Parish Council
Thursday 22-Jan-2026 @ 18:30
Dave Law Sports Pavilion, Park Crescent, Stewartby

MINUTES

1: Apologies
Apologies were received from Cllr Haley and Burnage (maternity leave).

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 18th December 2025 as a true and accurate record.

6: Matters arising from previous minutes
The Chair advised that the Clerk was in contact with Woodfines Solicitors to seek their advice regarding the paths at the Sports Field. The contractor has failed to take remedial action.

Cllr Melville advised that he had written to Highways England raising concerns about the flooding on the A421. The response will be circulated to all Councillors.

Cllr Melville asked Cllr Banks about the leaflet aimed at recruiting new Councillors. This will be A5 size with “save the date” information on the reverse. The Clerk will ask Free Range Design for a quote.

7: Chairman’s Report
Cllr Melville advised that it had been a busy month so far. The weekend caretaker has resigned and an advert for his replacement will need to be placed as soon as possible. Nathan Hayward has agreed to cover this weekend and the Council will ask Chris Cox if he would cover on an ad-hoc basis on a self-employed basis.

The Chair contacted Bedford Borough Council with concerns about the amount of rubbish on Green Lane and Broadmead. Works have already started on clearing this.

The Chair has also raised concerns with Encore and Persimmons about the appalling state of Hansons Reach. This has now been escalated to LSG Estates.

Cllr Melville has written to local Councils, the MP and Highways England about the state of the A421.
The Chair advised that works on the Brickworks site have stopped because they are awaiting planning permission. Bedford Borough Council Planning Department is short-staffed and Harworth are now wanting to make significant changes. It is anticipated that the first house will be built in Spring 2028. Harworth have built a two-storey bat house and they are still experiencing some issues with the kilns.

Harworth have installed a barrier to the site to prevent lorries parking there.

Cllr Melville met with Universal Studios last week. Works are slowly starting on the utilities. They will start demolishing the cottages on Manor Road soon.

Working committees will be instigated on Spring 2026 that will meet quarterly. The Parish Council will be part of these committees.

An email and helpline will shortly be setup for all concerns relating to the Universal site.

8: Report from Bedford Borough Council
Cllr Spice advised that the Bedford Borough Council’s budge would be considered by the Executive on Monday and then Full Council. This year’s budget will show an overspend however it will be less than anticipated. The Council have engaged external consultants to advise.

Cllr Spice advised that the recent potholes report was incorrect and that the Council is waiting for this to be corrected. She asked Councillors to let her know about any potholes that needed to be repaired.

She advised that the A6 near Wixams would be closed for resurfacing.

Cllr Spice advised that Council is currently looking for a leisure provider for Oasis.

Cllr Law raised the issue of flooding on Stewartby Way under the bridge. The gullies are blocked. Cllr Spice will look into this.

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.

The Council RESOLVED to accept the new contracts from Countrywide from January 2026 onwards.

9.2 Balances of Accounts

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

£22,677.68
£98,250.64 (includes part of the grant for the play area)
£6,159.14
£356,468.74

The Clerk advised that the outstanding VAT had been reclaimed which had added £17k to the Parish Council savings account. The meeting was also advised that full payment for the play area had been made this week (less 10% for the outstanding works). The Parish Council is waiting to receive the remainder of the grant funding.

9.3 Internal Auditor's 2nd Quarter Bank Reconciliation Review

The Clerk advised that the second quarter bank reconciliation review had been carried out by the internal auditor. They only area of concern noted was the Councillor review was not being carried out in accordance with the Council's procedures.

The Clerk advised that she was now sending a What's App message to the Councillor when the information has been emailed and this seems to have resolved the issues.

9.4 Annual Return 2024-25 External Audit Report

The Clerk shared the external audit report with Councillors.

It was RESOLVED that the Council would consider the Auditor's recommendations with regard to the Village Hall accounts at the next meeting.

9.5 Precept 2026-27

The Council RESOLVED to set the precept for 2026-27 at £149,250

10: Quotations for authorisation

10.1 Village Hall Stoneworks

The Council RESOLVED not to accept the quote at the current time. Cllr Serino will obtain an alternative quote for consideration.

10.2 Village Hall Tree Works

The Council considered the quote from Countrywide.

The Council RESOLVED to seek alternative quotes for consideration at the next meeting.

11: Planning Applications & Decisions

11.1 Planning Applications & Decisions received before the despatch of the Agenda

Ref: 26/00042/FUL Full Planning Application for proposed single storey rear extension @ 205 Stewartby Way, Stewartby, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK43 9LN

The Council RESOLVED that it has no objections to this application (or the subsequent amendment).

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

None

11.3 Update on Universal Studios

None

11.4 Planning Appeal

Inspector Ref: 6002675 Extension of dropped kerb and parking area to provide additional parking space, and resurfacing of existing parking space with surface dressed concrete with aggregate finish 25/01496/FUL Full Planning @ 206 Stewartby Way, Stewartby, Bedford Bedfordshire MK43 9LN
The Council RESOLVED to submit the same objections as previously made to Bedford Borough Council.

12: Amenities

12.1 Highways/Lighting

Cllr Law and Banks will check the highways and lighting and report any issues.

Cllr Banks also advised that the hedge was overgrown at the top end of Green Lane. She will take a photo and send to Cllr Melville.

12.2 Recreation Area

The Clerk advised that the replacement carousel would be installed towards the end of February 2026.

12.3 Social Engagement

As discussed earlier, Cllr Banks will prepare a flyer to recruitment new Councillors. A Parish Council will be held later in the year.

12.4 Sports Field/Pavilion

None

12.5 Village Hall

Cllr Melville advised that the insurers would be visiting next week to assess the damage caused by the trees the Village Hall.

Cllr Melville also advised that the new flat tenants had installed Perspex behind the trellis to enhance security. In future, works should not be carried out without approval.

12.6 Policing

Cllr Melville advised that crime remains low in the area.

12.7 Encyclis

None

13: Premises/Fire Risk Assessments for Sports Pavilion & Village Hall

The Caretaker was in attendance for this item.

Sports Pavilion

The Caretaker advised that the Bowls Club storage was identified as an issue. The container and the COSHH requirements have now been resolved.

The Risk Assessment identified that the COSHH register needed to be kept in a paper file onsite and also digitally.

A new Legionella Risk Assessment needs to be carried out by an alternative company following concerns about the last one.

Village Hall

The Caretaker advised that the Village Hall Cleaner's lone worker alarm needs to be tested regularly to ensure that it is working.

The cleaning cupboard needs to be streamlined and bunding in place should there be a chemical spillage.

The kitchen shutter and the projector mechanism was identified as a potential risk that needs to be inspected annually under the PUWER

Regulations.

The Risk Assessment identified that the COSHH register needed to be kept in a paper file onsite and also digitally.

The external tiles were assessed as a trip hazard. The Council RESOLVED to use signage to alert the public and restrict access. Cllr Serino will obtain a quote for repair/replacement.

The Council will review the new policies at the next meeting.

14: Community Events 2026 & Fountain

Cllr Melville advised Councillors to refer to the minutes of the Events meeting held the previous week.

The Events Committee will meet again on the 10th February 2026 @ 6.30 pm.

Cllr Melville advised that he has a meeting with the Police next week to advise on the event on the 4th July 2026.

15: Grants

None.

16: Council Surgery / Community Engagement

None.

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 8.19 pm.

19: Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on the 19th February 2026 @ 6.30 pm.