
BRICKHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Report

2009- 2010



Brickhill Parish Council's Gathering on the Green, August 2009

Chairman's Overview

Work of the Parish Council 2009/2010

Introduction

Over the past year, the Parish Council has met 10 times. There have also been meetings of its Planning Committee and other groups.

The second full set of elections since the creation of Brickhill Parish Council was held in June 2009. These were the first elections since Brickhill Parish was divided into three wards:

- 4 councillors for **North Ward** (Tyne Crescent area): Councillors Andrew Wilkins, Charles Royden, Patricia Marriott & Ray Seymour
- 4 councillors for **East Ward** (Kimbolton Road/Larkway area): Councillors Gurmel Chambers, Joanne Laybourn, Mark Fitzpatrick & Peter Blakeman
- 5 councillors for **South & West Ward** (Brickhill Drive/Curlew Crescent area): Councillors Stuart Buchanan, Stuart Green, Pat Ovenell, Ray Waterhouse & Cllr Wendy Rider

The aim of introducing parish wards is to improve the accountability of Councillors, to reduce the size of ballot papers and reduce the cost of by-elections should any occur. The entire council is up for election in May 2011. I thank all our present Councillors for their efforts over the past year.

I also 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.

The Parish Council now appoints two councillors to the management committee of Brickhill Community Association, which manages the Brickhill Community Association. The representatives are Cllrs Mark Fitzpatrick and Ray Waterhouse.

I am also an ex-officio member of the Brickhill Community Safety Forum committee. I continue to serve as a member of the County Committee of Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils.

Cllr Peter Blakeman is Brickhill Parish Council's nominated highways representative/

Parish Councils have a limited range of duties and powers

- They have several duties including that to provide allotments.
- They have the power to provide a range of services, such as village greens, war memorials, parks, open spaces, road and path maintenance.
- They also have the right to be informed on planning matters

Allotments

These are a major responsibility of the council. The council is aiming to both give a good service to tenants but at the same time control costs. The rates for a plot have been set to £52 (£32 concessionary) from 1st October 2009.

During 2009-10 the Parish Council has resurfaced part of the main track in the allotments, planted saplings down the side of the allotments, repaired some of the fencing and organised the first skip for many years and worked with tenants to ensure the site is run as efficiently as possible.

There is a high demand for allotment plots, so the Council has changed its policy towards allocating plots: priority is now given to Brickhill residents, while new tenants will only be allowed to rent one plot.

The Parish Council is working with Taste Real Food Bedford, who has a demonstration plot. A grant has been given to the organisation who is working with local schools to make children appreciate food.

Communication

To help communicate with residents, the Council has published 4 newsletters. It includes detailed information from the Brickhill Safer Neighbourhood Team. It is delivered by a combination of paid deliverers and volunteers, including Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators.

We have display boards at Avon Drive and Brickhill Drive shops and a website. An updated version of the website will be launched shortly.

Parish Council surgeries have been introduced for half an hour before each full parish council meeting and the Clerk continues to run a public drop-in session on Tuesday mornings at St Mark's between 10 am and 12 noon. No appointment is necessary at this time but if the drop-in is not convenient our officers are available at other times by appointment.

Training

Both our staff and some of our Councillors have been on training courses over the past year. Our clerk has achieved the CiLCA qualification and has started a further two year course in Community Engagement and Governance at the University of Gloucestershire. Most of the Parish Councillors attended a Power of Wellbeing training course.

Community Engagement and Representation

The work of Parish Councils is not just about delivery of services, it is also about establishing a dialogue with other organisations and raising matters of concern for residents of the parish. The councillors have striven to keep themselves informed about local issues which might affect the parish and regularly attend meeting with representatives of the Bedford Borough Council and the Bedford Borough Partnership Network of Parish and Town Councils.

We have had several presentations at Parish Council meetings over the past year, including:

1. Future developments at the Linear Park (Bedford Borough Council) given by Steve Tomlin of Bedford Borough Council
2. Taste Real Food Bedford given by Sue Miller of Taste Real Food Bedford.

Matters discussed during the year have included:

- The Bedford Electoral Review
- Schools reorganisation
- Traffic problems – in particular near schools.
- The Primary Care Trust's proposals for a new GP Centre at Bedford Health Village on the North Wing Hospital site.



Children at Scott Lower, Brickhill getting ready for Christmas

It is worth noting some successes from the past year:

Play area on Waveney Green

At last year's meeting I reported on the meetings that had taken place with the Borough Council regarding providing a play area on Waveney Green. As you will probably have seen, a new play area is currently under construction. With 'Playbuilder funding', it is intended for younger children and is due to be opened at 4pm on Friday 21st May. Do come along!

The use of Westrope Way for buses

The Parish Council supported residents of Westrope Way in their opposition to the use of Westrope Way by buses. We are pleased that use of Westrope Way for buses has now been ruled out.

Bedford Development Framework – Allocations and Designations

Jackman's Farm (2 sites) and Freeman's Common (1 site) were on the list of sites owned by Bedford Borough Council which could be considered for potential development by 2021. The Parish Council is pleased that the Mayor has dropped these sites from the Allocations and Designations Plan.

Planning

Cllrs Peter Blakeman, Ray Waterhouse, Andy Wilkins, Ray Seymour and Pat Ovenell were appointed to serve on the Planning Committee at the Annual Meeting of the Brickhill Parish Council on 11 June 2009.

The calendar for the committee was set to have meetings at approximately three to four week intervals to deal with planning applications for Brickhill within the timetable set by Bedford Borough Council Planning (BBCP).

In the period covered by this report (1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010) only 9 of the scheduled 14 meetings took place and 37 planning applications were considered (69 – 2008/9, 83 - 2007/08). This steep reduction was believed to be due to the continuing effects of the recession as well as the relaxed rules for house improvements which had come into effect in late 2008.

In summary the Planning Committee made comments on 13 applications, 3 adversely. BBCP subsequently refused permission on only one of the objected applications but refused two further applications.

In detail the applications reviewed were:-

- 28 for extensions to private houses: three were subsequently refused by BBCP (Eden Way boundary wall, Kimbolton Road boundary wall and Tydeman Close decking/pergola).
- 4 for tree surgery work: all granted.
- 1 for schools: a number of small improvements to Pilgrims Pre-Prep. School - granted.
- 1 for churches: solar panels for St Marks Church - granted
- 0 for mobile phone mast: none - although pre-application consultation for Brickhill Drive near allotment entrance had been received.
- 3 for business premises: ARA Manton Lane - replacement security fencing – granted, BG Bet Brickhill Drive – repositioned TV aerial – granted, Martins Avon Drive – air conditioning unit - granted

Policing

The Beat Manager, PC Dave Hawkey is a regular attendee of Parish Council meetings, reporting on crime in Brickhill. At our public open sessions residents regularly raise issues about community safety, crime and anti-social behaviour in Brickhill. Councillors listen carefully to what residents have to say and then discuss these issues and others with the police.

PC Dave Hawkey and PCSO Roberto Bonforte are in post and are based in St Mark's Church Community Centre. The Police Post is the result of what we call the 'Brickhill Policing Partnership', consisting of the Parish Council, the Police and St Mark's Church & Community Centre.

I am pleased that we have a new Special Constable, Monika Gerula, who is working with Dave Hawkey in Brickhill.

The Parish Council contributed £1,000 towards the costs of putting in a gate at Mowsbury Park car park, Kimbolton Road, to tackle the problem of late-night disturbances to Brickhill residents.

Gathering on the Green

Last year, the Parish Council organised two events on Waveney Green, one at Easter and one in the summer holidays. They were free and aimed at younger members of the community. The purpose of these events was to provide constructive and fun activities for the community in the open space on Waveney Green at the same time as raising awareness of agencies and communities groups which are working in Brickhill. There will be another 'Gathering on the Green' on 4th August 2010 and planning is underway for this already. If anyone wants to help or take part, please contact Delia Shephard.

Litter Picks and Tidy Ups

The Parish Council has continued to hold regular community litter picks and tidy up events with the support of Pride in Bedford at Bedford Borough Council. Many thanks to all those volunteers who have helped to improve the physical of environment of Brickhill during 2009-10.



Some of the rubbish collected by residents on one of our litter picks

Football competition

Thank you to Tim Gannon of Brickhill Baptist Church for organising the football tournament that ran last year on Waveney Green. It is on again now, each Tuesday evening and seems to be very popular. The Parish Council made a financial contribution to this event as it is keen to see more leisure facilities provided for our young people in Brickhill.

Finances

The Parish Council has complied with the national guidance provided to all parish councils by NALC and the Audit Commission. As is usual, the budget and precept for the year 2009-10 were agreed at a meeting of the Parish Council in January of the preceding financial year. The precept raised was £52,000. The parish council accounts for 2009-10 have been submitted to the external auditors for approval and are displayed below.

The Parish Council precept for 2010-2011 is £57,700. Parish Council tax is £17.76 for Band D properties.

Full details of any of the Parish Council's financial transactions are available on request from the Responsible Financial Officer at any time of the year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Fitzpatrick', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Fitzpatrick
Chairman
13 May 2010

Annual Accounts

Brickhill Parish Council Annual Accounts

Receipts and Payments Accounts

2008/2009		2009/2010
£		£
	Receipts	
52,200	Precept	52,000
4,956	Allotment receipts	6,248
495	Newsletter advertising	218
561	Interest	36
2,225	V.A.T. reclaim	1,941
2,400	Grants received	769
55	Other (includes Smartwater)	472
62,892		61,684
	Payments	
23,147	Staff Costs	27,003
12,525	Cost of Democracy	11,793
3,978	Allotments	9,605
888	Street Ranger	-
2,400	Brickhill Policing Partnership	2,400
2,603	Publicity	2,197
882	V.A.T. on payments	1,823
558	Community Grants	5,131
358	Hall Hire	448
47,339		60,400
	Summary	
43,144	Balance brought forward	58,697
62,892	Total receipts	61,684
47,339	Total Payments	60,400
58,697	Balance carried forward	59,981
		These cumulative funds are represented by:
12,071	Current account	5,981
46,626	Deposit account	54,000
58,697		59,981

Brickhill Parish Council
Notes to the accounts year ended 31 March 2010

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 2010 the following assets were held:

Notice boards £1,880

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 2010 was £6.15 per elector but no payments were made using this power during the year.

Advertising and Publicity

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

	£
Recruitment and advertising	0
Other advertising	0
Publicity	2,197
	£2,197

Future Liabilities:

1. Elections - election costs were incurred in June 2009 when there were contested elections for two of the three parish wards, costs are estimated at between £5,000 and £6,000 but are not yet known. A further election will be held in May 2011 at an estimated cost of up to £7,500. Ward by-elections may arise at any time.

2. Staff Gratuity - a sum of £5,465 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 £1000 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.

Membership

North Ward

Cllr Charles Royden (also Borough Councillor for Brickhill)

The Vicarage, Calder Rise, Brickhill

Bedford MK41 7UY

☎01234 309175

✉ vicar@thisischurch.com

Cllr Ray Seymour (Vice-Chairman)

11 Calder Rise, Brickhill

Bedford MK41 7UY

☎01234 305695

✉ rrays@tgis.co.uk

Cllr Andrew Wilkins

33 Douglas Road Bedford MK41 7YF

☎01234 308957

✉ andywilkins.bpc@ntlworld.com

Cllr Patricia Marriott

18 Leven Walk Bedford MK41 7XE

☎07818 052363

✉ patm1958@hotmail.com

East Ward

Cllr Peter Blakeman (Planning Committee Chairman)

15 Dove Road, Brickhill, Bedford MK41 7AA

☎01234 355952

✉ pj.blakeman@btopenworld.com

Cllr Gurmel Chambers

16 Trent Road Bedford MK41 7EF

☎01234 212536

✉ CHAMBERSB2B@aol.com

Cllr Mark Fitzpatrick (Chairman)

20 Nursery Gardens, Brickhill, Bedford MK41 8DU

☎01234 357259

✉ markfitzp@cix.co.uk

Cllr Joanne Laybourn

32 Curlew Crescent, Brickhill, Bedford MK41 7HX

☎01234 268477

✉ joanne.laybourn@hotmail.co.uk

South & West Ward

Cllr Stuart Buchanan

19 Starling Way Bedford MK41 7YF

☎08714 235044

✉ stuart_buchanan1@sky.com

Cllr Stuart Green

39 Larkway, Brickhill, Bedford MK41 7JW

☎01234 354339

✉ _stuart.green5938@ntlworld.com

Cllr Pat Ovenell

12 Nightingale Avenue, Brickhill,

Bedford MK41 7JB

☎01234 341422

Cllr Wendy Rider

23 Orwell Close, Brickhill, Bedford MK41 7BQ

☎01234 303254

✉ wendyrider41@hotmail.com

Cllr Ray Waterhouse

64 Curlew Crescent

Bedford MK41 7HZ

☎01234 355801

✉ raymond.waterhouse@yahoo.co.uk

Table of Member Attendance at Parish Council Meetings 2009-10 (following elections June 2009)

	11.6	2.7	3.9	1.10	5.11	17.11	7.1	5.2	4.3	%
Peter Blakeman	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	89
Stuart Buchanan	✓	✓	✓	A	A	✓	✓	X	✓	67
Gurmel Chambers	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	A	67
Mark Fitzpatrick	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	89
Stuart Green	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	89
Joanne Laybourn	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	A	✓	A	✓	67
Patricia Mariott	✓	X	A	A	✓	A	✓	✓	A	44
Patricia Ovenell	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	89
Wendy Rider	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	A	✓	A	67
Charles Royden	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	A	✓	A	67
Ray Seymour	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	89
Raymond Waterhouse	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	100
Andy Wilkins	✓	A	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	78

Key:

- ✓ Present
- A Apologies submitted and accepted
- X Absent no apologies

Parish Council Contact Details

Clerk to the Council:	Delia Shephard MILCM
Assistant Clerk to the Council:	Alison Southern
Parish Council Office:	St Mark's Church Community Centre, Calder Rise, Bedford MK41 7UY
Telephone:	☎01234 271708
Email:	clerk@brickhillparishcouncil.gov.uk
Website:	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
Weekly "drop-in" session:	Every Tuesday 10 am to 12 noon at St Mark's Church Community Centre Calder Rise, Bedford MK41 7UY
Parish Councillor Surgeries:	Saturday mornings – see notice boards for details Before each Parish Council Meeting 7 pm to 7.30 pm at St Mark's Church Community Centre, Calder Rise, Bedford MK41 7UY