

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday August 27th 2015 in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

Present:

Dickens Heath Parish Councillors; Trevor Eames, Stephen Gussin (Chairman), Maureen Holloway, Di Potter, Doreen Wright.

5 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 88 (2015/16) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were accepted from Councillors Phil Brandum and Bob Cudmore.

Minute 89 (2015/16) Public Participation

Village Maintenance/Litter

Maintenance of Traffic Islands

The island on Old Dickens Heath Rd has been sprayed with weed killer, but the shrubs have still not been cut back and residents have to walk in the road to get round them. The Clerk to follow this up again with Neighbourhood Co-ordinator Matt Gardner.

Future Developments

Builders' Start Times in the Morning

A resident asked at what time building sites are allowed to start work, as noise from the sites on Rumbush Lane and Dickens Heath Rd seems to start as early as 7.30am. As far as the Parish Council are aware, work is allowed between 8am and 6pm, not on Bank Holidays, unless there are special circumstances which might necessitate working outside of these hours – eg. If a road needs to be closed.

Other Issues

Antisocial Behaviour

A resident reported that large groups of teenagers are cycling around Waterside in an intimidating manner, and feels that security should be more visible. Councillor Maureen Holloway has spoken to PC Dost, and the Police are aware of this issue, but they need members of the public to call 101 and report such instances of antisocial behaviour. If the behaviour is intimidating, then the Police will disperse such groups. The Police have responded well regarding the intimidating motorcyclists. The DHMC security are not there to intervene, but they will liaise with the Police. It was suggested that residents should keep a daily record and inform the Police. The Police are also encouraging the public to inform Crimestoppers.

Minute 90 (2015/16) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None.

Minute 91 (2015/16) Gardening/Landscaping Issues

Several businesses may be interested in sponsoring a traffic island, it was agreed that a notice should be publicized to see if there is any further interest.

Minute 92 (2015/16) Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday July 21st 2015

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

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Signature.....

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Minute 93 (2015/16) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meetingConstruction Route Signs

Bellway have put some signs up, but they are too low and are falling off. It was agreed that Bellway be requested to put up some more signs.

Alternative Christmas Decorations

Solihull MBC will not allow a lit up Christmas tree on the clock island because it will be a distraction for motorists and there is also no power supply there. The Parish Council suggested the possibility of a Christmas tree by the planters at the clock island, with power accessed from a lamp post, or solar powered lights around the railings around the clock. The Clerk to contact SMBC.

Bellway – Road Names

Bellway have asked the Parish Council to make some suggestions for proposed road names at the site. The Parish Councillors to think about some suggestions or themes.

Minute 94 (2015/16) Planning Applications

No comments.

Minute 95 (2015/16) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Wright, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the August 27th 2015 Agenda be approved – 19 cheques and 2 direct debits totalling £5,594.05. This included an additional cheque for £702.14 to GBR Phoenix Beard for the service charge.

It was agreed that the Parish Council should seek recognition as an employer (Resolution Body Status) within the Local Government Pension Scheme and to designate the Clerk as a member of the LGPS as an employee of DHPC.

Minute 96 (2015/16) Reports from Councillors who attended any outside events

Councillors Trevor Eames and Doreen Wright attended the meeting at SMBC about the Combined Authority for the West Midlands. Solihull Council leader Bob Sleigh promoted the event which looked at why there should be a combined authority, along with its benefits and how it would be financed, and in which issues it would be involved. Further devolution to the West Midlands is its aim. Government funding to local authorities is going down, while the cost of services is going up. The Combined Authority's plan for securing additional funding is to grow the West Midlands economy and to be able to retain business rates that are currently handed over to Central Government. They do not want an elected mayor, nor do they want a Greater Birmingham Authority, it has to be a West Midlands Authority.

Minute 97 (2015/16) Richborough Estates/ Other Development Proposals

There is still no concrete proposal regarding Richborough Estates.

Councillor Eames said that a review of the Solihull Local Plan will be starting soon – the housing shortfall will have to be calculated using an agreed formula, and it will have to take a share of the Birmingham shortfall – but we don't yet know what that figure is. Solihull MBC will need to identify sites to meet the housing requirement up to 2031. It will need to find land for a lot of properties, and will need to reassess sites that it previously rejected. Developers want to build in Blythe, and in Richborough's case it could be as many as 1,000 homes. This will have to be fought using reasons other than it being Green Belt, and the possibility of flooding will be a major consideration. Developers will need to be able to divert water into the canals, but the Canals and Rivers Trust may not be supportive. Therefore the planning sub-committee will be seeking some information from the Canals and Rivers Trust. Another argument is that the Solihull Local Plan does state that playing fields should not be built on. It was agreed that the planning sub-committee should do some research and bring their proposals to a future Parish Council meeting.

Minute 98 (2015/16) Maintenance of the Playground Equipment

The Parish Council has not had a reply yet from the Receivers for their offer for the Village Green and Playground. Dickens Heath Management Co. have no budget for the replacement of the playground equipment and have requested a contribution towards this from the Parish Council. The Parish Council acknowledge that the Playground equipment is old and does need replacing, however they did not feel that they should make any contribution in advance of a response from the Receivers.

Minute 99 (2015/16) Parish RoomsElectricity Contract

The transfer of the electricity contract from Npower to British Gas has not gone to plan. Although we gave Npower sufficient notice, and British Gas applied to take our supply – because they applied to take our contract 2 days before the end date, Npower rejected it. We have now been billed by both companies for the same period, with Npower's charge being at emergency out of contract rates. The Parish Council agreed that British Gas be asked to proceed again to take the contract, that Npower's invoice should not be paid while British Gas investigate what has happened, and a complaint be made to Ofgem.

Gas Contract

The annual gas contract expires at the end of September. Four quotes have been received, the lowest one being from Extra Energy, and British Gas agreeing to match Extra Energy's quote. It was agreed that the contract should be moved to British Gas.

Minute 100 (2015/16) Parking at Whitlocks End Train Station

There has been a very positive response from Centro with regard to the extension to the car park, and they are making progress towards putting a planning application forward.

Minute 101 (2015/16) CorrespondenceSolihull Connected event in the Parish Rooms on September 3rd 2015

Councillors Trevor Eames, Maureen Holloway, Di Potter and Doreen Wright are able to attend this.

SMBC Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Parish Councillors will look at this in more detail, particularly with regard to improving routes from the village to the train station.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Planning sub-committee would like to undertake a feasibility study into producing a Neighbourhood Plan. Since the Planning Inspector has stated that Dickens Heath facilities will service Tidbury Green - this needs to be discussed with Tidbury Green and Cheswick Green Parish Councils, taking into account all the developments in the area, so that policies are all married up. This was agreed.

Litter

It was reiterated that cigarette ends are litter. It was agreed that this fact should be publicized as cigarette ends are still being thrown out of windows.

Minute 102 (2015/16) Items for next agenda

Dickens Heath Management Co. lease.

Meeting ended 8.45pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday September 15th 2015: 7.00pm The Parish Rooms

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Date.....