

**Minutes of the Meeting of Brickhill Parish Council held in St Marks Church and Community Centre on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024 commencing at 7.30pm.**

**Present:**

Cllrs Fitzpatrick, Green, Grant, Ward, Rani, Holloway, Blakeman, Borough Cllrs Royden and Sawyer, four members of the public and the Clerk (Mrs S Bottoms).

Absent: Cllr Lamswood, Borough Cllrs Rider and Vann.

*Summary of the meeting: -*

*Table 1 – The Minutes*

Item	Description	Action
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence:</b>  Cllr Lamswood, Borough Cllrs Rider and Vann.	
2.	<b>Declarations of interest in items on the agenda:</b>  i) To receive written requests for a dispensation:  None received.  ii) To consider any requests for a dispensation:  None received.	
3.	<b>To agree the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023</b>  The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.	
4.	<b>Public Open Session:</b>	

Item	Description	Action
	<p>The new postmaster for the post office on Brickhill Drive attended. Plans are in place to improve access into the shop, currently a step. Cllr Fitzpatrick thanked him for the support given to the senior citizens party held at Brickhill Community Centre prior to Christmas.</p> <p>i) Healthwatch Bedford: Gloria Chukwuji, Community Outreach Officer, introduced herself and the aim of Healthwatch Bedford. Cllr Fitzpatrick suggested she left her contact details in order that the Parish Council might better understand how the Parish Council might support the work of Healthwatch. She then left the meeting.</p> <p>ii) Flooding Curlew Crescent and junction with Brickhill Drive. Could action be taken. Borough Cllrs Royden and Sawyer said that Bedford Borough Council had been actively pursuing Anglian Water with the aim of getting this sorted out but to no avail. A letter could be sent by Brickhill Parish Council to Anglian Water on behalf of residents expressing disappointment with the lack of action but Cllr Fitzpatrick suggested trying to get a meeting of all relevant parties with Anglian Water might be a better approach. Borough Cllrs Royden and Sawyer would provide the contacts he had available.</p>	<p><b>Borough Cllrs Royden and Sawyer</b></p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Attendance by Amanda Higham, Good Neighbours Scheme Support Officer to discuss a potential scheme in Brickhill:</b></p> <p>Amanda introduced herself. Her role is to try to get a Good Neighbours Scheme active in Bedford and Kempston. The Clerk had put information into the last Brickhill News and following that a resident had come forward keen to work to establish a new scheme. This requires a chairperson, secretary and treasurer as well as other volunteers. Any support the Parish Council could</p>	

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	<p>give would be very welcome. She will send a copy of the survey which aims to establish need as well as any volunteers. She was thanked for attending and left the meeting.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Financial Matters:</b></p> <p>i) To agree the bank reconciliations and any accounts for payment: <b>It was resolved</b> to accept these.</p> <p>ii) To consider and agree the budget for 2024-25:</p> <p>Cllr Fitzpatrick had circulated a draft budget ahead of this meeting and following on from the Finance Advisory Group meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November. The following points were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As from January 2025, the January Parish Council meeting should move to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of January to give more time to get the draft budget circulated following Christmas and to make it more likely that the Borough Council will have been able to finalise its figures regarding tax bases. This year this will not happen until the 24<sup>th</sup> January.</li> <li>• Discussion also looked at setting out the data in the draft budget in a different format focussing firstly on what expenditure is necessary to enable the operation of the Parish Council and secondly what is optional.</li> </ul> <p>The budget was looked at in detail and Cllr Fitzpatrick explained the thinking behind the figures. The following matters were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllrs Ward and Rani <b>agreed</b> to circulate in advance for consideration at the next Parish Council meeting, a proposal/proposals for children and/or youth activities which could be organised or just funded by the Parish Council.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p> <p><b>Cllrs Ward and Rani</b></p>

Item	Description	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There was concern about the steep rise in the electricity charges for the fountain on Rooksmead. The Clerk will investigate.</li> </ul> <p>The proposed budget would require an increase in precept from £124,600 (2023-24) to £131,000 and an increase in Band D of £1.68/year (approximately 3.25p/week). This assumes that, as mentioned above, that the figures supplied by Bedford Borough Council are approved at its meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> January.</p> <p>Following thorough discussion, <b>it was resolved</b> by a majority not to increase the Band D tax charge for 2024-25.</p> <p>iii) To agree the precept for 2024-25:</p> <p>Following the agreement under 6ii to hold the Band D charge at the level of 2023-24, <b>it was resolved</b> to request a precept of £125,050. The Clerk completed the paperwork and both she and Cllr Fitzpatrick signed it. The Clerk would forward this to the Borough Council.</p> <p>iv) To agree to change the signing mandate for the Co-operative Bank (postponed to the February meeting)</p> <p>As a result of the length of time spent on items 6ii and 6iii it was decided to postpone 6vi and items from 8 onwards to the February meeting.</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p> <p><b>Clerk</b></p>
7.	<p><b>To receive reports from the Borough Councillors:</b></p> <p>Joint written reports had been received from Borough Cllrs Vann and Sawyer and Borough Cllrs Royden and Cllr Rider. The Clerk had circulated both reports to the parish councillors and had put copies on the website.</p> <p>Cllr Ward discussed the issue of the number of cars parked on Plover Way at the top end (hill section) making the road very narrow for vehicles to pass. Could</p>	

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	<p>grasscrete be installed as happened on Rookmead? It is not clear what funds are available in the Bedford Borough Council budget for 2024-25 for local parking improvements. More information should be known in February.</p> <p><b>It was agreed</b> that Cllr Ward would provide more information on the section of Plover Way she is referring to, perhaps a diagram, and the proposed impact on the street scene. She would send this to the Clerk in the first instance. The Clerk could forward this to the Borough Council to see if it is a project that it would consider funding.</p>	<p><b>Cllr Ward and the Clerk</b></p>
8.	<p><b>To receive an update on the switching on of the Christmas lights on Waveney Green:</b></p> <p>Postponed to the February meeting.</p>	
9.	<p><b>To receive an update on Woodlands Park matters:</b></p> <p>Postponed to the February meeting.</p>	
10.	<p><b>To receive any update on the Brickhill Neighbourhood Development Plan and any further action needed:</b></p> <p>Postponed to the February meeting.</p>	
11.	<p><b>To consider and agree action acquiring a triangle of land at the rear of Curlew Crescent as part of the allotments:</b></p> <p>Postponed to the February meeting.</p>	
12.	<p><b>To give further consideration to any options which might be available for Brickhill Parish from the Rural England Prosperity Fund:</b></p> <p>Postponed to the February meeting.</p>	

Item	Description	Action
13.	<p><b>To confirm status and agree any action re: the cycle connection Foster's Brow to the industrial estate:</b></p> <p>Postponed to the February meeting.</p>	
14.	<p><b>To confirm the latest situation and agree any action re: Grant Palmer buses:</b></p> <p>Postponed to the February meeting.</p>	
15.	<p><b>To confirm the status of planning conditions that affect Brickhill parish re: the Graze Hill Development:</b></p> <p>Postponed to the February meeting.</p>	
16.	<p><b>To receive any update on a date for the Annual Parish Meeting:</b></p> <p>Postponed to the February meeting.</p>	
17.	<p><b>Correspondence:</b></p> <p>Hedgehog Awareness - I Need Your Help!</p> <p>BATPC information</p> <p>PCC – precept survey</p>	
18.	<p><b>Date of the next meeting:</b> Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 at 7.30pm at St Marks Church and Community Centre, Calder Rise.</p>	

Approved by .....

Chairman  
1<sup>st</sup> February 2024

Table 2 Reconciliations for Approval (see item above and table below)

Payee	Reference	Amount Paid	Transaction Details
Reids Playground Maintenance	BACS 109	£ 4,596.00	Surfacing etc WG
Bedford Borough Council	BACS 110	£ 1,115.23	Grounds Maint and Litter WG
Bedford Borough Council	BACS 111	£ 371.91	Grass and litter MW
S Reilly	BACS 118	£ 2,036.00	Work on Allotments
Pigeon Proofing Solar Panels	BACS 119	£ 280.80	Deposit for future works
P Anthony	BACS 112	£ 75.00	Payroll
D Britton	BACS 113	£ 145.60	Salaries
HMRC	BACS 114	£ 1,452.37	PAYE
Bedfordshire Pension Fund	BACS 115	£ 1,315.66	Pensions
S Bottoms	BACS 116	£ 2,718.78	Salaries Nov
Chris Horne Gardens Ltd	BACS 117	£ 224.40	Meadow Allotment
Associated Telecom Solutions	DD	£ 22.50	Telephone Charges
St Marks Church Community Centre	BACS 120	£ 13.86	Room Hire
St Marks Church Community Centre	BACS 121	£ 18.48	Hall Hire
St Marks Church Community Centre	BACS 122	£ 18.48	Room Hire
St Marks Church Community Centre	BACS 123	£ 41.58	Hall Hire
St Marks Church Community Centre	BACS 124	£ 188.33	Office Hire Oct
St Marks Church Community Centre	BACS 125	£ 188.33	Office Hire Nov
S Bottoms	BACS 128	£ 108.58	Tree Switch on etc
S Reilly	BACS 129	£ 140.00	Waste disposal
Reids Playground Maintenance	BACS 130	£ 432.00	Rubber dampers Gr Gym
Scott Primary	BACS 131	£ 1,500.00	Correct Allocation of Grant
NSYS	BACS 132	£ 1,554.88	Website Maintenance

Payee	Reference	Amount Paid	Transaction Details
The Tree People	BACS 133	£ 2,200.00	Tree Work WG
The Christmas Decorators	BACS 134	£ 3,456.00	Dressing of Christmas Tree
Paul Riches Skips	BACS 135	£ 294.00	Skip Hire
Bedfordshire Pension Fund	BACS 136	£ 962.12	Pensions
S Bottoms	BACS 137	£ 2,051.90	Salaries
D Britton	BACS 138	£ 145.60	Salary
HMRC	BACS 139	£ 980.06	PAYE
Bedford Bricklaying and Gen	BACS 140	£ 480.00	Uneven Slabs BCC
S Reilly	BACS 142	£ 610.00	Base and install bench Allots
Associated Telecom Solutions	DD	£ 24.85	Telephone
Wave	DD	£ 91.33	Water Allotments
NPower	BACS 143	£ 125.75	Electricity for Fountain Sept
NPower	BACS 144	£ 133.71	Electricity for Fountain
White Hart Press	BACS 145	£ 925.00	Newsletter Printing
<b>Total Payments</b>		<b>£ 31,118.95</b>	