

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday September 12th 2017 in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

Present:

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

4 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 83 (2017/18) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were accepted from Councillor David Jones.

Minute 84 (2017/18) Public Participation

Proposed Youth and Community Facility at the School

Two of the leaders from the village Scout troop wished to discuss a youth facility that the Scouts would be able to use in Dickens Heath. The Dickens Heath Scout troop is very successful and is expanding. They know that there are funds set aside for a youth/community facility for the village. They have spoken to Chris Barr at Solihull MBC about it – but there is still no decision on the proposal for a facility at the school. They have also spoken to Borough Councillor Richard Holt, and been told that the proposal is in limbo. In terms of a site for a Scout Hut, the leaders had considered a few possible locations, including Dickens Heath Sports Club, but had settled on the school – for access reasons. They asked when a decision would be made. The Chair, Councillor Maureen Holloway, replied that SMBC have informed the Parish Council that they are doing a review/consultation and will respond by the end of the financial year. Although SMBC did a presentation on the proposed facility at the school, there has been no proper consultation, and the facility is not just for the Scouts. The Scout Leaders said that youth anti-social behaviour is a growing problem, there is nothing for the older youth in the village, they have been forgotten, discussions have been going on for years and a decision must be made. They asked if the Parish Council has put the kibosh on a facility at the school? The Chair agreed that a decision needs to be made, but there needs to be a proper consultation on what the wider youth want, and that is what SMBC are doing. SMBC want the PC to be on board with the proposed facility, but the PC needs to know that there has first been a proper consultation.

Councillor Trevor Eames summarised the history of the proposal – that a sum of money has been provided for facilities for younger people. A MUGA was originally proposed for the Bellway site, but there are problems if such a facility is in the midst of a residential site – residents will object. The school has an all weather pitch which should have been available for community use, but there was so much opposition from local residents that the planners put in many restrictions and so it is not really used. The proposed community facility at the school would be managed by the school, and have restricted hours of use. There has been no real look at accessibility and who would use the facility. The funds are there for an accessible youth/community facility – but only the school and Scouts are known to want to use it. It would close at 9pm, and if it's not available for community letting – where would any income come from? If a planning application were to be submitted for this current proposal – there would probably be a lot of opposition to it.

The Scout Leader pointed out that Borough Councillor Richard Holt had said that a youth facility has been under discussion for 12 years now. A lot of talking has been done, but anti-social behaviour is rising – who can do something about this?

Councillor Alan Scholes said that the school would use the proposed facility, but would the wider community use it? That's why a consultation is needed.

Councillor Maureen Holloway said that she has lived in Dickens Heath for 17 years, she has the same frustrations, and it is not the Parish Council's intention to hamper this decision. But 17 year olds will not want to go somewhere that shuts at 9pm. It could be a very expensive mistake, but SMBC are currently progressing the consultation. And a lot of the young people behaving anti socially in the village don't actually live here. Councillor Holloway suggested discussing where else a Scout hut might be situated.

Councillor Eames said that there is only one pot of money to provide recreational facilities. The Parish Council has put in a petition asking that a footpath be provided up to Dickens Heath Sports Club – for existing and new use – and the PC have explained that this is nothing to do with any proposed youth facility. Solihull MBC officers are currently looking at the feasibility of the site for the provision of some sort of facility, and they will report on this by the end of the financial year. They need to get the provision right and the location right. The Scout Leader agreed that everyone needed to work together to get a proper consultation done.

Speed Limit at New Development

The Village has expanded with the new developments, and there is no 30mph speed limit sign before entering the village at Dykens Way. The 30mph sign needs to be moved further out of the village. Councillor Trevor Eames confirmed that if there are street lights, then the speed limit is 30mph unless there are signs to say otherwise. The Parish Council will ask Matt Gardner of SMBC if the 30mph sign can be moved to before the turn into Dykens Way.

Minute 85 (2017/18) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None.

Minute 86 (2017/18) Report from the Borough Councillors

None.

Minute 87 (2017/18) Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday July 11th 2017

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

Minute 88 (2017/18) Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday August 22nd 2017

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

Minute 89 (2017/18) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meeting

Parish Councillor Surgery

This has been booked with the Library, notices have been advertised, and Councillors Trevor Eames and Doreen Wright will attend the first one.

Development of Site Towards Shirley

Councillor Eames confirmed that there is no developer as yet linked with this site.

Cleansing of Pavements

The pavements around the islands have not been kept cleaned in the last year, and are as bad as they were a year ago. A meeting to be arranged with Solihull MBC officers to discuss future arrangements.

Dangerous Parking alongside the Village Green

This to be raised again with Matt Gardner of SMBC.

Minute 90 (2017/18) Planning Applications

It was agreed that no comment should be made on planning application 2017/02293 for The Uplands, as it has no adverse impact.

An additional planning application – 2017/01880 – for Akamba was also discussed. Akamba are regularising something that is already there, and there have been no complaints. There is an increase in car parking and an increase in local employment. It is a local attraction, and it was agreed that the Parish Council would register their support for this.

Minute 91 (2017/18) Dickens Heath in Bloom and Floral Displays

Trish Willetts, In Bloom judge, has been invited to the October Parish Council meeting, and an appeal will then be made for volunteers for next Spring. Councillor Alan Scholes has installed the flower boxes on the island at Waterside, these were donated by Elegant Homes. Councillors Maureen Holloway and Doreen Wright have filled and planted up the flower boxes. The island at Waterside and its pavements have been cleansed – the Parish Council thanked Solihull MBC for this.

Simon had started painting the village planters, but has been finding it difficult to fit in the painting along with litter picking. It was agreed that the Clerk should get in touch with a painter who has done work locally, with a view to getting the rest of the planters painted.

Minute 92 (2017/18) Remembrance Sunday Service and Installation of Memorial Memorial

The payment of the balance for the memorial stone was agreed (approximately £250) and the design of the plaque, and payment for it, was also approved.

Remembrance Sunday Service

The Clerk has completed the paperwork for the road closures, and forwarded it to SMBC. Extended road closures have been requested, and although not yet formally approved, initial indications from SMBC are that the closures should be fine. Extended road closures will necessitate additional signage, and it was agreed, if the closures are approved, that the necessary large framed signs should be purchased.

Rev. Theresa Jones of St Patrick's and Andrew Simpkins of Dickens Heath Church are liaising over the service, and Adam Weber has indicated that his brother will probably be willing to play the Last Post once again.

Dickens Heath Management Co. have a supply of barriers, and it was agreed that the Clerk should ask if the PC could borrow some of their barriers for the road closures.

As has been the case for the past few years, it was agreed that 2 wreaths be ordered from the British Legion for a donation of £100, Fastaid be invited to cover the First Aid, the Police Specials be invited, and Coffee Cloud be asked if they can provide refreshments after the service.

Minute 93 (2017/18) Update on Solihull Local Plan (SLP) Review

The draft of the Solihull Local Plan Review is now expected to be published in Winter 2017, with the Examination in Public taking place in Autumn 2018. The Parish Council is waiting for the Plan to be published, there is pressure on SMBC to include higher numbers of housing. A Neighbourhood Plan for Dickens Heath will have to wait as it must be in line with the SLP, otherwise the work may have to be done twice.

Minute 94 (2017/18) Maintenance of Islands

The island at Brixfield Way has a lot of weeds, and Councillor Doreen Wright has been weeding a couple of the other islands. It was agreed that the Solihull Rangers should be asked to come and respray the islands that they planted out, and the Parish Council will pay if necessary.

Minute 95 (2017/18) Welcome to the Village Signs

Councillor Alan Scholes has produced some designs of the proposed gates and where they would be situated. The Parish Council agreed that they preferred the gates with the Welcome sign on one side of the road and a plain gate on the other side – to be situated just after the SLOW sign on the road, just past the Miller and Carter. It was agreed that the next step was to speak to Matt Gardner of SMBC on progressing this.

Minute 96 (2017/18) Youth Group

The Parish Council has received notification that the Youth Group may not be able to continue due to a lack of volunteers. There is a meeting tomorrow to discuss this, and Councillor Doreen Wright will be attending.

Minute 97 (2017/18) Village Playground

Caroline Spelman MP has forwarded to the PC a copy of a letter that she has received from Michael Johnson of Dickens Heath Management Co.(DHMC), which confirms that the PC has offered to negotiate to buy the Village Green and playground, but that the Receivers have not replied.

It was also noted that the gate to the Village Green on Old Dickens Heath Rd is looking a bit unstable – DHMC to be notified.

Councillor Doreen Wright asked that DHMC also be contacted about an insecure wooden building at the entrance to the car park opposite the Doctors' Surgery, it is currently unlocked.

Minute 98 (2017/18) Solar Christmas Trees

Many of the solar Christmas trees failed intermittently last year, the Parish Council expect the problem to have now been rectified. The new owners of Plantscape, TCL, had agreed a discount of 25% for our order for Christmas 2017. It was agreed that the same solar Christmas trees as last year should be ordered, with a quote initially requested.

Minute 99 (2017/18) Village Litter Picks

The monthly village litter picks have come to an end due to a lack of community support. It was agreed that maybe one-off litter picks would have more success, as the first of the litter picks was actually very successful.

Minute 100 (2017/18) Traders' Temporary Parking

Of the traders' temporary underground parking spaces, 28 spaces have now been removed as Elegant Homes are now working on the car park. Elegant Homes should be able to provide another 15 spaces soon which should be enough for those regularly using the spaces

Minute 101 (2017/18) Sign for Waterside

Dickens Heath Management Co. have agreed to provide a small sign including a 'Mission Statement' suggested by residents at Waterside. It was agreed that the Parish Council would ask DHMC if they would allow a larger sign (A3) to be put up at Waterside, and if so the Parish Council will look into the cost.

Minute 102 (2017/18) Councillors who have attended Outside Groups or EventsSolihull Area Committee (SAC) Meeting and AGM in July 2017

Police Chief Supt Basid Javid did a presentation, and lots of issues were raised. Police officers cover the West Midlands based on where problems are. So he has less officers in Solihull, they are 'borrowed' to deal with problems elsewhere. Areas with a lot of crime get priority, particularly crime against people. A lot of Solihull is a low risk area, and so residents don't get the resources they pay for. Other aspects of Policing were discussed – for example Specials and Volunteer Policing. He said that Specials, although a 'free' resource, do have training costs that are quite high, and they only work a limited number of hours. Parish Council representatives asked whether the Police would be supportive of volunteer police, and there was no real answer. Police officers on the beat are very expensive.

Meeting with Richborough Estates

Members of the Parish Council met with representatives of Richborough Estates to discuss a possible public information event to inform residents about their proposed plans for new development locally. The Richborough proposal is expected to be included in the Solihull Local Plan when it is published later this year. However, as there is still some uncertainty, the representatives of Richborough wish to wait until SMBC have published the comments received in response to the SLP consultation. They did comment that SMBC have received objections to just about every site that has been put forward.

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 12th September 2017

Signature.....

Date.....

Minute 103 (2017/18) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Wright, seconded by Councillor Potter, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the September 12th 2017 Agenda be approved – 23 payments for August totalling £14,235.58 and 22 payments for September totalling £6,591.08 including additional payments of £11.94 to Opus for gas, £360.00 to Grant Thornton for the External Audit, £1,318.43 to ADT for the annual line rental and intruder alarm system, £181.20 for the plaque for the memorial and £80.00 for plants and compost for the flower boxes at Waterside island.

The Parish Council asked the Clerk to notify Plantscape that next week should be the final week of watering, and so the payment to Plantscape for watering in September will be prorated down.

Councillor Di Potter verified that the bank reconciliation matched the bank statement.

Minute 104 (2017/18) Parish Councillor Vacancy

It was agreed that the Vacancy for Co-option should be advertised the next day, with a closing date that is just before the October meeting. A decision can be taken then on how to proceed.

Minute 105 (2017/18) Parish Rooms

None.

Minute 106 (2017/18) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

These were approved.

Minute 107 (2017/18) CorrespondenceOvergrown Bushes on Approach to Whitlocks End

These have now been cut back.

WALC Courses

It was agreed that the Clerk could attend the WALC courses on Data Protection/Freedom of Information and End of Year Financial Procedures.

Issues at Dickens Manor

A resident has complained about children behaving in an anti-social manner on the Bellway site. Wendy Shale, our local PCSO, will contact this resident, and has asked whether the Parish Council or Youth Group would be prepared to engage with these children. The Parish Council don't feel that they are best placed to do youth engagement.

Suggestion of a Farmers' Market or Christmas Fayre on the Village Green

It was agreed that the PC would look at this suggestion for 2018.

St Patrick's Church

St Patrick's Church is, of September 1st 2017, officially a new parish covering Dickens Heath, Monkspath, Cheswick Green and part of Earlswood. Rev Julie Humphries' formal induction to the 'new' post of vicar will take place on Sunday October 1st 2017.

Violent Car Crime

An email has been received from a resident asking for support in appealing to the Police for more resources to deal with all the violent car crime currently taking place in the area. Unfortunately, as shown in the summary of the SAC meeting, the Police statistics show that reported crime in Solihull is comparatively low, and therefore more resources will be deployed to those areas where reported crime is much higher.

Minute 108 (2017/18) Items for Next Agenda

None.

Minute 109 (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 110 (2017/18) Community Facilities
Deferred.

Minute 111 (2017/18) Library
This was discussed.

Meeting ended 9.35pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday October 10th 2017: 7.00pm The Parish Rooms