

BRICKHILL

PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Brickhill Parish Council held on Thursday 24 January 2011 at St Mark’s Church & Community Centre, Calder Rise, Bedford commencing at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs Fitzpatrick (Chairman), Blakeman, Buchanan, Green, Ovenell, Royden, Waterhouse and Seymour, Laybourn, Wilkins. Two members of the public attended the meeting. The Assistant Clerk to the Council, Alison Southern, was in attendance

Absent: Cllrs Chambers, Marriot and Rider.

<p>1 Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Marriott (work), Cllr Chambers (ill) and Cllr Rider (Borough council meeting). It was resolved: to accept the apologies for absence.</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>2 Declarations of interest in items on the agenda Cllrs Waterhouse, Fitzpatrick and Green declared a personal interest in matters pertaining to Brickhill Community Centre because of their membership of the Management Committee of the Brickhill Association. (Item 6) Cllr Royden declared a personal interest in matters pertaining to Waveney Green because of his role as Borough Councillor.</p>	
<p>3 Minutes of Previous Meeting It was resolved: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 6 January as a correct record.</p>	
<p>4 Public Open Session One member of the public attended and asked questions about the proposals to transfer ownership of Waveney Green to the Parish Council in particular who had suggested this proposal and what the financial implications would be to the residents of Brickhill. Cllr Fitzpatrick responded by confirming that the Parish Council had sought to take over the running of Waveney Green. The Parish Council wishes to see this open space registered as a Village Green and this was perhaps one way of achieving this. The Parish Council currently use the Green for events run for the local community including Gathering on the Green, the Brickhill Football Tournament run by Brickhill Baptist Church and the Saturday morning football sessions. Currently all residents of Brickhill pay a contribution towards running costs for this area through the special area charges which are included as part of each households council tax. The parish council would need to increase its Precept to manage these services but the same amount would be reduced from the Special Area charge by the Borough giving an overall financially neutral change. The Parish Council would work very closely with the Borough for the first year with a view to taking over full managed services from 1 April 2012. There were no further public questions.</p>	

5 **To approve arrangements for responsibility for and management of Waveney Green open space with effect from 1 April 2011**

Cllr Royden left the room and took no part in the discussion of this item

The Borough Council's Executive met on 19th January and approved the recommendation to transfer Waveney Green to Brickhill Parish Council (see attached report in minute file). The report outlines several conditions which must all be met the Parish Council and Borough Council can proceed. Cllr Fitzpatrick had circulated a draft proposal for discussion at tonight's meeting. It was noted that in the first year the Borough Council would continue to maintain the site and Brickhill Parish Council would reimburse the borough for the costs involved. The Parish Council would work closely with the Borough during this first year to determine how best to manage the Green and ensure a smooth transition from Borough to Parish Council management. There followed a brief discussion and it was noted that there was no mention of the lease terms and charges ie would this be a peppercorn rent? In addition the new Play Area had not been specifically mentioned and the Parish Council would need clarification that this would be included as part of the Open Space – this should be included in the Business Plan. Members of the council also required confirmation from the Borough ensure that the £40K Special Area charge reduction would be transferred directly to the residents of Brickhill and not distributed throughout the whole of the Borough. Legal Fees would be incurred and it was proposed by Cllr Green that the Parish Council request Bedford Borough Council meet the full cost of this expense. It was proposed that the draft Business Plan was adopted subject to the following amendments:

- i) To include "subject to detailed agreement between both parties covering the terms of the lease" at the end of this paragraph
- ii) To include "and Play Area" at end of this paragraph
- iii) To include "and Play Area" at the end of this paragraph

It was resolved to adopt the draft Business Plan with the proposed amendments.

6 **To approve arrangements for responsibility and management of Brickhill Community Centre with effect from 1 April 2011**

The Borough Council's Executive met on the 19th January and approved the recommendation to transfer Brickhill Community Centre to Brickhill Parish Council (see attached report in minute file). The Community Centre has its own staff in place who are employed by Brickhill Community Association. Brickhill Community Association will remain as the day-to-day management of the centre. A draft business plan had been circulated to all members for discussion and approval at tonight's meeting. Cllr Fitzpatrick had spoken with David Joyce at Bedford Borough Council and a meeting arranged for 10am on the 10 February. Members discussed whether the parish council should undertake a full survey of the building prior to any agreement being signed. **Resolved:** a full structural survey would be required to include details of current state of repair and condition of building which will form the baseline for returning the community centre to the Borough. Both parties would appoint a mutually acceptable agent and the costs would be split equally between the Borough and Parish Council.

The draft Business Plan was adopted subject to the following amendments:

- (i) To include "subject to detailed agreement between both parties covering the terms of the lease" at the end of this paragraph
- (ii) To include "subject to a full structural survey of Brickhill Community Centre to confirm the condition of the property at the time of transfer which would serve as the baseline for the establishment of future dilapidations"

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Chairman

Cllr Green proposed that the parish council should include a written statement included in the council tax literature sent to all households in the Borough. This would outline why the Precept has increased – in a similar way that the Police Authority and Fire Brigade provide a yearly breakdown of spending costs as a percentage of council tax.

The chairman replied that this year there would only be one insert to accommodate all the authorities and the parish council had been offered space for a short paragraph to outline the reasons for the increased precept payment. It was considered that such a large change to the Precept should be explained fully to the residents of Brickhill. It was proposed that the Parish Council produce an A5 leaflet which would be inserted by Bedford Borough Council with the Council tax bills.

- 7 **Staff Matters** – the chairman explained that the next item would now be item 9 as this had implications for the budget and precept items. **It was resolved:** that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

The Members of the public left the meeting at this point but were invited to re-join the meeting after this item had been discussed. Cllr Royden rejoined the meeting.

Council moved back into public session.

- 8 **To approve the Brickhill Parish Council budget for the year 2011/12**
A revised draft budget had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. This now took into account the additional costs for the community centre and Waveney Green.

Cllr Seymour proposed that the staff budget be increased by £2,000 to allow for the additional 2hrs required for these extra responsibilities. In addition the gratuity fund contribution should be increased by a further £950.00. **Resolved:** to increase the budget for staffing and the gratuity fund. In order to accommodate this increase money would need to be found from other areas in the budget. Several amendments were then discussed and it was **resolved** to remove the cost of replacement noticeboards from the budget, if necessary these could be purchased from unspecified reserves. Study support heading was reduced to £700. In addition it was agreed to transfer out £7K of staff costs from the staffing budget and include these under allotment costs as this would highlight the true running costs for the allotments.

Resolved: to approve the draft budget with the suggested amendments (copy in minute file).

- 9 **To set the precept for Brickhill Parish Council for the year 2011-12**

Taking into consideration the final budget figures it was **resolved** that the precept request for 2011-12 would be £107,734. This would mean a Band D household would pay £33.16 towards the Parish Council which was an increase of £15.40 from last year however the special area charge reduction would be £15.41 and therefore residents of the Parish would not be facing an increase in their overall

Clerk

contribution for Brickhill.

15 **Date of Next Meeting**

It was resolved to cancel the meeting scheduled for Thursday 3rd February but this would be re-scheduled later on in the month.

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Approved by Chairman
10 February 2011