

STAGSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of the Parish Council

Held Monday 17 January 2022
in the Village Hall at 7:30pm

PRESENT: Peter Brown, Jim Watson, Esther Dickson, James Taylor, Jim Weir,
Julie Betts (Clerk)

APOLOGIES: Joanne Hodson, Trisha Walker

ABSENT:

Action/Power

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None.

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

56/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Joanne Hodson and Trisha Walker.

LGA 1972,
Sch 12 para
40

57/22 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

LGA 1972,
Sch 12, para
41

RESOLVED

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

58/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

As previously declared and as recorded in the minutes.

January 2022
Signed (Chairman)

59/22 **REPORTS**

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

See Appendix A.

- (b) Police and Crime Reports

The Crime reports for November and December 2021 were circulated by email to Parish Councillors.

Current Policing priority: Speeding

60/22 **UPDATES ON CURRENT ISSUES**

- (a) Parish Council Vacancy

Ashley Kenlock had resigned from Stagsden Parish Council. Councillors thanked Ashley for her contribution and for volunteering her time for Stagsden.

A Vacancy would be advertised on the noticeboards and website.

Julie Betts

- (b) Village Hall

Cllr Watson reported the following works: maintenance issues, PAT Testing, lights changed, work on roof tiles and door lock had been updated.

The Pop Up Pub had been successful.

Roger Heron would be stepping back from maintenance duties and in future a contractor would be employed.

5 March 2022 Curry & Quiz night.

Application for funding

The Village Hall Committee had requested funding towards the cost of the Village Hall Insurance. Parish Council had £750 in the budget for the village hall insurance.

Cllr Dickson asked about the Village Hall Committee's sizeable reserves. (£47,151.80, 29 November 2021). Cllr Watson did not have the current figures but noted that there had been maintenance that would require payment.

Cllr Dickson asked what Stagsden residents get from the Village Hall. Cllr Watson said that residents get a reduced rate for hall hire.

The meeting discussed that many hires are from non-residents and it was suggested that the hall hire rates were too cheap in comparison to other village halls. The meeting agreed that a free event for the village hosted by the Village Hall, as seen in Great Denham would be a great use of surplus funds. Cllr Watson to take points raised back to the Village Hall Committee.

JW

RESOLVED

- (i) To contribute £750 towards the village hall insurance.
- (ii) That Stagsden Village Hall Committee share a copy of the year end accounts annually with Stagsden Parish Council. To be reported to the Annual Meeting in May each year.

(c) Allotments

Peter Brown declared an interest in the Allotments.

SAALA report

Membership continues to be high with only a few plots remaining. Some social events had been held. Financial situation remained strong.

This is our time of year for the renewal of memberships. Next Committee meeting later this week. Agenda: future purchases, site maintenance, social events.

The Allotments would like to plan an event for the Queens Platinum Jubilee but would not want to clash with any other organisations. Therefore, if any other groups are organising an event please contact us. Shane Hodson, SAALA Chairman

(d) Development at Spring Lane

Astrum Homes had confirmed they would provide a stone wall rather than a hedge on the development at Spring Lane.

(e) St Leonard's Church Wall

Application made to Bedford Borough Council Rural Affairs Committee.

61/22 **PLANNING**

(a) To Consider Planning Applications

Town &
Country
Planning Act
1990

21/02706/FUL, Town Close 64 High Street Stagsden, 1 & 2 storey front, side and rear extensions, new first floor and widening of existing access with new gates and piers.

RESOLVED

No Objections.

21/02245/FUL Watside Cottage, 8 Bedford Road, Amended Plans

RESOLVED

No Objections.

(b) Report of Planning Applications:

There was no update on planning applications pending.

62/22 **FINANCE**

(a) Schedule of Receipts and Payments – October/November 2021, Appendix B

The Council received the schedule of receipts and payments made during December/January 2022.

LGA 1972,
s150 (6)

January 2022
Signed (Chairman)

RESOLVED

That the schedule of receipts and payments made during December/January 2022, and as circulated, be approved.

(b) Standing Orders

The meeting reconsidered the existing Standing Orders.

RESOLVED

To acknowledge and approve the Standing Orders circulated.

(c) Financial Regulations

Defer to May 2021

(d) Review of Effectiveness 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 C, 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

January 2022
Signed (Chairman)

(e) Annual Risk Assessment

Councillors reviewed the Annual Risk Assessment attached at Appendix D

RESOLVED

To acknowledge and approve the Annual Risk Assessment.

63/22 **Amenities**

(a) Play Area

No problems with the play area. New Table Tennis table had been well used.

Cllr Dickson asked for funding for additional equipment for the play area: new basket balls, giant Jenga. All Councillors were in agreement to support.

ED

(b) Rights of Way/Footpaths

Cllr Watson had replaced posts on bridleways and tidied up footpaths.

It had been agreed with Bedford Borough Council to keep a gate on Spring Lane near the bypass. A new gate was required and Bedford Borough Council had requested a contribution of £250 towards the gate.

RESOLVED

To contribute £250.00 towards a new gate for Spring Lane.

(c) Highways

The Clerk had reminded Bedford Borough Council that Stagsden Parish Council want to reduce roadside grass cutting in summer 2022.

64/22 **NEW MATTERS FROM COUNCILLORS FOR DISCUSSION AT NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

Queens Jubilee

Community Flower/Herb Box

65/22 **CORRESPONDENCE, APPENDIX E**

See Correspondence List attached.

66/22 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Meeting closed at 20.40 pm.

The next meeting will be held on **Monday 21 March 2022 (7.30pm)**.

MINUTES AGREED: _____

Date: _____ **2022**

January 2022
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Borough Councillors Report Stagsden Parish Council January 2022

Borough COVID-19 Latest Figures

The first case of the 'Omicron' variant was confirmed in Bedford Borough on 7 December 2021, it is known to spread quicker than previous variants and residents are being urged to be cautious and work from home where possible.

Cases rising rapidly in Bedford

As of the 12th January in Bedford generally and Kempston Rural Ward we have seen a large increase over the past few weeks. There have been 41,237 cases in the Borough since the start of the pandemic and there have been 2,819 registered cases in Bedford with 122 in Kempston Rural in the last 7 days. The measure of cases against 100,000 population in the Borough has reduced from last weeks all time high of 1,727 to 1,614. Hospital admissions are up again but thankfully no further deaths have been registered. The weekly snapshot can be accessed through this link.

More information available at: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-health-and-community/public-health/coronavirus/>

Bedford providing free taxis to and from Vaccination centres

Bedford Borough Council are providing free taxis for anyone in the borough getting a vaccine.

To get your free taxi ride, you just need to call one of the taxi operators from the list available at www.bedford.gov.uk/VaxiTaxi, give them the reference BBC VACCINE, and let them know where you need to be picked up and dropped off.

£16m boost for Education in Bedford next year

Schools in Bedford Borough will receive a total of £179m next school year, which is a boost of £16m, from central government.

This money can be used for hiring specialist teachers, providing training and purchasing school supplies. It will also help specialist providers provide the right care and support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

Bedford Borough Businesses get Covid-19 Support from Central Government

Bedford Borough has received funding from the Additional Restrictions Grant to provide the following assistance to Bedford Businesses:

- £48,000 to the Southeast Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) Growth Hub to support their small and medium size enterprise recovery support programme in Bedford Borough.
- £40,000 to the Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce towards their global trade business support programme to assist businesses in Bedford Borough to expand into export markets.
- £50,000 to BedfordBID to undertake activities to increase custom for town centre businesses and to encourage customers to feel safe to return to the town centre.

Bedford Borough Receive £202k as part of Welcome Back Fund

The activities agreed for the use of the Welcome Back Fund (WBF) total £202,500 and are summarised as:

- Additional planting at various town centre locations
- Enhanced communications campaign
- Temporary benches in town centre and embankment
- Temporary bins in town centre

January 2022

8

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- Floor signage at various council owned buildings
- Lighting for the Corn Exchange

Bedford Borough were originally allocated £308,000 as part of the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund which the WBF is part of. That means there is a remaining allocation of £105,500 which can still be spent by March 2022, subject to a successful project change request.

Bin collection update

Bedford Borough Council have renewed their waste collection calendars. You can check your bin collection day and download a calendar here:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/rubbish-recycling-and-waste/household-bins-and-recycling/check-bin-collection-day/>

Permit Scheme Introduced for Businesses Operating in Bedford Parks

From 1st January 2022, any fitness instructors are required to have a permit card. All instructors with a permit card will have been risk assessed and properly insured.

A list of authorised fitness groups and instructors will be put on the Council's website, so people looking for a new workout group will be able to check which groups have been licensed to run in Bedford Borough Parks.

Bedford Receives £25k from Arts Council England

Bedford Borough has received £25,000 from Arts Council England to deliver a project to develop a Strategic Cultural Vision in conjunction with the Bedford Cultural Partnership (BCP). Bedford Borough are making a £10,000 contribution to the project.

The grant funding will enable the commissioning of relevant expertise to provide the momentum and facilitation skills required to document and share a cultural vision and strategic aims for the Borough that will focus and embed the energy of the developing BCP and local cultural sector stakeholders.

Homelessness Prevention Grant funding of £177k

Bedford Borough Council has accepted increased Homelessness Prevention Grant funding of £177,961. This money is provided by Central Government to assist Bedford Borough in delivering the following:

- To fully enforce the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness
- Reduce family temporary accommodation numbers through maximising family homelessness prevention
- Eliminate the use of unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation for families for longer than the statutory six-week limit.

Bedford Borough Strategy to Address and Reduce Domestic Abuse to be Published on 5th January

The Bedford Borough Strategy to Address and Reduce Domestic Abuse is due to be published on 5th of January following consultation. There have been some minor additions from the draft which is available here: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/have-your-say/consultations/domestic-abuse-strategy-consultation/>

The implementation of this strategy will be funded by a Government Grant of £335,779.

Bedford Borough Council to fund maximum of nine Average Speed Camera's across Bedford

Bedford Borough Council will fund a maximum of 9 ASCs across the borough for the municipal 2021/22 year. The criteria on how these 9 ‘core sites’ will be chosen is set out in the Average Speed Camera Policy which is available by double clicking the image on the right of this section.

There is an option for ‘Community Concern Sites’ to be installed which must also meet set criteria, including 100% funding from third-party sources.



ENGINEERING SERVICES

ENG/008

Average Speed Camera (ASCs)
Policy

Revision Date	Description	Author	Checked By	Approved By	Next Review Date
	First Issue	Allan Butts	Math Soper	Matthew D'Archaucourt	

High Street Highways Improvement Scheme Ready in time for Christmas

The works in the High Street to create a single lane with wider pavements for pedestrians with ‘better’ drop off points and short-term parking bays for shoppers was completed just in time for Christmas.

You can read more about the works here: <https://www.bedfordindependent.co.uk/single-lane-high-street-now-fully-open-in-time-for-christmas/>

Rural Affairs Grant

There is currently £77,000 of uncommitted funds in the Rural Affairs Grant. If you want to see the requirements for this grant they are available by clicking the relevant web form here:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/advice-and-benefits-grants/grants-for-financial-assist/>

Update on ‘Transporting Bedford’ Road Works

There are several works going on around Bedford Town Centre during the winter period.

This includes work at St Paul’s square, Ampthill Road and between Victoria and Britannia Road, so do expect delays.

There has also been progress on the Northern Gateway project with the widening of Clapham Road between the two roundabouts complete, along with the dedicated left hand turn lane from Clapham Road into Manton Lane.

Works have started on the central reservation of the dual carriageway, introducing a permanent right-hand turn into Sainsbury’s so people won’t need to use the Clapham Road/Manton Lane roundabout to U-turn.

The works had been creating major traffic jams for residents, but they will now take place overnight, with the re-opening of the second lane and manual traffic lights being put in place between Paula Radcliffe Way and Clapham Road roundabouts to ease delays.

Council Invites Charities and Voluntary Organisations to Bid for Funding

Bedford Borough Council has called for local charities and voluntary organisations to apply for funding that will help them to support members of communities that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

Those that have been disproportionally impacted by COVID-19 could include people from black and minority ethnic communities or persons with disabilities.

The funding can be used for activities including introducing physical infection control measures in community buildings, improving understanding around COVID-19 safety advice, assisting people in need of financial support due to COVID-19 and funding additional staff to work with at risk groups.

Groups that apply for the funding, which is available through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund, will be required to set out how it will be used to benefit residents who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. All applications should include:

- The name of the organisation applying

January 2022

10

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- The year the organisation was established, e.g. date a charity was registered
- The amount of funding that you are applying for
- Details of how the funding will be used and how this will help residents who are likely to be disproportionately affected by COVID.
- Confirmation that the charitable/voluntary organisations has a bank account in the name of the organisation.
- A copy of your most recent audited or independently verified accounts.
- The name and position of the person making the request.

Requests for funding should be emailed to community.welfare@bedford.gov.uk before 23:59 on Tuesday 25 January 2022. Any requests received after this date will not be considered.

East West Rail update

[East West Rail have said they will announce their preferred route alignment in the first half of 2022.](#)

APPENDIX B

Receipts & Payments

0.25	Nat West	Charges
0.27	Nat West	Charges
176.44	Julie Betts	Jan-22
176.44	Julie Betts	Feb-22
44.00	HMRC Cumbernauld	Jan-22
44.00	HMRC Cumbernauld	Feb-22
250.00	Bedford Borough Council	Spring Lane Gate
750.00	Village Hall Committee	Insurance

Balance £29397.18

January 2022
Signed (Chairman)

Report on the Effectiveness of Internal Audit

Peter Brown
Julie Betts
12 January 2022

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	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

January 2022

Signed (Chairman)

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	

January 2022
Signed (Chairman)

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

Signed:

Peter Brown, Chair, 12 January 2022

January 2022

Signed (Chairman)

STAGSDEN PARISH COUNCIL

RISK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS – Jan 2022

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

January 2022

Signed (Chairman)

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 held in Village Hall from 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

January 2022

Signed (Chairman)

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 E

CORRESPONDENCE LIST

Received	Type	From	Subject
10.1.22	email	Gemma Drake Bedford Borough Council	Mayors Climate Fund
10.1.22	email	Mark Hancock Beds Police	new PCSO
10.1.22	email	Dick Thompson	Grass Cutting
11.1.22	email	Ashley Kenlock	resignation
13.1.22	email	Claire Pick Bedford Borough Council	Grass Cutting planning

January 2022
Signed (Chairman)