

RISELEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 18 December 2025 at 7.15pm

Venue: Village Hall Lounge

Open Forum

A resident submitted a request for grant funding of **£4,000**, to be considered by the Parish Council following the next Precept meeting. The group outlined the positive impact their activities have had within the village and advised of their intention to work collaboratively with the Parish Council regarding the Old School Field, with the potential for a community hub to be relocated to the site in the future.

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence

None received.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

- **Parish Council Meeting held on 20 October 2025**
- **Extraordinary Meeting held on 11 December 2025**

It was **proposed and unanimously agreed** that the minutes of both meetings be approved as a true record.

4. Correspondence

The Clerk reported the following correspondence received after publication of the agenda:

- A new **amended planning application**, which is due to expire. The Parish Council will submit its comments following the expiry date.
- An email from a resident regarding **poor and irregular Royal Mail service** within the village. It was agreed that this matter be placed on the agenda for the next meeting to consider whether the Parish Council can formally raise concerns with Royal Mail.

Cllr Davis advised that land measuring approximately **3 acres at the top of Carriage Drive** has been sold at auction.

5. Matters Arising

None.

6. Planning

a. New Planning Applications

There were no new planning applications to consider.

b. Planning Decisions

The following decisions were noted:

- A **Tree Preservation Order (TPO)** has been approved.
- Planning permission has been granted for the **conversion of Sackvills Barn**.
- **Listed Building Consent** for the installation of French doors to a property on the High Street has been approved.

c. Planning Appeals

There were no planning appeals.

7. Administration and Finance

a. Monthly Financial Report and Invoices

The Parish Council **agreed the payments** as presented. However, it was agreed to **withhold the smaller second payment to Graingers** pending a review of the grass cutting. Cllr Davies will liaise with the Clerk to confirm whether the payment may proceed following his review. It was noted that Woodfines legal costs was to be paid from the reserve funds that has been ringfenced from the CIL money.

b. Clerk's End of Year Report

The Chairman read the Clerk's End of Year Report to the Council.

c. NALC – AI and Document Access

The Clerk advised that NALC has introduced access for all Councillors to documentation via the **NALC Vault**. Councillors are required to set up individual profiles, selecting *Riseley Parish Council* from the drop-down menu. The Clerk will circulate the relevant access link.

NALC is also trialling the use of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** within its systems, and Councillors are encouraged to provide feedback during the trial period.

8. Riseley Village

a. Old School Field Update

Cllr Davis provided an update on the Old School Field:

- The **Playing Field Lease** has now been agreed, with key legal documents to be held by **Woodfines Solicitors**.
- The **working group continues to expand**, and thanks were extended to all those involved to date.
- Neighbouring residents are being kept informed and invited to meetings.
- A dedicated **website is now live**, providing updates and allowing residents to submit ideas.
- It is hoped the field will be ready for use by **Summer 2026**.

- A **pump track** has been received positively by residents and will be explored further by the working group. A video of the Billing Aquadrome pump track was shown to Councillors.
- Existing gates will, in due course, be replaced with **bollards**.
- Councillors were reminded that **1 March marks the start of the nesting season**, which should be considered when planning hedge cutting.

Cllr Davis advised that, as chair of the School Field Working Group, he would like to hold a **stakeholder meeting in January**. It was noted that, as the Riseley Recreation Association (RRA) holds charity status, it may be beneficial to incorporate the School Field within its remit.

9. Riseley Recreation Association (RRA)

There was nothing to report. The next RRA meeting is scheduled for January.

10. Rights of Way

The Chairman advised that he has repaired the mower at a cost of **approximately half of the allocated budget**.

11. Tree Warden, Ross Meadow and Allotments

a. Tree Warden

No report.

b. Ross Meadow

Cllr Wady advised:

- A bench has been constructed by a local resident, who has requested **approximately £80** for fixings. The Parish Council **proposed and agreed a budget of up to £150** to cover fixings and Perspex. Receipts should be forwarded to the Clerk. A sign will be required once the bench is installed.
- Ditches have been cleared and the water standpipe has been turned off for winter.
- A replacement **Perspex sheet** is required for the Ross Meadow sign, estimated at **£20**. Cllr Towse will remove the security fixings, after which Cllr Wady will measure for replacement.
- A walkaround of **Helen's Meadow** has been undertaken to identify future requirements once the Parish Council has formally acquired the field. Further inspection will be arranged once the legal process progresses.

c. Allotments

A request for an allotment has been received. Cllr Wady will contact existing tenants to confirm continued use, as some plots appear underutilised.

12. Children and Youth

There was nothing to report.

13. Brook

There was nothing to report.

14. Highways and Footways

Cllr Wallis requested that the Clerk **follow up with Bedford Borough Council** regarding the seasonal Trim of **Bowers Lane**.

15. Street Lighting

Cllr Wallis will follow up with **Andy Musket** regarding outstanding lighting works and invoices required for an insurance claim. It was noted that Mr Musket has been heavily involved in Christmas lighting installations. The **Kings Close column** is scheduled for replacement in January.

16. Village Hall

Cllr Brown will raise the **internet service offer** with the Village Hall Committee. He will also seek to visit **Grafham Village** to review how internet coverage is provided to the village hall, public house, and playing field via an internet mast.

17. Grass Cutting

It was noted that **Graingers** have maintained the playing field for over 30 years. Particular thanks were extended to **William**, who has been a valued and reliable operative throughout this period.

18. Newsletter

No report.

19. Website

a. AI Search Function

Cllr Davis explained the need for an improved **search function** for the village website to allow quicker and easier access to documents. A search plug-in is available at a cost of **approximately £75 per year**. The Parish Council **agreed to trial the service for one year**.

It was further agreed that the **School Field website** should be linked to the main village website.

20. Environment and Village Appearance

Cliff has been commended for his ongoing work trimming pathways, which has had a noticeable positive impact across the village. Cllr Towseland was asked to pass on the Parish Council's thanks.

There has been no update regarding the **railings leaning into the brook**. Bedford Borough Council is aware of the issue and is considering potential solutions.

21. Bedford Borough Council

No formal report was received.

A resident raised concerns regarding:

- A tree within **the Orchard** that appears to be in poor condition, with dead branches falling.

- Overgrown hedges encroaching onto footpaths in several locations.

It was noted that the Parish Council may contact residents requesting hedge maintenance and, if necessary, escalate matters to **Bedford Borough Council Highways Enforcement**. The Clerk advised that this issue will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting to allow for public discussion.

22. Dates of Next Meetings

- **Precept Meeting:** Thursday 22 January 2026
 - **Next Parish Council Meeting:** Thursday 29 January 2026 (to be held later than the usual schedule)
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Meeting closed at 8.24pm.

The Parish Council marked the end of the year with festive drinks and refreshments kindly provided by the Clerk and the Chairman.