

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday April 21st 2015 at 7.00pm in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

Present:

Dickens Heath Parish Councillors; Philip Brandum (Chairman), Robert Cudmore, Alyson Glenn, Richard Holt (from 8.20pm).

Solihull MBC; Councillor Linda Brown.

Birmingham University postgraduate student: Upuli Perera

19 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 187 (2014/15) Apologies for Absence and Acceptance of Reasons

Apologies were accepted from Councillor O’Nyons.

Minute 188 (2014/15) Public Participation

Survey on Housing in Dickens Heath

The Chairman welcomed Upuli Perera to the meeting, she introduced herself and explained the research she is doing as part of her PhD, she asked residents whether they would be prepared to help by filling in her questionnaires.

Highway Issues/Parking

A resident raised concern about a footpath at the Bellway Homes development at Cleobury Lane. The footpath terminates at the Hirdemonsway junction, this needs to be extended. The Chairman agreed to meet to discuss this issue.

Village Maintenance/Litter

The Brockhurst Lane footpath low level shrubs have not yet been planted – the Clerk to confirm when this will take place.

The green mould on the block paving at the clock island has still not been sprayed – the Clerk to follow this up with Solihull MBC.

Other Issues

A resident asked whether there were plans for a sports hall in the school grounds, that the governors had in the past applied for a MUGA with floodlights and this caused a lot of controversy with residents. The Chairman replied that it was not a sports hall that was planned. SMBC and the Parish Council have been looking for a suitable site for a youth facility for a long time – SMBC has the funds, but there has been no site available. A MUGA included in the Cleobury Lane development plans had seemed to be the only option and so the Parish Council had supported it. However it did not have SMBC’s support due to a lack of any supervision. Alongside this, plans started to be developed by SMBC for a supervised multi purpose area at the school. There has not been any consultation on this, but the plans were not advanced enough to enable a consultation until very recently. An outline plan will be going to the planning authority in the next few weeks, and then there will be a full planning consultation and Parish Council consultation too. SMBC will be taking residents’ views into consideration. Some drawings and diagrams relating to the facility at the school were then shown to those present. There have been concerns that SMBC may not retain these funds indefinitely for Dickens Heath, however the Chairman stated that there has been no indication that SMBC will spend the funds elsewhere. A resident asked whether the community would be able to use a facility at the school, but that is not known at this stage. It will primarily be a facility for young people, and the school will be able to use it.

Garden Squares II site

There is still no news from SMBC on this.

Minute 189 (2014/15) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None.

Minute 190 (2014/15) Gardening/Landscaping Issues

The Parish Council is planning to replant the 2 islands either side of the clock island – with part gravel and part planting. Quotes will be sought, and there may also be potential sponsorship. The planters are all currently empty and awaiting planting. The Parish Council are prepared to move 2 back to the clock island if the cycle friendly works currently being carried out there are not a sufficient barrier to cars.

Minute 191 (2014/15) To Receive a Report from the Borough Councillors

Councillor Brown has contacted the Canals Trust about the state of the towpath at Tythe Barn Lane – but they do not have any funds for this at the moment. A resident has suggested a one way route around Cleobury Lane/Braggs Farm Lane to deal with the traffic from the new developments – but SMBC have said no. Councillor Brown is also using the Dickens Heath Directory to update residents and to explain some of the ways in which the Borough Council works.

Councillor Holt has attended meetings regarding deprivation in South Solihull, and making the most of HS2.

Minute 192 (2014/15) Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday March 17th 2015

Proposed by Councillor Glenn, seconded by Councillor Cudmore, it was **Resolved** that the minutes be approved as a true and accurate record.

Minute 193 (2014/15) Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday March 17th 2015

Proposed by Councillor Glenn, seconded by Councillor Cudmore, it was **Resolved** that the minutes be approved in principle as a true and accurate record.

Minute 194 (2014/15) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meetingMissing Sign at Cleobury Lane/Rumbush Lane junction

The SMBC Neighbourhood Co-ordinator had advised this morning that he was still chasing this up, but a resident confirmed that the sign had been replaced the previous day.

Green Mould at Squareabouts

Problem locations to be reported to the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator.

Footpaths Unsuitable for Wheelchairs

The Chairman has followed this up with a resident – there is a surface of compacted sand on some footpaths, which is no good for wheelchair users. Many of the dropped kerbs are not adequate either. This needs to be followed up after the election.

Cigarette Litter from Apartments at Clock Island

Councillor Cudmore has followed this up with the managing co. of the apartments, and they will send letters out to residents of the apartments. There is a problem with cigarette butts in the gutter too.

Village Playground

This will be a matter for the new Parish Council to agree on following the election.

Nature Reserve

The Nature Reserve has been dredged and is now looking awful, this to be followed up with DH Management Co.

Minute 195 (2014/15) Planning Applications

Planning application 2015/50443 - 1 Parkridge House, Main St - The conversion of offices to a further 4 apartments will impact on the already pressured car parking in the village centre. The Parish Council agreed that an objection should be sent in based on the grounds of car parking, as this will exacerbate the village car parking problem.

No comment on additional planning application 2015/50588 - Whitlocks End Farm, Bill's Lane - erection of new agricultural building (part retrospective).

The Parish Council has also been copied into a complaint from a neighbour of Birchy Farm, 57 Birchy Leasowes Lane. It was clarified that this is an on-going dispute between neighbours.

Minute 196 (2014/15) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Cudmore, seconded by Councillor Glenn, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the April 21st 2015 Agenda be approved - 1 direct debit and 1 cheque totalling £347.85 to be included in the 2014/15 end of year, and 3 direct debits and 14 cheques totalling £9,451.97 for April 2015 which includes an additional direct debit of £788.00 for Npower gas. The Parish Council would like a progress report from the Cricket Club before their grant for 2015/16 is forwarded, and also asked that the annual breakdown of the Parish Rooms service charge be circulated to Councillors.

Proposed by Councillor Cudmore, seconded by Councillor Holt, **Resolved** that the 2014/15 End of Year Financial Statements be approved, and these were signed by the Chairman and the Clerk /RFO. The surplus to be carried forward into 2015/16 is a healthy balance of £78,556. The 5 year plan needs to be completed so that the new Parish Council can target future expenditure.

The electricity contract for the Parish Rooms is coming to an end, and 3 quotes were considered. It was agreed that the contract should be moved to British Gas who are offering the best value based on current usage.

Minute 197 (2014/15) Reports from Councillors who have attended outside groups or events

None.

Minute 198 (2014/15) Tidbury Green Lowbrook Farm Enquiry

The Parish Council agreed that they support Tidbury Green Parish Council in their objection, SMBC are not objecting to the appeal. It is a very complex hearing and statements have been made regarding the unsustainability of the site. Resident Jean Walters gave an update on the very complex legal issues regarding the land. It is classified as 'white land' which has no designation, and there is no definition of white land in the National Planning Policy Framework. The Enquiry has been recalled by the Secretary of State, and the decision will be made after the Election.

Minute 199 (2014/15) Village Survey

Quite a few responses have been received, and the results will be considered by the new Parish Council.

Minute 200 (2014/15) Parish Rooms Fire Risk Assessment

It was agreed that PAT testing should be undertaken, to include the youth club electrical items. A date for the fire drill with the youth club is still to be agreed.

Minute 201 (2014/15) SMBC Schedule of Works to be done in Dickens Heath

Members of the Parish Council are due to meet with Paul Tovey of SMBC soon for an update on various issues.

Minute 202 (2014/15) Library Request for a Donation towards Summer Reading Challenge

The Parish Council agreed that they are in support of this. A figure of £100 was suggested, but the Parish Council would be prepared to donate more depending on the Library's plans. It was agreed that the Chairman should meet with the library staff to discuss this.

Minute 203 (2014/15) Maintenance Agreement with SMBC for 3 Traffic Islands

The agreement was signed, this gives the Parish Council permission to plant out and maintain the islands.

Minute 204 (2014/15) The Parish Rooms

A request had been received about holding a party for someone who is leaving Dickens Heath, but the event was held elsewhere in the end. The Parish Council agreed that the general rule of thumb for the use of the Parish Rooms should be that there is some form of public benefit. The Parish Council approved the booking by the Dickens Heath Allotments Association.

Minute 205 (2014/15) Ongoing References

Village Memorial

Malcolm Sier's designs for the memorial have been received today, and the Chairman invited those members of the public remaining to have a look at them. The designs are modern, quite unique and include the words provided by Ryan Carter of Alderbrook School. All agreed that the designs fit the brief that they had hoped for, but that perhaps the words could be amended slightly so that they are easier to read. The Parish Council agreed that Malcolm Sier should be commissioned to produce the memorial, subject to a slight clarification of the words.

Minute 206 (2014/15) Correspondence

There is a SAC meeting taking place on Thursday April 23rd 2015.

Minute 207 (2014/15) Items for next agenda

None.

Minute 208 (2014/15) It was Resolved that, in accordance with paras I and II Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public should be asked to withdraw due to the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

Minute 209 (2014/15) Additional Hours Worked by Clerk and Admin Assistant

The Clerk was asked to withdraw, and the Parish Council then discussed additional hours worked by the Clerk (in putting together modules for the CiLCA qualification) and the Admin Assistant.

Meeting ended 8.55 pm

Next Meeting : Thursday May 21st 2015: 7.00pm The Parish Rooms