

# BRICKHILL

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## PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a meeting of the Allotments & Open Spaces Committee held on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November at St Marks Church, Calder Rise, Brickhill**

**Present:** Cllrs Bowler, Holloway, Reeve and the Assistant Clerk. In addition there was 1 member of the public.

1	<b>Apologies for absence</b> None.	
2	<b>Declarations of acceptance of interest in items on the agenda</b> None	
3	<b>Public Open Session</b> It was agreed that Mr Newberry would be able to comment during item 5. There were no further questions.	
4	<b>To confirm minutes from meeting held on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September. It was resolved</b> to accept the minutes as a true record of the meeting.	Asst Clerk
5	<p><b>To receive a report on the management of Brickhill allotments to include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spend against budget for 2016-17</li> <li>• Review of annual rent charges</li> <li>• A proposal to introduce ponds within the site to encourage wildlife and improve the natural environment</li> </ul> <p><b>Spend against budget</b> – the report was noted. Income was less than originally forecasted but this was due to having 11 plots vacant. In addition there has been a large turnover of tenants and plots previously held by full fee paying tenants are now being rented to tenants entitled to the concessionary rate (a potential difference of £22.00 per plot). In addition the October renewals were issued for a 6 month period only and the next renewals will be issued on 1 April 2017 for a full calendar year. This will bring the allotments accounts in line with the parish council's accounts i.e. from 1 April – 31 March.</p> <p><b>Review of annual rent charges</b> It was noted that due to changes to the timing and duration of the allotment renewals there would not be an increase in the allotment rents due from 1 April 2017. However, it was noted that rents were last increased in 2009 and <b>it was resolved</b> to review annual rent charges at the May 2017 meeting as 6 months notice is required by law of any increase.</p> <p><b>Ponds</b> The committee had been asked to consider installing ponds on vacant plots in order to encourage amphibious wildlife on the site and to improve the natural environment.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by Mr Newberry (allotment tenant): Why do we want to install ponds and where will they be put? What budget line</p>	

	<p>will the cost of installation and maintenance come from? If ponds are introduced they would need looking after regularly and could simply become a place for mosquitos to breed in the summer. If the intention is to introduce amphibious wildlife onto the site there are already plenty of midwife toads on the site and the nature reserve adjacent to the allotments has two large ponds. What about health and safety issues i.e. the ponds would need to be fenced off. If any tenant wants to install a pond on their own plot then they are responsible for this and any health and safety issues not the parish council.</p> <p>The proposal was an attempt to improve the natural environment on long standing vacant plots. However, members were concerned about cost, suitable locations and health and safety issues. Children regularly visit the site and as such any ponds would need to be fenced off. The wildflower area has long grasses and is only cut once a year and therefore not a suitable location for a pond. Having considered the proposal <b>it was resolved</b> not to install ponds on the allotment site.</p>	
6	<p><b>To consider the draft budget for 2017-18 for Brickhill Allotments</b></p> <p>A draft budget had been circulated prior to the meeting for consideration. This financial year some of the earmarked reserves had been used for groundworks following the demolition of the allotment hut and also roadway repairs to improve parking facilities for the allotment tenants and visitors to the Scout Hut. <b>It was resolved</b> to approve the draft budget at £12,780 for 2017-18.</p>	
7	<p><b>To receive a report on the management of Waveney Green to include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Spend against budget for 2016-17</b></li> </ul> <p>The report was noted. This year earmarked reserves had been used for footpath repairs and also installation of all weather surfacing under the toddler play equipment. In addition the parish council had incurred cleaning up costs for following two illegal encampments on Waveney Green.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To consider quotes for the installation of green gym equipment in the next financial year</b></li> </ul> <p>Three quotes had been supplied for installing 5 pieces of outdoor green gym equipment similar to those installed at Mowsbury Park. The quotes were:</p> <p>Sovereign Playgrounds - £12,273 + VAT  Fresh Air Fitness - £9366.30 + VAT  Solutions 4 Playgrounds - £6330 + VAT</p> <p>Sovereign Playgrounds had included a larger central area of mulch surfacing but members preferred to install surfacing under each item of equipment (this is how the equipment has been installed at Mowsbury Park). This would reduce the overall cost of the project and provide flexibility regarding location of the equipment and future installation of additional pieces of equipment. Members also considered whether grant funding would be available for this project. However, due to the amount of undesignated reserves and the council's overall reserves it was unlikely that any grant application would be successful. Members agreed the project should be paid for using parish council funds which had been collected via the precept levy collected from residents living in Brickhill as a way of giving something back to the community from their council tax contributions.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To explore the possibility of obtaining a PSCO for Waveney Green play area</b></li> </ul> <p>Currently the play area on Waveney Green is not fenced off or a dog exclusion zone. However, there are No Dog signs already in place in the play area and No Dog Fouling signs throughout Waveney Green. There have not been any complaints from Brickhill Lower Football Club or any sign of dog fouling during the weekly play area inspections and twice weekly litter collections. Without evidence of dog fouling the Borough would not issue a legal order (which the PC would be expected to pay for). <b>It was resolved</b> not to apply for a public spaces control order as there was no evidence a dog fouling problem exists and signs were already in place to ask visitors to Waveney Green to keep dogs out of the play area.</p>	
8	<p><b>To consider the draft budget for 2017-18 for Waveney Green</b></p> <p>A draft budget had been circulated prior to the meeting for consideration. It was noted that the parish council has applied to take over responsibility for the remainder of Waveney Green and this will mean increased areas for grass cutting and tree maintenance. <b>It was resolved</b> to approve the draft budget at £29,586 for 2017-18. This is an increase on the budget for 2016-17 to include £7K for the green gym installation.</p>	
9	<p><b>Date of next meeting: February 2017 (date to be confirmed)</b></p>	

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 Approved by Chairman  
 1 March 2017