

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday June 20th 2017 in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

Present:

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

8 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 31 (2017/18) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were accepted from Councillor Alan Scholes.

Minute 32 (2017/18)

A minute's silence was observed to pay tribute to all of those affected by recent terrorist and tragic events.

Minute 33 (2017/18) Public Participation

Planning Application at 39 Birchy Close - Replacement Triple Garage Building

Several of the members of the public present expressed concern about this planning application. The replacement garage proposal is effectively a completely new building that is much nearer to the roadway than the current garage. The proposed building is very large, it is almost on the roadside, it is intrusive, and out of character with the rest of the road. Councillor Trevor Eames agreed with them – he said that the proposal is not attractive, but that is not a reason for it to be turned down. He has been to look at the site and agreed that large trees and the hedgerow would be affected, even though the applicant stated that there would be no felling of the trees or hedgerow. He felt that a professional opinion would be needed on whether the willow tree would be affected. The proposed new building has been distanced from the current property so that it doesn't look part of the property. The expanse of brickwork would be a very unattractive outlook for the neighbour. If a building of this size were to be allowed, it should be closer to the property to lessen the impact on neighbours. Councillor Doreen Wright felt that the willow tree would be affected as willows have long roots. Councillor Eames summarised by saying that all residents are entitled to send in a comment, but just one per household. The Parish Council's objections must be on planning grounds, but residents can use other additional arguments. If Solihull MBC receive a significant number of objections, then there is a chance that the application will be referred to Planning Committee. If so, then representations can be made to the Planning Committee. A resident has spoken to the Planning Officer who had said that this will not go to Planning Committee. Councillor Eames reiterated that it depends on whether there are a significant number of objections, and the Parish Council can ask Borough Councillor Richard Holt to consider formally requesting that the application be referred to Planning Committee if there are a lot of objections.

Minute 34 (2017/18) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None.

Minute 35 (2017/18) Report from the Borough Councillors

Councillor Ken Hawkins wasn't able to attend, but had sent through an update:

- The Solihull Local Plan Review – still no date for submission of the plan for public examination.
- Speed checks have been carried out in Tidbury Green, and he has had comments about the speed of traffic near the clock island in Dickens Heath. However, in his experience, there is often a big difference between perceived speed and reality, and

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Signature.....

Date.....

motorists are often found to be within the speed limit. Councillor Trevor Eames pointed out that the Parish Council would need to be sure that there was a speeding problem before asking the Police to take action.

- Councillor Hawkins will be arranging some pop up surgeries at the library.

Minute 36 (2017/18) Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday May 16th 2017

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

Minute 37 (2017/18) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meeting

Dickens Heath in Bloom

In Bloom judge Trish Willetts is happy to support the Parish Council either for this year, or she could come along to a PC meeting in the Autumn to discuss preparing for In Bloom 2018. The Parish Council agreed to invite Trish to a meeting later in the year.

Watering of Planters

The watering in the hot weather has been very tiring, all of the Parish Councillors have been helping out. Plantscape will soon be watering them once a week, but they will need additional watering. The Chair said that Tesco have agreed to water the 3 planters at the rear of the store, staff at the Library will water the 2 nearby, Councillor Di Potter will water the 2 by the Clock, the Clerk can help to water the 1 at Waterside and possibly a resident could be asked to water the planter by the GP surgery.

Maintenance of Roads and Pavements

The manual brushing of the pavements has not been done, the weeds around the islands need to be sprayed, but Rumbush Lane has been swept. These to be followed up with Matt Gardner before the July meeting.

Memorial

There are some issues outstanding, Nic Wright of SMBC is thought to be dealing with these – the Clerk to chase up.

Youth Group Fire Drill

Admin assistant Hannah carried out a fire drill with the Youth Group on June 7th 2017.

Minute 38 (2017/18) Planning Applications

It was agreed that Councillor Trevor Eames should draft an objection to the planning application for 39 Birchy Close.

No comments on the other planning applications.

Minute 39 (2017/18) Solihull Local Plan Consultation (SLP)

An update on the Solihull Local Plan has been received from Gary Palmer at SMBC – there will be no revised plan before the end of 2017. The Parish Council had agreed that they would not be going forward with the Neighbourhood Plan until the revised SLP is published. Otherwise there is a risk that it would have to be redone. SMBC has consulted on the sites that are suitable for development, though they may not actually be developed. Gary Palmer is now suggesting that parish councils engage further with developers with a view to facilitating presentations or consultation exercises with residents. Following the publication of the revised SLP, the public enquiry is anticipated to take place in Spring 2018. This would be the time to do the Neighbourhood Plan. Richborough Estates have a very detailed development proposal for the site off Tythe Barn Lane, and residents could be made aware of this – the Clerk to contact Richborough about a potential public presentation. Councillor Trevor Eames will contact Gary Palmer to find out who might be putting together the development proposal for the other site in the Parish which is adjacent to Shirley.

Minute 40 (2017/18) Literary Litter Pickers – Community Litter Picks for DH

Councillor Dave Jones gave an update – the June litter pick was, disappointingly, only attended by a few Parish Councillors, but some of the Scouts will hopefully be attending the July litter pick.

Minute 41 (2017/18) Dickens Heath in Bloom and Expansion of Floral Displays

Simon will be repainting the planters over the next few weeks. Plantscape have quoted £693 plus VAT to add the 9 planters to their watering route for the hanging baskets for the duration of the summer, this was approved. The Clerk to find out when the hanging baskets are due to arrive.

Minute 42 (2017/18) The Opening of Dickens Heath Sports Club

Councillor Trevor Eames has put together a draft petition for the footpath to be extended to Dickens Heath Sports Club. Parish Councillors will meet outside Tesco on the morning of Saturday June 25th to talk to residents, promote the Sports Club's Grand Opening, and ask them to sign the petition. They will also take the petition along to the Grand Opening on Sunday June 26th, then the petition will be forwarded to Borough Councillor Richard Holt so that it can be presented to the Borough Council.

Minute 43 (2017/18) Village Post Office

Councillor Dave Jones' neighbour used to run a Post Office, and they would like to open one in Dickens Heath, potentially in the Library. The Clerk to enquire on what the process is for opening a Community Post Office.

Minute 44 (2017/18) Dangerous Parking on Bus Route alongside the Village Green

It was agreed that SMBC Highways should be formally asked to assess this.

Minute 45 (2017/18) Councillors who have attended Outside Groups or Events

None.

Minute 46 (2017/18) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Holloway, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the June 20th 2017 Agenda be approved - 19 payments totalling £4,268.00 including an additional payment of £747.45 for the WALC subscription for 2017/18.

The Parish Council currently has a surplus of £114,000 and is projecting a surplus of £101,000 at the year end – this will be used to meet the cost of any projects, such as the memorial. The bank reconciliation was verified and signed by Councillor Di Potter.

Annual Return/External Audit

The Annual Return has been submitted, by the deadline, for the external audit.

Security of Parish Council Documents

It was agreed that the Clerk should look into the purchase of a fire proof cabinet for historic documents, and that the disk on which Councillor Alan Scholes has saved scanned copies of these documents should be held by the Chair.

In Bloom Bank Account

This will be required for any grants or donations received towards Dickens Heath in Bloom – Councillors Di Potter and Trevor Eames to progress this.

NEST Pension

The direct debit form was signed in accordance with the bank mandate.

Minute 47 (2017/18) Parish Rooms

A request has been received to hold a knitting/felting workshop on a Saturday afternoon. Following some discussion, it was agreed that for the use of the Parish Rooms for 2 hours – a £25 donation towards Dickens Heath in Bloom should be requested.

Minute 48 (2017/18) Vacancy on the Parish Council

Solihull MBC have confirmed that no one has requested that an election be held to fill the vacancy. It was agreed that this should be deferred to the September meeting with a view to filling the vacancy by co-option once the summer holidays are over.

Minute 49 (2017/18) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Due to lack of time, it was agreed that the review of these documents should be deferred to the July meeting – Councillors to retain the paperwork until then.

Minute 50 (2017/18) Parish Council Website and Emails

The website has moved to a different hosting server which has caused some problems – which Councillor Alan Scholes has now resolved. The emails linked to the website may however not be working – this to be checked.

Minute 51 (2017/18) Away Day for the Parish Council

It was agreed that the Parish Council would meet for a morning early in July, at The Limes - to discuss future projects and ideas.

Minute 52 (2017/18) CorrespondenceDog Fouling

This is a real problem again, and needs to be publicized and included in the next Parish Council News.

Complaint about Visitors to Parish Rooms/Inspire who Park on the Island

A resident has complained that visitors to the Parish Rooms, and particularly Inspire (who run educational classes for children) are parking very inconsiderately on the island and surrounding area at Waterside – to drop off and pick up. This is causing a hazard for residents – Councillor Maureen Holloway is following this up.

Business Rates on Main St

Some business properties in Dickens Heath, including the Parish Rooms, have seen a dramatic reduction in business rates. However Cre8's business rates are still very high. Councillor Trevor Eames is following this up with them.

The Chalice

There has been a complaint about noise as customers leave The Chalice, and the signs asking customers to be considerate to residents as they leave have been removed. It was agreed that the Parish Council should ask them to reinstate the signs.

School Bus on Tythe Barn Lane

School bus number 382 comes down Tythe Barn Lane en route to the Blossomfield Rd schools. The lane is very narrow, and the bus forces cars on to the verges, but some people have put boulders on the grass verges outside their houses – so cars cannot safely get out of the way of the bus. A resident has asked if the bus can be diverted, or if the boulders could be removed. It was agreed that Matt Gardner should be contacted about the removal of the boulders.

Update from Solihull MBC

Cutting back has been done at the junction of Birchy Close and Dickens Heath Rd, the footway is also due to be widened at this point during this financial year, and the bollards on Dickens Heath Rd and Rumbush Lane have been realigned.

Noise from Garden Squares I

During the warm weather, residents have complained about noisy all night parties held in one of the Garden Squares apartments. This has been followed up with Dickens Heath Management Co and the Police.

Minute 53 (2017/18) Items for Next Agenda

Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Minute 54 (2017/18) 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 55 (2017/18) Community Facilities

The possibility of the Youth Group using the facilities at Dickens Heath Sports Club was discussed – the Group have some concerns and so it was agreed that they could stay at the Parish Rooms if they wished. It was agreed that Councillor David Jones should represent the Parish Council on the Sports Club committee.

It was also noted that Borough Councillor Richard Holt is now a member of the Village Hall committee.

Meeting ended 10pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday July 11th 2017: 7.00pm The Parish Rooms