

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday September 15th 2015 in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

Present:

Dickens Heath Parish Councillors; Philip Brandum, Robert Cudmore,
Stephen Gussin (Chairman), Maureen Holloway, Diane Potter, Doreen Wright.

6 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 103 (2015/16) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were accepted from Councillor Trevor Eames .

Minute 104 (2015/16) Public Participation

Highway Issues/Parking

Tythe Barn Lane

Traffic calming is needed on Tythe Barn Lane – Solihull MBC are due to be putting in additional double yellow lines and timed parking restrictions around the school. By the sports fields, the Parish Council have in the past asked SMBC to look at further traffic calming measures, but they have not been prepared to change what is in place.

Additional Traffic and Parking Pressures

The new developments will bring another 200 houses, and the resulting cars will bring additional parking problems. The Parish Council shares residents' concerns about this, but we do not have a choice – the Parish Council challenged the timing of the developments but couldn't stop them. Residents feel that time restricted parking in the car parks would help, but the car parks are owned by the liquidators.

20 mph Speed Limits in the Village

This is raised regularly by residents. Solihull MBC have been carrying out some pilot schemes, but currently do not have the funding to complete their 3rd pilot. It was noted that some cameras are being brought into the Borough which measure average speed.

Village Maintenance/Litter

Litter

The village is starting to look shabby. Stephen, the Parish Council litter picker, comments that he will litter pick roads but by the time he goes along them again on his way home – there is again litter on them. It is an on-going problem, a lot of litter seems to be thrown from cars, and it is particularly bad after the bins have been emptied. All agreed that the litter picking hours funded by the Parish Council should be increased to 8 hours per week. Councillor Bob Cudmore and Stephen, our litter picker, to monitor the worst thoroughfares.

Maintenance of Traffic Islands

The islands are also looking shabby, the Parish Council is currently advertising for businesses that may be interested in sponsoring an island.

Garden Squares II

Elegant Homes have exchanged contracts, but not yet completed. In terms of parking, Elegant Homes plan to add spaces wherever they can around Tesco and the old Parkridge offices, although behind Mortons there is an overall loss in parking spaces to the new apartments in Parkridge House. They intend to speak formally to the Parish Council once the purchase is completed.

Other Issues

On Facebook there has been a questionnaire about support for a business hub in the library, which is with regard to making better use of the library facilities. There is nothing concrete yet. The Parish Council met with senior SMBC library officers 3 months ago – the Clerk to ask whether there has been any progress.

Minute 105 (2015/16) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None.

Minute 106 (2015/16) Whether to Elect a Vice Chair

All agreed that it was not necessary to elect a Vice Chair at the moment.

Minute 107 (2015/16) Gardening/Landscaping Issues

Behind Tesco, cars are still driving over the area which will be grassed over. Matt Gardner has suggested placing 2 more planters there if the Parish Council will agree to maintain them. All agreed this, and it was suggested that the Scouts might like to maintain one of the planters.

The Conservation Area is owned by Solihull MBC, Councillor Doreen Wright suggested that the Woodland Trust may be willing to donate some trees that the Scouts could then plant in the Conservation Area. All agreed that the Clerk should ask SMBC whether this would be possible.

The cycle lane/'parking space' by the GP surgery is a problem, a bike sign on the road is probably not sufficient - the space between the lines needs to be narrower as well. The Clerk to follow this up.

Minute 108 (2015/16) Minutes of previous meeting held on Thursday August 27th 2015

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

Minute 109 (2015/16) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meetingParish Rooms Electricity Contract

The contract has failed to move to British Gas yet, and we are now being billed at out of contract rates by Npower. British Gas have accepted that this is their fault, and have agreed to reimburse the additional cost.

Memorial

There has still been no reply from SMBC Planning regarding how to progress this. It was agreed that the Clerk should refer this to a senior officer.

Christmas Decorations at Clock Island

Solihull MBC will not allow a Christmas tree in between the 2 planters – on safety grounds. They have suggested alternative lights by accessing lamp posts' power supply, but this is much more costly than the solar lamp post Christmas trees. It was agreed that the Clerk should continue to research alternative solar powered decorations.

Bellway Site Road Names

Bellway have asked whether the Parish Council can suggest any road names that may be used. Suggestions included names of trees, names of people associated with the area, or asking the school to ask the children – although there may not be enough time for this.

Maintenance of Traffic Islands

The treatment of moss/weeds and cutting back of overgrown hedges is included in the SMBC Autumn programme, they don't have the funds to do any more than this unless it is urgent.

Gorcott Lane Fence

Between the Chalice and the last house, the fence is falling over. This belongs to the Receivers, but will belong to Elegant Homes. The Clerk to reiterate the Parish Council's concern that this is a potential health and safety risk.

Flooding Risk from Additional Development

The Canal and River Trust have confirmed that they will, for a charge, assist developers in disposing of excess water into the canal.

Village Green/Playground

There has still been no response to the Parish Council's offer for this. The Parish Council agreed that they would be willing to pay for any associated legal fees, as long as they are reasonable. Michael Johnson at DHMC is following this up. The playground inspection is due in September and it was acknowledged that some of the play equipment may not pass.

Minute 110 (2015/16) Planning Applications

No comments.

Minute 111 (2015/16) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Holloway, seconded by Councillor Brandum, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the September 15th 2015 Agenda be approved – 18 cheques and 1 direct debit totalling £7,725.52. This included additional cheques for £360 to Grant Thornton for the 2014/15 external audit, and £1,230.78 to ADT for the line charge and monitoring of the intruder alarm for 2015/16.

The Parish Council currently has a surplus of £84,000 and is projecting a surplus of almost £74,000 at the year end.

Minute 112 (2015/16) Reports from Councillors who attended any outside eventsLowbrook Farm Appeal

Councillors Maureen Holloway and Doreen Wright attended the Tidbury Green Lowbrook Farm Appeal meeting. Solihull MBC have not come out of this very well. The correct number of houses that should be included in the Solihull Local Plan was debated. SMBC will have to review the SLP in November – regarding the number of houses they should include plus what will need to be included for Birmingham.

Solihull Connected – Planning Transport in the Borough

Several of the Parish Councillors also attended the Solihull Connected event, which was very interesting and involved members of neighbouring Parish Councils – one of whom suggested that they were not in support of an extension to the Whitlocks End car park because it was bringing people from too far afield.

Minute 113 (2015/16) Youth/Community Project

There has been no recent update from Chris Barr about the proposed roadshow. The Clerk to chase this up.

Minute 114 (2015/16) Remembrance Sunday

The Chairman will be meeting with Rev Julie Humphries of Salter St and Andrew Simpkins of Dickens Heath Village Church to discuss arrangements for the Remembrance Service. It was agreed that the Clerk should order the usual 2 wreaths from the British Legion for a donation of £100. It was also agreed that the Clerk should contact Fastaid with regard to First Aid cover and ask the Police whether the Specials could once again attend. All agreed that Coffee Cloud be asked to provide refreshments for after the service. One difficulty may be the borrowing of barriers for the road closures. It was suggested that the Clerk ask SMBC for advice.

Minute 115 (2015/16) Proposed Additional Parking Restrictions

Solihull MBC have proposed additional parking restrictions in 5 locations around the village. All agreed that these were fine.

Minute 116 (2015/16) Dickens Heath Management Co. Lease

Deferred.

Minute 117 (2015/16) Parish Rooms

No issues.

Minute 118 (2015/16) Action Plan for Next 5 Years

A first draft to be put together before the next meeting. Councillor Maureen Holloway to arrange for a valuation of the Parish Rooms.

Minute 119 (2015/16) Correspondence

Rural Newsletter

PC Sharon Grant reports that a lot of work has been done regarding quad bikes on the open space area at Griffin Lane, and Police patrols of the Nature Reserve. The current gate was designed to allow wheelchair access, but also allows quad bikes to enter. Talks are taking place with the developer to resolve this. There has also been a successful prosecution for an owner not picking up their dog's waste – this to be publicized.

Resident's Email – Ongoing Issues in Dickens Heath

A request to see the anti social behaviour that has been occurring on the Village Green tackled. It was agreed that a meeting should be set up with the Solihull MBC ASB officer, and Councillor Brandum will look into possible solutions.

Minute 120 (2015/16) Items for next agenda

Village Survey.

Minute 121 (2015/16) 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 122 (2015/16) Parish Councillors' Privileged Information

Solihull MBC advice regarding confidential information received by Parish Councillors.

Meeting ended 9.20 pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday October 20th 2015: 7.00pm The Parish Rooms