ditch outside Oakley Primary. Reported to Bedford BC and removed

First Aid Village – the scheme had been advertised in the Newsletter and one resident had volunteered

Brockwell Meadow – resident had asked to use the meadow to access her fence for repairs. Contractor had no objection provided the fencing contractors stayed on the mown areas and Clerk had advised the resident

Riverside Meadow – CPRE was concerned that hedge in Riverside Meadow is failing and requesting weeds be cut down in line with the landowner agreement. Contractor had cleared weeds and Clerk had pointed out to CPRE that they delayed the hedge planting until March so the subsequent very dry Spring was a major factor in it struggling

Lincroft Academy – residents were concerned about floodlights on the School's new building shining continuously into properties. Clerk had asked Planning Enforcement to investigate and suggested residents contact Environmental Health

Quiz – profit for June was £233.50

6. **Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd June 2026:**
none

Action

7. **Reports:**

a) Network Meeting 04.06.26.

Cllrs. Bays, Jones & Walker attended. Cllr. Walker reported that Family Hubs, of which there was one monthly in Oakley, were discussed and the Mayor updated the meeting on EWR. Health care provision was also discussed. Bedford BC was now part of the Central East Integrated Care Board which covered a wide area including Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire. The change had taken place recently and the new Board had 50% less staff so Bedford BC was in the process of determining how services could be kept local.

b) ORA Meeting 16.06.26.

Cllr. T. Saunders attended. ORA reported that The Hog Roast and Cider Festival was a success and they thanked the local supporters. The Roly Moore tournament was also successful and a complaint about a ball being kicked against a neighbouring fence was addressed quickly by OSSC and ORA. Saturday sessions would be taking place with singers and World Cup planning was underway.

Consideration was being given to rotating the football pitch to conform with FA guidelines of pitch length and youth regulations. Membership of the Motorcycle Club was currently 505 and on 04 & 05.07.26. OSSC would be a checkpoint for the ACU National Roads Rally. On 30.07.26 there would be a mini event with rock band KOPY KATZ and the Bike of the Year Show. Council had nothing to raise.

8. East West Rail (EWR):

Action

EWR had reported that more than 3,100 people attended consultation events and more than 5,000 feedback forms had been received. Feedback was being reviewed and a consultation summary report would be published in the Autumn and a Development Consent Order application submitted in 2027.

9. Police Report:

Action

There were 2 reported crimes in the second half of May, 1 assault without injury in Westfield Road and 1 stalking offence and 11 in June, 2 stalking offences, 2 sexual offences, 2 public order offences, 2 criminal damage, 1 assault without injury, 1 public fear offence and 1 possession of a blade.

Reports on FB of the smell of cannabis pervading properties in The Furlong, Dewlands by one of the alleyways, Parrots Close, Ruffs Furze and Lincroft had been reported. Police had advised that they would patrol the areas highlighted and had asked residents to report incidents on 101. Cllr. Jones had posted on FB. Possible drug paraphernalia by the seats along the path to the weir had also been reported to the police.

10. Play Equipment:

Action

a) new equipment at The Furlong

Clerk had discussed with various play companies and had received quotations for £9894.00 + VAT for a pick up sticks unit, £9,466 + VAT for an owl tree unit, £14,076.87 + VAT for a play tractor and pick up sticks unit, £7,064.71 + VAT for a mini timber trail, £9,100 + VAT for a bluebell play unit, £9,783.82 + VAT for a daisy play unit and £10,634.72 + VAT for a mini play set with slide. One contractor had suggested either a balancing trail or a trampoline but had not provided quotations

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. T. Saunders that the quotation for £9,466 + VAT for the owl tree unit be accepted

Resolved

Clerk

b) quarterly inspection report

Inspection indicated that fixings on the multiplay at The Furlong needed tightening. On the Green, the gate needed adjusting, algae/moss needed removing from around the spinner, springer and log climber; fixings on the log climber, wooden multiplay, silver multiplay and MUGA needed tightening; the grass mats needed repairing around the wooden multiplay, the silver multiplay and the supernova and the wetpour needed repairing around the log climber.

The report recommended that the hanger bearing on the group swing was showing wear and should be dismantled and checked and the seat, cable and trolley on the zipwire should be dismantled and inspected. The wetpour around various other items had shrunk again and would need repairing again soon.

Contractor had quoted £390.00 + VAT for repairs and inspections

Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Hine that quotation for £390.00 + VAT be accepted

Resolved

Clerk

11. Resignation of Clerk:

Seven applications had been received and because of difficulties finding times when all interviewers were available, the panel had been revised to consist of the Chair and Cllrs. Abbott and T. Saunders. The Clerk would also attend to answer any technical questions. Interviews would be held on 27. & 30.07.26.

Action

Chair/
JA/TS/
Clerk

12. Community Litter Pick:

Clerk had asked the OSSC if they would be interested in hosting an event in October and still awaiting a response. Council agreed to book either 03.10.26. or 10.10.26. with Bedford BC and meet at the Village Hall if the OSSC did not wish to host.

Action

Clerk

13. Tree Works:

All Council trees had been inspected and contractor had quoted £1,950 + VAT to clear the footpath, understories of trees and remove a dead branch at the allotments; trim back vegetation in The Furlong bund; cut ivy on the ash tree in Brockwell Meadow; prune 4 trees on the Green and pollard the Norway maple which is in severe decline; remove 3 dead trees on Grange Green and reduce the beech tree; remove the dead apple and the declining rowan on Ruffs Furze Green; remove the declining cherry in Parsonage Close and remove deadwood from the highway tree overhanging Riverside Meadow.

The celebratory oak on the Green had been hit by a mower and the contractor suggested installing a guard. A horse chestnut was also showing signs of bleeding canker and should be monitored.

Contractor had also quoted £945 + VAT to supply and replant trees that had been removed. Clerk noted that Cllr. Jones had offered to replace the dead apple in Ruffs Furze Green

Proposed by Cllr. R. Saunders, seconded by Cllr. Abbott that the quotation for £1,950 + VAT be accepted and replanting be considered at a later date

Resolved

Clerk

14. Highway Matters:

Cllr. Abbott advised that both Lincroft Academy and Bedford BC considered the hedge on the corner of Station Road/Lovell Road was not their responsibility to trim. Cllr. Abbott was pursuing with Meridian Trust who run the Academy

Action

JA

Cllr. Abbott noted that hedges were overhanging the High Street footway and Clerk to ask residents to cut back

Cllr. Walker noted that, although residents had been advised of the upcoming works in Station Road, they had not been told that some of the green space in front of their houses would be removed.

Clerk

15. **Borough Council Report:**

Cllr. Abbott reported that food waste collections were progressing well now teething issues had been resolved.

The River Festival would take place on 18/19.07.26. and the Family Hub would be running a programme of summer events. The Planning Inspector had upheld the Borough's decision to refuse permission for the Felmersham gypsy & traveller site. The owners had also been refused permission to appeal further and the site would need to be cleared by the end of September. The case had cost Felmersham & Pavenham PCs £100K. Devolution discussions were continuing and proposals to change the planning system so that applications were called in if 10 objections were received rather than the current 3 had not been taken forward. A vote of no confidence in the Mayor had been held but had little practical effect as mayors could only be removed at elections.

Cllr. Walker added that the Family Hub timetable included events at libraries and the Higgins and the Summer of SEND would provide free sessions for SEND young people and their families. The Executive would be meeting 15.07.26. to appoint a developer for the Debenhams site and consultation was underway on moving the central library into a more accessible building.

Action

16. **Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:**

Decisions notified since Council meeting – 2nd June 2026

Application No. **26/00558/FUL** - front porch extension at 38 High Street

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 02.06.26.

Application No. **26/00665/TPO** - prune various trees at Tall Trees, Westfield Road

Parish No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date: Permission 03.06.26.

Application No. **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 No objection

Comments:

Decision/Date:	Refusal 17.06.26. because of concerns about the extension of the informal outdoor play area. Bedford BC considered that this would result in increased noise and disturbance to neighbouring residential properties, would represent an unjustified encroachment into designated Village Open Space, eroding its identified function and would place unacceptable pressure on existing trees, to the detriment of their long-term retention.
Application No.	26/00228/S73A - erection of first floor extension above existing garage structure to form gym/ office/activity space (development already carried out) at Parklands, The Drive
Parish	Objection on the grounds that the proposed extension does not fit with
Comments:	the appearance of the house or the previous appearance of the garage block prior to the extension
Decision/Date:	Permission 18.06.26. (CIL liable) on the grounds that proposal is considered to accord with the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 and the Residential Extensions, New Dwellings and Small Infill Developments Design Guidance 2000
Application No.	25/02562/M73 - variation of condition 6 to allow for the provision of a temporary construction access and for the development to commence prior to the completion of the approved vehicular access junction to the highway attached to 21/02394/MAO (appeal ref APP/K0235/W/23/3316823) for the development of up to 40 dwellings, vehicular and pedestrian access, green infrastructure including open space and landscaping, and related drainage and other infrastructure works
Parish	No objection in principle but consideration would need to be given to
Comments:	school parking and Council therefore requests conditions that there is no left turn out of the site onto Station Road; no access between 8.00am and 9.30am and 2.45pm and 4.00pm and the Traffic Management Plan includes frequent cleaning of Station Road.
Decision/Date:	Permission 24.06.26. with a condition that no development shall take place until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted and approved but no reference to specific time restrictions
Application No.	26/00826/S73 – vary approved plans condition 2 attached to 25/01358/FUL, to allow for an overall reduction in the scheme at 78 Ruffs Furze
Parish	No objection
Comments:	
Decision/Date:	Permission 25.06.26.

Application No.	26/00865/PIP – Permission in Principle for the erection of 5-7 houses on land at 20 Lovell Road
Parish	Objection on the grounds that:-
Comments:	1. Oakley has already allocated over 50 houses in its Neighbourhood Plan 2. The site is outside the SPA in the open countryside 3. The development would form back land development and contribute to coalescence between Oakley and Clapham
Decision/Date:	Refusal 30.06.26. on the grounds that the proposal is outside the SPA and does not accord with the exemptions for development in the countryside; the development would be cramped and contrived which would not assimilate well with the spacious, ribbon development surrounding the area (with the exception of Parrot Close); the development would represent back land development which would visually and physically diminish the Local Gap by eroding the verdant and spacious character of the site. Also, the removal of established and mature trees to the front boundary of 20 Lovell Road, which contribute to the verdant and spacious character of the ribbon development would result in further harm to the visual amenities of the area.

Clerk noted that a certificate had been issued to confirm that planning permission is not required for a garage conversion at 85 Lincroft

Applications received since Council meeting – 2nd June 2026:

Application No.	25/02085/MAR – amended plans for 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 at land north of High Street
Parish	Oakley Parish Council is concerned about management of the open space on the development. We understand that this will be required as part of the S106 Agreement and that S106 Agreements are agreed as part of the Reserved Matters process even if not included in the actual application. We would not want residents having to pay very expensive maintenance fees.
Comments:	Council agreed to send additional comments highlighting concerns about misleading drawings, as the 2m slope on the site, which would impact neighbours was not obvious and the tree belts had been reduced in size but the position of the houses remained unchanged; concern that the visibility splays extended into neighbouring properties and that run off from the site still fell towards High Street properties and there was no provision for collection at the lowest point on the site. Clerk to also ask whether any of the trees on the site would qualify for TPOs.

17. <u>Planning Policy:</u> a) update on Station Road site Snowdon Homes had advised that the reserved matters application was submitted to Bedford BC on 26.06.26. and was awaiting validation.	
18. <u>Correspondence:</u> none	<u>Action</u>
19. <u>Grant Applications:</u> a) Oakley Village Hall Oakley Village Hall had requested a grant of £3,364.56 or as much as Council decided towards a replacement air conditioning unit on one side of the Hall. Total cost was £3,364.56. This quotation was not the cheapest but a lower quotation which was received in December 2025 had expired and requests for a revised figure had received no response. The balance would be taken from remaining financial resources. Previous grants - £500 in 2009, £864 in 2016, £400 in 2018, £264 in 2020, £1,055 in 2021, 21,000 in 2022, £1,000 in 2023 and £1,000 in 2025. Balance at 31.08.25. was £ 18,959.73 plus £14,595.74 investments. Proposed by Cllr. Walker, seconded by Cllr. Abbott that £1,000 be granted Resolved	Clerk
b) Country Days Country Days had requested a grant of £1,000 for their summer courses, which include a high proportion of FSM, Pupil Premium and SEND children. The total cost of providing these courses was £58,244 in 2026 and the balance would be obtained from fundraising, donations and other funders. Previous grants – £50 in 2024 and 2023, £100 in 2022 & 2025. 12 young people that either live in Oakley or come from the primary schools in the area had attended the courses. Balance at 31.12.24. was £97,456 as they aim to hold sufficient reserves to run courses for the following year. Council agreed that Country Days should be asked to confirm if any of the participants lived in Oakley and, if so, they would reconsider in September.	Clerk
20. <u>Finance Matters:</u> a) accounts to pay Income and balances: NatWest Bank – Current account balance at 30.06.26. £18,882.10 NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 30.06.26. £2,447.57 Nationwide – Savings Bond £68,096.18 Hampshire Trust – Savings Bond £85,013.20	<u>Action</u>

Received since last meeting:

Worker	June quiz	£286.00
	Compensation for issues with	
NatWest	online banking	£100.00
NatWest	Interest	£1.82
Total		£387.82

Payments Already Made:

			Chq. No. /online
Old School	Rent for upper rooms June	153.83	s/o
Salaries	June payment	1496.81	s/o
Pension Fund	June payment	500.03	online
DJT Surfacing	MUGA tarmac repairs	3796.08	online
Anglian Water	Allotment water	44.30	d/d

Payments Made:

HMRC	Quarterly PAYE	1152.92	2111
BATPC	2026/27 affiliation fee	606.00	online
CPRE	Centenary oak plaque	30.00	online
	Hire of rooms 02.06.26, &		
Oakley Village Hall	19.06.26.	68.50	online
Total		£7,848.47	

b) Clerk's expenses

Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Abbott that expenses of £64.31 for the period April to June 2026 be paid

Resolved

21. Date of Next Meeting: 1st September 2026