

# **BRICKHILL PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Annual Report**

**2008-2009**

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# Chairman's Overview

Over the past year, Brickhill Parish Council met 10 times. There have also been meetings of its Planning Committee and other working groups. For instance the Council held an Open Morning of Saturday 17 January 2009 for potential new councillors and for anyone interested in the work of the Council. The Finance Advisory Group, Footpaths Group and so on have also held several meetings.

The Council had its full complement of 13 Councillors including Cllr Joanne Laybourn who was co-opted in July 2008. The term of office for existing councillors ends on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2009 when there will be elections for a new set of Councillors.

The Parish Council successfully argued that Brickhill should be divided into wards:

- North Ward (Tyne Crescent area) – 4 Councillors
- East Ward (Kimbolton Road/Larkway area) – 4 Councillors
- South & East Ward (Brickhill Drive/Curlew Crescent area) – 5 Councillors.

This was to improve the accountability of Councillors and to reduce the size of ballot papers and reduce the cost of by-elections should any occur. I thank all our present Councillors for their efforts over the past 5 years.

I would like to thank our staff: our Clerk, Delia Shephard and our Assistant Clerk, Alison Southern. Delia is the Proper Officer of the Council – making sure that all actions taken by the Council are legal. Delia is also the Responsible Financial Officer for the Council looking after the finances. Alison takes primary responsibility for the administration of the allotments which is a considerable job and both have done a great job for the Parish Council over the last year. Delia works 23 hours per week and Alison 17 hours.

The Council strives to ensure that all its procedures are appropriate, lawful and comply with the requirements of best practice and the guidance from relevant professional bodies.

Parish Councils have a range of duties and powers for example:

- They have a duty to consider provision of allotments where requested by 6 electors, a duty to hold at least 4 meetings per year and keep a legal record of its meetings
- They have the power to provide a range of services such as village greens, war memorials and open spaces
- They also have the right to be consulted on planning matters

## Allotments

These are a major responsibility of the Council. The Council is aiming to both give a good service to tenants and also control costs. In September 2008 it was agreed that new tenants would be required to pay a deposit of £50 (full

rate) or £25 (concession) which would be refunded on termination of the tenancy agreement provided the plot was left in good order. The Parish charged annual rents of £42 (full rate) and £26.25 (concessionary rate); charges were increased to these levels with effect from 1 October 2008 and will be reviewed again in summer 2009. The site has been fully occupied for most of the year and a short waiting list is maintained.

The Parish has been looking at a range of issues, the state of the track ways in the site, the fencing around it and the problems of theft, vandalism and flooding.

## **Communication**

To help communicate with residents the Council published 4 newsletters during the year initially delivered with Bedfordshire on Sunday but now by a combination of other methods.

The Council has three notice boards –two at Avon Drive and Brickhill Drive shops and one at the Allotment site. The Parish Council website has recently been revamped and is still being developed - [www.brickhillparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.brickhillparishcouncil.gov.uk)

## **Training**

Both our staff and some of our Councillors have been on training courses over the past year and both officers are working towards specific qualifications.

## **Other Work**

The work of the Parish Council is not just about delivery of services, it is also about establishing a dialogue with other organisations, raising matters of concern for residents of the parish. We have had several presentations at Parish Council meetings over the past year including:

- Future developments at Anjulita Court, North Brickhill (given by the Ibbett Trust and Methodist Homes for the Aged)
- Future developments at the Linear Park (given by Bedford Borough Council)
- Extended Schools Service St Thomas More Cluster (given by Shikoll Akthar)

Matters discussed during the year have included:

- **Making Brickhill Safer** the Parish Council consulted with residents about the association of some footpaths with crime and anti-social behaviour. A working group was set up to look into this in more detail working with the Community Safety Manager at the Borough Council, our local policing team and the relevant departments at Bedfordshire County Council. The Parish Council is working towards closure of three pieces of land: land behind the houses in Tyne Crescent near to Thomas More School, land between Ryton Close and the Wharfe and the footpath from Blythe Close to Otter Walk.

- **Enhanced Parish Partnership** Bedfordshire County Council allocated Brickhill Parish Council £11,000 to be spent on road or footpath repairs. The Parish agreed to use this to get paths in Avon Drive repaired, in the area between the shops and Sir William Harpur House.
- **Confident Communities Fund** This was a fund allocated by the County Council which could be used on a range of services to promote community safety. The Parish Council was allocated £15,000 which was used for: two vehicle activated speed signs (Kimbolton Road and Brickhill Drive), Bobby Van service and SmartWater provision in the parish, youth activities on Waveney Green during the summer holidays and the hiring of a pitch at Gordon Field for community football sessions in the early autumn.
- **Post Office Campaign** The Parish Council set up a working group to co-ordinate and run a campaign to oppose closure of the Brickhill Drive Post Office. Over 350 letters of support for the Post Office were submitted to the relevant authorities along with several petitions opposing closure. Several Parish Councillors and two of our Borough Councillors with the Clerk attended a meeting with Post Office Network representatives and a detailed submission making the case for retaining the Brickhill Drive Post Office was prepared and submitted. The Council wrote to Patrick Hall MP to point out that Brickhill Drive was the proposed alternative PO when Roff Avenue Post Office was closed but it was not possible to obtain Mr Hall's full support for our campaign. I would like to thank Cllr Stuart Green, Delia Shephard and Alison Southern and all members of the working group for the hard work they put in on this campaign. We were very disappointed that the Post Office went ahead and closed the Brickhill Drive Post Office despite our efforts.
- **Westrope Way** The use of buses on this road remains a matter of concern to the Council. The Parish Council has supported residents in their opposition to the use of Westrope Way and Councillors and Officers have met with representatives of the Borough and County Councils and Stagecoach to oppose the planned route.
- **20mph Speed Limits** A public consultation meeting on the possibility of introducing 20 mph zones in Brickhill was held on 8 December 2008 and presentations were given by Cllr Blakeman and the Watchman in Chief, Jon Shortland. The Council discussed many of the issues raised at the meeting and noted that opinion was divided on the relative merits of different approaches to road safety problems in the parish. The Parish Council has requested that the unitary Borough Council should investigate the possible future introduction of time restricted 20 mph limits outside all the schools in Brickhill including St Thomas More Upper School.
- **Pedestrian Bridge at Manton Lane** The Parish wrote to Bedford Modern School expressing regret that the pedestrian bridge was to be demolished and also made known to the County Council its concerns about the likely implications of the replacement pedestrian operated crossing in terms of road safety and traffic congestion.
- **Bedford Development Framework** Jackman's Farm (2 sites) and Freeman's Common (1 site) are the list of sites owned by Bedford

Borough Council which could be considered for potential development by 2021. Further sites (not owned by the Borough Council) could be proposed for development as part of the Bedford Development Framework Allocations and Designations Plan during the last year. Consultation on these sites is due to be held in August 2009. A site at #Mowsbury Golf Course had initially been on this list but was subsequently removed. The Parish Council expressed its opposition to residential development of land at Freeman's Common and Jackman's Farm and sought explanations about their inclusion in the Allocations and Designations Plan from the Borough Council.

- **Planning** The Parish Council's Planning Committee met 11 times during the year. It is composed of 4 Members and has the authority to comment on planning applications on behalf of the Parish Council. The Committee reviewed fewer applications this year partly as a consequence of the economic climate and partly because recent changes to planning legislation mean that fewer domestic matters require formal planning permission. Nevertheless the Committee reviewed 47 extensions to private houses and 12 applications for new developments. The Committee also looked at 5 applications concerning trees, one for St Thomas More School and several commercial and business applications including an application for extended facilities at Anjulita Court in North Brickhill. The Committee made comments on as many applications as possible.
- **Policing** Beat Manager PC Dave Hawkey regularly attended Parish Council meetings and regularly reported on crime figures in Brickhill. Residents raised policing issues during the public open sessions and Councillors were able to discuss these concerns with the community policing team. PC Hawkey and PCSO Roberto Bonaforte are in post and based in St Mark's Church Community Centre. This Police Post is the result of the "Brickhill Policing Partnership" consisting of the Parish Council, St Marks and the Police. The Brickhill Policing Partnership funds this Post. PC Hawkey was the main organiser of the Youth Club that met at St Mark's on Friday evenings. Unfortunately this stopped in summer 2008 after PC Hawkey's shifts changed and there was a lack of adult volunteers.
- **Street Ranger Service** Previously the Parish Council was paying Bedford Borough to provide a part-time Street Ranger for Brickhill (15 hours per week). The post-holder left and following some detailed discussions with the Borough and within the Parish Council we decided not to continue provide funding for a new Street Ranger in 2008-9. However the Street Ranger service has provided some support within Brickhill with the Parish Council's event on Waveney Green and with the youth football sessions for which I thank them.
- **Games Area on Waveney Green** A meeting was held on 26 August 2008 between Cllrs Green, Royden and Rider and Officers from Bedford Borough Council and BPHA and the Clerk to discuss provision of additional youth facilities in Brickhill. The Chief Executive of Bedford Borough Council indicated that the Borough would be willing to consider youth facilities on Waveney Green provided they were in keeping with the landscape and supported by the community.

However until budgets for the new unitary authority were agreed no commitment could be given to capital or revenue funding for this project. The Parish Council remains committed to working towards provision of additional facilities for young people and has agreed to renew its efforts to secure village green status for the land at Waveney Green. A working group of members has been set up to continue work on this project.

- **Events on the Green and elsewhere** On 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008 “The Picnic in the Park – The Revenge” was held on Waveney Green. On 6<sup>th</sup> December “Take the Lead” was held at St Thomas More School organised by Kim Norris of BPHA with support from Bedford Borough Council. Community Football events were held in the summer and autumn of 2008 with the support of the Street Ranger service, Brickhill Baptist Church, BPHA and Bedford Borough.
- **Finance** The financial accounts are shown in Section 2 of this report. The Precept for the year 2008-9 was £52,200.

### **Future Plans**

During 2009-10 the Parish Council Precept will be £52,000 equating to £10.76 for a Band D property. Work will go on with building relationships with the new unitary Borough Council. The Parish Council is keen to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Brickhill, the first house at no 2 Robin Hill was occupied in December 1959 and we are looking at a range of activities and events to celebrate Brickhill’s Golden Jubilee. The Parish Council will continue its links with the Brickhill Community Safety Forum. The Parish Council has agreed to join the Brickhill Community Association which runs the Brickhill Community Centre in Avon Drive. Work with our Extended Schools Co-ordinator for the area, Shikoll Akthar will also continue and the Parish Council will be taking a particular interest in the proposed schools reorganisation which could represent a possible threat to Waveney Green.

Mark Fitzpatrick  
Chairman  
7 May 2009

**Brickhill Parish Council**  
**Receipts and payments account for the Year to 31 March**

<b>2007/2008</b>		<b>2008/2009</b>
£		£
	<b>Receipts</b>	
49,950	Precept	52,200
4,755	Allotment receipts	4,956
435	Newsletter advertising	495
972	Interest	561
797	V.A.T. reclaim	2,225
401	HM Revenue (incentive payment)	0
	Grants received	2,400
	Administration	55
<u>57,310</u>		<u>62,892</u>
	<b>Payments</b>	
17,691	Staff Costs	23,147
8,907	Administration Expenses	12,525
7,164	Allotments	3,978
8,000	Street Ranger	888
2,400	Brickhill policing partnership	2,400
1,323	Publicity	2,603
1,619	V.A.T. on payments	882
50	Grants S137	558
282	Hall Hire	358
<u>47,436</u>		<u>47,339</u>
	<b>Summary</b>	
33,270	Balance brought forward	43,144
57,310	Total receipts	62,892
47,436	Total Payments	47,339
<u>43,144</u>	Balance carried forward	<u>58,697</u>
	These cumulative funds are represented by:	
5,079	Current account	12,071
38,065	Deposit account	46,626
<u>43,144</u>	Total	<u>58,697</u>

**Brickhill Parish Council**

## Notes to the accounts year ended 31 March 2009

### Fixed Assets

During the year the following assets were purchased at the cost shown: NIL

During the year the following assets were disposed of for the amount shown: NIL

At 31 March 2009 the following assets were held:

Notice boards £1,166

The basis of valuation of these assets is replacement value.

### S.137 Payments

The limit for spending under S137 of the Local Government Act 1972 for this council for the financial year ending 31 March 2008 was £5.86 per elector and the payments made were:

Payee	Nature of Payment	£
Brickhill Baptist Church	Grant to community football league	500
Cambridge County Council	Deposit for climbing tower hire (for community event)	35
BRCC	Deposit for Rave bus hire (for community event)	22
		£557

### Advertising and Publicity

The following costs for advertising and publicity were incurred during the year:

	£
Recruitment and advertising	0
Other advertising	0
Publicity	2,018
	£2,018

### Future Liabilities:

**1. Elections** - election costs will be incurred in June 2009 when the whole council will be eligible for re-election, costs are estimated at between £5,000 and £7,500. A further election will be held in May 2011 at an estimated similar cost. Ward by-elections may arise at any time.

**2. Staff Gratuity** - a sum of £3210 is currently ring fenced in the reserves in case payment of the staff gratuities (in lieu of pension arrangements) become payable.

**3. Allotments** - a sum of £700 is held in reserves to allow refund of key deposits and plot deposits held from allotment tenants. The allotment site will require re-fencing at some point in the foreseeable future; current estimates for re-fencing the whole site are in the region of £50,000 - £60,000.

**4. Information Technology** - it is anticipated that the Parish Council will need to purchase its own computer equipment at some point in the future and a designated reserve of £2015 is held for this purpose.

## Membership of Brickhill Parish Council

**Cllr Mark Fitzpatrick** (*Chair*)  
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**Cllr Peter Blakeman** (*Planning Committee Chair*)  
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**Cllr Stuart Green**  
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**Cllr Nigel Haughton**  
10 Douglas Road, Bedford MK41 7YH  
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**Cllr Alison Holden**  
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**Cllr Peter Hand** (*also County & Borough Councillor*)  
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**Cllr Howard Humphries**  
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**Cllr Andrew McConnell** (*also Borough Councillor*)  
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**Cllr Joanne Laybourn**  
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**Cllr Pat Ovenell**  
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**Cllr Wendy Rider**  
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**Cllr Charles Royden** (*also Borough Councillor*)  
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**Cllr Ray Seymour** (*Vice-Chair*)  
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## Table of Attendance at Parish Council Meetings 2008-9

	3.4.08	8.5.08	5.6.08	3.7.08	4.9.08	2.10.08	6.11.08	5.1.09	10.2.09	5.3.09
Peter Blakeman	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓
Mark Fitzpatrick	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stuart Green	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nigel Haughton	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Alison Holden	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	✓
Peter Hand	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	A
Howard Humphries	A	A	A	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	A	A
Joanne Laybourn*				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓
Andrew McConnell	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	A	A	A
Patricia Ovenell	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	A	✓
Wendy Rider	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Charles Royden	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ray Seymour	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

- \* Co-opted in July 2008
- ✓ Present
- A Apologies submitted and accepted