MINUTES

1: Apologies
Apologies were received from Cllrs Haley, Fraser, Burnage and Williams.

2: Declarations on Interest in items on the Agenda
Cllr Banks declared an interest in item 10.1 on the Agenda.

3: To consider any applications for dispensation
It was RESOLVED that Cllr Banks could take part in the discussion regarding the quotes for the redecoration of the Village Hall Flat but not vote.

4: Public Participation
The Parish Council welcomed residents from Manor Road to the meeting.
The residents are concerned about the Universal Studios development and what will happen to their homes.

They feel that they are in limbo and that they have the threat of compulsory purchase orders over their heads even though they have heard nothing formally from any party involved.

There is increased trespassing in the area, a rise in crime (burglaries) and drones taking images of homes and occupants which are appearing on social media.

Cllr Melville advised that he was shocked that there had been no direct engagement and agreed to arrange a meeting with residents and representatives from Bedford Borough Council.

Cllr Spice will address the concern about Compulsory Purchase Orders with the Borough Council and advise accordingly.

Cllr Melville advised that the planning application had not yet been received and therefore the formal consultation period for that had not yet commenced.

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 15th May 2025 as a true and accurate record.

6: Matters arising from previous minutes
The Clerk advised that the planning application for the Village Hall had not yet been completed due to completing the Annual Return.

Cllr Melville advised that the Stewartby Bowls Club had now complied with the health and safety requirements.

The Chair advised that, following a meeting, the preferred site for the statue was on the land owned by O & H. Permission will be sought from O & H and, if not, an alternative location identified.

The lines have now been repainted at the Montgomery junction.

The Village Hall flat is now being marketed by an Agent and the first viewing was today.

7: Chairman’s Report
The Chair advised that a final decision was still awaited from Harworth about funding the works to reinstate the fountain however this could be in the region of £90 – 110k. Grant funding will almost certainly be needed.

Harworth is expected to submit the design plan for the site imminently and will look to hold a further public meeting.

The Chair advised that two areas of land have been identified in the Village that are not being cut and are not part of the schedule of works that have been given to Countrywide. The first is the responsibility of Houghton Conquest Parish Council and the Clerk has requested that they cut this. The second is the verge on the right-hand side near Kimberley College. It is unclear who this land belongs to. This area will be added to the schedule.

8: Report from Bedford Borough Council

Cllr Spice gave a brief update on the Local Plan and the letter that had been received from the Inspectorate. The Local Plan needs to cover a period of fifteen years and the announcement of Universal Studios significantly changes they strategic landscape.

The Executive will need to consider this matter.

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.

9.2 Balances of Accounts

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

£41,341.38
£54,125.56
£11,365.38
£389,121.02

9.3 Internal Auditor's Report & Annual Return

The Clerk shared the Internal Audit Report with the Council. The Clerk advised that she had been unable to prepare the accounts on an Income & Expenditure basis as advised by Mazars, external Auditor, due to her personal circumstances and the withholding of belongings by another party.
These were only retrieved in April 2025.

The Council RESOLVED to approve the figures on the Annual Return and the recommendations in the Internal Audit Report.

10: Quotations for authorisation

10.1 Redecoration of Village Hall Flat

The Council RESOLVED to accept the quote from RM Maintenance for £1,600.

10.2 Fire Extinguishers

The Council RESOLVED to accept the quote from ACE Fire & Security received back in January 2025.

11: Planning Applications & Decisions

11.1 Planning Applications & Decisions

Ref: 25/01101/FUL Full Planning Application for proposed change of use of part of Unit to a hot food takeaway (Sui Generis), including internal fit-out works and installation of an external extraction system @ 10 Broadmead Business Park Broadmead Road Stewartby Bedford Bedfordshire MK43 9NX

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

The Council RESOLVED to notify Bedford Borough Council that work had already commenced.

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

None

11.3 Update on Universal Studios

The Parish Council met with officers from Bedford Borough Council last week and expect the formal planning application for the development of Universal Studios to be received sometime in July
2025.

11.4 Planning Issues – 181 Wavell Close, Stewartby

The Parish Council RESOLVED that the Parish owned land that has been built upon should not be given/sold to the homeowner.

12: Amenities

12.1 Highways/Lighting

None

12.2 Recreation Area

Cllr Law advised that a site meeting needed to be arranged so that a full survey could be carried out by the contractor for the new play area. The installation date will be sometime in September 2025.
Once the play area is in situ, the Parish Council will be response for the risk assessments and annual inspections however the asset will not be included on the Council's Asset Register until it is formally handed over at the end of the initial three-year period.

Cllr Melville advised that the noticeboard in Manor Road will need to be relocated. It was RESOLVED that this would move to Kempston Hardwick (near the new developments).

12.3 Social Engagement

It was RESOLVED that the next Parish Council Surgery with Cllr Spice will be held on Saturday 13th September 2025 between 10.00 am and 12.00 pm. Cllr Banks will liaise with Cllr Fraser about the newsletter templates.

12.4 Sports Field/Pavilion

The meeting was advised that the football pitches had been drill-seeded and top-soil spread on the top. It was RESOLVED that the Memorial Garden did not need to be box cut by Countrywide.

Cllr Melville advised that sketches had been received from the Stewartby Bowls Club as they wish to extend the facilities. It was RESOLVED that the Parish Council does not have the time or resources to invest in the Sports Pavilion.

12.5 Village Hall

It was RESOLVED that quotes should be sought for the next meeting for the repointing of the outbuilding at the Village Hall.

12.6 Policing

None

12.7 Encyclis

None

13: Community Events 2025/2026

The next meeting to discuss events will be held on the 10th July 2025.

Cllr Melville advised that he was obtaining quotes from event management companies for the event on the 4th July 2026.

14: Grants

This Agenda item will be considered at the next meeting.

15: Council Surgery / Community Engagement

It was RESOLVED that the next Council Surgery will be held on the 13th September 2025.

16: Policies

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

The Clerk will add this to the next Agenda.

17: Items of an urgent nature or for inclusion on the next agenda
None.

18: Close of Meeting and items for the next Agenda.
Meeting closed at 8.40pm.

19: Date and Time of Next Meeting
The next meeting will be held on the 17th July 2025 @ 6.30 pm.