

BRICKHILL

PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of a Meeting of the Allotment & Open Spaces Committee held on Wednesday 18th November 2020

Present:

Due to the COVID 19 restrictions the meeting took place on Zoom and the following councillors were in attendance

Cllrs Holloway, Fitzpatrick, Reeve, Jarman-Webb, the Clerk (Mrs S Bottoms) and 3 members of the public were in attendance.

Absent:

None.

Summary of the meeting: -

Table 1- Minutes

Item	Description	Action By
1.	Apologies for Absence: None.	
2.	Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda: None.	
3.	Public Open Sessions (10 minutes) i) Request for a second bench on Waveney Green to be located on the brow of the hill on the footpath heading towards Falcon Avenue: It was agreed that the Clerk would investigate options for a wood effect bench which would be maintenance free.	Clerk



Item	Description	Action By
	<p>ii) What was happening regarding the composting toilet?</p> <p>The resident was told that the decision had been taken not to pursue this.</p> <p>iii) What was happening regarding the inability to get keys cut?</p> <p>This was to be discussed under 5ii) below.</p> <p>iv) The effectiveness of the CCTV which covers the allotments:</p> <p>The tenant reported having his unlocked shed regularly visited by someone. The Clerk reported that a request to examine the footage had to be made through the police. It was important for all tenants to notify the police should anything be stolen or damaged with dates and times. It was also important to inform the police of the existence of the CCTV and that it is monitored by Bedford Borough Council. Please also let the office know. The Clerk reported that it is a condition of the Tenancy Agreement that tenants are not to go on other tenants' plots and to do so would be breaking their agreement. Potentially the sanction for doing so is to have their tenancy terminated. The Clerk has written to people in the past and will continue to do when it is known or it is suspected that they have broken this condition.</p> <p>v) Problem with water supply near plot 25:</p> <p>The tenant said that she had to bring water from home because no water was coming out of the tap near her plot. She suspected that the problem was when tenants were running taps and filling water butts closer to the point where the water supply enters the allotment. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact Anglian Water to establish water pressure and advice on what could be done to improve the situation (also see below under 5d below).</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2020:</p> <p>The minutes were signed as a true record of the meeting.</p>	



Item	Description	Action By
5.	<p>To receive a report on the management of Brickhill Allotments to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) To note the current spend against budget: This was circulated to all councillors. ii) An update on the general management of the site since the last meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Waiting list:</i> Currently there are 16 Brickhill residents waiting for a full plot and 9 waiting for a half plot. 26 non-residents wanting a full plot and 9 waiting for a half plot. There has never been so many on the waiting list. There was always a worry that COVID might make plot holders give up but the opposite has been the case. The allotment managers and associations in Bedford and across the eastern region have all reported having the same increase in demand. The Clerk has recently been on three courses focussed on managing allotments at which this was discussed. b) <i>Vacant Plots:</i> There are currently 5 vacant plots which cannot be let because of lack of keys. If the decision is to go ahead with replacing locks and keys then the cost will be £160 for two padlocks and £10 per key 140 x £10 + £1400. If we try to go to a combination lock, we will still need to refund those with keys which will cost £6 x 140 = £840 as tenants quite rightly should be refunded for the keys no longer needed. Bedford Borough Council have replaced all their padlocks with new padlocks and new keys. Following discussion, it was agreed by a majority of 3:1 to replace the padlocks and keys and for the Clerk to organise this to coincide with the start of the new rent year in April 2021. c) <i>Plot Clearance:</i> In all but two cases, the retention of the £50 deposit has covered the cost of tidying and strimming. The excess of £155 comes from two plots. In both cases it has not been possible to re-charge. 	Clerk



Item	Description	Action By
	<p><i>d) Plumbing Repairs:</i> It has been an expensive year with underground leaks and leaking standpipes. The underground pipes are of an uncertain age and the Parish Council are not in possession of a map showing the layout of the pipes across the allotments. The Clerk will ask the Estates office at Bedford Borough Council if it has any information. With regards the standpipes, our contractor, has said that the non-return valves are easily blocked and cause problems. The fitting of these is a requirement of Anglian Water and unfortunately there is no alternative option. The Clerk was asked to get three quotes from relevant companies to investigate the condition of the underground pipes, what is causing the lack of water at the bottom end of the allotments and what is causing the non-return valves to get blocked. The quotations were to cover a detailed report as well as costed options to rectify the situation. Once those costings have been obtained then a decision on any possible action can be taken.</p> <p><i>e) Water Charges:</i> The invoice to the 1st September was £818. The water was switched off on the 1st October and is not switched on again until the 1st April so hopefully the water charge over the full year will not be much more than £1,000 although it is not clear how much water was used in that last month.</p> <p>iii) Any other matters: None.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>To receive a report on the management of Waveney Green to include:</p> <p>i) To note current spend against budget: This was circulated to all councillors.</p> <p>ii) An update on the general management of the site since the last meeting:</p> <p><i>a) Grass cutting:</i> This is continuing to take place. Brickhill Lower School FC is</p>	



Item	Description	Action By
	<p>no more but one pitch is being marked out for Bedford Park Rangers Under 10's, who are mainly Brickhill residents. This will only be for the 2020-21 season. A meeting took place between the Clerk, Tony Lack from BBC and Howard Phillips the under 10's manager. The borough council have taken over the contract for white lining so hopefully there will be better liaison between the grass cutters and white line markers. It is not clear yet what the charge will be for marking out the pitch.</p> <p>The Clerk had received complaints that the grass was not being strimmed up to the fence line behind Frances Groves Close/Falcon Ave (into the corner). She discussed this with Tony Lack of the Borough Council and he will now arrange to get this done regularly.</p> <p><i>b) Footpath works:</i> I have met with Phoenix Surfacing ahead of this meeting to get quotations for two sections of path running up from the rear entrance to the school towards the section near the dog bin. The quote is £9,695. The suggestion is to budget for this work for the financial year 2021-22. The Clerk agreed to circulate the previous spend on footpaths.</p> <p><i>c) Play equipment:</i> The new equipment is in place and seems to be enjoyed by everyone using it. The toddler equipment has benefitted from being cleaned as has the bench donated by Palmers. Perhaps it would be sensible to budget for a regular clean and to include the older children's equipment and adjacent bins. Repairs have been done to the mulch under the toddler swings, a re-attachment of the rope on the toddler multi-unit and repairs to the mulch under two pieces of the green gym.</p> <p><i>d) Tree Works behind Francis Groves:</i> The tree works have been completed adjacent to Frances Groves (insurance company). Trimming has taken place to clear the footpath from Falcon Ave and to enable the grass cutters to access the grass under the trees. The Clerk has asked the tree surgeon to look at some trees right up behind the rear fence line of houses in Falcon Ave.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>

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Item	Description	Action By
	<p>iii) Any other matters:</p> <p><i>a) Nest Boxes:</i> Cllr Fitzpatrick reported that he had ordered some nest boxes in the last financial year but unfortunately COVID had stopped progress on this. There is still scope for getting more put up. He reported that there is evidence that the existing ones have been used and he will arrange to clean them out.</p> <p><i>b) Mowsbury Walk Play Area:</i> The Clerk reported that the lease was close to being signed. By the February 2021 meeting, this would have occurred. Perhaps this committee needed a change of name to incorporate this new area under its remit. The £4000 in the current budget for new equipment needed to be moved into reserves as it is unlikely it will be spent before the end of the current financial year although new signage will be needed. The Parish Council has already agreed to £20,000 to be spent to begin the process of upgrading the area. Decisions will need to be made at the Parish Council budget meeting as to whether this was to be met from existing reserves or from precept monies received in 2021-22.</p>	Cllr Fitzpatrick
7.	<p>Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 17th February 2021 at 7.30pm</p>	

Approved and signed by

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Chairman
 17th February 2021