

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council held on Friday February 10th 2017 in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

Present:

Dickens Heath Parish Councillors; Trevor Eames, Maureen Holloway (Chair), David Jones, Jill Lovett, Diane Potter, Alan Scholes, Doreen Wright.

In attendance: Jean Walters and 6 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 145 (2016/17) Apologies for Absence

None.

Minute 146 (2016/17) Declarations of Interest

Councillor Trevor Eames has an interest in relation to item 3) on the agenda and therefore did not take part in the discussion on the Solihull Local Plan Consultation (SLP).

Councillor Doreen Wright lives in Birchy Close which runs alongside Site A in the SLP, it was agreed that she could participate in the discussion.

Minute 147 (2016/17) Solihull Local Plan Consultation

This is the first stage of the consultation. A Residents' Survey was conducted in January by the PC, and is now being independently analysed. The Parish Council are awaiting the results of this before finalising their response to the Consultation – the results are expected by the end of Monday.

Jean Walters, a local resident and retired Chartered Town Planner, has produced a draft response for the Parish Council to consider. Although the independently analysed results of the survey are not yet available, Adam Weber (a resident who put the survey together) has been able to provide some statistics generated by Survey Monkey – and Jean has used these. Jean has also looked at the broader Solihull wide picture, and where Solihull might put houses if they weren't to take the easy route and put large estates of housing in the Green Belt – which is the case in this Plan.

- Sites such as these, which include a large number of dwellings, lean towards the big 5 builders whereas smaller sites give variety, are more sustainable, and support small/medium sized builders.
- Jean added that the Green Belt is graded, it is quite a high grade in this area – which SMBC don't appear to have considered. Site A is grade 7/8 and Site B is lower.
- Jean feels that the Parish Council can ask for 1 site to be removed from the Plan, but not both, and Site B has less impact on the community and Green Belt. Site A would mean a lot of extra traffic coming through the village.
- On Site B there is a public amenity area. Jean feels that it is important to keep this 'green lung', it has an established use as a public amenity, and SMBC will need to provide green open space within any development.
- Jean added that the development of Site A would turn the village into a town. In terms of sustainability, dwellings should be within 800m of facilities, and this wouldn't be the case.
- The development of Site A will mean the loss of the sports fields, but the addition of new sporting facilities. Jean commented that the new facilities will be urban in appearance, and many users of the sports field object to their loss.
- The development of Site A will mean coalescence with Majors Green.

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Friday 10th February 2017

Signature.....

Date.....

Jean is recommending that the Parish Council object to the inclusion of Site A in the Plan, but agree to Site B if the green area is retained.

Comments from Councillors were that – on the one hand the infrastructure can't cope with all these new houses, but on the other - the businesses are struggling. Also that the report very much focusses on Site A and needs to include more reference to Site B.

A resident asked whether the Parish Council had consulted with the Sports Clubs. The Parish Council sent out 5,000 flyers and ran an on-line survey so that all members of the community should have been made aware.

Jean added that Tidbury Green Parish Council will also object to Site A.

The Chair thanked Jean Walters and Adam Weber for all of their hard work and help with the survey and consultation response. The Parish Council will finalise its response once the Residents' Survey results are in.

Councillor Trevor Eames joined the meeting at 10.55am

Minute 148 (2016/17) Memorial

Parish Councillors have looked at some stones at Earlswood Garden Centre, and they agreed on a suitable one. It was agreed that a payment of £100 be made as a deposit to secure the stone. The Clerk to follow this up with Planning with regard to amending planning approval and the SMBC Parks Department in relation to its installation.

Minute 149 (2016/17) RoSPA Safety Review

The Parish Council have obtained a quote for a safety review in respect of the SUDS at the David Wilson site, and access to Dickens Heath Sports Club.

Councillor Maureen Holloway said that advice from Ed Bradford of SMBC was that David Wilson should have done the safety review on the SUDS, and SMBC are legally ensuring that they do it. Ed suggested that the result should be something fairly unobtrusive such as low level post and rail fencing. This area is part of SMBC's obligations for a public amenity area and so it needs to be open access. Councillor Alan Scholes added that the original plans for the SUDS did have to be altered because of the additional pressure of the Bellway site. It was agreed that there is no point in the PC paying for a safety review as SMBC are forcing David Wilson to do it – it is their responsibility.

Councillor Maureen Holloway also advised that the issue of the safety of access to Dickens Heath Sports Club is being followed up by Borough Councillor Richard Holt. Therefore there is no need for the RoSPA safety review at this time.

Minute 150 (2016/17) Planning Applications

Councillor Trevor Eames recommended that, with regard to the treeworks at 8 Wrens Nest Close, the Parish Council supports the Tree Officer's recommendations. This was agreed.

Minute 151 (2016/17) Solar Christmas Trees

The solar Christmas trees have worked with no problems in previous years, but this year there were a lot of failures. Plantscape came out twice to attempt to rectify the problem, but it didn't work. Councillor Di Potter monitored the trees – around 23% failed from the start, this increased to 36% just before Christmas, 41% after Christmas and finally a failure of around 80% in early January. Plantscape have offered a discount of 25%. It was agreed that the average failure was more like 50% and therefore this discount should be requested.

Minute 152 (2016/17) Problems with the PC Website

Councillor Alan Scholes has successfully got the website working again, and will look at the problems with the Councillor emails.

Meeting ended 11.20am

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Friday 10th February 2017

Signature.....

Date.....