

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday January 20th 2015 at 7.00pm in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

Present:

Dickens Heath Parish Councillors; Philip Brandum (Chairman), Robert Cudmore, Alyson Glenn, Richard Holt, Josh O'Nyons.

SMBC Officers; Jo Rouse and Sally Babb.

17 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 127 (2014/15) Apologies for Absence and Acceptance of Reasons

None.

Minute 128 (2014/15) The Care Act 2015 – Solihull MBC Plans for Implementation

Jo Rouse and Sally Babb of SMBC gave a presentation and answered questions on the consultation regarding implementation of The Care Act 2015.

Minute 129 (2014/15) Public Participation

Highway Issues/Parking

A resident of Hirdemons Way stated that the Parking Restrictions have displaced cars so that parking on Hirdemons Way is now a nightmare, with inconsiderate parking that makes it impossible for large vehicles to pass and for some residents to access their drives. Councillor Brandum was present at the SMBC Scrutiny Board at which the Parking Restrictions were considered for adoption, and it looks like this will be going ahead. There have been several objections from residents that parking has been displaced to other locations and that highways officers need to look again at locations where there are problems. Residents commented that such locations needed to be visited in the evening when the parking is at its worst. The Scrutiny Board felt that the restrictions had improved the parking situation, but the reality is that Dickens Heath has too many cars and not enough parking spaces – the problem has been moved. Councillor Holt reiterated that SMBC need to look at imaginative solutions. A member of the public stated that the Scrutiny Board wishes the Highways Dept to cooperate with the Parish Council and Borough Councillors and look at areas where the parking restrictions are not working.

A resident asked whether vehicles were ticketed on Main St and at Waterside – which are private roads. This will need to be clarified at the Parish Council's next meeting with representatives of Dickens Heath Management Co.

Village Maintenance/Litter

The flood pond at Griffin Lane has an unsightly fence around it, residents would like to know when it will be finished. The Parish Council suggested that residents could contact the relevant officer at SMBC, as detailed on the SMBC Schedule of Works that is published on the Parish Council website.

Dog mess is a problem in the village, there are not enough dog bins. Solihull MBC are unwilling to fund the emptying of additional bins. A suggestion that the Parish Council consider part funding this to be added to next month's agenda.

When the Brockhurst Lane footpath was moved, the ground was due to have grass seed put down – but there doesn't seem to be any evidence that this has been done.

Garden Squares II

There is no further news on Garden Squares.

Other Issues

A resident asked whether there was any progress on identifying a site for a youth facility – negotiations are still in the hands of SMBC, but the multi use games area has been taken out of the plans for the new housing development at Cleobury Lane.

Minute 130 (2014/15) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None.

Minute 131 (2014/15) Gardening/Landscaping Issues

Councillor Cudmore and Village Handyman Steve have cleared 13 bags full of litter and fly tipping from Birchy Leasowes Lane. The 2 new planters should be arriving in February, and the planter at the back of the Parish Rooms can hopefully be moved to the front of the building – subject to approval from Dickens Heath Management Co. The planters will then be planted up in the Spring.

Minute 132 (2014/15) To Receive a Report from the Borough Councillors

Councillor Holt stated that the Solihull MBC Scrutiny Board have approved the traffic order for the parking restrictions.

Minute 133 (2014/15) Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday December 9th 2014

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

Minute 134 (2014/15) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meetingRequest for Review of Chicane by School

Highways have stated that it is not possible to remove or alter the chicane because cars need to be slowed by the school.

Overgrown Hedges

The SMBC Neighbourhood Co-ordinator feels that the hedge by Whitlocks End is safe to walk by, and that it is only reasonable to ask the farmers to cut back hedges when they are getting unsafe. Councillor Cudmore has recently walked that way, and agreed.

All other areas of concern should be covered by the imminent winter cutback.

Ward Action Plan

Kath Hemmings at SMBC will chase up approval for the Welcome to DH signs for the next financial year.

Loss of Parking Spaces

The proposed letter to SMBC was discussed, Councillor Brandum to draft.

Minute 135 (2014/15) Planning Applications

None.

Minute 136 (2014/15) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Holt, seconded by Councillor Cudmore, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the January 20th 2015 Agenda be approved – 10 cheques totalling £5,605.93. This included additional cheques of £312 to Carasol Ltd for website hosting and £39.25 to Severn Trent for water services.

The Parish Council currently has a surplus of almost £78,000 and is projecting a surplus of £67,000 at the year end.

The Parish Council discussed the precept for 2015/16 and **Resolved** to keep the Band D property precept charge unchanged at the 2014/15 level of £42.46. The precept request to SMBC will therefore be £80,632 plus the support grant of £765.

The Parish Council discussed the quotes for insurance for 2015/16. Councillor Holt requested clarification on a couple of points regarding the Zurich and Aon policies, to ensure that the level of cover was sufficient.

Minute 137 (2014/15) Reports from Councillors who have attended outside groups or events

None.

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Signature.....

Date.....

Minute 138 (2014/15) SMBC Review of Pilot Parking Scheme

The Parish Council sympathise with residents, such as those in Hirdemonsway, for whom parking has become increasingly difficult as a result of cars displaced by the parking restrictions. Solihull MBC have agreed to liaise with the Parish Council and Blythe Councillors to address areas where residents still have concerns, so the Parish Council will be forwarding residents' concerns to SMBC.

Minute 139 (2014/15) SMBC Schedule of Works to be done in Dickens Heath

This can be seen on the Parish Council website and Facebook page. Nick Page, Chief Executive of SMBC, is happy for it to be in the public domain, and the Chairman has thanked Mr Page for this information. The Parish Council agreed that they would be monitoring the deadlines on this schedule, noting progress and chasing up officers at SMBC if deadlines are missed.

Minute 140 (2014/15) Proposed New Road Names for Development off Rumbush Lane

The Parish Council agreed that these new suggestions for road names were a great improvement on the previous suggestions. They had reservations about 'Maypole' due to its links with Birmingham, and about 'Light Hall' because of potential confusion with the school in Shirley, but were happy with the others.

Minute 141 (2014/15) Timetable for Elections 2015

The Parish Council discussed the date for the Annual Meeting of the Council – which would be the first meeting of the newly elected council. It was agreed that the date should be Thursday May 21st – the Clerk to ensure that this is advertised, and that the Parish Rooms are available.

It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting should be held earlier than usual this year, to allow the inclusion of an information session to encourage residents to stand for election as a parish councillor. It was agreed that this should be held on Tuesday March 17th 2015. The Clerk to source promotional material for the next meeting.

Minute 142 (2014/15) Agreement for Maintenance of Planters & Traffic Islands

It was agreed that the proposed agreements should be forwarded to Matt Gardner at SMBC.

Minute 143 (2014/15) The Parish RoomsBookings

- Alicia, the yoga lady, has planning approval for her new yoga studio at Waterside, but there is a delay with getting access to the premises. She has asked if she can use the Parish Rooms for some additional sessions in the short term. The Parish Council agreed this as long as it is for no longer than 3 months and as long as she makes some contribution back to the community.
- The Breastfeeding Café is going really well, and now meets weekly.

Fire Risk Assessment

It was agreed that the Fire Risk Assessment should be repeated, the cost will be in the region of £420 plus VAT. It was also suggested that a fire drill should be carried out with the youth club.

Minute 144 (2014/15) Ongoing ReferencesAction Plan for Next 5 Years

A proposal for a village survey was discussed, with the aim of designing an online survey. The results of which will allow the Parish Council to plan future expenditure based on the views of residents. A budget for this of up to £1,500 was agreed.

Minute 145 (2014/15) CorrespondenceConsultation on Modernising Parish Poll Regulations

WALC are recommending support for this because Parish Polls are costly and have in the past been held on issues over which a parish council has no control. It was agreed that this be supported.

Update of the Register of Pecuniary Interests

No changes in pecuniary interests.

Councillor Holt is now also a Borough Councillor.

Royal Garden Party in May 2015

It was agreed that the Chairman should be nominated.

Black Smoke Seen at the Uplands

Residents have seen black smoke regularly coming from the Uplands. It was agreed that Environmental Health should be notified.

Increased CCTV

A resident has suggested CCTV on the main access roads into Dickens Heath to help deal with the increased car crime. Our local Police Sergeant does not believe this will help because so many criminals use the canal to come in and out of the village. It was agreed that the extension of CCTV would be discussed at a future meeting with Dickens Heath Management Co. who already operate CCTV in the village centre.

Additional Dog Bins

It was agreed that this would be further discussed with Solihull MBC and Dickens Heath Management Co.

SAC Meeting on Jan 29th 2015

Nick Page will be the guest at this meeting, Councillor Brandum is able to attend.

Minute 146 (2014/15) Items for next agenda

Dog bins.

Minute 147 (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 148 (2014/15) Proposals for the Village Playground

The Parish Council agreed that it would be better for the playground to be in public hands with its costs borne by all village ratepayers rather than just the service charge payers. An initial approach to be made to the Receivers.

Meeting ended 9.55 pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday February 17th 2015: 7.00pm The Parish Rooms