MINUTES

1: Apologies
None

2: Declarations on Interest in items on the Agenda
None

3: To consider any applications for dispensation
None

4: Public Participation
None

5: Minutes of the previous meeting
The Council RESOLVED that Cllr Melville should sign the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on the 20th March 2025 as a true and accurate record.

6: Matters arising from previous minutes
Cllr Melville advised that the wheelie bins have still not been received. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk would follow this up with Claire Pick at Bedford Borough Council.

The Chair advised that he had still not received photos from Cllr Fraser regarding the damaged paths. Cllr Fraser described the damage as extensive.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Fraser would send photos to Cllr Melville.

The Clerk advised that nothing had been received from ACE Fire & Security regarding the fire extinguishers. ACE have apparently advised the Caretaker that they do not supply the ones that the Parish Council requested. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should follow this up with ACE and add this item to the next agenda for consideration.

Cllr Melville advised that nothing had happened with regards to Montgomery and that he was frustrated with the lack of action/support from Andrew Prigmore.

Cllr Melville advised that he had written to URisk regarding the Parish Council's concerns about their Legionella risk assessments. They have responded and standby their recommendations and quote. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should reissue the alternative quotes received for consideration at the next meeting.

The Chair referred to the decision at the last meeting to recharge the caretakers time to the Village Hall. Unfortunately, the Village Hall is struggling financially and the Parish Council has had to provide further financial support for utilities. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk would collect data from the caretakers about the number of hours that they spend on covering Village Hall lettings to be considered at a future meeting of the Parish Council.

Cllr Melville advised that he has an Estate Agent coming to view the Village Hall flat on Thursday to determine the rent that could be achieved.

7: Chairman's Report
Cllr Melville advised that he had met the Tree Officer from Bedford Borough

Council earlier the day. He confirmed that the tree by the bus stop was safe however the tree by the Village Hall is causing further subsidence issues and therefore needs to be removed.

It was RESOLVED that a planning application needs to be submitted.

He also advised that he had met with Martin from Countrywide. All parties are pleased with how things are working and favourable comments have been received from members of the public. Cllr Fraser commented on how friendly and polite the employees were.

The brackets for the hanging baskets will be going up next week and the baskets will be put up during the last week of May.

The Clerk advised that the issues with the invoices had now been resolved. Cllr Melville advised that he had met with a potential new Parish Councillor, Donna. She will come to the next two meetings to determine whether the role is still of interest to her.

It was noted that the event run by Harworth last Saturday, about the development of the former Brickworks site, was a success with over 300 people attending. Positive feedback has been received from residents. Cllr Melville and Law will meet further with them and a Heritage Specialist on the 30 April 2025 to look at the fountain and establish the cost of restoring this.

Works will commence on the former brickworks site on the 5th May 2025 and it will no longer be accessible.

Following the news that Universal Studios will be coming to Bedford, Cllr Melville advised that John will continue to engage with the Parish Council and will attend a future meeting

8: Report from Bedford Borough Council

Cllr Coombe advised that an announcement about Wixams Station was expected soon. He advised that plans for a Health Centre were also expected.

The Parish Council suggested that the Broadmead Lower School could be a potential site. This has been noted by Bedford Borough Council.
Cllr Spice advised that the event on Saturday went well regarding the new development.

Concerns about noise from the dogs barking at Rose Cottage were raised by members of the public. Cllr Spice advised that residents should be encouraged to make a complaint to the Borough Council.

She also advised that the new “No Entry” sign was not installed wonky. They had used the existing post as it was good and repainted it. The railings outside the school had also been painted.

Cllr Spice further advised that the litter pickers had been working on the A421 for two weeks and had collected 1,000 bags of rubbish. A schedule will be in place going forward for future litter picks.

Cllr Melville confirmed that the Parish Council would not be holding an event for VE day. Cllr Spice advised that Street Party licences can be applied for.

9: Clerk’s Financial Report

9.1 Authorise payments for BACS Transfer
The Council RESOLVED to authorise the BACS Reports for the Parish Council and the Sports Pavilion. It was noted that the Chair’s Allowance of £100 had been missed in error from the Parish Council BACS Report.

9.2 Balances of Accounts
Members were advised that as at the 31st March 2025, the balances of the Parish Council and Sports Fields accounts were as follows:

£2,269.27
£54,125.56
£19,217.37
£387,832.57

The Clerk advised that the first precept payment had been received.

9.3 Review of rates for Football Pitch Hire
The Council RESOLVED that with immediate effect the new rates for the hire of the football pitches are as follows:

Home Teams £60
Other Teams £70

10: Quotations for authorisation

10.1 Village Hall guttering/brick works
The Council RESOLVED to accept the quote from J Roberts Roofing.

10.2 Parish Council Insurance Renewal
The Council RESOLVED to accept the insurance renewal quote and terms.

11: Planning Applications & Decisions

Ref: 25/00732/FUL Full Planning Application for proposed two storey rear extension and single storey front/side extension @ 1 Marsh Leys Cottages, Woburn Road, Kempston, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK43 9AB

The Council RESOLVED that it had no objections to this application.

11.2 Planning Applications & Planning Decisions received after the despatch of the Agenda

Ref: 24/02163/FUL Planning Appeal proposed two new roof dormers on front elevation @43 Oxford Blue Way, Stewartby, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK43 9GF (INSPECTORATE NO: APP/K0235/D/25/3362630)

The Council RESOLVED that it had no objections to this application therefore no further action was required.

11.3 Update on Universal Studios
Please refer to comments under the Chairman's Report

12: Amenities:

12.1 Highways/Lighting
Cllrs Law and Banks to carry out another review of the Village.

The Council RESOLVED that Cllr Melville should write to the Chief Executive of the Chiltern Learning Trust regarding the concerns about parking outside of the school.

12.2 Recreation Area
Cllr Law advised that a site meeting will be held in two weeks to progress the play area.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Melville must be at this meeting.
It was further RESOLVED that the bark would not be removed from the zip wire area.

12.3 Social Engagement

Cllr Fraser will draft an update to go out on social media. This should also feature as news on the website. Cllr Melville to write article about the new development and Universal Studios.

Cllr Fraser advised the Council that she felt that they needed social media training and a social media policy.

It was RESOLVED that Councillors should not engage in private messages with anyone that comments on a Parish Council post. If a comment requires a response then they should be advised to email the Clerk.

12.4 Sports Field/Pavilion
None

12.5 Village Hall
None

12.6 Policing
None

12.7 Encyclis
Cllr Law to attend a meeting in July 2025 and feedback to the Parish Council.

13: Community Events 2025
The next meeting of the Events Committee will be held on the 8th May 2025 after the Village Hall meeting.

14: Grants
Cllr Melville advised that Bedford Borough Council had declined the Parish Council's grant application. This was because from the AGAR they had determined that the Council had sufficient funds for the play area however they have since been advised that a significant amount of the Council's reserves are earmarked for the Sports Pavilion and cannot be used for other purposes.

15: Council Surgery / Community Engagement
None

16: Policies
It was RESOLVED that these should be reviewed with the Caretaker prior to being adopted.

17: Review of Code of Conduct
It was RESOLVED to accept the NALC Model Code of Conduct and include the Council's Complaints Procedure.

18: Demographics Mapping
Cllr Haley has put forward ideas for support for the community.

19: Review of Risk Register
The Council reviewed the Risk Register and RESOLVED to make the following amendments:
Following the completion of the external audit by the end of September each year, the paper for the previous financial year should be stored at the Village Hall not the Clerk's home.

20: Heritage Ideas
In the absence of Cllr Banks it was RESOLVED to defer this item to the next meeting.

21: Contract Management – ACE Fire & Security
Due to ongoing concerns about ACE Fire & Security, it was RESOLVED that Cllrs Melville, Fraser and the Clerk would meet with them.

22: Items of an urgent nature or for inclusion on the next agenda

None

23: Close of Meeting and items for the next Agenda.

Meeting closed at 8.57 pm.

24: Date and Time of Next Meeting

Annual General Meeting on Thursday 15th May 2025 @ 6.30 pm followed by the monthly Parish Council meeting afterwards.