

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council held on Thursday November 2nd 2017 in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

Present:

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

In attendance: 12 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 138 (2017/18) Apologies for Absence

None.

Minute 139 (2017/18) Declarations of Interest

None.

Minute 140 (2017/18) Proposal for a Replacement Playground on the Village Green

Chair, Councillor Maureen Holloway, summarised the situation with the current village playground:

- The current playground is 10 years old, it is owned by the Receivers, it is managed by Dickens Heath Management Co (DHMC), and its maintenance is funded from the service charge paid by some of the village residents and the businesses.
- Following an accident in which a child was injured, the playground is closed, and DHMC is trying to source parts to reopen the playground if it can be made safe. But DHMC does not have the funds to do any more than this, and getting any
- funds out of the Receivers is very difficult.
- The Parish Council have taken legal advice from WALC with regard to using their funds to buy a replacement playground, and then donating it, and have been told that it would be legal.
- This meeting is to ascertain whether residents would be in favour of the Parish Council taking this action, and spending their funds on a playground.

Councillor Trevor Eames stated that there is an obligation on the landlord of the Village Green and playground (the Receivers) to provide and maintain these facilities in perpetuity. DHMC operate on behalf of the landlord and have an obligation to make the playground safe. Local authorities don't provide play areas any more, and on new estates – developers would provide play areas and a service charge would be levied to pay for them.

The Parish Council want to do something about the playground, but only if residents want them to.

Residents' Comments:

- Residents expect to have a park and playground.
- As well as all the parents in the village, there are also grandparents who use the playground. Some residents have offered to make donations themselves towards a new playground as it is very important for the community. Blossoms nursery use the playground, as do the Brownies, and children after school.
- It would be inconceivable that Dickens Heath wouldn't have a playground, in fact it should be made bigger.
- It needs to be fixed as soon as possible, happy for the PC to use its funds.

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Signature.....

Date.....

- There needs to be somewhere safe for children to play.
- Residents would help with the funding.
- A lot of people are really missing the play area.
- A lot of residents also wanted to come along to the meeting this evening, but couldn't as they have young children.
- The Blossoms nursery used to go to the play area, and the nursery manager said that they would be willing to help with fundraising.

Councillor David Jones asked those members of the public present whether they minded if the Parish Council spent funds on a new playground – all unanimously agree that they were in favour.

Meeting ended 7.25pm