

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Wednesday 26th May 2010 at 7pm, Dickens Heath Village Hall

Present:

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

Borough Councillors: Martin McCarthy

Matt Gardener : Neighbourhood Co-Ordinator SMBC

PC Jones : Neighbourhood Police Officer

29 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Report from the Parish Chairman – Richard Holt

The Chairman welcomed everybody and gave an overview of the new parish council, giving examples of what they wanted to achieve – including providing hanging baskets, encouraging volunteer gardeners, meeting the needs of older residents and generally trying to increase community spirit in Dickens Heath.

3. Matters of Particular Local Importance

Proposed Youth Facility

A resident, who lives in Aldershaws opposite the conservation area, mentioned the rumoured youth facility and asked for more information. Matt Gardener, neighbourhood co-ordinator, said that Borough Councillors and senior SMBC officers were meeting and then there would be consultation with local residents. He said there were no concrete plans and any queries should go to the relevant officer at SMBC – Christopher Barr.

A show of hands indicated that 26 people had an interest in this matter.

The Chairman asked what should be provided for older children.

Points made were that there is support for youth facilities, but this location is not appropriate, it needs to be somewhere central, that is visible and can be patrolled. The village green was suggested.

It was stated that availability of land is a problem for this type of facility. There used to be a youth club, but it was not viable, which was disappointing.

PC Jones said that the PCSO used to patrol the area, but not any more. Another PCSO to be visible in the area was suggested. The police opinion is that it is essential there is somewhere for young people to 'hang about', teenagers want a space of their own. It was felt the space needed to be larger than the village green eg. to play football.

A resident asked whether the youth had been asked what they want. Matt Gardener stated that a consultation had been done in October via a community bus on a Saturday. He said the team would come to consult again. A door knock was suggested.

Fusion still run football sessions on the village green on a Monday night. Do the youth want sports clubs? It is important to start the dialogue to find out what facilities the youth actually want.

Residents made comments about the behaviour of some young people: They hang about and drink in the wetlands, they skateboard and cause damage. The police are aware of a couple of incidents, but the feeling was that the police don't deal with this bad behaviour and it will only get worse if there is a youth facility where teenagers gather. There was concern about drugs if a facility is at the edge of the village.

Councillor McCarthy stated that he believes the site is too small and too close to the nature reserve. The site visit is planned for June 9th 2010, and he said that he and Councillor Burgess both feel the site is too small and the access is too limited for a police car or fire engine, and that they should look for a larger and more central site.

A number of residents of Aldershaws and Griffin Lane expressed concern that there had been no consultation.

A show of hands indicated that 29 people felt this was unacceptable. It was stated that the Parish Council representative at the Dickens Heath Working Party had expressed concerns over this matter, but has no vote.

The Chairman asked if anyone knows what is done for the youth in other areas, and asked for the residents to give feedback on:

- Youth groups
- A PCSO
- A facility on the village green
- A location with games consoles etc. – although this is unlikely to be supported by the DH management co. or residents local to it.

The possibility of petitioning the Borough Council was raised and Councillor McCarthy said he could organise it. He agreed to send a copy of the plan to the clerk.

State of Dickens Heath Roads

A resident stated that he was appalled at the state of the roads. Some of the roads have been adopted, but others haven't. Matt Gardener stated that Dick Woodward is the engineer at SMBC who can answer these queries. It was agreed that resident's queries regarding the roads could be raised via the parish council.

Landscaping

It was asked when this would be completed. Matt Gardener said that this was ongoing along with the art project. He will progress this regarding the roundabouts.

Restricted Vision on the Roads

It was stated that, at the traffic island with the hoarding, opposite Custom House, vision is very restricted. Matt Gardener agreed to have a word with Parkridge about this.

Parking

It was stated that at Griffin Lane, the island with the obelisk, cars park on the double yellow lines which is very dangerous. Matt Gardener agreed to contact the parking ticket officers to have a look.

Other

It was also stated that although there are restrictions on what residents can do, these are being flouted. These concerns would need to be expressed to Solihull MBC.

4. Minutes of the Previous Year’s Meeting held on 1st July 2009.

These were accepted as a true and accurate record, proposed by Councillor Kendall and seconded by Councillor Thompson.

5. The Chairman closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and saying that the Parish Council would take on board residents’ concerns and try to look positively at what could be done, but would need residents’ suggestions and feedback.

Meeting ended 8pm