

**The Parish Council of Dickens Heath**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held**  
**On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2010 at 730pm, Dickens Heath School**

**Present:**

**Dickens Heath Parish Councillors;** Vaseem Arfan, Richard Holt (Chairman), Philip Kendall, Charles Robinson and Alyson Thompson.

Kath Hemmings, Matt Gardner and Gary Farmer SMBC  
 Paul Hunt, Architect that had produced plans for DH Village Hall  
 2 members of the public  
 Acting Clerk: Marie Zizzi

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**173. Apologies for Absence.**

173.1 None.

**174. To approve, if thought fit, the reasons if any given for absence from the meeting.**

174.1 Not applicable.

**175. Declarations of Interest.**

175.1 Cllr. Robinson declared an interest in agenda item 8; *to discuss plans for the Village Hall with architect* - as Chairman of the Trustees of the Village Hall, and agenda item 15; *to discuss and resolve matters in relation to Dickens Heath School – Stop the Drop Litter Campaign* – as a Governor of DH Community Primary School.

175.2 Councillor Thompson declared an interest at agenda item 13 (*Discuss and resolve issues in relation to the appointment of a permanent Clerk, including purchasing a separate laptop for DHPC for future clerk*), as she knew and is related to one of the candidates.

**176. Public Participation (15 minutes).**

176.1 Not applicable.

**177. To receive a presentation from Gary Farmer, SMBC Local Nature Reserve Officer.**

177.1 The Chairman welcomed the people from Solihull MBC, Paul Hunt and the members of the public.

177.2 Gary explained about there being a 5 year plan and lists of sites to be designated as Local Nature Reserves. He said that DH Country Park was a designated sight. He issued some plans to look at, illustrating the sight. (*Copy attached to filed set of Minutes*).

177.3 Gary spoke about liaising across the Borough, to ensure that people had access to good quality spaces near where they lived, he referred to SMBC already having Blythe.

177.4 Gary informed the group about the sight survey for DH Country Park and this revealing an interesting list of species etc. He referred to the plan and pointed out that the majority of the area was semi improved grass land, there were some flowers, he explained that the more unimproved the better the grassland and the chance of enhancing this. He referred to the wet land and the wood land that had already been designated as a site of importance. He said they were trying to get this as a Natural England site now.

177.5 Gary spoke about trying to encourage more wild life; birds and owls. He said 2 barn owl boxes had been donated by local charities and these were to be installed, stating barn owl boxes had been successful at other locations. He said they were also trying to improve the habitat for other local birds and in turn butterflies and bugs would benefit too.

177.6 Gary spoke about the wet area being invaded by scrubs and this needing to be managed. He referred to the possible creation of a wood pasture and planting some Oak trees, if there was any funding for this. He said they wanted to promote the site and referred to any interested groups wanting to get involved.

177.7 The Chairman said that the Parish Council would be interested and there was a possibility of some funding. He asked whether the ownership had been transferred to Solihull MBC.

177.8 Gary said that it had, except for one small area.

177.9 The Chairman referred to another Nature Park in DH. Gary said it was privately managed as a nature reserve. The location for this was discussed and there were comments about there being 2 separately owned nature reserves. It was stated that Solihull MBC had no plans to take over the other reserve. There were further comments about the plans including the entrance, ponds and the location for the play area. Ownership of part of the land was discussed and the possibility of housing, it was stated that this should be looked into.

177.10 There were comments about maintaining and enhancing the area. Gary explained about hay cutting and trying to maintain wild flowers, looking to develop the area and finding a balance between people and nature. He said they wanted to welcome people to the reserve, but to manage this so as not to disturb what existed. He referred to paths and routed locations. He said Brueton Park was very busy and proved this could be done. There were some comments about Solihull MBC being responsible for the area and a bridge in the park, Gary said this matter was being looked into. There were comments about infrastructure for picnic areas.

177.11 Cllr. Arfan stated that as a Parish Council they would certainly consider some funding and he thanked Gary for what had been undertaken.

177.12 Gary said in relation to planting shrubs, maybe it would be possible to get some local people to do this and the Parish Council could fund this.

177.13 The Chairman thanked Gary for attending.

**178. To receive a report and update from Matt Gardner.**

178.1 Matt said the campaign in relation to the grass verges had started and from 250 letters sent out there had been 12 replies. He said he had met with 6 people so far and talked about what could be done to resolve this issue.

178.2 Matt spoke about Tythe Barn Lane and having additional trip rail and trees. He said they had to consider what was affordable and possible, he said he was not keen on trip rail or bollards, low wooden trip rail and trees would be better.

178.3 Matt spoke about the tree line on the grass verges and said an order had been placed for Tythe Barn Lane and Rumbush Road. He referred to Dickens Heath Road having a couple of trees planted and trying to remove stones and rocks to tidy the area up. He said they were not planning to redo the grass verges at present.

178.4 It was stated that there was some other tree work to be undertaken in the area and in relation to new trees, it was important to get the right sort of trees, slow growing ones, so there was no root damage.

178.5 Cllr. Arfan queried whether trees would be effective and whether people would still park there regardless.

178.6 Matt said this was a concern, they would have to see what happened and deal with it as and when. He said the letter about this had only recently been issued and residents could start talking and getting ideas and they would be able to see where to go on this issue.

178.7 The Chairman said that parking was an issue and referred to an idea for an audit to establish who had parking; he referred to space sharing for the flats.

178.8 Cllr. Robinson commented about people paying for extra parking space. Cllr. Kendall referred to an area where there was parking space.

178.9 Cllr. Arfan said it was anti social but that he understood and was sympathetic to a degree.

178.10 There was a discussion and further comments about this matter.

178.11 Matt referred to the previous meeting when there had been comments about the parking when football matches were taking place. He said he had left a message for the secretary of the football club and was awaiting a reply, to arrange a site visit and that he hoped this could be resolved.

178.12 Matt referred to the planting of flowers on the traffic islands. He said he understood some Parish Councillors were meeting with SMBCs landscape architect, to look at some ideas on 12<sup>th</sup> April at 5pm.

178.13 Matt referred to Old Dickens Heath Road and Rumbush road, a barrier, a dirt area and cycling route, he said it would be tidied up and made accessible until the barriers went.

178.14 Matt said Solihull MBC wanted to promote Environmental Champions in the area and that Trish Willets would like to do a presentation. It was suggested that she be invited to the Annual Parish Meeting, when there maybe more residents in attendance.

178.15 Kath said they were in the process of producing Ward Action Plans. A first draft had been circulated and there would be a second draft, with opportunities to comment. She referred to any priorities or projects that the Parish Council thought SMBC should support and promote, she asked the Councillors to please let her know, to enable them to take on ideas and develop successful partnerships. Kath said they wanted to keep the area clean, green and safe. Kath informed the group that various monthly meetings were held with Youth Services, the Police, Environmental Champions; Park Rangers etc. She asked the Councillors to let her know about any issues, so they could be fed into these meetings.

178.16 Kath said the Ward Action Plan would go to the Cabinet in June (due to elections), therefore it was written at the beginning of March, with the second draft at the beginning of April, which then needed to be finalised.

178.17 Councillor Kendall asked if there were any developments with Highways and yellow lines. Matt said they were awaiting adoption of the roads and that paroloes would increase.

178.18 The Chairman thanked the people from Solihull MBC for attending and said they were welcome to stay or leave as they wanted.

**179. To receive a report from the Borough Councillors – if present.**

179.1 None present.

**180. To discuss plans for the Village Hall with architect.**

180.1 Paul issued a copy of a plan (*copy attached to filed set of Minutes*); he explained that in relation to the Village Hall various options had been considered. He referred to the idea of installing another floor being dismissed. He said something at a higher level could be done to create a meeting room with a lift to go upstairs and he referred to another area of space.

180.2 Paul said he was unsure what uses the hall would be put to.

180.3 The Chairman referred to the Parish Council wanting to have a presence with an office for the Clerk, for members of the public and a Community room. He said he anticipated it being a social meeting point perhaps for elderly residents, a large room that did not interfere with the main Village Hall area.

180.4 There were comments about heavy beams or posts being required to hold up another level/floor. The plans were looked at. It was stated that pillars would get in the way.

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180.5 There were comments about there being another door and about the heating system being operational now, making it less easy to clear that area.

180.6 Potential costs of £40-50,000 were mentioned and £15-16,000 for a platform lift, £8-9,000 for stairs. There were comments about having partitions, lighting, the structure and the necessity for disabled access due to regulations. It was stated that a passenger lift would be more expensive.

It was queried whether this was a realistic proposition. It was felt that it was, but it was expensive. The Chairman asked how many people Paul thought the extra room could hold, Paul said about 30. It was stated that this was food for thought.

180.7 Paul said the work had not yet been costed. The Chairman wondered about timescales and planning permission. Paul said planning permission was not required. The Chairman said the members needed to discuss and decide if they wanted to proceed. It was stated that the Parish Council had no control if it did not take over the Village Hall.

180.8 **Resolved;** Proposed Councillor Thompson, seconded Council Arfan, all in favour that Paul Hunt proceed with budget costing the project.

180.9 The Chairman asked Paul to inspire them with the layout, he said there was a lot of space and he added that it would be nice for the Parish Council to have its own front door. He referred to the infrastructure and moving things around.

Note: at 820pm people from SMBC and Paul Hunt left the meeting.

### **181. To resolve to accept the Minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2010.**

181.1 **Resolved;** proposed Councillor Robinson, seconded Cllr. Kendall that these Minutes are accepted as a true and accurate record. One spelling error was pointed out and manually amended.

### **182. To receive a report on the finances of the Council. To resolve matters in relation to former HHPC funds. To approve any payments to be made, including petty cash and authorise Acting Clerks February payment/timesheets.**

182.1 **Resolved;** proposed by Cllr. Arfan, seconded by Cllr. Robinson, that the following payments be made and Acting Clerks February payment authorised.

#### **Dickens Heath Parish Council account**

<b>Payee</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Amount</b>
DH Man Co.	village litter picks w/c 18 Jan and 1 Feb	£ 423.00 (inc. VAT)
SMBC	Members Allowances Nov-Dec	£2001.88
SMBC	Clerk costs Sep – Dec 09	£2974.11
	<b>(£1487.05 to be invoiced to CGPC)</b>	
SMBC	DH Youth Workers – <i>Former HHPC funds to be transferred for this</i>	£2744.60 (inc. VAT)
Marie Zizzi	Petty Cash (cash in hand at 9/3 £15.71)	£ 84.29

#### **Former Hockley Heath Parish Council account prior to transferring funds**

SMBC	Clerk costs 26/6/09 – 4/9/09	£2466.64
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182.2 The payment for the Youth Workers was queried, it was explained that this was to be made from the former HHPC funds and it was to November 2009.

**Action Item: Clerk to check with DH Directory as Youth Club still being promoted.**

182.3 **Resolved;** proposed Cllr. Thompson, seconded Councillor Kendall that letter to HSBC to arrange transfer of former HHPC funds, to enable DHPC to pay SMBC for DH Youth Workers to Nov 09, be signed and this action authorised.

### **183. To consider planning applications.**

183.1 There were no comments or observations regarding any planning applications up to and including week ending Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2010.

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**184. To receive any report(s) from Councillors that have attended any outside groups (i.e. SAC/Police Forum etc).**

184.1 None.

**185. Discuss and resolve issues in relation to the appointment of a permanent Clerk including purchasing a separate laptop for DHPC for the future Clerk.**

185.1 Councillor Thompson declared an interest, as she knew and is related to one of the candidates.

185.2 It was stated that the interviews would be held next week; a couple of applicants had withdrawn. It was noted that there had been a good response for the position. It was stated that the Chairman, Cllr. Arfan and Cllr. Kendall would report back to the other members in due course, with their recommendation.

185.3 It was noted that the Parish Council would need to obtain a laptop for the Clerk.

**186. Discuss and resolve matters in relation to DH Notice board.**

186.1 Councillor Kendall said that he had the necessary written authority from Dickens Heath Management Company.

186.2 There were comments about contacting Julia Sykes at SMBC regarding planning permission. It was stated there maybe a cost of £90. It was pointed out that it had previously been stated that planning permission was not necessary; however this needed to be approved by the Highways department.

**Action Item: Clerk asked to forward documents to Mike Swallow for him to progress with SMBC Highways department as necessary.**

186.3 There were comments about DHPC logo. The Chairman said there was no negotiation on the cost for a Coat of Arms. This was further discussed and it was agreed that the logo would be in place for many years to come.

186.4 **Resolved**, proposed Councillor Arfan, seconded Councillor Kendall that DHPC obtain a Coat of Arms.

**Action Item: Chairman to arrange.**

**187. Discuss and resolve matters in relation Dickens Heath School - Stop the Drop Litter Campaign.**

187.1 Councillor Arfan stated that the school was keen to work with the Parish Council regarding litter. He said there could be a 'Stop the Drop' anti litter campaign, for the whole school to get involved with, similar to something Bickenhill Parish Council had undertaken.

187.2 Councillor Arfan said he had spoken with one of the teachers that was very enthusiastic and very serious about this idea.

187.3 Councillor Arfan asked the members to agree on some prizes. He suggested a maximum of £200, with the Chairman presenting the prizes to the winners.

187.4 Councillor Arfan said the intention was to engage the students to design a poster and that the winning entry could be made into placards to be placed around DH. He said they wanted the children to take a pride in the area and display the winning entry, possibly by main DH Road and play area to highlight the issue.

187.5 Councillor Kendall pointed out that not everyone was keen to see notices attached to lamp posts. Councillor Arfan said it could be agreed how long they stayed there for, it had to be undertaken responsibly. He referred to covering this in the newsletter. He said he was only looking to have 10-15 produced.

**Action Item: DHPC to confirm whether permission is required to erect notices/placards.**

187.6 **Resolved**; proposed Councillor Thompson, seconded Councillor Kendall, that the 'Stop the Drop Campaign' be progressed as stated.

**188. To discuss and resolve idea regarding premises in DH at Waterside.**

188.1 The Chairman said he had seen some premises and made some enquires. He said it was a liquidation sale and therefore it was a question of making an offer, as it was a blind auction.

188.2 The Chairman said if DHPC was interested, some enquires needed to be made and professional advice taken. He asked if everyone thought it was suitable/relevant for the PC purposes. He referred to the idea in relation to the Village Hall and whether this could be an alternative or something additional.

188.3 Councillor Kendall thought it was worth pursuing as the units could be reasonable.

188.4 Councillor Thompson thought it was a better idea than the Village Hall, she thought it was better to keep the Village Hall and the PC separate. She said it was a nice location for a presence and base for the Clerk.

188.5 It was stated that the PC could still take over the VH admin and not spoil the Village Hall as it was.

188.6 Councillor Robinson said it was possible to partition the VH into 1, 2 or 3 separate areas.

188.7 The Chairman said if the PC obtained a unit, the Clerk could always walk up to the VH, if necessary.

188.8 The Chairman referred to exploring the value and taking advice about negotiation, he referred to Graham Derby dealing with commercial property.

188.9 **Resolved**, all in favour, due to possible short timescales, as it was anticipated there could be a lot of interest in this unit, that the Chairman instruct Graham Derby to act on behalf of DHPC with a view to making an offer and on the process, as any offer would be subject to contract, to enable DHPC to get to successful bid stage based on professional advice, (in case bids needed to be in by next week). Chairman to go ahead without committing the PC.

188.10 The Chairman pointed out that due to the nature of this, there would be commercially sensitive information and this needed to be kept confidential.

188.11 It was stated that the PC may need to look into obtaining a mortgage or other means of funding. It was noted that £15,000 and £5000 had been included in the 2010/11 budget for the VH in relation to initial development costs and capital/load repayments.

**189. To resolve date, time and venue for Annual Parish Meeting (to be held between 1 March and 1 June annually and called by Parish Council).**

189.1 It was agreed that DHPC would call this meeting on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2010 at 7pm in the Village Hall.

**Action Items:**

**1) Councillor Robinson to check hall is available and book.**

**2) Clerk to invite Trish Willets SMBC to give a presentation re: Environmental Champions.**

**190. To discuss and resolve any action(s) in relation items of correspondence.**

190.1 Articles in the Solihull News regarding DHPC precept were discussed.

**Action Item: Chairman to draft letter to be sent to Solihull News.**

**191. Review issues with on going Activity Plan updated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010.**

**Action Item: To obtain 2 quotes for Internal Auditor costs from Helen Daniels and Whalley and Co.**

It was agreed that the Clerk should purchase one set of Standing Orders @ £25.

It was requested that the Clerk obtain a final bill from the solicitors in relation to TG Village Hall (this cost to be apportioned between all 4 new parish councils).

**192. Items for next agenda.**

192.1 None.

**Meeting ended 945pm**

**Next Meeting: Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2010: 730pm Dickens Heath School**

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Signature.....

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