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# BRICKHILL

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## PARISH COUNCIL



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## Annual Report

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2013-14

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*Brickhill Parish Council's Gathering on the Green, August 2013*

# **CHAIRMAN'S OVERVIEW**

## **Brickhill – Annual Parish Meeting – Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2014**

### **Introduction**

Welcome to St Mark's for the 10th Annual Parish Meeting for Brickhill.

The Annual Parish Meeting is an unusual meeting – it isn't a council meeting. It is a meeting of parish electors and local organisations, including the Parish Council. It gives the chance to share news of achievements over the past year and of plans for the future, as well as allowing residents to ask questions.

### **Work of the Parish Council 2013/2014**

Over the past year, the Parish Council met 10 times. There have also been meetings of its Planning Committee, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee and other groups. We welcome attendance by residents at our meetings, though the number coming along is quite low.

There were no elections during the last municipal year. Gurmail Chambers stepped down from the council due to ill-health; Pat Ovenell sadly died. There was an outstanding vacancy at the start of the financial year. Sheila Mulvenney, Alex Chrusciak and Cathrine Ward were co-opted during the year to fill these vacancies. Cllr Jane Josephs is resigning due to ill health and the vacancy will be advertised in the usual way shortly. In May 2015 the entire council is up for election, with 15 councillors to be elected instead of the current 13 places.

Our former clerk, Francesca Johnstone, decided to leave at the end of her maternity leave. We wish her all the best for the future. Sue Bottoms had been working as our Acting Clerk while Francesca was on maternity leave; we were pleased that Sue accepted our offer to become the Clerk to the Parish Council. Sue Bottoms has now gained her Clerk's 'CiLCA' qualification; she has been instrumental in getting the Parish accounts fully computerised and has also very effectively handled the refurbishment work at Brickhill Community Centre. Alison Southern is the Assistant Clerk and Allotments Officer; she has provided Sue with great support as well as managing the allotments and taking the lead on production of the Brickhill News parish newsletter. Dave Britton has continued working as our litter-picker, keeping Waveney Green free of litter.

The Parish Council appoints a representative to the AGM of the Brickhill Community Association, which manages the Brickhill Community Centre on behalf of the Parish Council. I am an ex-officio member of the Brickhill Community Safety Forum committee; I am also a member of the County Committee of Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils.

Several councillors regularly attend meetings of the Borough's Town and Parish Council partnership. Cllr Ray Waterhouse is the Vice-Chair of the Parish Council and also chair of Brickhill Community Association. I want to thank all the councillors, all of whom are volunteers, for their work on behalf of Brickhill.

The Parish Council office is located at Brickhill Community Centre. We continue to work well with Sue Stewart, manager of the Community Centre.

## **Brickhill Community Centre and Waveney Green to the Parish Council**

These were leased by the Borough to the Parish Council in 2011 for 99 years.

Waveney Green continues to be used for Saturday morning football by the Brickhill Lower School Football Club. It is also used by a military fitness group, as well as for informal sport and recreation. An area of 'wildflower meadow' has been established near Falcon Avenue, as part of a project led by the Borough Council. As part of environmental improvements, eight bird nest boxes were put up in April 2014 by the Parish and some bat boxes may be put up.

Another Gathering on the Green event was held on Saturday 10th August. Offers of help for this year's event on Saturday 26th July would be welcome.

Brickhill Community Association continues to run the Brickhill Community Centre on a day-to-day basis, with the Parish Council responsible for the more structural maintenance. Before the Parish Council took over the Community Centre a very detailed survey was carried out of the building. We've carried out some essential structure repairs followed by a package of other repairs and improvements that will cost approximately £20,000.

### **Allotments**

The Parish Council's allotments at the top of Brickhill Drive continue to be popular. There are 123 full plots and 17 half plots; currently there are just 2 half plots and 2 full plots vacant. Priority is given to Brickhill residents. The Conservation Volunteers manage a plot to give residents a taste of what having an allotment entails, so they can decide whether to take on a plot of their own.

### **Communication**

The Council has published 4 newsletters over the past year. We have five display boards (Avon Drive and Brickhill Drive shops, by the bus shelter next to Waveney Green, Ashmead Road just off Tyne Crescent and share a board outside Brickhill Community Centre). The website is updated regularly and the Parish Council is on Twitter and Facebook.

### **Brickhill Sustainable Community Plan**

The Plan is due to end in 2016. Due to the challenging funding situation affecting many of the original public sector partners, the degree of engagement by these partners has been much less than was originally envisaged.

The Brickhill Good Neighbours Scheme is continuing to do well, though more volunteers are needed.

A spin-off from the plan has been the setting up of the Brickhill Better Energy Efficiency Group ('Brickhill BEE' for short). This is aiming to reduce Brickhill's carbon footprint and tackle fuel poverty in Brickhill. The Group has officially become a Community Interest Company and is working on a number of projects to install solar PV panels on various sites, including Brickhill Community Centre.

The current status of the 100 milestone items in the plan is: 5 Completed, 68 Started, 5 Dropped, 22 Not Started. Many of these 'Started' items are going to be ongoing. It has been a useful exercise but we need to agree what should follow it. The Parish Council is considering the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Brickhill, which will help set out some medium/long-term objectives on

how Brickhill may develop in the future. For details of the Sustainable Community Plan see <http://brickhillcommunityplan.wordpress.com>.

## **Community Events**

A Community Litter Pick took place on 5th April 2014 at Waveney Green. The Parish Council organised three activity sessions for young people last summer and two more this Easter. More will take place this summer; these sessions are subsidised by the Parish Council and are proving popular. A Christmas Dinner was funded by the Parish Council for 40 local residents, with entertainment provided by the choir from Scott Lower School.

The Parish Council received funding from the Borough for some work with young people aged 13-19 as part of the 'Youth Innovation Zone'. It proved very hard to attract a sustainable group of young people and earlier this year we formally closed the project. Some of the equipment bought for the project has been given to Open House at St Mark's. Thank you to Ann Reeve and Dean Crofts for their hard work in supporting the project. Remaining funds are to be used to pay for a sessional youth worker who will be trying to liaise with young people in Brickhill, to find out what they would like to see happening in the area.

The Parish Council hosted a meeting in December at which the CAB gave residents advice on how to switch energy suppliers. In March a public meeting was held to discuss the Local Plan 2032 proposals.

## **Woodlands Park**

The Bedford Borough Council's Community Governance Review for Brickhill and Ravensden parishes continued during most of the past year. In February 2014 the Borough officially confirmed that Woodlands Park will join Brickhill Parish with effect from 1st April 2015. Two councillors will be elected in May 2015 to represent Woodlands Park.

Ravensden Parish plans to transfer £20,117.90 to Brickhill Parish on 1st April; this represents the additional amount collected by Ravensden Parish from Woodlands Park residents through their council tax over the past two years. Brickhill Parish has started consulting with Woodlands Park residents, seeking views on how this sum could be spent.

## **Community grants**

The Parish Council continues to support the Brickhill Community Safety Forum and the Good Neighbours Scheme. A grant of £500 was given to the Brickhill Lower School Football Club for kit for their Year 3 team. The Parish contributed half (£650) of the costs of a defibrillator with Bedford Rotary Club providing the rest; the defibrillator is located at St Mark's. This year the Parish has budgeted £2,000 for grants to local groups.

## Attendance by Parish Councillors April 2013 – March 2014

COUNCILLOR	Apr	May	Jun	July	Sept	Oct	Nov	Jan	Feb	Mar
Blakeman	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chambers	x	✓	x	x	x					
Chrusciak							✓	✓	✓	✓
Crofts	x	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fitzpatrick	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Josephs	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
Mulvenney							✓	x	✓	✓
Ovenell	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Reeve	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rider	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Charles Royden	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x
Corinne Royden	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x
Ward								✓	✓	✓
Waterhouse	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wilkins	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓

**Finances****Annual Accounts Summary 2013-14****2012-13****2013-14****Operating Income**

98,249.00	Precept	98,249.00
9,606.00	CT Support	9,606.00
6,768.00	Allotments	6,709.50
	Waveney Green	14,183.00
3,504.90	Other Receipts	3,111.15
6,361.00	Youth Funding	1,145.00
1,201.00	Newsletter Advertising	833.00
182.56	Interest	825.00
<u>7,809.03</u>	VAT Data	<u>7,422.51</u>

**133,681.49****Total Payments****142,084.16****Running Costs**

36,666.48	Staff Costs	27,340.48
9,188.33	Administration	5,002.58
4,208.34	General Expenses	6,293.22
1,642.00	Subscriptions	1,654.00
6,014.56	Allotments	11,135.20
8,894.92	Community Initiatives	6,647.89
13,622.15	Waveney Green	23,868.75
10,804.44	Brickhill Community Centre	12,109.91
6,808.16	Reserves Used	
2,387.73	Youth Funding	3,097.52
4,252.61	VAT Data	8,631.00

**104,489.72****Total Payments****105,780.55****Receipts and Payments Summary****100,083.00****Opening Balance****129,275.07**133,681.49

Add Total Receipts (As Above)

142,084.16

233,764.49

271,359.23

104,489.42

Less Total Payments (As Above)

105,780.55

**129,275.07****Closing Balance****165,578.68****These cumulative funds are represented by :**

53,363.32	Current Bank A/c	6,911.87
14,881.50	14 day Deposit A/c	6,908.37
<u>61,030.25</u>	Stafford Pullmans A/C	<u>151,758.44</u>
<b>129,275.07</b>		<b>165,578.68</b>

**Reserve Balances are represented by :**

29,191.77	Current Year Fund	36,303.61
37,743.33	General Reserves	- 4,724.93
1,134.00	EMR - Gratuity fund	1,134.00

378.00	EMR - IT Fund	378.00
11,677.00	EMR - Election Costs	12,677.00
6,804.00	EMR - Allotment Maintenance	8,804.00
700.00	EMR - Key Deposits	700.00
1,000.00	EMR - Plot Deposits	1,000.00
37,000.00	EMR - Brickhill Community Ctr	44,660.00
1,917.00	EMR - Waveney Green	12,917.00
1,730.00	EMR - Legal Fees Asset Trsfs	1,730.00
-	EMR - Capital Purchases Fund	<u>50,000.00</u>
<b>129,275.07</b>		<b>165,578.68</b>

The Parish Council precept for 2013-2014 was £98,249. In addition the Parish received £9,606 in Council Tax Support from the Borough Council.

The Parish Council tax for 2013/14 was £33.16 for Band D properties, no change from 2012/13. It is unchanged for 2014/15 also.



Mark Fitzpatrick

Chairman of Brickhill Parish Council

28<sup>th</sup> May 2014

## **REPORT FROM BOROUGH COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Royden gave a brief report on behalf of the Ward Councillors

Full reports for can be viewed on the website within the Borough Councillors' page.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

- Ed Burnett- Countryside Sites Officer, Parkwood Nature Reserve
- Anita Barker, Headteacher, Scott Lower School
- Ian Evason, Headteacher, Beauchamp Middle School
- John Wallace, Putnoe Woods
- Steve Howe, Brickhill Lower School Football Team
- Cllr Dean Crofts, Community Safety Forum
- Cllr Peter Blakeman, Chairman of Brickhill Parish Council Planning Committee

## **CLOSE**

Cllr Fitzpatrick thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

## PARISH COUNCIL CONTACT DETAILS

Clerk to the Council: **Sue Bottoms**

Assistant Clerk to the Council: **Alison Southern**

Parish Council Office: **Brickhill Community Centre, Avon Drive, Bedford  
MK41 7AF**

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Website: [www.brickhillparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.brickhillparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Meetings: **First Thursday of every month (except August and  
December) at St Mark's Church Community Centre,  
Calder Rise, Bedford MK41 7UY**

Parish Councillor Surgeries: **Before each Parish Council Meeting  
7 pm to 7.30 pm at St Mark's Church Community  
Centre, Calder Rise, Bedford MK41 7UY**