

# The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday July 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

### **Present:**

**Dickens Heath Parish Councillors;** Trevor Eames, Maureen Holloway (Chair), Diane Potter, Doreen Wright.

8 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

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### **Minute 47 (2016/17) Apologies for Absence**

None.

### **Minute 48 (2016/17) Public Participation**

#### Service Charge paid to Dickens Heath Management Co.

A resident complained about the service they receive from Dickens Heath Management Co. The service charge is very high but very little maintenance work is done. A light wasn't working for around 4 weeks before it was fixed. They provide an on-going poor service and residents are at their wits end, it is emergency management all the time. The water feature at Waterside is cleaned every week, but if the pump worked properly – this wouldn't have to be done. It equates to 2 days of work per week that shouldn't need doing. It was agreed that Michael Johnson and Barbara Cooper of DHMC should be invited to September's Parish Council meeting.

#### Early Morning Noise

Someone with a dustpan and brush is cleaning noisily in the village centre as early as 7am in the morning, residents feel this is too early to be making such a noise.

#### Anti-Social Behaviour

The night of Saturday July 16th and early morning of Sunday July 17<sup>th</sup> were very noisy. Young people were heard saying that they were kicking off car wing mirrors. Residents heard that at least one car had been damaged, but the road sweeper had swept up the evidence of damage. There were also several women shouting outside the Chalice after it had shut. The Police will always advise that residents ring 101 to inform them of any ASB. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact the Police to ask whether they have any records for this night in Dickens Heath and whether they are taking any action.

#### Dickens Heath Youth Group

The Youth Group wasn't on last week. This was due to staffing shortages, but the youth leader did attend at the beginning of the evening to let the young people know. The youth worker actually finishes at the end of July, but it will continue as a volunteer led group.

#### Cleaning of Signs and Lamp Posts in the Village

Many of the signs and lamp posts around Dickens Heath are looking grubby, it was agreed that Matt Gardner at Solihull MBC be asked if there is a programme for cleaning signs and lamp posts and, if so, where Dickens Heath might be on the programme.

#### Rubbish outside the Bellway Development

There was a heap of rubbish at the end of the road by the Bellway development, most has been taken by the bin men – but some bags have been left. Councillor Holloway will ask Tammy Rowley at SMBC to remove them.

### **Minute 49 (2016/17) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations**

None.

### **Minute 50 (2016/17) Report from the Borough Councillors**

None.

**Minute 51 (2016/17) Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday June 28<sup>th</sup> 2016**

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

**Minute 52 (2016/17) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meeting**Carpet Cleaning

The Parish Rooms carpets are due to be cleaned at the end of July.

Pay Awards

The staff have been awarded a pay award of 1% from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2016. Councillors' allowances have stayed at the same level for several years, and are linked to the allowances paid to the Borough Councillors – however, they are likely to be reviewed during 2016/17.

Children's Groups in the Parish Rooms

The Ofsted Guide to Early Years and Childcare Registration Handbook states that providers do not have to register with Ofsted if: a child does not stay with them for more than 2 hours a day (even if the childcare service is open for longer than 2 hours); if they provide no more than 2 activities (from school study support, sport, performing arts, arts & crafts, or religious/cultural/language study); or care where parents remain in the immediate area. All of those who book the Parish Rooms for children's activities would meet at least one of these exemptions.

It was agreed that a further Risk Assessment should be carried out specifically relating to pre-school children in the Parish Rooms.

Pavement Cleansing

Chris Barr of SMBC is following up on the cleansing of pavements near the school, and manual brushing of moss from pavements is taking place on the last Friday of each month – the Parish Council will monitor this.

No Left Turn Sign at Library

This is ignored by many motorists, is it still necessary? The sign's removal requires a formal request to SMBC Highways as it was installed as part of a Traffic Regulation Order – it was agreed that such a request should be made.

Road Repairs and Pot Holes

Many of the road issues and pot holes that were reported at the June meeting have now been repaired.

Welcome to the Village Signs

Three signs have now been ordered and are expected in the Autumn 2016.

Anti-Social Behaviour

The Police were unable to attend this evening's Parish Council meeting as they are on a rest day. However, they reiterate that residents should log all ASB incidents by ringing 101.

Construction Traffic along Main St

Residents were concerned that Elegant Developments construction vehicles were using Main St and had knocked over some bollards. DHMC have responded that one very long truck has used Main St with their permission, but the bollard outside The Chalice was knocked over by a car and not such a truck. The bollard has now been permanently removed as it was being constantly knocked over.

The Parish Council's Pensions Obligations

It was agreed that the Clerk could attend a WALC course on Pensions in September.

**Minute 53 (2016/17) Planning Applications**

The Planning Sub-Committee have drafted a response to planning application 2016/01692 for the Dickens Heath Village Development on Main St. All agreed the response which supports the opportunity to obtain additional parking spaces in Garden Squares for traders and residents and so to free up parking spaces in the village centre.

The planned Blythe Valley Park development (planning application 2016/00863) is huge – with 1,000 houses and a hotel along with shops etc. Cheswick Green PC and residents are very worried about the impact on roads, their school and GP practice. Dickens Heath PC will be concerned about the overall impact on the local community, roads and Dickens Heath

village centre traffic. It was agreed that a response should be lodged – not an objection, but to raise concerns.

No comments on the other planning applications.

#### **Minute 54 (2016/17) Planning Sub-Committee**

##### Neighbourhood Plan

We have not heard yet about the designation of the Neighbourhood Plan area, the Clerk to find out when this is likely to be considered. An initial meeting needs to be set up with Councillors and interested volunteers – the Clerk to arrange this.

#### **Minute 55 (2016/17) Village Issues**

##### Memorial

An initial quote has been received regarding the cost of materials for the memorial – the steel panel will cost around £1,176 and the estimated cost of the piece of Limestone is around £3,500. This is before the hours to do the carving are added. Councillor Doreen Wright feels that this is costing too much, and there followed a discussion on whether the memorial could instead be a simpler stone with the poem on it. Members of the public in attendance were in agreement. The Parish Council therefore agreed to review some other options for a simpler memorial before the September meeting.

##### Litter Picking

The Parish Council considered a report regarding complaints about litter, which are mainly from one source. The SMBC rural litter picking cycle is usually 2 weekly, but Dickens Heath was litter picked each week up until recently. On the last Friday of the month, SMBC staff now brush moss from the pavements instead of carrying out a litter pick. Solihull MBC have taken the decision that the additional service for Dickens Heath is not justified, they checked each week for an 8 week period - and litter pickers were not finding much litter compared to the levels in the rest of the Borough. SMBC cannot therefore justify the enhanced service in Dickens Heath. The Parish Council employs a litter picker for 8 hours a week, and Dickens Heath Management Co. cover the village centre – so the overall litter picking service should be satisfactory. Solihull MBC staff will still be spending the same amount of time working in the village, they will be spraying weeds, road sweeping, strimming verges etc. instead of litter picking every week. The Parish Councillors approved the report and agreed that it should be published.

##### Solar Christmas Trees

Last Christmas, a mix of basket mounted and hanging solar Christmas trees decorated lamp posts. The Parish Council agreed that the hanging Christmas trees were very effective as well as being slightly cheaper. It was therefore agreed that up to 22 hanging trees be ordered for Christmas 2016.

##### Village Chemist

The Government is trying to limit the number of pharmacies in order to save money. Accredited pharmacies are paid a lump sum plus they are paid for the number of prescriptions. The Government is proposing to phase out the lump sum payment and pay more per prescription. This would make life difficult for the chemist in Dickens Heath. Petitions around the country are attempting to get these proposals amended. It was agreed that the Parish Council should express its concern to Caroline Spelman MP, Councillor Trevor Eames to forward some additional information to the Clerk.

#### **Minute 56 (2016/17) SMBC Issues**

##### Remembrance Sunday

Solihull MBC will soon require all the forms if the Parish Council wishes to close the roads for the Remembrance Sunday Service in November. It was agreed that the Remembrance Service outside the Village Hall had gone well last year, and if the Service was held there again then no road closures would be required. It was agreed that the Clerk should get in touch with the 2 churches and Scouts regarding this year's service.

**Minute 57 (2016/17) Vacancies on the Parish Council**

Balsall Parish Council have an application form for co-opting Councillors, and Councillor Trevor Eames has used this form as a basis to produce one for Dickens Heath. All agreed that this form should be used. It was agreed that the vacancies should be advertised until the end of August 2016.

**Minute 58 (2016/17) Financial Matters**

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Wright, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the July 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 Agenda be approved – 15 payments and 2 direct debits totalling £4,392.16. This included an additional direct debit for £98.04 to BT for broadband.

The Parish Council also approved the payment of the August salaries and allowances when the payroll information is available.

The Parish Council currently has a surplus of £95,000, and is projecting a surplus of £76,000 at the year end.

**Minute 59 (2016/17) Grievance Procedures**

The draft Grievance Policy and draft Protocol for Councillor-Employee Relations were adopted.

**Minute 60 (2016/17) Parish Rooms**Wiggle Waggle

The lady who runs wiggle waggle is finishing, she thanked the Parish Council for the use of the Parish Rooms.

U3A

Three U3A groups currently use the Parish Rooms, and they are all run by Dickens Heath residents. A couple of residents have asked about booking the Parish Rooms for further U3A events – one for a Family History Meeting, and the other for planning a Christmas show. These were agreed.

**Minute 61 (2016/17) Parish Council Emails**

The Parish Council emails are successfully forwarding into Councillors' personal emails, the Clerk to test whether acknowledgements are being sent.

**Minute 62 (2016/17) Grant Application from Dickens Heath Scout Group**

Councillor Maureen Holloway stated that the grant application does not include a copy of a bank statement, she has researched the cost of Scout tents at around £265 each, and feels that a request to the Parish Council for £1,000 is excessive. Councillor Trevor Eames agreed that the Parish Council needs to see what resources they have and whether the grant is justified. The Parish Council wouldn't want to award the full amount as they would wish to see the Scouts fund raising for some of the cost. It was agreed that the Parish Council's policy is to make a contribution, not to award the full amount, and they need to be reassured that the Scouts can raise the rest – therefore they need to see a bank statement before making a decision.

**Minute 63 (2016/17) Correspondence**Defibrillator

Borough Councillor Alex Insley has obtained a free defibrillator from West Midlands Ambulance Service, and has asked whether the Parish Council would be interested in it. It was agreed that the Parish Rooms are not a suitable site in terms of location and hours open. Tesco or Mortons would be more appropriate.

Localised Council Tax Support Scheme

SMBC are proposing to make some changes from April 2017, the consultation runs until October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016. The Parish Council will look further into this before deciding whether to make a response.

**Minute 64 (2016/17) 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 65 (2016/17) Car Parking in the Village Centre**  
Deferred.

**Minute 66 (2016/17) Youth Group and Community Facilities**  
Deferred.

**Meeting ended 9.45pm**

**Next Meeting : Tuesday September 20<sup>th</sup> 2016: 7.00pm The Parish Rooms**