

BRICKHILL

PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Allotments & Open Spaces Committee held on Wednesday 25th November at Brickhill Community Centre, Avon Drive, Brickhill

Present: Cllrs Bowler, Chrusciak, Reeve, and Holloway and the Assistant Clerk. In addition 2 members of the public.

1	Apologies for absence None	
2	Declarations of acceptance of interest in items on the agenda None	
3	Public Open Session One tenant queried when the notices were placed regarding provision of the skips? The notices were displayed 1 week prior, the other tenant confirmed he had seen the notices. It was proposed that the notices were displayed 2 weeks prior and that the information was emailed to the tenants on the mailing list. There were no further questions from members of the public.	Assistant Clerk
4	To confirm minutes from meeting held on Wednesday 16th September It was resolved to accept the minutes as a true record of the meeting.	
5	To receive a report on the management of Brickhill Allotments A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Assistant Clerk reported there had been a high turnover of tenants in the past year and 7 tenants had decided not to renew their agreement in October. At the time of the meeting there were 8 plots vacant and no one on the waiting list from Brickhill. Therefore the plots were being offered to people living outside the parish. Three plots had been cleared by our contractor, the plot deposits have been retained and the previous tenants had been invoiced for additional costs incurred (totalling £234) which should help offset the projected overspend on plot clearance. There had been one attempted break in (although nothing had been taken) since the last meeting. Two skips were provided in October and the water is now switched off until the 1 st April 2016.	
6	To note the spend against budget for Brickhill Allotments A written report had been circulated. Projected year end spend indicates an overall underspend although plot clearance is predicted to finish over budget by approximately £400. Assuming no spend from the maintenance reserve this will be transferred to earmarked reserves to give total reserves at end of 2015/16 of £11,404.	Clerk
7	To receive a report on the management of Waveney Green A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was reported that additional grass cutting had been necessary due to the mild weather and the grass continuing to grow much later into the Autumn. For 2016 it was resolved to increase the grass cutting schedule to continue into November - an additional two cuts at a cost of £130 + VAT per cut (there would be an inflationary increase for 2016 but Beds BC have not confirmed rates yet.) It was resolved to obtain quotes for footpath repairs using tarmac and also for alternative surfacing (hogging) similar to that used at Harrold Country Park. These would	Clerk

	<p>be considered at the February 2016 meeting.</p> <p>The wildflower meadow trial is due to finish in Spring 2016. The Borough will not be continuing with this project and are seeking the views of the parish council regarding future maintenance. Members considered whether to retain this area as a wildflower meadow or return to grass. In making its decision members were reminded that the previous 3 year plan for Waveney Green had included provision for a wildflower meadow but this had been incorporated as part of the Borough's trial. Members were concerned that the trial for Waveney Green had not been as successful as other areas such as Mowsbury Park. Whilst the possible ecological enhancements were recognised as positive, if they were to retain the wildflower meadow the emphasis would move from a predominantly ecological to an aesthetic meadow to provide an appropriate balance between habit creation and the need to preserve and enhance the visual amenity of the area. Landscaping may be required so the meadow beds were not such a stark feature but there would be no financial impact before April 2016. It was resolved to retain the area as a wildflower meadow with a budget of £500 allocated for next financial year. Advice would be sought from the Borough regarding the best seed mix (from the results of the Borough's trial) to ensure the best visual outcome.</p>	<p>Clerk Assistant Clerk</p>
8	<p>To note the spend against budget for Waveney Green</p> <p>A written report had been circulated. Projected year end spend indicates an overall underspend (arisen from underspend for litter and dog waste disposal due to the Borough not charging for emptying of dog waste bins.) The full amount for footpath repairs (£5K) and Waveney Green reserves (£3.5K) would be transferred to earmarked reserves this financial year. Total earmarked reserves for 2015-16 for Waveney Green would then be £29,917.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
9	<p>To consider the draft budget for Brickhill Allotments and Waveney Green for 2016/17</p> <p>Draft budgets had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Allotments - it was resolved to approve the draft budget at £12,750 (copy of budget attached to minutes.) Members also considered altering the renewal date for allotment tenants from 1st October to 1st April which would mean the budget followed the financial year more accurately. 6 months notice of any increase in rent or alterations to the timings of renewals was required and this item would be considered fully at the February meeting. There would be no increase in plot rents prior to April 2017.</p> <p>Waveney Green – it was resolved to approve the draft budget at £19,590 (copy of budget attached to minutes).</p>	<p>Assistant Clerk</p>
	<p><u>To confirm date of next meeting – Wednesday 24th February 2016</u></p>	

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 Approved by Chairman
 24th February 2016