

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday June 28th 2016 in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

Present:

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

Borough Councillor; Richard Holt

11 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 29 (2016/17) Apologies for Absence

None.

Minute 30 (2016/17) Public Participation

Pot Holes

The island at Calcutt Way has large potholes, it was agreed that this should be reported to Solihull MBC and a meeting with Matt Gardner arranged.

Garden Squares II Building Work

Building work is starting at 7am, should they be starting this early? The developers are doing preparation work which doesn't need planning permission – this work is not building controlled as it is not part of planning consent. Once they have planning consent – controls will be put in place.

Braggs Farm Lane

Braggs Farm Lane is still closed. There was a temporary road closure order in May to allow remedial emergency works to take place. There is now an unofficial looking barrier about half way down the Lane. A new temporary road closure has now been put in place until the end of July. The road had collapsed at the point where contractors enter the David Wilson site and David Wilson should remedy it. Solihull MBC are looking into it, and they have said that the first stretch of road is 'unsafe'.

Rumbush Lane

The stretch of Rumbush Lane out to Norton Lane is collapsing, and complaints have been made to SMBC by residents. SMBC are unwilling to resurface while there is so much heavy construction traffic, and will only make temporary repairs. It was agreed that it is dangerous, it is an unlit stretch of road, and a re-inspection should be requested. This stretch of Rumbush Lane is actually in Tidbury Green parish, and so it was agreed that a complaint should be made to SMBC and copied to Tidbury Green Parish Council.

Garden Squares II Construction Traffic

Some bollards on Main St have been knocked down by construction vehicles. It was asked whether they are allowed to drive down Main St, but there is no specified construction route at the moment. Repairs to Main St will have to be paid for by those paying the service charge. It was agreed that the Clerk ask Dickens Heath Management Co. if they could liaise with Elegant Developments about the access route for construction traffic.

Land on Rumbush Lane which includes the Coppice

Borough Councillor Richard Holt had been approached by the owner of the Coppice who has submitted a planning application to fell a number of trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The owner of the land feels that he has not been given a fair chance to put his case forward. He owns the land and the trees – on which there was never a Tree Preservation Order until recently. It has been suggested that he purchased the land for a nominal sum, but the land had been owned by his mother since 1968 and then transferred to him. He has received an intimidating leaflet through the post which he found very hurtful. Councillor Holt said that he had himself objected to the planning application but this land's owner is entitled to maintain his land – he has commissioned a report that concludes that several of the trees

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don't have value. He does intend to develop the land, but it is a free country and SMBC should judge the planning application on its merits without leaflets being distributed encouraging residents to object. Councillor Holloway replied that residents have been horrified at the desecration of this site, the work that was done was intended to clear the site of trees. The landowner does have rights, but residents also have the right to object. Solihull MBC have put a Tree Preservation Order in place and Caroline Spelman MP is in favour of retaining the Coppice as a wildlife link. Councillor Holt replied that he was not himself expressing a view either way, but the landowner feels that it is his land and his integrity has been questioned.

Minute 31 (2016/17) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None.

Minute 32 (2016/17) Report from the Borough Councillors

Borough Councillor Richard Holt is involved with the HS2 Committee, and the Scrutiny Committee which has been looking at the Combined Authority – which will lead to integrated transport and additional investment in the region.

Minute 33 (2016/17) Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday May 17th 2016

Proposed by Councillor Eames, seconded by Councilor Wright, it was **Resolved** that the minutes be approved as a true and accurate record subject to the deletion of a small section of Minute 28.

Minute 34 (2016/17) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meeting

Cleaning of Parish Rooms Carpets

A quote has been received for £100, which is lower than the 2 previous quotes. It was agreed to go with this quote.

Dog Mess Stencils

Councillors Di Potter and Doreen Wright will liaise to mark on a map where SMBC might best put some more stencils.

Website

This has been updated for the recent Councillor resignations. Some of the general information on the website is now quite out of date – it was agreed that this should be looked at.

Pavement Cleansing

Pavements at the islands have all been cleansed, it was agreed that the Clerk follow up with SMBC about the pavements by the school. The manual brushing of the pavements has started and will be done on the last Friday of each month – the Councillors will monitor this.

Kent's Barbers Pole

Kent's have confirmed that they will get this serviced, it appears that they have switched it off for the moment.

Suspected Fly Tipping by Residents

SMBC are happy to send out letters to nearby residents.

Minute 35 (2016/17) Planning Applications

The Planning Sub-Committee have drafted a response to planning application 2016/01059 to fell several protected trees on the Rumbush Lane coppice – the response supports the Tree Preservation Order and objects to the felling of the trees. All agreed that this should be sent in. If there are a substantial number of objections, this should go to SMBC Planning Committee.

No comments on the other planning applications, including an additional one for 22 Brixfield Way.

There is also a Department for Transport consultation on the proposed stopping up of highway at 62 Three Acres Lane – this is ok, it will not impact on anyone, a very small portion of footpath is being taken in to a garden.

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Minute 36 (2016/17) Planning Sub-CommitteeNeighbourhood Plan

A number of volunteers have come forward, and the appeal is going into the Dickens Heath Directory again in July. It was agreed that the Clerk should email round the volunteers to reassure them that we haven't forgotten them.

Minute 37 (2016/17) Village IssuesReplanting & Maintenance of Islands

The Parish Council awarded the contract to replant the 3 islands to D & D Grounds Maintenance, however they replied that they were no longer able to do the work. Therefore the contract was awarded to the Solihull Rangers who had submitted the second most competitive quote. Two of the islands have now been replanted, and the Rangers are awaiting additional supplies for the final island. In fact the Rangers had been seen today checking on the plants. Councillor Doreen Wright asked about Neighbourhood in Bloom – the Parish Council has already been entered.

Welcome to the Village Signs

A quote has been received from Solihull MBC of £1,137.51 for 4 signs. All agreed that SMBC should be asked to go ahead with this.

Hedge on Old Dickens Heath Rd

This hedge runs between the highway and the footpath on the opposite side of the road from the Village Green. The management co. RMG have trimmed it each year, but reluctantly, and they have said that this year is the last. The highway is unadopted, and the hedge on the other side of the road is the responsibility of Dickens Heath Management Co. If the highway is unadopted, then the frontages must therefore be the responsibility of RMG. At the moment both SMBC and RMG are refusing to take responsibility for the hedge, it is stalemate. SMBC do however intend to adopt this highway, and if they do so in the next year – then the problem will be resolved. The Parish Council is unable to do anything about this at the moment, and all agreed to look at it again in 6 months time.

Memorial

Malcolm Sier is still waiting for costing information from his suppliers, it was agreed that the Clerk should chase him up again.

Anti Social Behaviour

Residents have reported intimidating behaviour by a group of 14/15 year olds. It was agreed that this should be raised with the Police, and the Police be invited to the July PC meeting.

Solar Christmas Trees

The Parish Council will definitely be ordering these for Christmas 2016. Two different types of solar trees were put up last Christmas, quotes for the different types of tree to be brought to the July meeting so that a decision can be made.

Minute 38 (2016/17) Councillors who have attended Outside Groups or EventsParish Review

Councillor Holloway has met with Rev Theresa Jones regarding a Parish Church in the village. The Parish Review has been done and mentions Dickens Heath. Unfortunately Rev Peter Law Jones who came to a parish council meeting to discuss an Anglican Church presence in Dickens Heath is off sick at the moment and so it may be a while before they can get back to us.

Combined Authority Presentation

The presentation from May 23rd 2016 has been circulated. The Combined Authority should generate significant investment in the West Midlands. The staff at Centro will move to the Combined Authority. The election of a Mayor and their associated powers seemed to be of most concern, and there was a request that the powers of the Mayor should be limited.

Meeting with Village Traders and Residents

On May 23rd there was also a meeting of traders and some residents to discuss parking in the village centre. They also discussed an overview of the Neighbourhood Plan proposal.

Minute 39 (2016/17) Resignation of Councillors and the Process for Filling the Vacancies

Councillors Phil Brandum, Bob Cudmore and Stephen Gussin resigned in May 2016. The vacancies have been advertised in accordance with the legal requirement to allow electors the opportunity to call for an election to fill the vacancies. We have been informed by Solihull MBC that there has been no request for an election and so the vacancies can be filled by co-option. Councillor Trevor Eames will source a form that interested residents can complete, then the Clerk will advertise the vacancies over the summer.

Minute 40 (2016/17) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Eames, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the June 28th 2016 Agenda be approved – 18 payments and 1 direct debit totalling £7,022.24. This included an additional payment for £43.99 to Councillor Holloway for the door bell for the Parish Rooms.

The Parish Council currently has a surplus of £100,000, and is projecting a surplus of £74,000 at the year end.

The bank account is now set up to make payments by on-line bank transfer. The list of payments was therefore authorised and signed by 2 Councillors. The Clerk will set up Councillor Di Potter with on-line access to the bank account so that the bank transfers made by the Clerk and Admin Assistant can be monitored.

The Annual Return and associated paperwork has been sent to the External Auditors.

Minute 41 (2016/17) Parish Rooms

The Creation Station

A request has been received to hold arts and crafts activities for babies and pre-school children in the Parish Rooms. There followed a discussion about children's groups meeting in the Parish Rooms and whether the Parish Council, as managers of the premises, needed to carry out any additional checks on how such classes are run. Councillors Doreen Wright and Trevor Eames have previously met with an officer from SMBC Education, the Clerk to get in touch with her – to see whether she can give the Parish Council some advice.

Minute 42 (2016/17) Grant Applications

Dickens Heath Scouts were awarded a grant of £300 by the Parish Council in August 2015. They would like to apply for another grant as they would like to purchase some tents. The Parish Council agreed that they would be receptive to making another grant if the Scouts were to raise some of the funds themselves.

Minute 43 (2016/17) Correspondence

National Salary Award 2016-2018

The National Joint Council for Local Government Services has agreed new pay scales as of April 1st 2016 and April 1st 2017 – it is an increase of 1% each year. These pay scales relate to Parish Council staff, but not to Councillors' allowances. It was agreed that the Clerk, Admin Assistant and Litter Picker/Handyman would be awarded the pay increase. The Clerk to check whether there is any increase to councillors' allowances which are linked to those paid at SMBC.

Minute 44 (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 45 (2016/17) Car Parking in the Village Centre

A proposal to improve car parking in the village centre was discussed.

Minute 46 (2016/17) Youth Group and Community Facilities

Future Funding of the Youth Group

The Parish Council will make one more payment, in July, towards the youth worker. After that, the Youth Group will be able to use the Parish Rooms for the volunteer run group. Several members of the Parish Council will attend the Youth Group's management meeting on July 20th to discuss the future of the Youth Group.

Future Village Youth and Community Facility

This was discussed.

Meeting ended 9.50pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday July 19th 2016: 7.00pm The Parish Rooms