RISELEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES – MEETING THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2026, 7.15pm

Village Hall Lounge

Chair: Cllr Jowett Clerk: Sam Langley

PRESENT

Cllr Jowett (Chairman), Cllr Felce (Vice Chairman), Cllr Wallis, Cllr Townsend, Cllr Jones, Cllr Brown, Cllr Wady, Cllr Davies and Cllr Gell.

Apologies: None – all Councillors present.

Members of the Public: 11

The Mayor of Bedford arrived at 7.25pm and left the meeting at 7.50pm.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Cllr Jowett spoke on behalf of a resident, Mr Burton, spoke about the "Wrap Up" project being organised through the Rotary Club. The project is seeking donations of large coats, with collection points in the village, to be confirmed shortly. Mr Burton is leading the project.

The newly appointed Manager of Brook House, Daniel McCallum, attended the meeting and expressed a wish to reassure residents and answer any questions. It was agreed that the Clerk would invite him to attend a future Parish Council meeting.

A member of the public raised concerns regarding an increase in traffic through the village, including effluent, waste and scrap haulage, and asked whether the SID could be moved to another location.

Andrew Prigmore, Head of Highways, Fleet & Traffic Operations, attended the meeting in an official capacity and listened to the concerns raised by residents. He confirmed that he was happy to investigate HGV traffic further if supporting data could be provided. He recommended that residents undertake a Lorry Watch exercise for a period of one month using the relevant forms already provided.

It was agreed that a Lorry Watch scheme would be circulated to residents so that details of vehicles, times and registrations could be recorded. This information would allow Highways to establish the scale and frequency of HGV movements through Riseley and, where appropriate, contact the relevant companies.

Some Parish Councillors stated that they had not observed a significant HGV problem within the village.

A resident raised concerns regarding the poor condition of the allotment fencing. The allotment holders are aware of the proposed works and are supportive of the fencing being replaced. The matter was included on the agenda for consideration.

Concerns were also raised regarding the fence/railings leaning badly towards the brook, near the Riseley Village Sign, Mr Prigmore confirmed that the matter had been looked into, although funding is currently limited. It may therefore be necessary, as a first step, for the railings to be removed. Any decision regarding the railings is a matter for Bedford Borough Council.

01. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

There were no apologies. All Councillors were present.

02. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

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Cllr Davies advised the Parish Council that, following Bedford Borough Council's current Call for Sites, he had submitted his field for consideration. He confirmed that he would advise the Parish Council of any progress or developments.

03. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16 JULY 2026

The minutes were approved and agreed as a true record.

Cllr Jowett abstained from voting as he was not present at the meeting held on 16 July 2026.

04. CORRESPONDENCE – IMPORTANT ITEMS RECEIVED AFTER THE AGENDA WAS PUBLISHED

An email regarding dog fouling had been received from a resident. It was agreed that this matter would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

05. NIL

06. PLANNING

There were no planning applications to discuss.

06b. DECISIONS ON PLANNING

The Certificate of Lawful Development for the Old School Playing Field has now been issued.

06c. PLANNING APPEALS

There were none.

06d. BROOK HOUSE UPDATE

The Parish Council was advised that a planning application relating to Brook House is expected shortly.

07. ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

a. Monthly Report and Invoices for Payment

The monthly financial report and invoices were presented.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to approve the payments as presented.

b. Asset Register

Cllr Wallis and Cllr Felce raised concerns regarding the current presentation of the Asset Register and the way the information has been entered into Scribe.

It was agreed that they would meet with the Clerk to review the register and ensure that the assets are recorded in a clear and orderly manner.

The Chairman also noted that the Saber Saw should be included on the Asset Register.

c. Helen's Meadow – Request for Funds for Preliminary Meeting with Solicitor

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to allocate a budget £500 to cover a consultation and meeting with our solicitor at Woofines. Cllr Gell offered to make a donation towards the legal fees. Any donation would be subject to the Parish Council's Donations Policy once formally adopted.

It was proposed that CIL funding could be considered towards the costs should the proposed donation not be applicable.

d. Policy on Donations, Sponsorship and Advertising

The Clerk had circulated the proposed Donations, Sponsorship and Advertising Policy.

Although not all Councillors had yet had an opportunity to read the full policy, it was recognised that the policy provides a useful framework for the Parish Council.

The Chairman requested that some wording be reviewed and amended.

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RESOLVED: The Parish Council agreed to adopt the policy in principle, subject to any amendments being made.

The use of advertising within the village newsletter was also discussed. It was agreed that anyone wishing to advertise should be directed to the Parish Council's policy. The Parish Council noted that advertising had not previously been permitted due to the additional issues and responsibilities that could arise.

e. Old School Website Renewal – £40.14

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to approve the annual website/domain renewal cost of £40.14.

f. 2026 National Pay Increase

The national pay increase was noted for information.

The Mayor of Bedford left the meeting at 7.50pm.

08. RISELEY VILLAGE

a. White Gates at the Southern Entrance to the Village

The damage to the white gates has now been repaired. However, the gates are generally showing signs of deterioration.

ACTION: Cllr Townsend to inspect the gates and establish what works may be required.

b. EV Charging Point – Dodds Close

Andrew Prigmore explained that Bedford Borough Council had received approximately £1 million of funding to introduce EV charging infrastructure for residents who do not have access to off-road parking.

The proposed facility at Dodds Close is intended to support residents who do not have access to private charging. Other potential locations, including Wells Road and Bourne Road, are also being considered.

The proposed bays would not initially be restricted solely to EV users. However, as EV ownership increases, restrictions may be considered in the future.

The charging infrastructure would become a Bedford Borough Council Highways asset and would be maintained by the Borough Council. Two charging points would provide charging for four bays.

The Parish Council raised no objection to the proposal.

c. CPRE – Hedgerow Heroes

The CPRE is offering free hedgerow planting to Parish Councils and landowners.

The information was noted.

d. Resident's Email – Lion Standpipes

It was noted that one cast-iron standpipe had been interfered with had sustained damage. which has been repaired

The Parish Council will monitor the situation and arrange repairs to the damaged standpipe where reasonably possible.

e. Community First Responder Update

An update was provided regarding the Community First Responder equipment and the new EE SIM card.

It was noted that the dual-SIM arrangement does not automatically detect which network is providing the strongest signal.

f. Post Office Van Update

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The Post Office van service has now returned to the village and a new Postie is in place.

g. New Village Post Office Locker at the School

The Parish Council noted that a Post Office locker had been installed at the lower school without consultation with the Parish Council.

Concerns were raised regarding the location of the locker at the front of a primary school and potential safeguarding considerations. Concerns were also expressed regarding the lack of communication between the school and the village.

Cllr Townsend suggested that a Parish Councillor could become a school governor to help improve communication between the Parish Council and the school.

It was noted that the school currently has relatively low pupil numbers and may welcome a governor.

h. Christmas Lights

No update was provided.

i. People's Emergency Briefing

Cllr Jones will investigate this further and obtain additional information for consideration at the next meeting.

j. Village Noticeboards

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to allocate a £200 budget for materials required to refurbish the village noticeboards.

The village handyman will undertake the refurbishment works.

09a. RRA – ACTIONS FOLLOWING ROSPA REPORT 2026

Cllr Gell summarised the findings of the ROSPA report.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to proceed with the replacement of the zip wire mechanism at a cost of £630, providing a five-year mechanism although it was agreed to not action till after the precept meeting next January

The RRA AGM is due to take place shortly.

10a. OLD SCHOOL PLAYING FIELD – UPDATE AND REQUEST FOR FUNDS FOR GAZEBO AND PUMP TRACK

The Parish Council noted that the Certificate of Lawful Development has now been issued for the Old School Playing Field.

Funding was requested towards a cedar wood shelter and the pump track project.

Cllr Towler offered £500 of Ward Funding towards the project.

RESOLVED: It was unanimously agreed to allocate £4,500 for a shelter and £1,500 from CIL funds for the project.

It was also proposed and agreed that the Parish Council should apply for Mick George funding during the next funding round in March 2027.

It was noted that the Parish Council may need to provide approximately £1,725 as a third-party contribution, if we are successful with the Mick George Community Fund

11. RIGHTS OF WAY

Nothing to report.

12a. TREE WARDEN – JOE HEAST'S ASSESSMENT OF ROSS MEADOW POPLAR TREE

Quotes have been received:

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Pollard the tree – £950

Fell the tree – £1,150

The matter was agreed to proceed with the lower cost.

12b. TREE WARDEN – TREE 61, HIGH STREET

It was confirmed that Tree 61 is the same tree referred to under the Ross Meadow assessment above.

12c. ALLOTMENTS – FENCING

A new fence is required at the allotments.

The estimated cost for materials was discussed, with pressure-treated timber expected to cost approximately half the price of some alternative options.

Cllr Townsend had investigated galvanised fencing, with five-foot sections costing approximately £15 each and posts approximately £12 each, with creosoted posts having an estimated 25-year lifespan.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed to allocate a budget of £1,800 for the replacement of the allotment fencing.

13. CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Nothing to report.

14. BROOK

The equipment purchased through the grant funding has now been received and is ready for installation/action.

15a. HIGH STREET TRAFFIC – SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTS AND MP RICHARD FULLER

Andrew Prigmore confirmed that a vehicle/Lorry Watch would be undertaken by residents to establish the number and frequency of HGVs travelling through the village.

It was noted that Bedford Borough Council will no longer fund average-speed cameras.

It was considered that the length of the village may not make an average-speed camera scheme viable.

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed that the existing SID should be converted to mains power from the lamppost rather than relying on battery charging.

The Parish Council also noted that Bedford Borough Council does not currently support a weight restriction, and that such a restriction could potentially affect legitimate deliveries to the area.

The Parish Council agreed that the Lorry Watch would provide useful evidence of the actual number of HGVs travelling through the village before any further action is considered.

15b. Beanfield Close – Sewer Access / Possible Highways Land / Building Concern

RESOLVED: It was proposed and agreed that Bedford Borough Council should investigate ownership of the land in question.

15c. Damaged Verge Exposing Services – Bedford Road

No further update was provided.

15d. Overhanging Bush Restricting Vision Near 28 High Street

Andrew Prigmore agreed to add this location to his list of overgrown vegetation hedges requiring attention.

15e. Footbridge Update

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The footbridge, by 61 High Street, has now been repaired and is open.

15f. SID Proposal to Convert to Mains Supply

RESOLVED: as above 15a

16. LIGHTING

Nothing to report.

17. VILLAGE HALL

Nothing to report.

18. GRASS CUTTING

Graingers are scheduled to undertake the next grass cut on 24 September 2026.

19. NEWSLETTER

Work is ongoing.

20. WEBSITE

Nothing to report.

21. ENVIRONMENT & VILLAGE APPEARANCE

Nothing to report.

22. BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Bedford Borough Council report had been circulated to all Councillors.

No comments were raised.

23. OUTSTANDING ITEMS

Ref	Description	Action By	Waiting For	Notes / Update
12/23	Review of Parish Council procedures and protocols	Cllr Jowett / Cllr Felce & Clerk	To be arranged	Remain outstanding
2025	Children's Community Hub	Cllr Wady	Updates	Remain on agenda
2025	Helen's Meadow	All Councillors	Updates	Remain on agenda
2025	Handy Person	All Councillors	Work to be scheduled	Remain on agenda
2026	Scribe Accounts housekeeping	Clerk / Cllr Jowett	To be arranged	Review required
2026	Overhanging hedges	All Councillors	Resolution	Remain on agenda until resolved

24. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Riseley Parish Council will be held on:

Thursday 22 October 2026

This is one week later than the usual meeting date.

Meeting closed at 9.25pm.

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