

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 24th May 2011 at 7pm, Dickens Heath Village Hall

Present:

Dickens Heath Parish Councillors; Vaseem Arfan, Philip Brandum, Robert Cudmore, Alyson Glenn, Richard Holt (Chairman).

Borough Councillors: Ken Hawkins

3 representatives from the police

2 representatives from University of the Third Age

1 member of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

1. Apologies for Absence

SMBC Councillor Brian Burgess.

2. Report from the Parish Council Chairman – Richard Holt

The Chairman welcomed everybody and gave a summary of the Parish Council's achievements and particular highlights of 2010/11. These included the establishment of the gardening club, the new Parish Council website, the bimonthly news page in the Dickens Heath Directory, the inaugural marking of Remembrance Day in the village and the purchase of the Parish Council Rooms at Wharf House. The Chairman also summarised Parish Council plans for 2011/12 – the lamp post floral decorations which will arrive in June, the village noticeboard which has now been ordered, the proposed village clock for the roundabout at the entrance to the village, and the hope that the Parish Council Rooms will enhance community spirit in the village and may become a base where groups such as University of the Third Age can flourish.

3. Minutes of the Previous Year's Meeting held on May 26th 2010

These were accepted as a true and accurate record, proposed by Councillor Glenn and seconded by Councillor Arfan.

4. Annual Accounts for the year to 31st March 2011

These were provided for information.

5. Presentation by Janice Anderson and Eileen Ward of University of the Third Age

Introduction

University of the Third Age is overseen by the Third Age Trust. It was set up in 1981 in Cambridge by some academics nearing retirement, with a principle of 'mutual learning'. There are 800 groups in the UK with 250,000 members and it is very fast growing. Each group is a charity and run by volunteers, for people who are no longer in full time work and wish to pursue learning for fun. There are 11 groups in Solihull, and 2 more being set up. Groups are self funding and have complete autonomy.

Groups

Each group will run activity groups (depending on members' interests), general meetings, visits to places of interest and social events. The Dorridge group has 41 activity groups, and most meet monthly in members' homes if a small group. 3 general meetings are held each month in the village hall. There will be a speaker, who is either a member or from outside. Visits to places of interest include for example National Trust properties, and social events may include holidays, lunches and theatre trips.

How Members Benefit

The aim is that members benefit from fun and fellowship, they make new friends, there is a wide range of opportunities for informal learning which complements existing community activities and new interests can be developed. U3A is very informal and no qualifications are expected.

What Next?

To set up a new group, the parish council would need to:

- Advertise the possibility of a new U3A
- Call a public meeting to gauge interest
- Call a second meeting to form a steering group
- 'off you go'
- local and national support is available
- the national website has lots of information

Castle Bromwich have set up a new group with the support of the parish council. There were 20/30 people at the first meeting.

Costs

Costs are relatively low. U3A is independent of government, so there is no government funding. There is some start up money available, and then it is run on a subscription basis. In Dorridge, subscriptions are £13 a year which covers the hire of the hall and refreshments. Some individual groups, for example – badminton, levy a charge for hall hire etc. So it is inexpensive.

Ages

This tends to be 55 upwards, but there are no age limits.

The Chairman thanked Janice and Eileen very much.

6. District Borough Councillors Invited to Speak

Councillor Ken Hawkins introduced himself as the newly elected Borough Councillor for Blythe.

7. Issues of Particular Local Importance

Provision for young people was discussed, and whether local young people could be surveyed on what they want. Options suggested were to send a survey into the local secondary schools, or to ask for a youth rep on the Parish Council. The police representatives gave an update on crime in Dickens Heath, anti social behaviour is a lot better than it used to be.

Meeting ended 8pm

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Signature.....

Date.....

