

**Minutes of a meeting of Brickhill Parish Council held on Tuesday 17 November 2009 at St Mark’s Church & Community Centre, Calder Rise, Bedford commencing at 7.30 pm**

**Present:** Cllrs Seymour (Chairman), Blakeman, Buchanan, Green, Ovenell, Royden, Waterhouse, and Wilkins. The Clerk to the Council, Delia Shephard, was in attendance. Keith Simmons, Head of Registration and Records, Bedford Borough Council attended for part of the meeting.

**Apologies:** Cllr Fitzpatrick, Laybourn, Marriott and Rider

1	<b><u>Apologies for absence</u></b> The apologies for absence were accepted.	<b><u>Action</u></b>
2	<b><u>Declaration of Interests in matters on the agenda</u></b> Cllrs Wilkins, Waterhouse and Blakeman declared a personal interest in the item relating to possible transfer of their own GP practices to a GP Centre at the Health Village in Kimbolton Road.	
3	<b><u>Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2009</u></b> <b>It was resolved:</b> to approve the minutes as a correct record.	
4	<b><u>Public Open Session</u></b> No members of the public were present.	
5	<p><b><u>Submission on proposals for a new 5 practice GP Centre at Bedford Health Village and on proposals for an Enhanced Services Clinic at Bedford Health Village on Kimbolton Road to be made to NHS Bedfordshire</u></b></p> <p>It was agreed to take this agenda item first as Borough Councillor Royden was not yet present at the meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that the proposed Health Village at Kimbolton Road would be developed in two phases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enhanced Services Clinic</li> <li>2. GP Services (2012/2013)</li> </ol> <p>(Cllr Royden joined the meeting.) The Council discussed the plan to relocate five GP practices in one purpose built building on the Health Village Site, noting that the effect of this plan was to move the people towards the doctors rather than bringing the doctors out into the community where people lived. It was recognised that this centralising effect, (which might make very little difference to some people in the parish) went against the Parish Council’s strongly held view that some medical facilities should be located in the parish for the benefit of those residents who found it difficult to access facilities further away. Following an extensive discussion of the related issues <b>It was resolved:</b> to respond to the public consultation on the two proposals as follows.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proposal to relocate GP Practices in Kimbolton Road</li> </ol> <p>The Parish Council is concerned that there are no medical services of any substance within Brickhill. The proposed relocation of 5 GP Practices in Kimbolton Road takes GP services even further away from the centres of population in our parish and concentrates them in the centre of Bedford. There is a strong argument for retaining medical services in the heart of the communities they serve if we are to create and maintain sustainable and cohesive local communities.</p>	

	<p>Specifically, the Parish Council is concerned about access to the new GP Centre for a number of reasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is already poor public transport provision for most residents of Brickhill to Kimbolton Road. It would not be easy for Brickhill patients to access the Centre (or the Enhanced Services Centre) using the bus.</li> <li>• There are concerns about the adequacy of parking around the proposed Health Village. The Parish Council believes that there are already significant pressures on the limited parking spaces on the site and in the immediate area which are likely to be worsened.</li> <li>• The Parish Council is concerned at the prospect of making patients pay for parking whilst they are receiving treatment and regards this as a tax on the sick. It seems likely that the policy of charging for onsite parking will continue and most on street parking in the near vicinity will be within the CPZ. This is a significant factor for those on low incomes especially the elderly who may need to access health services very frequently.</li> <li>• The Parish Council recognises that a new purpose-built carbon neutral building would have some advantages in terms of sustainability and accessibility. However, we are concerned to see that none of the GP practices will be located on the ground floor and there will be only two lifts.</li> <li>• The Parish Council notes that an in-house pharmacy is to be provided in the GP Centre. Whilst this would be convenient for the patients visiting the Centre, we are concerned about the knock on commercial effects on pharmacies located elsewhere in the community which provide much needed OTC services etc. It is difficult to speculate about the likely consequences of this without more information but the Parish Council would be resistant to any measure which threatened the viability of the local pharmacy at Brickhill Drive.</li> </ul> <p>2. Enhanced Services Clinic</p> <p>The Parish Council can see benefits in the Enhanced Services Clinic if immediate and direct referral from the transferred GP practices is possible. However, it is not clear whether this would be the case.</p> <p>In conclusion, should these proposals be adopted as they stand, the Parish Council foresees an inevitable drift towards unification and centralisation of medical services which does not sit well with our desire to secure medical services in Brickhill. If the proposals are adopted the Parish Council would hope to see a comprehensive serviced satellite surgery in Brickhill (on a public transport route) for people who are unable to access Kimbolton Road.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>6</p>	<p><b><u>Submission on warding arrangements for Brickhill as part of the Electoral Review of Bedford Borough Council</u></b></p> <p>Cllr Green introduced this item by suggesting that the boundaries of Brickhill Parish should be co-terminous with the ward boundaries of our elected representatives and co-terminous with the community of Brickhill as far as practically possible. This view was accepted by the Council.</p>	

It was noted that Cllr Fitzpatrick had submitted a paper to the Council (copy in minute book) which outlined his view of five specific options and the Clerk had also provided a briefing document and electronic links to the relevant documents from the Boundary Committee especially “Bedford Borough Consultation on a pattern of ward” (copies in minute book) and these documents were used as the basis for debate.

Cllr Green reminded Council that the most significant factors in the Boundary Committee’s decision making process were:

1. Electoral equality (ie 3,083 electors in 2013)
2. Community cohesion
3. Strong and clear boundaries.

Although Cllr Fitzpatrick had stated in his paper that the Boundary Committee “is not keen on 3 member wards” it was noted that there was no indication of this in any of the technical guidance issued by the Boundary Committee.

It was noted that the projected number of electors for each ward in 2013 which the Borough Council had calculated was debateable. However, it was reluctantly accepted that these had already been agreed between the Boundary Committee and the Borough Council as the basis on which ward boundaries could be proposed.

In an initial discussion the five options were defined as:

Option 1 – the existing Brickhill ward would continue with two elected members. It was agreed that the electoral numbers fitted within the 10% variance of electoral equality permitted by the Boundary Committee, the boundaries were clear and strong and reflected the community of Brickhill.

Option 2 – the existing Brickhill ward based on the current boundaries with the addition of Woodlands Park (Polling District NP -756 electors) and two elected members.

Option 3 – the existing Brickhill ward based on the current boundaries with the addition of Woodlands Park but with the compensating loss of the Mallard Hill area (ie polling district BD) and two elected members.

Option 4 – the existing Brickhill ward based on the current boundaries with the addition of Woodlands Park but with the compensating loss of Ellis Road, Kimbolton Road, Nursery Gardens, Crofton Close, Carlton Gardens, Goldcrest Way and Eagle Gardens and two elected members.

Option 5 – an expanded Brickhill ward based on the current boundaries with the addition of Woodlands Park, Manton Heights (Polling District BX 740 electors) and Cleat Hill (Polling District NQ 396 electors).

The Council moved on to discuss each option in detail:

Option 1 – it was accepted that there was no possibility of changing the access to Woodlands Park (ie developing an access road from Kimbolton Road). The Woodlands Park residents already used the Brickhill schools, shops, pre-school etc. The residents felt un-represented at the moment and so Brickhill Borough Councillors had taken on some case work from them. Anjulita Court was developing links with the Brickhill community. Councillors agreed that Woodlands Park residents

<p>already “felt” they lived in Brickhill.  <b>It was resolved:</b> that this warding option did not meet with the Council’s favour on the grounds that Woodlands Park would be excluded.</p> <p>Option 2  <b>It was resolved:</b> that this warding option was unrealistic because the number of electors would result in a 19.82% variance from the norm of perfect electoral equality which could not be justified to the Boundary Committee.</p> <p>Option 3 – it was agreed that Mallard Hill was at the heart of the Brickhill community and to lose it from the ward would be totally unacceptable in terms of community cohesion. Historically this was the site of the first occupied houses in modern Brickhill, the residents made full use of the local facilities at the community shopping parade at Brickhill Drive. Bizarrely the shops themselves together with Brickhill Baptist Church and the Bird in Hand public house would also be removed from the ward.  <b>It was resolved:</b> that the loss of the Mallard Hill area (Polling District BD) was unacceptable to the Parish Council.</p> <p>Option 4 – it was felt by some that an argument could be made for Kimbolton Road (both sides) to be located in Putnoe ward though other councillors noted that Kimbolton Road had been in the Brickhill ward for a long time. It was pointed out that to incorporate new residents at Woodlands Park at the expense of longstanding residents located in both the ward and the parish from the beginning would not reflect the community as it exists on the ground. It was agreed to move on to consider Option 5 in more detail.</p> <p>Option 5 – This option included the addition of Woodlands Park, Painters/Manton Heights area and Cleat Hill.          Regarding Manton Heights (or the Painters’ area) - the residents here did not feel part of the Prime Ministers area but regarded themselves as living in Brickhill. The Parish Council had evidence from the recent Post Office campaign that residents of this area regarded Brickhill Drive as their local shopping parade and made full use of these and other facilities in Brickhill.          Regarding Cleat Hill, this area is an extension of Kimbolton Road and as such develops the clear and strong boundary line from its existing termination at Wentworth Drive towards the new developments at Woodlands Park. Historically Cleat Hill had been included in the Brickhill Farm and Brickhill is named from brick making at Cleat Hill. Such a ward would have a total of 8,524 which would be within the permitted 10% variation for a three member ward. It was pointed out that this would leave some additional scope for further development at Woodlands Park in the future.</p> <p>There was discussion of the relative merits of Options 4 and 5. In response to a question the Head of Registration and Records, Bedford Borough Council, Mr Keith Simmons confirmed that there was nothing in the boundary Committee’s technical guidance that would either encourage or discourage 3 member wards in a Council which had all out elections every four years.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b> that the inclusion of Woodlands could not be made at the expense of longstanding residents.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b> that warding option 5 was the favoured option of the Parish Council and this should be communicated to the Borough.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
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<p>Whilst it was agreed that the Clerk would communicate this settled (and unanimous) view to the Borough Council, it was recognised that there would be implications for other wards in the Borough. Therefore <b>it was resolved:</b> to elect a working group comprising Cllrs Green, Blakeman and Waterhouse to work with the Clerk on any detailed submissions and community information which might be necessary. Cllr Green agreed to prepare information about the effects on other wards.</p> <p>Mr Simmons sought clarification about whether the proposed ward boundary would encompass St Thomas More School and the adjoining caretaker's house and also the houses adjoining Mowsbury Park Car Park.</p> <p><b>It was resolved:</b> that it had been assumed that these properties were included within the Brickhill ward in any discussion of any of the 5 options as this would simply rectify a historical anomaly.</p> <p>The Parish Council confirmed that when the Community Governance Review was undertaken following the Bedford Electoral Review it would seek to have the Parish Boundary reviewed.</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that Bedford Borough Council had requested warding proposals as part of the Bedford electoral review by 2 December 2009. It was noted that in addition to any submissions to Bedford Borough Council on a proposed ward for Brickhill the Parish Council might make submissions direct to the Boundary Committee on the pattern of wards for Bedford.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
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