

# BRICKHILL

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## PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a meeting of the Allotments & Open Spaces Committee held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014 at Brickhill Community Centre, Avon Drive, Brickhill**

**Present:** Cllrs Crofts, Mulvenney, Waterhouse, Wilkins, 1 member of the public and the Assistant Clerk

1	<b><u>Apologies for absence</u></b> None	
2	<b><u>Declarations of acceptance of interest in items on the agenda</u></b> Cllr Waterhouse declared a personal interest in matters pertaining to the allotment site by way of his allotment tenancy. However, a dispensation has been granted to Cllr Waterhouse with regard to Brickhill Allotments .	
3	<b><u>Public Open Session:-</u></b> A member of the public queried the minutes of the November meeting regarding a question from the public as to whether there had been a change in policy regarding enforcing of tenancy agreement. It was queried whether the minute meant that the tenant was responsible for clearing the plot until it contained only those items allowed under the current tenancy agreement. The Chairman responded that he understood this was the case but would seek legal advice for confirmation.	Asst Clerk
4	<b><u>To confirm minutes from meeting held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November</u></b> <b>It was resolved</b> to accept the minutes as a true record of the meeting – item 3 had been queried during the public open session and legal clarification would be sought.	
5	<b><u>To receive a report on management of the allotment site</u></b> The report was noted	
6	<b><u>To note the outcome of the Complaints Committee</u></b> A written report had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. The complaints committee had agreed a compromise agreement with the tenant which required a management plan for the care of the trees which would need to be adhered to. The plan ensures the 2 trees are managed to ensure they do not grow any taller than their current height which would ensure no damage will occur to neighbouring gardens or properties. Cllr Mulvenney gave a brief verbal report regarding the background to the complaint and explained that a site visit had taken place prior to meeting with the tenant to discuss the complaint. The 2 trees (an Ash and a Horse Chestnut) were self-set and already on the plot (although much smaller) when the tenancy began, the purpose of the tree management report was to provide assurance that the trees would be a positive environmental addition and not a negative one. Members of the allotments and open spaces committee commented that the decision to allow the trees to remain did not support the terms of the allotments handbook, allotments strategy and the current tenancy agreement however they accepted the report and thanked the committee for dealing with the complaint on behalf of the PC. Members requested that the policy for dealing with complaints is referred back to Full Council in particular with regard to the number of councillors required for a complaints committee.	Clerk

7	<p><b><u>To note the spend against budget for Brickhill Allotments</u></b></p> <p>The spend against budget had been circulated to all members and there were no areas of concern. The grass cutting heading was slightly over budget and this was because we had paid for the grass to be cut and then raked in the fallow area as part of the wildflower initiative. The fallow area would only be cut once a year from now on (usually end of August/September). There had also been an overspend on waste disposal but this was attributed to the need for 2 skips clearing plots 138 &amp; 139.</p>	
8	<p><b><u>To note advice received from NSALG regarding arrangements for notifying tenants of rent increases</u></b></p> <p>The allotments officer had received advice from NSALG regarding its current tenancy agreement. The agreement is not illegal despite giving only 2 months notice of any rent increase however NSALG would recommend altering this to 6 months. <b>It was resolved</b> to increase the amount of notice from 2 months to 6 months and the timetable for setting the following year's rent would be as follows:</p> <p>A&amp;OS committee November meeting – committee considers the allotments budget for the next financial year which would include any recommendations regarding rent increases. This information is then considered by Full Council at the January budget/precept meeting. Decision regarding rent costs confirmed at February A&amp;OS meeting and confirmed in writing to all tenants in March.</p> <p><b>It was resolved</b> to alter the tenancy agreement to reflect the amount of notice given from 2 months to 6.</p>	Asst Clerk
9	<p><b><u>To confirm procedure for enforcement of rules and regulations relating to breaches in the tenancy agreement</u></b></p> <p>This item was withdrawn from the agenda and would be discussed at the next meeting. The Assistant Clerk was asked to seek advice from NSALG and SLCC regarding changes to the tenancy agreement (last made November 2011) and whether this over rides any previous tenancy arrangements.</p>	Asst Clerk
10	<p><b><u>To receive a report regarding the 24hr Sport Relief event on Waveney Green on 21 March</u></b></p> <p>The committee had received a copy of the letter which BLSFC intend to distribute to neighbouring properties on Waveney Avenue, Avon Drive and Francis Groves Close. The club had also produced a risk assessment document for the event and provided details of their public liability insurance. Members were satisfied that BLSFC had taken due care and consideration when planning the event and re-iterated their support for the event.</p>	
11	<p><b><u>To note the spend against budget for Waveney Green</u></b></p> <p>The report was noted and there were no areas of concern. It was noted that the invoice for 2013-14 for litter and dog waste disposal had been received and was under-budget. Bedford Borough Council will not be charging the parish council for dog waste collections this is in line with Borough policy not to re-charge parish councils for this service. The footpath repairs budget (£5k) and Waveney Green reserves (£2K) had not been spent this year and this would now be transferred into designated reserves.</p>	
12.	<p><b><u>To consider a request to cut back one tree on Waveney Green overhanging no 28 Francies Groves Close</u></b></p> <p>At the November meeting members had agreed to pay for works to trees behind no 28 Francis Groves Close as a good neighbourly gesture without prejudice. Unfortunately Bedford Borough Council then arranged for the trees to be cut down without first checking whose land they were on. There remained 1 tree behind no 28 and this tree</p>	

	<p>had several smaller shoots growing up off the main trunk. <b>It was resolved</b> to approve works to the tree to cut back the off shoots to the main trunk and then to side up the tree so that there were no overhanging branches and this decision was again taken as a good neighbourly gesture without prejudice. The Assistant Clerk would inform Mr Roethenbaugh of the committee's decision and instruct Steve Dear tree services to carry out the work.</p> <p>Prior to the end of the meeting the following items were reported to the committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land on Waveney Green adjacent to the footpath on Waveney Avenue had sunk. This was in the same place where Anglian Water had carried out repair works last year. It was resolved to contact Anglian Water and request a site visit with a view to re-instating the Green as this is currently a trip hazard.</li> <li>• Last year a tree was removed by the rose garden but a new tree has not been re-planted? It was agreed to plant a replacement this Spring and to purchase a mature specimen which would become established quickly.</li> <li>• BLSFC had offered to provide some new young trees for Waveney Green however, members felt that this was a generous offer but that the club should retain its funds for use by the young people to provide football on Saturday mornings especially as it had recently received grant funding from the PC. The Assistant Clerk would convey this decision to the football club.</li> </ul>	Asst Clerk
13.	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting:</u></b> Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2014</p>	

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Approved by Chairman  
3<sup>rd</sup> June 2014