Minutes of the Oakley Parish Council meeting held on 1st September 2026 in the Village Hall

PRESENT: Cllrs S. Fardon (Chair), J. Abbott, C. Bays, A. Hine, P. Jones, R. Saunders, T. Saunders, J. Walker, P. White, R. Worker

IN ATTENDANCE: Clerk: Mrs Judith Crosier

1. **Public Open Session:**
No members of the public were in attendance.

2. **Apologies:** Cllr Olney

3. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Abbott for items 10 and 16 as a resident of The Furlong; Cllr Walker for item 20e.

4. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th July 2026:**
Unanimously **Approved;** the minutes will be signed at the next meeting.

5. **Appointment of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer**
Four applicants were interviewed and Mrs Judith Crosier was appointed as the new Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer after unanimous **Approval.** The Chair welcomed her to the Parish Council.

6. **Clerk's Report:**
Highways – works to lighting columns in Lovell Road and Pavenham Road have been postponed as, due to other planned works and adjacent closures in the area, the contractor was unable to secure road space permits. Bedford BC has confirmed that road closures would not be required for streetlight works. Works will be carried out on Grenidge Way footways between 28.09.2026 and 16.10.2026. Residents were concerned that the road closure at the twin bridges 19.07.26. was not advertised. Organisers advised that they had a legal road closure in Church Lane and over the bridges for the safety of cyclists taking part in the event. Council was not made aware of the closure and the previous Clerk asked them to advise Council in future.
Bus stops - Bedford BC were to add bus stop works to the footway works in Station Road. Cllr Abbott had suggested that these were not needed as the stop will be affected by the new entrance to the Station Road development and other stops in Oakley were more in need of work. Bedford BC has therefore removed the Station Road southbound bus stop works from the programme. Bedford BC will advise which bus stops could be improved in this year's budget once the programme was finalised.
Speed Watch – nil return for events on 13.07.26 in Reynes Drive and 23.07.26 in Church Lane. Reported to police. A National Speed Watch Day event was held in Highfield Road, speed limit 40 mph, on 15.07.26 as a speed of 88mph was recorded here by the Speed Watch device in July. 7 vehicles were recorded speeding at the event and were reported to police. PCSO Dancer, who attended the National Speed Watch Day event, thanked the team for their work in highlighting, educating and preventing speeding issues in the village.
Litter bins – the bin at the twin bridges was not emptied w/c 06.07.26. Reported to Bedford BC. Bins at the twin bridges and the Lovell Road bus stop by the Old School were damaged. Cllr. White has replaced the liner in the bin at the twin bridges and Council thanked him. The bin in Lovell Road will need repairing/replacing.
Fly tipping – plastic left on Lovell Road verge was reported to Bedford BC and removed.
Bedford Arms - residents were concerned about loud music. Bedford BC had previously advised that the Live Music Act removes the licensing requirements for live and recorded music between the hours of 8am and 11pm where there is a premises licence or club premises certificate in place permitting 'on sales;' the premises are open for the sale or supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises and if the music is amplified (live music or recorded music, e.g. DJs or a disco for example), and the audience consists of no more

than 500 people. Residents would therefore need to report concerns about noise to Environmental Health.
Lincroft Academy – residents were still concerned about lights on the school's new building shining continuously into properties, and noise, dust and lack of tree planting to protect their privacy. The Clerk has asked Planning Enforcement to investigate, and suggested residents contact Environmental Health directly.
Quiz – profit for July was £265.50

7. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th July 2026: none

8. East West Rail (EWR):
Cllr Walker reported that residents are now being contacted with regard to the purchase of homes.

9. Police Report: Action
There were 5 reported crimes: 2 assaults with injury in Grenidge Way and the High Street; 1 assault without injury in the High Street; and 1 sexual offence and 1 threat to kill in the High Street.

10. Play Equipment: Action
New equipment at The Furlong
Nationwide has confirmed that monies will be transferred on 29.10.26. and a purchase order will then need to be raised for installation in December/January. Clerk

11. Community Litter Pick: Action
The litter pick has been arranged for Saturday 03.10.26 from 10am to 12pm and OSSC have kindly agreed to host again. Cllr Walker will be leading the event and the previous Clerk invited the Brownies, Scouts and ATC to join. Council thanked Cllr Walker. There will be complimentary bacon rolls and tea for all volunteers. Cllr Walker

12. Tree Works on the Green: Action
A resident was concerned that one of the trees close to the edge of the Green was undermining her property. The Parish Council arranged for a structural assessment to be carried out on the tree and the two adjacent trees at a cost of £400.00 by a tree surgeon. There was no Council meeting in August so Council retrospectively **Approved** the cost after a unanimous vote. The written report is awaited. Clerk

13. Replacement Bollards on the Green: Action
Two bollards have rotted away on the Green and the contractor has quoted £395 + VAT to replace them. A third bollard has been removed which falls under the remit of BBC; Cllr Walker will report this. After a proposal by Cllr Abbott which was seconded by Cllr and unanimously **Resolved** that the quotation for £395 + VAT be accepted for the work to be carried out. Clerk

14. Highway Matters: Action
A bollard needs to be removed from The Furlong; this is in the hands of Bedford Borough Council. There is overgrown vegetation outside 62 and 64 High Street; it was unanimously **Resolved** to contact the relevant householders to request it to be cut back. Works to the pavement is now finished. The construction management plan for the development of 10 houses in the High Street has been agreed with works to start in autumn 2026. Hours of operation for the 12–13-month programme will be: 8am – 6pm weekdays, 8am – 1pm Saturdays. Clerk

15. Borough Council Report: Action
Cllr Walker reported the following (a full report can be found on the Oakley Parish Council website):
Bedford Borough Council is continuing to press for action over concerns about water

quality in the River Great Ouse and across the Borough.
There is a Bedford Borough planning meeting to be held online tomorrow; from 1st November, central government will take away the ability for planning applications to be 'called in' by Councillors in order to be heard by the Planning Committee. This will mean that planning officers will have more decision-making ability impacting some contentious applications. Cllr Walker suggested that the NDP Committee join the meeting to find out the impact on Parish Councils.
The 'Call for Sites' consultation is ongoing at Bedford Borough Council. The Local Plan is ongoing and there is a planning consultation until 10th September.
Bedford Borough Council has approved a new Crisis Resilience Fund.
The bus stop on Lovell Road needs an upgrade. The ward fund deadline is 2nd October and the deadline for the fund for CCTV, alley gates and salt bins is 20th November.
The Barkers Lane recycling centre is being overused due to neighbouring recycling centres introducing a booking system. Residents will need to register their car registration plate – up to two vehicles per residence - in order to use the recycling centre. There is a consultation to 2nd November about the library and whether it should be moved to the new development on the ground floor or elsewhere in the town.
There has been a fall in recorded crime across Bedford Borough in August's figures.

16. <u>Planning Applications and Decisions and other planning matters:</u>

Decisions notified since the Council meeting on 7th July 2026

Application No. **26/00703/TPO** - fell one tree and deadwood/prune others at The Spinney, Church Lane
Parish Comments: No objection
Decision/Date: Permission granted 8.07.26.

Application No. **26/00896/TPO** – deadwood and reduce a red oak at Ashbourne, 45 High Street
Parish Comments: No objection
Decision/Date: Permission granted 17.08.26.

Applications received since the Council meeting on 7th July 2026:

Application No. **a) 26/01214/MAR** - reserved matters application for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of 25/02562/M73 for 40 dwellings (including affordable housing) at land off Station Road
Parish Comments: Oakley Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Group have the following comments:-
1. We are pleased that the site offers affordable housing and that the play area has been moved away from the entrance road.
2. We have concerns about the management of the open spaces, including the play area. Documents indicate management either by the Parish Council or a management company but this has not been discussed directly with the Parish Council. If the Parish Council is to manage these areas monies should be provided for this purpose, given that there is no CIL liability on the site.
3. We are concerned that the spur road links directly into Parrott Close. The road in Parrott Close is very narrow in places so access onto Lovell Road would be difficult.
The comments were unanimously and retrospectively **Approved**

Application No. **b) 26/01390/FUL** - single storey rear pergola at Oakley Pre School, Chapel Pound
Parish Comments: No objection

Application No. **c) 18/01284/FUL** - reconsultation on chicken farm in North Northamptonshire
Parish Comments: No additional comments

Application No.	**d) 26/01570/S73** – vary temporary condition 1 and occupancy condition 2 attached to 22/00349/S73 (originally permitted under B/TP/82/1971/A), to allow for the permanent retention of the fishing lodge at Willow Vale, Pavenham Road.
Parish Comments:	It was unanimously **Resolved** to object to the removal of the temporary condition. Action: Clerk

17. Planning Policy: — Action

NDP Review

The NDP Group met a Bedford BC Planning Officer on 22.07.26 to discuss the options for review. The officer advised that factual updates to the current Plan would not require examination by a Planning Inspector but the start date of the Plan would remain as 2020. Changes to policies, amendments to design codes, the addition of new green spaces and/or development sites would need examination and the Plan start date would move to 2026/27, so it would no longer be over 5 years old and would carry more weight. However, Bedford BC needed to increase its land supply and meeting the housing need in the 2030 Local Plan and an examined review would not stop speculative applications; e.g. Bromham has built 500 homes but additional housing has been granted permission. She offered to consider a draft NDP review to determine whether or not it would require examination. — NDP Group; Clerk

The NDP Group had subsequently met on 4.08.26 to discuss a review and had agreed that a full review would be unproductive until the Borough's Spatial Strategy was known. In the meantime, Clerk would ask Bedford BC whether the Housing Needs Survey and new landscape map could be added as annexes to the current NDP. Bedford BC had advised that Council/NDP Group would still need to go through the process to amend the plan and the Borough would need to check modifications as the Plan might need to go through an examination if any of the landscape views were changed. It was unanimously **Resolved** that the NDP Group would review and update the NDP with the Housing Needs Survey and views as appendices. The Parish Council thanked the NDP Group for their hard work on this.

18. Correspondence: — Action

a) Land at The Furlong

Prior to the meeting, a resident of The Furlong approached Cllr. Abbott about purchasing land at the front of the site for additional parking. A similar request had been received in 2021 and Council had refused then because of concerns that that work to create parking spaces would damage the roots of the hedge. It was unanimously **Resolved** that the Clerk would contact the resident to inform them that Cllr Hine would assess the area and potentially speak to the resident about the suggested parking spaces. — Clerk

b) Hedgerow planting — Action

CPRE are aiming to plant another 1000m of hedgerow as part of their Hedgerow Heroes project and were seeking sites to plant. Council had previously planted a hedgerow in Riverside Meadow, which had struggled due to late planting and a dry summer. It was **Resolved** that the Clerk would contact CPRE to check that their offer of hedgerows includes private land and if so, to contact potential landowners. — Clerk

19. Grant Applications:

Country Days — Action

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. Country Days had confirmed that 8 young people from Oakley would be attending the summer courses. Balance at 31.12.24. was £97,456 as they aim to hold sufficient reserves to run courses for the following year. It was unanimously **Resolved** to add to next month's agenda and request up-to-date accounts from Country Days. — Clerk

20. Finance Matters The new clerk does not yet have access to the bank accounts and therefore some bank account balances and interest amounts will be confirmed at the next meeting. — Action

a) Accounts to pay

Income and balances:

NatWest Bank – Current account balance at 31.08.26	£8625.19
NatWest Bank – Business Reserve account balance at 31.08.26	£2450.94
Nationwide – Savings Bond	£68,096.18
Hampshire Trust – Savings Bond	£85,013.20

Receipts since last meeting:

Worker	July quiz	£318.00
Plizga	Allotment rent	£1.00
Zaiter	Allotment rent	£2.00
NatWest	Interest	£1.77
Zaiter	Allotment rent	£2.00
Worker	August quiz	£307.50
NatWest	Interest August	£1.60
	Total	**£633.87**

Payments already made:			**Chq. No. /Online**
Old School	Rent for upper rooms July & August	307.66	SO
Salaries	July payment	1496.81	SO
Pension Fund	July payment	500.03	Online
Paice	Expenses April - June	64.31	Online
Bedford BC	Quarterly grass cutting payment	2,956.69	Online
D M Payroll	PAYE services - second half	172.80	Online
CPRE	Membership renewal	36.00	Online
Oakley Village Hall	Hire of rooms 07.07.26, 17.07.26, 27.07.26. & 30.07.26.	114.50	Online
Salaries	August payment	1496.81	SO
Pension Fund	August payment	638.30	Online

Payments made:

Knight	Grounds maintenance 2026	2,300.00	002112
CPM Playgrounds	Play area repairs	480.00	Online
Paice	Pay in lieu of holiday	400.72	Online
White Hart Press Ltd	1020 autumn newsletters	765.00	002113
Davies Arboriculture Ltd	Tree survey Grenidge Way	400.00	002114
Paice	Expenses July - August	306.36	002115
	Total	**£12,435.99**	

b) Insurance renewal — Action

The Council's insurance is due for renewal on 01.10.26 at a cost of £2,813.81. Council is in the second year of a three-year long-term agreement. After a proposal by Cllr Jones which was seconded by Cllr Bays it was unanimously **Resolved** that the insurance premium of £2,813.81 would be paid. — Clerk

The Council's cyber insurance is due for renewal on 01.11.26 and the brokers have recommended a policy at a cost of £384.88 for one year. After a proposal by Cllr White , which was seconded by Cllr Hine, it was unanimously **Resolved** that the quotation would be accepted and an insurance premium of £384.88 would be paid.

c) Completion of audit — Action

External auditors were content with the accounts and had no matters to draw to Council's attention. They had one comment on the internal auditor's report as was not made clear whether the Parish Council did or did not use petty cash. Closure of the audit to be advertised. Council thanked previous Clerk and noted the conclusion. — Clerk

d) Domain name protection — Action

EasySpace, who provided the Council's domain name, have offered identity verification before key domain changes, expert-managed DNS support and protection against accidental or malicious changes at a cost of £14.40 + VAT for one year. It was unanimously **Resolved** to ask the Council's IT advisor if this is required. — Clerk

e) Allotment rent 2027 — Action

Allotment rents were increased to £42 for a full plot and £21 for a half plot in October 2026 and all plots were currently in use. It was unanimously **Resolved** to check with the previous Clerk regarding the rent for 2027. — Clerk

f) Clerk's expenses — Action

After a proposal by Cllr T Saunders which was seconded by Cllr Bays it was unanimously **Resolved** that expenses of £306.36 for the period July and August 2026 would be paid to the outgoing clerk. — Clerk

21. Date of Next Meeting: 6th October 2026

Meeting closed: 9.25pm

Signed by the Chairman on 6th October 2026