RISELEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday 22 October 2026 at 7.15pm
Village Hall Lounge

Present	Cllr Felce, Cllr Davies, Cllr Gell, Cllr Toseland, Cllr Jones, Cllr Brown, Cllr Wady
Apologies	Cllr D. Jowett (Chairman) and Cllr Wallis
Chair – Cllr Felce	Clerk – Sam Langley

Public Participation.

The Chairman opened the meeting to members of the public. The public forum was limited to 15 minutes.

A resident asked about the retrospective planning application relating to 20 High Street and raised concerns that the property was being used as a nursery. The Clerk explained that the application before the Parish Council related to the demolition of a timber shed and the erection of a timber-clad cabin, rather than a change of use. The Parish Council could only comment on the development as presented in the application. Cllr Towler provided further background on retrospective planning applications, and Cllr Gell reminded those present that the Parish Council is a consultee, with Bedford Borough Council responsible for determining the application.

Mr Robinson, the planning agent for land at the top of the lane near Sackville Farm, advised that a revised application would be submitted. The updated plans had been circulated and he asked to attend a future meeting to present the proposals and receive feedback. It was agreed that this would be included on the next meeting agenda.

A resident asked the Parish Council to consider local resilience planning, including preparation for wildfires and flooding. It was agreed that this request would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

A resident raised concerns about the number of heavy goods vehicles travelling through the village, including movements from approximately midnight to 4 am. Cllr Davies explained that Bedford Borough Council had requested a Lorry Watch initiative be set up to help establish which vehicles were using Riseley as a route. Mr Latham is coordinating the local Lorry Watch initiative, and the resident agreed to contact him. If the vehicles are associated with BCA, the matter will be escalated to Bedford Borough Council.

01. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr D. Jowett (Chairman) and Cllr Wallis.

02. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

03. Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 17 September 2026 were considered. The following amendments were agreed:

- The wording relating to the tree quotation/assessment was to be corrected.
- Minute 10(a) was to record the additional sum of £1,400 for the pump track.
- The Highways and Footways section was to reflect that Bedford Borough Council expected the work to be completed during October.
- The spelling of Cllr Toseland's name in the attendance record was to be corrected.

Subject to these amendments, the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

04. Correspondence

The Clerk reported receipt of an email concerning land at the bottom of Sackville Farm. This had been circulated and the matter had also been raised during public forum.

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An email had also been received offering a free planning-link service for the Parish Council website. Cllr Davies would address this under the Website item.

05. Presentation – Brook House

Daniel McCallum, Head of Children's Services for Bedfordshire Supported Housing and Manager of Brook House, introduced himself and answered questions from Parish Councillors and members of the public.

Questions were raised about the number of children expected to live at the home, the nature and level of their additional needs, and public safety. Mr McCallum explained that the home would initially be planned for six children, subject to Ofsted's determination. The provision would be for children with low to moderate learning difficulties and would not accommodate children from the youth justice system.

Mr McCallum advised that appropriate security arrangements would be in place to safeguard the children and the wider public. The service would provide a comprehensive, wrap-around package of care. An on-site school was planned so that the children's educational needs could be met within the home, without relying on places or resources at local schools. Any change of use away from provision for children with learning difficulties would require the appropriate planning consideration.

The home was expected to create local employment opportunities. Staffing was anticipated to comprise approximately three teams of ten staff to provide round-the-clock care. Vacancies were expected to be advertised around summer 2027, once training and systems were in place.

Mr McCallum explained that he had been recruited for the role because of his previous experience and successful management of other children's homes. He referred to the positive reference provided by the parish council in Downsey, whose experience of the service was considered relevant to the arrangements proposed for Riseley.

A resident welcomed the proposed use of the property and expressed the hope that the home would receive local support. The Parish Council thanked Mr McCallum for attending and answering questions.

06. Planning

a. New planning applications

Application 26/01796/S73A – retrospective planning permission for the demolition of a timber shed and erection of a timber-clad cabin at 20 High Street, Riseley, Bedford, MK44 1DU. The Parish Council considered the application and noted that the proposal was described as being for family use and on the same footprint as the previous shed. Councillors felt that this information was incorrect. However, as a consultee, the Parish Council agreed to make no comment, noting that Bedford Borough Council would need to determine the use and scale of the development.

b. Planning decisions

The application for pan tiles at Rotten Row was approved.

c. Planning appeals

There were no planning appeals to report.

07. Administration and Finance

a. Monthly report and invoices for payment

The monthly report and schedule of invoices were reviewed. The payment list was approved by the Parish Council.

b. Protocol for a visit by the Mayor

Cllr Davies suggested that the Parish Council should formally welcome the Mayor if he attends a meeting and offer him the opportunity to address the Council. It was proposed and agreed that this approach would be adopted for any current or future Mayor attending a Parish Council meeting.

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08. Riseley Village

a. The People's Emergency Briefing Film

Cllr Jones had reviewed the information and considered that a date should be arranged for a screening. The film can be booked through the Government website and there is no charge. The screening is expected to last approximately 90 minutes.

A parishioner had expressed an interest in attending. Cllr Wady, together with her husband, would take this forward and liaise with the Clerk to agree a suitable date. The Clerk would then arrange the booking on behalf of the Parish Council. Cllr Wady's husband has experience in public speaking.

b. The Villager Minibus – AGM

The Council noted that the Villager Minibus AGM is scheduled for Wednesday 18 November 2026 at 2.00pm at Sharnbrook Village Hall. An official invitation will be sent to the Parish Council and other parish councils. Passenger numbers are reported to be increasing.

c. Local Plan 2050

The Parish Council noted that work on the Local Plan 2050 is underway.

d. Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day

Cllr Gell has the wreath. The Chairman would be asked to lay it. If the Chairman is unavailable, Cllr Wallis would be approached, subject to availability.

e. Increase in dog waste

Following an email from a resident, the Parish Council discussed reports of increased dog fouling and bags containing dog waste being left behind. It was noted that the Parish Council has limited powers in this matter. Residents would be reminded of their responsibility to clear up after their dogs and help keep the village tidy.

09. Riseley Recreation Association (RRA)

A revised date for the RRA AGM is to be arranged.

10. Old School Playing Field

Cllr Davies reported good progress on the pump track. Thanks were recorded to Rob and Michael Norton for loading the trailer, which Rob then transported to the site. Approximately 70 tonnes of material had been moved to begin forming the track. A volunteer dirt day was planned for Saturday, and residents were invited to help with construction.

Ryan Cain had provided the track layout and design, intended to use the natural gradients to create movement around the course. A limestone topping would be required to maintain the surface, although this may not be available until spring. No cost had been incurred by the Parish Council to date. The design was available on the project's Facebook and Instagram pages.

The shelter project was also progressing. Ground screws were considered preferable to a concrete base, as they would reduce the amount of volunteer work required. Professional installation was expected to cost less than the funding already agreed, with the screws extending approximately one metre into the ground.

A trial tennis session was planned for Monday at the Village Hall, with around 15 people having registered an interest.

11. Rights of Way

Cllr Jowett's report was that the Parish Council was still awaiting the walk boards for Footpath 38 and servicing of the equipment. No significant progress was expected until spring.

It was noted that work had been undertaken on the bridge at Gold Street. Councillors queried whether the correct bridge had been worked on, as the Parish Council had not been consulted.

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12. Tree Warden, Ross Meadow and Allotments

a. Tree Warden

Cllr Toseland reported that, following the response received regarding the popular tree, no action would be required for three years. Cllr Toseland suggested that the tree could be pollarded back to an existing stem.

b. Ross Meadow

The ditches had started to be cleared. It was also noted that another person appeared to be undertaking clearance work.

c. Allotments

An enquiry had been received from a new resident asking whether an allotment plot could be made available at the rear of her property. The only plot that might be available was plot 4D. Cllr Wady would check whether this plot was still required.

13. Children and Youth

There was no report.

14. Brook

There was no report.

15. Highways and Footways

a. Parking on the High Street

The Parish Council considered an email from a resident concerning parking on the High Street. Following discussion, it was noted that the matter was not within the Parish Council's remit. The suggestion that residents use the garages was not considered a practical option, as the garages are privately owned. The request for parking to be incorporated into new developments was also outside the Parish Council's powers. The Parish Council would thank the resident for raising the matter but was unable to take further action.

The work on the ditch next to the garage was due to be completed.

b. Electric vehicle charging points

The Parish Council supported the principle of providing electric vehicle charging points in the village. However, Councillors considered that there may be inaccuracies or discrepancies in the plans and location descriptions supplied.

The Clerk would contact Bedford Borough Council to confirm that the map and descriptions were correct. It was noted that two charging points had previously been identified for Dodds Close and that the current proposal related to additional charging points.

16. Lighting

A report had been received that a light was not working. On inspection, it was found to be operating correctly.

17. Village Hall

There was nothing to report.

18. Grass Cutting

The Parish Council noted receipt of the grass-cutting contribution from Bedford Borough Council. The contribution had not increased for the past three years.

Grass cutting was now back on track. The current contract was due to end on 31 October 2026. A final cut was considered desirable to leave the areas in good condition for the start of the next season.

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19. Newsletter

The next newsletter was expected to be distributed in mid to late November, in time to include Christmas events. The contributor known as “Janet the Wanderer” had advised that she would be stopping her article. The Parish Council wished to acknowledge and thank the contributor for her years of involvement, although her identity was not known to the Council.

20. Website

The recent national website hacking concern had been dealt with promptly. The Clerk reported that an email had been received from Plota.co.uk offering a free service to the Parish Council websites.

Councillors expressed some caution about the offer because the service was free of charge. However, it was proposed and agreed to trial the service for six months and review it at the end of that period.

21. Environment and Village Appearance

A survey of the gullies was expected to take place in the near future.

22. Bedford Borough Council

Cllr Towler provided an update on the latest matters at Bedford Borough Council. He referred to a 90-page Best Value report concerning the Council, which he considered to be critical in tone, although he felt that some of its content was hearsay rather than fact.

The Parish Council noted that discussions regarding devolution were continuing.

23. Outstanding Items

Ref	Description	Action by	Waiting for	Notes
12/2023	Review of Parish Council procedures and protocols	Cllr Jowett & Cllr Felce		To be arranged
2025	Handy Person	All Councillors		Remain on agenda for work to be scheduled
2025	Helens Meadow	All Councillors		Remain on agenda for updates
2024	Children’s Community Hub	Cllr Wady		Remain on agenda for updates
2026	Sponsorship/donations policy	Chairman	Cllr Jowett	Chairman’s amendments before publication

24. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 19 November 2026.

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