STAGSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the
Parish Council
Held Monday 15 March 2021
in the Village Hall at 7:30pm

PRESENT: Joanne Hodson, Ashley Kenlock, Peter Brown, Esther Dickson, Trisha Walker, James Taylor, Cllr Jim Weir, Julie Betts (Clerk)

APOLOGIES: Jim Watson

ABSENT:

This Parish Council meeting was held via Zoom online because of the implications of Coronavirus (Covid-19). The Government's advice was for vulnerable people to self-isolate and for all other people to socially distance themselves. Stagsden Parish Council should not, therefore, be meeting formally or encouraging Councillors and members of the public to attend meetings. The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 enables Parish Council to hold their meetings remotely.

Action/Power

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No members of the public attended the meeting.

The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended by s100, LGA 1972

12/21 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Jim Watson.

LGA 1972, Sch 12 para 40

13/21 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The meeting acknowledged that the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18 January 2021 were a correct record.

LGA 1972, Sch 12, para 41

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting, held on 18 January 2021, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

14/21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

As previously declared and as recorded in the minutes.

15/21 **REPORTS**

(a) Borough Councillor's Report, Cllr Jim Weir

See Appendix A.

16/21 **UPDATES ON CURRENT ISSUES**

(a) Village Hall

No report.

(b) Allotments
Peter Brown declared an interest in the Allotments.

Over the winter months the allotments remained open & have been ticking over nicely,if not a little wet , the members have got all their seeds ready & are raring to go.

Of the 39 plots listed available 31 have been taken, 2 for some reason do not exist, 4 are held back for Stagsden residents , which only leaves 2 spare plots. We may have to look in the future at opening the plots reserved for Stagsden residents to people from outside the village.

We are looking forward to being able to have some social events later this year & starting to have regular work parties.

Shane Hodson, Chair

(c) Management of Roadside Verges

Response received from Bedford Borough Council. There was not enough time to implement the proposed regime for the 2021 growing season. Work was required including consultation and changes to work programmes and mapping, therefore the changes proposed would be considered for the 2022 growing season.

(d) Village Lighting

Bedford Borough Council had received a complaint about street lighting in Stagsden. After considering the Dark Skies Campaign Stagsden Parish Council had agreed to turn off lighting between 12 and 5am. The complainant had said a light was not operational and it was too dark around the resident's home, Bedford Borough Council had repaired the light.

There had been no other comments on the reduction of lighting in the village.

(e) Royal George

The application to the Planning Inspectorate for change of use from public house to residence had been dismissed.

(f) Meetings

BATPC have written to Parish Council to update on the meeting remotely regulations. By virtue of the Coronavirus Act 2020, s78 and subsequent regulations, meetings of parish and town councils and of parish meetings may currently be held remotely **before 7 May 2021**.

The government is not currently planning to extend the remote meeting regulations beyond 7 May 2021. Along with other local government bodies, NALC is continuing to press for this extension. Gguidance for local councils on preparing for and managing the return to physical meetings in May and beyond is being prepared.

BATPC has already written to the six MPs serving Bedfordshire to ask for their support in extending the remote meetings regulations. BATPC are asking Parish Councils to lobby their MP on this matter, this would add further weight to the argument to continue meeting virtually.

Stagsden Parish Council have their May meeting on 17 May 2021, currently falling outside the agreement for remote meetings therefore the meeting may be held in the Village Hall. Await further advice.

17/21 **PLANNING**

(a) Report of Planning Applications

Bedford Borough Council approved: None

Bedford Borough Refused under delegated powers: None

Objections to the Planning Inspectorate: None

(b) To Consider Planning Applications

Town & Country Planning Act 1990

21/00277/FUL, Land adjacent to High View Wick End, Demolition of three agricultural barns and erection of two bungalows

RESOLVED

No Objection

21/00187/FUL, New Barn Wick End, Demolition of existing stables, change of use of land to erection of garage and workshop.

RESOLVED

No Objection

18/21 **FINANCE**

(a) Schedule of Receipts and Payments – Feb/March 2021, Appendix C

The Council received the schedule of receipts and payments made during Feb/March 20/21.

LGA 1972, s150 (6)

RESOLVED

That the schedule of receipts and payments made during Feb/March 2021, and as circulated, be approved.

(b) Budget Update

Councillors acknowledged the budget update attached at Appendix D.

(c) Asset Register

The Asset Register was circulated and is attached at Appendix E

RESOLVED

To acknowledge and approve the Asset Register

(d) Payroll Provider

Bedford Borough Council had ceased to provide payroll services. Therefore a new provider had been instructed.

DM Payroll Services will provide payroll from April 2021 at a cost of £120 per year.

(e) S137 Report

The Section 137 is attached at Appendix F. Due to Coronavirus there were no S137 payments for 20-21.

(f) Grants Received Report

The Grants Received Report was circulated and is attached at Appendix G

RESOLVED

To acknowledge the Grants Received Report.

(g) Annual Risk Assessment

The Annual Risk Assessment was circulated and is attached at Appendix H.

RESOLVED

To acknowledge and approve the Annual Risk Assessment.

(h) Review of Internal Controls

A review of the effectiveness of internal control arrangements had been undertaken.

The review the effectiveness of internal control arrangements, including the following had been assessed:

1. Scope of Internal Audit
2. Independence
3. Competence
4. Relationships
5. Planning and Reporting
6. Existing Internal Controls
7. Previous Internal Auditors report
8. Parish Council's risk assessment.

Report attached at **Appendix I**, that identified the internal controls of the Parish Council. There were no recommendations identified from the review

RESOLVED

To acknowledge and approve the Review of Internal Controls

19/21 **Amenities**

(a) Play Area

Grass Cut required as soon as possible. Clerk/ED

It was agreed to order the outdoor table tennis table.

(b) Rights of Way/Footpaths

Dog Poo leaflets had been printed and would be delivered in the near future.

(c) Highways

Church Lane closed by Anglian Water for urgent works.

20/21 **NEW MATTERS FROM COUNCILLORS FOR DISCUSSION AT NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

None.

21/21 **CORRESPONDENCE, APPENDIX D**

See Correspondence List attached.

Beds Police Crime Stats:
1 Theft from a vehicle, on 3 February 2021

Bedford Borough Council, Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Councillors agreed to consider and let the Clerk know if there were any subjects requiring investigation.

Notification from BATPC that Louise Ashmore would be retiring on 31 March 2021. Councillors wished Mrs Ashmore well for her retirement and thanked her for training and advice over the years.

22/21 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Meeting closed at 20.42pm.
The next meeting will be held on **Monday 18 May 2021 (7.00pm).**

MINUTES AGREED: _____

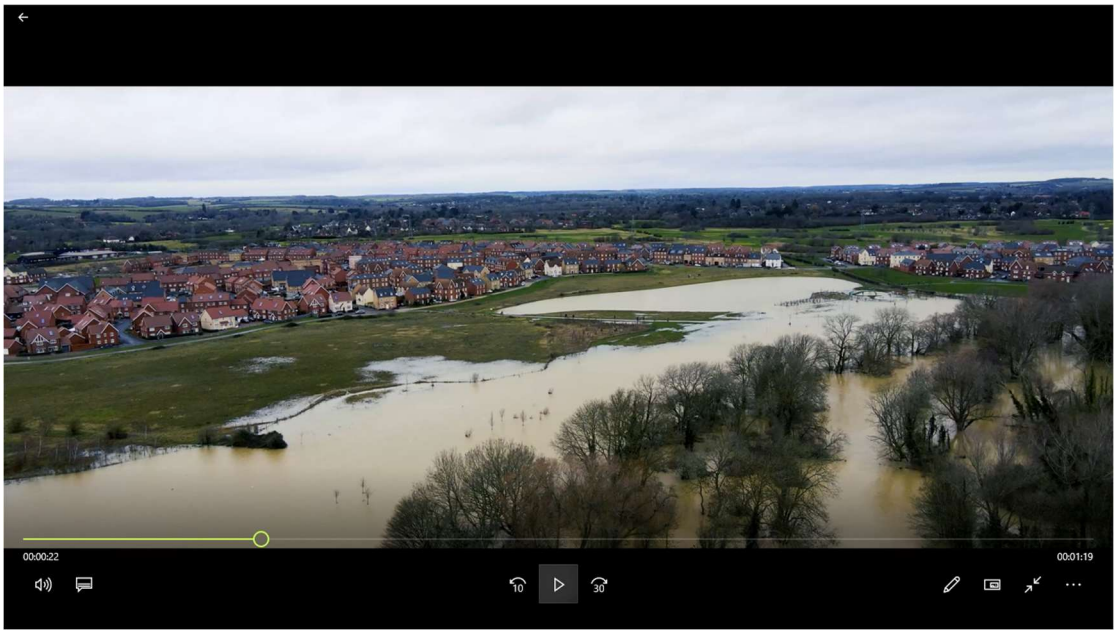
Date: _____2021

APPENDIX A

Borough Cllr Report - March 2021

Flood Response

Everyone will be aware of the horrible situation faced by many residents of the Borough through the Christmas period. Following many comments from residents in Great Denham and other parishes in the Ward I started a petition to ask that the Borough do a number of things to support and better communicate with local communities. The petition attracted nearly 700 signatures and many accompanying comments from those affected. One of the biggest issues was the incorrect and panicked warnings from leaflet posting on Christmas Eve in many parishes. I believe these issues came about because not enough local knowledge and awareness was available during the build-up of the flood. Great Denham Parish Chair and I discussed setting up a locally focused "Flood Response Group" which would require volunteers and be coordinated through the parish council. We have discussed with Officers from the Borough and now in receipt of the template needed to start to action setting up this group. This is also an agenda item for Monday 1st March PC meeting.



In order to bring this to the full attention of the Borough I led a debate at Full Council on the 24th of Feb and a motion was passed unanimously to put together a forum of Cllrs to work with the Environment Agency to ensure better communication with parishes and local communities and to give full support to setting up these local response groups.

Estate Management Charges

Ever since the estate management companies were appointed by the developer's residents have experienced numerous issues with schedules of work carried out, poor and sometimes non-existent communication, and of course costs and value for money. Whilst Chamonix and their associated schemes are by far the largest management company the issues also arise with SDL and RMG all of which I am either in dialogue with or very near to opening up discussions.

The trail and tales of woe from residents falls into the three main categories mentioned earlier. Following some detailed discussions with residents and social media feed-back I took the following actions.

- Contacted Directors of Barratt plc, Regional Managing Director of DWH and the Managing Director of DWH. Explained to them how poorly these schemes were operating, and the reputational damage being done to their brands.
    - DWH MD has met with Chamonix and is waiting to feed-back to me when we can arrange a meeting.
- Contacted Chamonix and First Port (new owners of Chamonix) local management.
    - Local Manager rang me today (1st March) to ask that we meet and start a process of improvement for residents.

- Meeting now arranged for 9th March with DWH and Chamonix

This is my suggested agenda for the meetings, and I would hope that residents take advantage of item 9 in order to give feed-back to managers of the schemes?

1. Number of schemes in place in Great Denham and Kempston Rural (GD&KR)
2. Number of courtyards/parking areas per scheme
3. Schedule of work
    a. What is undertaken in each scheme?
        i. Grass cutting
        ii. Weeding
        iii. Cleaning shared indoor areas
    b. How often
    c. Utility charges
    d. Formula for base charges before additional repairs
4. Process for the appointment of Resident Directors.
5. Options / Process for Residents to self-manage site.
6. Legal Requirement for Auditing of Accounts.
7. Approved Contractors (Identification and Value for Money).
8. Utility Supply – Market Testing
9. Agreed monthly surgery where residents can have access to management of schemes for at least one day per month.
10. Bedford Borough Council oversight, scrutiny and collation of complaints pertaining to managed areas across (GD&KR).
11. Role of The Property Ombudsman in the resolution of complaints pertaining to Property Management.

As soon as I have met with representatives of the management companies, I will keep everyone informed through my social media sites and the PC and local community sites. If residents are minded becoming involved as Resident Directors, this can be done, or even residents taking over the whole scheme as an option. (more on this in due course)

Controversial route 'E' for East West Rail a source of increasing concern for Borough residents

The chosen route selected for the East West Rail project - route E - continues to prove controversial and Borough Councillors received a petition this month, signed by over 1600 Bedford residents, objecting to it. The petition was debated at a heated meeting of the Borough Council on 24th February, when a number of residents from parishes in and around the route, put a series of questions to Council Leaders, and calling for the Council to "hold a full public consultation to be followed by a debate at Full Council in respect of the Council's decision to support Route E".
Many residents felt that there had been a lack of transparency around how the Mayor and Borough had come to support route E and felt that not enough information had been put in the public domain. They also demanded to know how route E, previously identified as one of the most expensive of the 5 options A-E, had suddenly become the cheapest option, without any explanation.

The subject of freight also proved controversial, with residents, parishes and Borough Councillors expressing the view that freight had been underplayed in previous discussions, and more information was required, as it forms a key part of the business case for the EWR project.

In the Council debate that followed, the Mayor's and Council leadership put forward a resolution which reconfirmed the Borough's support for a route through the town centre but didn't really address the concerns of the petitioners. Councillors representing the rural wards in the north of the Borough, those most affected by route E, objected to the motion. They feel route E will do irreparable damage to the north Bedfordshire countryside. Equally, Councillors in the south of the Borough wanted to ensure the

safe delivery of Wixams station and wanted an EWR route that would not jeopardise this. Ultimately, the Mayor's resolution was not unanimously supported.

The East West Rail project and the route is takes, are likely to be the source of ongoing controversy. Another round of consultation is due soon and residents and Parishes are strongly encouraged to respond.

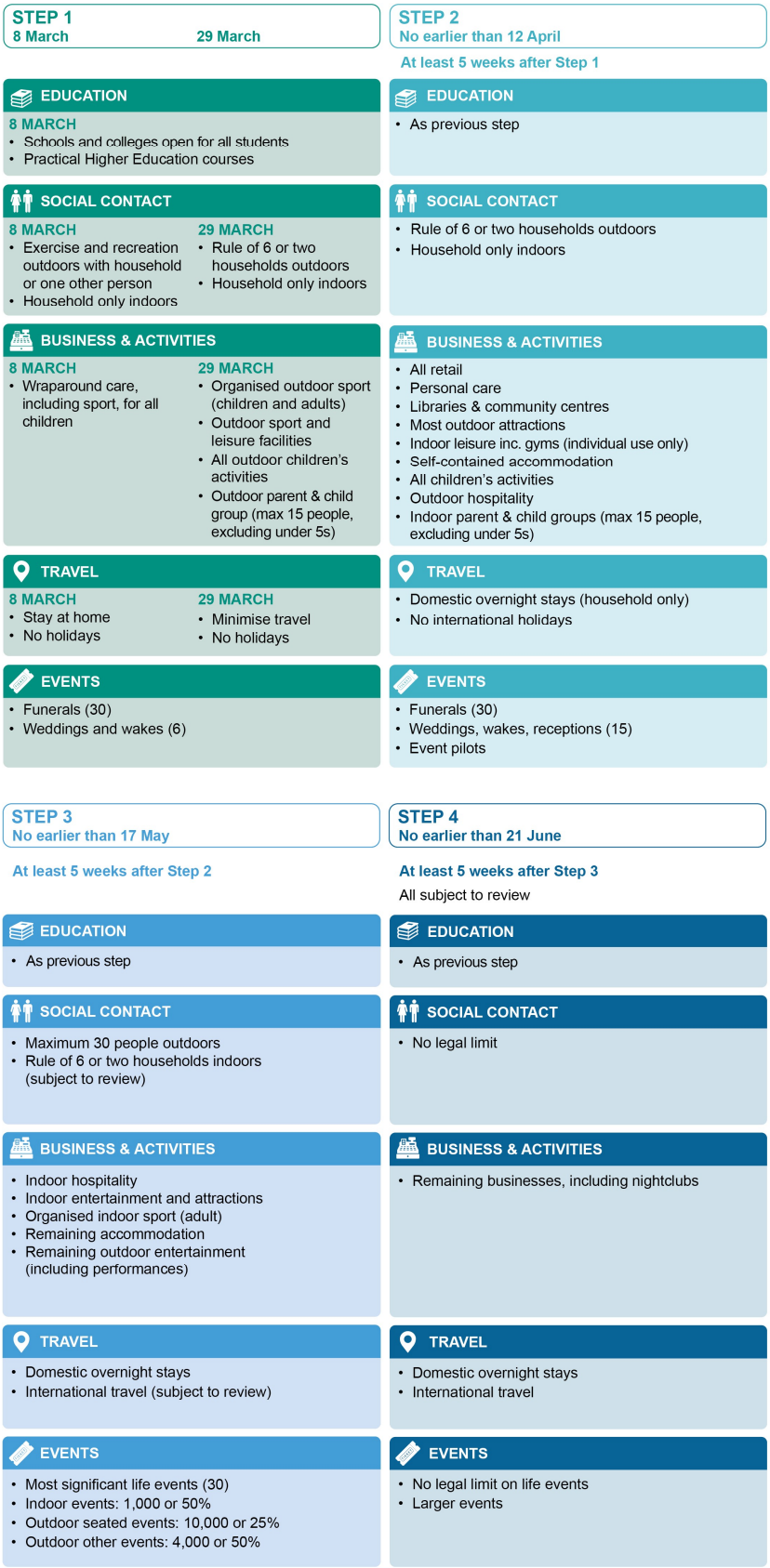
Further information about East West Rail and any forthcoming consultations can be found here: https://eastwestrail.co.uk/

Budget 2021/22

Bedford Borough Council have approved an increase in core Council Tax of 1.99% supplemented by a 1.75% Adult Social Care Precept, totalling 3.74% giving an average Band D Council Tax of £1,624.14 which was agreed at Full Council on Wednesday 3rd February.
You can find more details about their budget proposals here:
http://www.councillorsupport.bedford.gov.uk/documents/s53056/Item%2014%20-%20Revenue%20Budget%202021-22.pdf
At Full Council on Wednesday 24th February the completed budget was finalised and included the precepts of Police & Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire, the Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Authority and the Parish Councils.

Tesco confirms Midland Road closure but plans new Express store in town centre
Tesco have confirmed that they will be closing their Metro store on Midland Road in Bedford town centre.
However, in a letter to the Bedford & Kempston MP, the company said they were "actively working on plans to open a Tesco Express in the town centre."
In the letter, Tesco said that all staff members would be offered alternative roles at nearby stores.
The difference between a Tesco 'Metro' and an 'Express' is that a 'Metro' is generally bigger, offering a wider range of products whereas an 'Express' is closer to an off-license style of shop.
Garden Waste Collections Restart in Bedford Borough
Garden waste collections restart in Bedford Borough on Monday 1 March, following the usual pause in this service over the winter.
Garden waste can go in the green-lidded bin. Please put this bin out alongside your orange recycling bin by 6am on your next recycling day, and it will be collected every other week.
Grass cuttings, plants and weeds, hedge clippings and more can go in the garden waste bin- please make sure it is all loosely within the bin, not in bags.
To find out when you next bin collection is, please visit www.bedford.gov.uk/bins
£2.7m of Business Support Grants to be paid out in March.
A number of local businesses are set to remain closed for the remainder of this financial year, following the Prime Minister's announcement earlier this week about the roadmap out of lockdown.
As a result, Bedford Borough Council is now able to automatically pay £2.7million in business support grant to these businesses. These payments are expected to be in business bank accounts early next week.
These grants are set and funded by the Government at a national level and administered by the local council.
Additionally, any businesses with business premises that haven't been required to close but have been badly impacted by lockdown are encouraged to get in touch with the Council and apply for support at www.bedford.gov.uk/bsg, if they haven't already.
Any business that has already received a payment during this national lockdown period- either because it has had to close, or because it has been.

COVID-19 Update the Government has now set a roadmap out of lockdown which is as follows



Borough COVID Information

As of the 21st February in Bedford there has been 12,882 cases since the start of the Pandemic and there have been 241 registered cases in Bedford in the last 7 days. This means there have been 139.1 people per 100,000 in Bedford, even though this is a decrease of 40.9 per 100,000 in the last week, these numbers still show how rapidly the virus is currently spreading. At the Mayor's latest briefing he stated that the numbers were still declining at a slow rate and it was important that everyone does their bit to keep everyone safe.
If you would like the latest COVID snapshot (as of 21st Feb) please find it below:
https://bbcdevwebfiles.blob.core.windows.net/webfiles/Social%20Care%20Health%20and%20Community/Covid19/Covid19-weekly-statistics-24Feb.pdf
More information available at: https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-health-and-community/public-health/coronavirus/

COVID test centres in Bedford
There is continued tested in Bedford at Borough Hall and Prebend Street car parks as well as University of Bedfordshire's Polhill Campus
Test results from these sites should come back with 24-72 hours.
The government has updated its advice on testing. If you have any of the symptoms of Coronavirus, you can ask for a test through the NHS website or phone 119.
There are two walk through testing centres in Bedford for residents showing symptoms of Coronavirus. Drive-through testing is available 6 days/week at Gilbert Hitchcock House, Bedford Hospital and 5 days/week at Borough Hall. Both can be booked through the national testing website.
If you're an essential worker (see list here) you can apply for priority testing through GOV.UK by following the guidance for essential workers on the government website.
You can also get tested through this route if you have symptoms of coronavirus and live with an essential worker.
If you are unable to get to a testing centre, you can order a home testing kit through the national testing website.
You can find further details on testing on the government webpages.
More information is available here: https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-health-and-community/public-health/coronavirus/covid-19-testing/

COVID-19: Increased Support If You Need to Self-Isolate
Bedford Borough Council is making the Test and Trace Support Payment available to more people and has increased the Support Payment to £700. This means this payment will cover the earnings of someone working full time on the Living Wage.
In Bedford Borough, an individual is eligible for a Test and Trace Support Payment if:

- they have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, and
- have responded to the Test and Trace messages about their contacts, and
- are unable to work from home, and

Either:

- are currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit, or
- are on a low income (household earns less than £25,000 per year) and can show that self-isolation will result in financial hardship

If anyone has any symptoms of coronavirus: high temperature, new continuous cough, loss or change to your sense of smell or taste, it is really important that they self-isolate and book at test at www.nhs.uk/coronavirus

Also, anyone contacted by NHS Test and Trace and asked to self-isolate, must do so for the full amount of time they are told. Someone may not test positive or show symptoms straight away, but you could still be infectious and spread the virus to others, as it can take 10 days to develop the symptoms.
You can apply for this payment and find out more via our website by visitingwww.bedford.gov.uk/TTSP. adversely impacted- will receive this further grant automatically.

APPENDIX B

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS February/March 2021

Income	Expenditure			
0.21		26062.02	Nat West	Interest
	235.94	25826.08	Bedford Borough Council	Jan Salary
	100.00	25726.08	Eyelid Productions	annual website support
550.00		26276.08	Bedford Borough Council	contribution towards new bin
	235.94	26040.14	Bedford Borough Council	February Salary
0.20		26040.34	Nat West	interest
	235.94	25804.40	Bedford Borough Council	March Salary
550.41	807.82			
c/f	25804.40			

APPENDIX C

Budget Update

Stagsden Parish Council 21511.49

Budget Update as at 15.3.21	Budget	Actual	
Receipts			
Interest		10.13	
Precept		10000	
Grants		0	
Councillor funding		550	
Allotments		1200	
Total Receipts		11760.13	
Payments			
Election Costs		0	
Staff costs (Salary/Expenses)		3050.68	
Admin (Stationery & Postage)		60	
Councillor expenses			
Training		30	
Subscriptions		212.9	
Hall Hire		0	
Village Hall		0	
Grass Cut		360	
S137/Community Action		0	Christmas lunch
Allotments		1200	
Bank Charges		25	
Legal Fees		449	
Audit		335	
Insurance		670.89	
Play Areas		0	
Open Space		356.15	
Maintenance of village furniture		274	
Defibrillator		81	
Stagsden Historical Society		0	
Councillor grants		0	
Website		179.99	
Total Payments	0	7284.61	note: without VAT

APPENDIX D

Asset Register

STAGSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

ASSET REGISTER FOR

2018/19 **2020/2021**

Date Purchased	Item	Location	Cost	diference Add	Minus	Insurance Value
	4 Roadside seats		£809.75			£900.00
2000	Village Sign		£3,665.40			£5,000.00
	Litter/dog bins		£184.50			£200.00
	Seat (1) wood and metal ends	MK Entrance to High Street	£488.93			£500.00
	Seat (2) wood and metal ends	Centre near Browns	£500.00			£500
	Seat (3) wood and metal ends	Wick End Turn	£500.00			£500
	Seat (4) metal	Millenium	£1,000.00			1000
	Noticeboard	Village Hall	£1,437.05			£1,500.00
	2 Single Bay Notice Boards	High Street	£958.38			£1,000.00
	VAS Sign		£5,995.75			£7,000.00
	Various play equipment	Oakcroft Play Area	£13,004.69			£20,000.00
	Cast Bronze plaque		£40.37			
2011	Printer	Clerks Home	£50.00			
18/10/2012	Hags Goro 1 Bay Swing	Oakcroft Play Area	£1,700.00			£1,700.00
21/06/2012	Allotments Noticeboard	Allotments	£800.00			£800.00
01/11/2013	Village Gates	Entrances to village	£1,000.00			£3,000.00
	Play equipment, Zig Zag	Play Area	£850.00			£850.00
01/02/2014	Salt Bin	West End Lane	£200.00			
01/01/2015	Defibrillator	Stagsden Village Hall	£1,500.00			£1,500.00
03/03/2016	Noticeboard	Stagsden Allotments	£1,300.00			£1,300.00
30/03/2017	Laptop computer	8 Tulip Tree Close	£400.00			£400.00

19/03/2018	Picnic Bench	Play Area	£429.00		£429.00
20/03/2020	multi use bins x 2	Ent to Oakcroft & Bedford Rd	£1,100.00		£1,100.00
13/10/2020	Dog Bin Dispensers	Ent to Oakcroft & Bedford Rd	£200.00		£200.00
		Total	£38,113.82	0	£49,379.00

2019	£36,813.82
2020	£37,913.82
2021	£38,113.82

APPENDIX E

S137 Report

Local Government Act 1972, s137

2018-2019

Current Rate: **8.32**

Electors **317** **Max to be spent** **2637.44**

Date	Meeting Date	Payee	Details	Amount
				0
Total				0

APPENDIX F

Grants Received Report

Grants received 2020-21

Date	From	type	for	£
Mar-21	Bedford Borough Council	Councillor funding	Litter Bin	£550
				£550

STAGSDEN PARISH COUNCIL
RISK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

H=High M=Medium L=Low

Progress	Risk – Assets	Level	Controls
Done	Security & Safety of Assets, Updating Register, Insurance of Assets (play areas, multi-sport etc)	H	Administrative transactions are carried out by Parish Clerk except where indicated. Play area safety inspections are carried out annually by BPHA and work carried out to eliminate risks identified. Visual inspections also undertaken by Clerk and Parish Councillors. Asset Register and insurance of assets updated regularly.
Done	Office Equipment – Computers, Copier, Phones, Furniture	M	None.
Done	All Street Furniture	M	Insurance cover arranged – New additions added to insurance and regularly inspected.
Done	Children's Play Equipment	H	Insurance cover arranged – New additions added to insurance
Done	Public Open Space/Play Area	H	Insurance cover arranged and regularly inspected. Individually risk assessed.
Area	**Risk – Financial**	**Level**	**Controls**
Done	Banking/Investments	H	Investments kept under regular review by the Committee and returns monitored. Risk is minimised by appropriate regard to investment limits and types of investment made.
Done	Risk of Consequential loss of income	M	Insurance cover arranged
Done	Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty petty cash procedures	H	Insurance cover arranged. Fidelity Guarantee considered annually. Cash received is deposited once per week if required
Done	Financial controls and records	M	Financial Regulations approved. Monthly reconciliation of payments (cheque & direct debit) logged and reported to the Parish Council on a regular basis. Two signatories on cheques. Internal and external audit, review of effectiveness by Committee Representative.
Done	Comply with Customs and Excise Regulations	H	VAT claims calculated by Parish Clerk with Internal and External auditor to provide double check. VAT claimed annually.

Done	Budgeting to underline annual precept	M	Council receive detailed budgets in late autumn following detailed consideration by Clerk & Chairman (in accordance with Financial Regulations). Precept derived directly from this. Budget monitoring reports considered by Full Parish Council several times per year.
Area	**Risk – Third Party Liability**	**Level**	**Controls**
Done	Risk to third party, property or individuals	L	Insurance in place. Parks and Open Spaces checked regularly by BPHA. Trees and faults investigated when damage reported. Risk assessments prepared for individual events as required.
Done	Legal liability as consequence of asset ownership (especially playgrounds)	M	Insurance in place. Regular checks of playgrounds. Annual check of play areas undertaken by Independent Inspector. Individually risk assessed.
Area	**Risk – Employer Liability**	**Level**	**Controls**
Done	Comply with Employment Law	M	Membership of various national and regional bodies including Employees Organisation. Checked regularly for updates. Clerk is Member of NALC, BRCC, CPRE, BATPC Advisory Groups
Done	Comply with Inland Revenue requirements	M	Regular advice from NALC on payment scales. Salaries paid via Bedford Borough Council. Internal and External Auditors carry out annual checks.
Done	COVID 19 Risk 2020	H	Village Hall Risk Assessment for Village Hall, Meetings carried out virtually until May 2021..
Area	**Risk – Legal Liability**	**Level**	**Controls**
Done	Ensuring activities are within legal powers	M	Parish Clerk to clarify legal position on any new proposal. Legal advice to be sought where necessary.
Done	Proper and timely reporting via the Minutes	M	Council meets regularly and always receives and approves Minutes of Meetings held. Minutes made available to press and public and via the web site.
Area	**Risk – Councillors Propriety**	**Level**	**Controls**
Done	Registers of Interests and Gifts & Hospitality in place	M	Register of interest completed and submitted to designated Monitoring Officer at Bedford Borough Council yearly and changes are advised when required.
Area	**Internal Audit**	**Level**	**Controls**
Done	Annual Internal Procedures and testing specific internal controls	M	Annual review by member of the Committee.

Done	Review of Insurance cover	M	Reviewed before renewal.

APPENDIX H

Review of Internal Controls

Report on the Effectiveness of Internal Audit

Joanne Hodson
Julie Betts
16 February 2021

Councillors considered the Councils internal controls, the previous years Internal Auditor's Report and the Risk Assessment Document.**Internal Controls:**	**Comment**	**Action**
Proper arrangements for the approval of expenditure	Yes COVID 19 Meetings carried out by Zoom but expenditure still approved at meetings	None
Recording in the minutes of powers under which expenditure is being approved	Yes listed in minutes	None
Regular returns to HM Revenue and Customs	Financial Regulations 2.1 Return done yearly, unless large amount spent then more regularly.	None
Contracts of employment for all staff annually reviewed by the Council, systems of updating records for any changes in relevant legislation	Advice and updates from NALC/SLCC	Review annually
Training of RFO in matters of VAT	Yes completed	None
Regular Budget Monitoring	Yes reported regularly	None
Developing Systems of Performance Measurement/Appraisal	consider bi-annually	
Procedures for dealing with and monitoring grants or loans made and received	Budget Updates	None
Minutes properly numbered with master copy kept in safekeeping	Yes	None
Document procedures to deal with enquiries from the public	Yes Correspondence log	None
Documented procedures to deal with response to consultation requests	Yes	None

Procedures for document receipt, circulation, response, handling and filing	Yes	None
Procedures in place for recording and monitoring Members interest, Gifts and Hospitality received	Yes form available for Councillors	None
Adoption of codes of conduct for members and employees	Yes	None

The meeting considered the two principal aspects of the review of internal audit to comply with standards and overall effectiveness :

1. Meeting Standards:			
Expected Standard	**Evidence of Achievement**	**Yes or No**	**Areas for development**
1. Scope of internal audit	Terms of reference for internal audit were drawn up and will be considered by Parish Council at their March meeting. Internal audit work takes into account both the council's risk assessment and wider internal control arrangements. Internal audit work covers the council's anti-fraud and corruption arrangements.	**Yes**	
2. Independence	Internal audit has direct access to those charged with governance (see Financial Regulations). Reports are made in own name to management. Internal audit does not have any other role within the council/board.	**Yes**	
3. Competence	There is no evidence of a failure to carry out internal audit work ethically, with integrity and objectivity.	**Yes**	
4. Relationships	All responsible officers (Clerk/RFO) are consulted on the internal audit plan. (Evidence is on audit files). Respective responsibilities for officers and internal audit are defined in relation to internal control, risk management and fraud and corruption matters (job descriptions and engagement letter). The responsibilities of council members are understood; training of members is carried out as necessary. (See Member training plan).	**Yes**	
5 Audit Planning and reporting	The annual internal audit plan taking into account the risks facing the council and would be considered by the March Parish Council meeting	**Yes**	

2. Characteristics of Effectiveness			
Characteristics of 'effectiveness'	**Evidence of Achievement**	**Yes or No**	**Areas for development**
Internal audit work is planned	Planned internal audit work is based on risk assessment and designed to meet the council's needs.	**Yes**	
Understanding the whole organisation its needs and objectives	The annual audit plan demonstrates how audit work will provide assurance for the council's Annual Governance Statement.	**Yes**	
Be seen as a catalyst for change	Internal audit supports the council's work in delivering improved services to the community.	**Yes**	
Add value and assist the organisation in achieving its objectives	The council makes positive responses to internal audit's recommendations and follows up with action where this is called for.	**Yes**	
Be forward looking	In formulating the annual audit plan, national agenda changes are considered. Internal audit maintains awareness of new developments in the services, risk management and corporate governance.	**Yes**	
Be challenging	Internal audit focuses on the risks facing the council. Internal audit encourages managers/members to develop their own responses to risks, rather than relying solely on audit recommendations.	**Yes**	
Ensure the right resources are available	Adequate resource is made available for internal audit to complete its work. Internal audit understands the council	**Yes**	

Previous Internal Auditors Report			
No issues.			

Risk Assessment	Comment	Action
Risk Assessment reviewed	RA reviewed by Parish Council	

Summary & Recommendations

None.

Signed:

Joanne Hodson

16.2.21

APPENDIX I

CORRESPONDENCE LIST

Received	Type	From	Subject
1.2.21	email	Bedford Borough Council	Electoral roll update
8.2.21	email	Beds Police	Crime priorities
8.3.21	email	Bedford Borough Council	Claire Pick management of roadside verges
9.3.21	email	Diane DMPA	Payroll confirmation
11.3.21	email	Came & Company	information on Insurance renewal
14.3.21	email	Bedford Borough Council	Litter on bypass - order for work