

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Brickhill Parish Council held on Thursday 11 June 2009
at St Mark's Church & Community Centre, Calder Rise, Bedford commencing at 7.30 pm**

Present: Cllrs Fitzpatrick (Chairman), Blakeman, Buchanan, Chambers, Green, Laybourn, Marriott, Ovenell, Rider, Royden, Seymour, Waterhouse and Wilkins. The Clerk to the Council, Delia Shephard was in attendance. Three members of the public were present.

Apologies: None

		Action
1	<u>Election of Chairman and declaration of acceptance of office</u> Resolved: to elect Mark Fitzpatrick as Chairman for the forthcoming year. Cllr Fitzpatrick declared his acceptance of office as Chairman and his agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct before the Proper Officer.	
2	<u>Declaration of acceptance of office of all councillors</u> Peter Blakeman, Gurmel Chambers, Joanne Laybourn, Patricia Marriott, Charles Royden, Ray Seymour, Andrew Wilkins, Stuart Buchanan, Stuart Green, Patricia Ovenell, Wendy Rider and Raymond Waterhouse each declared their acceptance of office as members of the Council and their agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct before the Proper Officer.	
3	<u>Election of Vic-Chairman</u> Resolved: to elect Ray Seymour as Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year.	
4	<u>Apologies for absence</u> There were no apologies from councillors; PC Dave Hawkey had sent apologies for absence due to annual leave.	
5	<u>Declaration of Interests in matters on the agenda</u> Cllr Laybourn declared a personal interest in the schools reorganisation because of her role as parent and governor at Brickhill and Scott lower schools respectively.	
6	<u>Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2009</u> Resolved: to approve the minutes as a correct record.	
7	<u>Public Open Session</u> One member of the public drew attention to concerns about the limited access to Park Wood Nature reserve. The Clerk agreed to write to Bedford Borough Council to raise this issue.	
8	<u>Grant Application from Utopia Mas</u> A grant application in the sum of £1000 had been made from the group Utopia Mas and representatives of the group answered questions about its activities and finances. Copies of the grant application, a budget for the project (to take group members to carnival in Leicester on 1 August 2009) and copies of the group's constitution, education and child protection policies were supplied to the council. The clerk advised that the Council had the power to give such a grant under Local Government Act 1972, s.145 to provide entertainment and support the arts. Discussion followed. Funds were available in the 2009-10 budget under the youth initiatives heading. Members thanked and congratulated the Chairman and leaders of the group for the valuable community work which was being done by Utopia Mas on a voluntary basis. Resolved: to make a grant a sum of £1000 to Utopia Mas subject to scrutiny of further financial information from Utopia Mas by the clerk to the council.	Clerk

9 **Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations**

There were no amendments to existing standing orders and financial regulations. It was noted that NALC was preparing new model Standing Orders and the Council's Standing Orders would be reviewed again when the new model was available.

Clerk

10 **Asset Register and Inventory of Property**

The asset register and inventory of property of Brickhill Parish Council was noted.

11 **Consultation of Bedford Borough's Reorganisation of Schools**

Resolved: to hold an open public meeting in Brickhill to elicit local opinion on the proposed schools reorganisation and then to agree a response to the consultation on the reorganisation of schools from the viewpoint of the parish of Brickhill. A date for the meeting would be advised in the future, it was hoped this would be before 2 July 2009.

(*Cllr Laybourn left the meeting.*)

Clerk

12 **Complaints Policy and Procedure**

A draft complaints policy and procedure was reviewed and discussed.

Resolved: to adopt the policy and procedure with immediate effect and to give consideration to a suitable appeals procedure to be put to Council at a later date

Resolved: to establish a complaints committee composing of 5 members with a quorum of 3 with delegated authority to handle complaints on behalf of the Parish Council as described in the adopted procedure.

Resolved: to elect Cllrs Seymour, Fitzpatrick, Waterhouse, Wilkins and Green to the complaints committee for the year.

(*Cllr Chambers left the meeting.*)

Clerk

RS, MR, RW, AW & SG

13 **Financial Matters**

9.1 A financial report showing transactions to date against the budget for the year was circulated and noted. The clerk advised that the Council currently held £78,768.15 in the bank. It was also noted that high allotment maintenance costs were anticipated in coming months.

9.2 The following accounts were submitted for approval:

Cheque No	Payee	Details	Amount
402	Brickhill Baptist Church	Payment of grant from Bedfordshire Police for football project	£500.00
403	BAT&PC	Training fee – clerk training	£40.00
404	D Draper	Allotment maintenance	£560.00
405	St Mark's Church	Office and hall hire	£514.11
406	BRCC	Rave bus	£150.00
407	BDO Stoy Hayward	External audit fee	£460.00
408	St Mark's Church	Photocopying and hall hire	£32.47

Resolved: to approve the accounts for payment.

9.3 The clerk noted that the external audit for the year 2008/9 had been

Clerk

concluded and was currently advertised on the parish notice-boards. A copy of the auditors' report had been circulated to all councillors and would be taken into account in preparing the audit plan for the year 2009/10.

Resolved: to note the conclusion of the external audit and to approve the completed statement of accounts and annual return.

13 **Gathering on the Green Evaluation**

An evaluation report on the community event held on 16 April 2009 was received and discussed by Council.

Resolved: to allocate a budget of up to £2,000 to hold a similar event on Waveney Green on 27 August 2009. The clerk reminded councillors of the need for volunteers to help run the event and man a parish council advice/information stand.

Clerk

14 **Newsletter**

Several reports from the clerk on this subject had been circulated to councillors since the last meeting (copies in minute book).

Resolved: to continue to produce an A4 newsletter printed by White Hart Press and to arrange for distribution of the July edition by Mrs E Spavins at a cost of £6 per 100.

Clerk

15 **Public Sector Duties on Equality**

The Clerk drew attention to correspondence received from the Equality and Human Rights commission reminding the Council of its obligation to pay due regard to race disability and gender issues. It was noted that the forthcoming Equality Bill would harmonise public sector duties into one equality duty which would cover all 7 equality strands: age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation but meanwhile the Parish Council must continue to take appropriate action to deliver better equality outcomes and actively promote equality. The Clerk confirmed that she believed the Council to be compliant with its duties under the current law but reminded the Council that these issues must be kept in mind at all times.

All Councillors

16 **Consultation on Bedford Green Wheel**

Resolved: to respond to Bedford Borough Council's invitation to comment on its Green Wheel draft plan and consultation documents to congratulate the Borough on a comprehensive piece of work which would promote enhanced access to safe traffic-free paths for walkers, cyclists, disabled people and other footpath users.

Clerk

17 **Consultation on Bedford Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy**

The clerk reminded the council of the opportunity to respond to Bedford Borough's Draft Sustainable Community Strategy.

Resolved: to submit comments to the Clerk for collation into a unified response.

All Councillors