

# BRICKHILL

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## PARISH COUNCIL



### Minutes of a Meeting of the Allotment & Open Spaces Committee held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

**Present:**

Cllrs Fitzpatrick, Holloway, Reeve, Jarman-Webb and the Clerk (Mrs S Bottoms) were in attendance.

*Summary of the meeting: -*

*Table 1- Minutes*

Item	Description	Action By
1.	<p><b>Apologies for Absence:</b></p> <p>None. The Clerk had advertised the meeting on the website and the allotment gates but in future would also put it on the noticeboards..</p>	Clerk
2.	<p><b>Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda:</b></p> <p>None.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Public Open Sessions (10 minutes)</b></p> <p>None.</p>	
4.	<p><b>To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020:</b></p> <p><b>It was resolved</b> to sign the minutes as a true record of the meeting.</p>	
5.	<p><b>To receive a report on the management of Brickhill Allotments to include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>To note the current spend against budget:</b> This was circulated ahead of the meeting.</li> <li><b>An update on the general management of the site since the last meeting:</b> The Clerk reported that the impact of COVID 19 was initially concerning in that it was not clear whether tenants could still work their plots. She was therefore concerned that tenants would not want to keep their tenancies. In fact,</li> </ul>	



allotments have remained open during the current crisis and in fact more tenants than ever are on the site working their plots. She has put up notices on the gate reminding tenants as to the rules regarding social distancing etc. The Clerk has reviewed the waiting list. She is continuously receiving enquiries about vacant plots and is adding the names to the waiting list. Interest in having an allotment is greater than it has ever been.

To date, there are 20 outstanding rents. There has been a request to reduce rents during the current situation but the decision has been taken not to do so as they are already very low. Ordinarily the Clerk would chase rents by now, but given the current crisis and some tenants with financial issues, she will chase the rents on the 1<sup>st</sup> July. That will give those in need more time to pay.

Although tenants are working their plots more than ever there remains some plots (10) not well worked. The Clerk has written or e-mailed all of them. Some are amongst those who have not yet paid. Some have been isolating and others with other health problems. There now remains 5 she has still not had a response from.

The Clerk has also sent out to the Committee information about plots given up/deposits returned. Since the beginning of April, 7 tenants have given up their plots and in the case of 2 tenants, having left the plots in good condition and having returned their keys, have had their deposits returned. 5 plots have been re-let. In the case of the one plot, it was left with a significant amount of clearance needed.

Following discussion, **it was agreed** that the Clerk should pursue any costs involved in clearing plots unless there are mitigating circumstances.

Clerk

There are currently 4 plots vacant which all need strimming before they can be let. The problem is the lack of keys. The blanks are no longer manufactured and so no more keys can be cut. The Clerk agreed to contact the borough council to see if they use the same keys for their padlocks. Meanwhile she has put up a notice on the gate warning tenants to take care of their keys as she will not be able to issue replacements. The option is to replace the padlocks and issue new keys or look at moving to

Clerk



a combination lock. The Clerk agreed to investigate options with regards a suitable padlock.

The CCTV cameras covering the allotments, scout hut etc were installed in December. The Clerk has asked the borough council to install CCTV notices on the fences and around the perimeter. There will be a small charge for these. To date these have not been installed but she will chase the borough council in due course. She has not heard back from the borough council as to whether it will take over responsibility for the column installed to support the CCTV camera covering the allotments as there is some concern that it could be hit by a vehicle.

The Clerk had reported the rough sleeper to Borough Cllr Royden.

The 2019 season had seen a very significant increase in water charges. The Clerk is aware that some plots have 500 litre water butts. If these are filled from the water supply they will take a great deal of water to fill. She has put up a notice on the gate reminding them not do so but rather to fit guttering to sheds etc to collect water to fill them and in general to remind them of good practice. The Clerk has had reports that some tenants do water their plots by attaching hoses to the tap.

She has also put up notices asking tenants not to have bonfires during the current COVID crisis to protect those tenants nearby who may be shielding and also to reduce pressures on the fire brigade who may be experiencing staff off ill.

- **Any other matters:** None.

6.

**To receive a report on the management of Waveney Green to include:**

- **To note current spend against budget:** This was circulated ahead of the meeting.
- **An update on the general management of the site since the last meeting:** Grass cutting is continuing to take place. As football is currently halted, white lining is not taking place. The borough council have taken over the contract for white lining and the Clerk has informed it that once she hears from the football club that football is restarting, she will ask it to start

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fortnightly marking again. At this stage it is not clear if Brickhill Lower School Football Club will require the pitches in the future as the Chairman is standing down and no one has offered to take over the club. The Clerk is waiting to hear.

**Footpath works:** The Clerk accepted a quotation at the end of January from Phoenix Surfacing to do repair works to the section from Dove Road to the green gym. The intention was that the work should be carried out around now once the drier weather arrived. She is waiting to hear if and when that work will commence.

**Play equipment:** Orders have been placed to replace the galleon and an area of broken logs with two new pieces of equipment as well as replace the circular seat on the cantilever swing. The seat on the cantilever swing has now been replaced. The Clerk would prefer the works to be done once it is known when play areas are opening because she is concerned that new equipment installed now would only encourage unauthorised use. She has now received an invoice from Proludic for £15,689.78 (including VAT) for the two pieces of equipment. 6<sup>th</sup> July is the date the equipment is due to be installed. She frequently replaces signage on the equipment reminding residents that it is out of use.

**Tree Works behind Francis Groves:** She has asked for two quotes from tree surgeons and will be meeting on site if required. She will ask advice from them as to whether to seek a second opinion. She will also contact the parish council insurance.

- **Any other matters:** None.

Clerk

7.

**Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30pm

*Approved and signed by*

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Chairman  
18<sup>th</sup> November 2020