

Parish Council News – May 2016

Parish Council Meetings

The Parish Council's next meeting is on Tuesday May 17th 2016 at 7pm in the Parish Rooms. Please come and join us.

Chairman's Review of the Year 2015/16

This has been a busy and eventful year for the Parish Council with a great deal of local issues to deal with. We have all worked hard behind the scenes in the last 12 months to better our village and its surroundings. I would personally like to thank all of the other Councillors for their hard work and effort.

We are in the early stages of production of a Neighbourhood Plan, this will be an essential tool in ensuring that residents can influence the future of Dickens Heath in many different ways, including how future development takes place. The Neighbourhood Plan is a major piece of work involving several experts and advisors, it will involve the community at all levels of the process. If anyone is interested in assisting us, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

The year has seen significant progress on some issues that we have been working on for some time. We have come to an agreement with SMBC regarding the treatment of the slippery block paving around the islands. This is currently undergoing a deep cleanse and will be followed by monthly manual brushing to ensure that the paving stays free from any build up. Finally three of the islands are due to be replanted, which will include low maintenance planting that will look good throughout the year. We have continued to try to enhance the appearance of the village – for example - 4 additional planters arrived in the autumn and a large number of bulbs have been planted on the kidney shaped island.

We were very pleased that the uncertainty over the Garden Squares II site came to an end with its acquisition by Elegant Homes. Parking difficulties in the village centre have caused particular concern for residents and businesses this year, and members of the Parish Council have taken this up on your behalf and have been in continual contact with planners, advisors and SMBC's legal department.

Plans for the memorial are making progress with a planning application currently lodged with SMBC. Their officers are also due to visit the proposed sites for the Welcome to Dickens Heath signs.

Litter and dog waste have again been regularly brought to our attention, and we keep in close touch with SMBC and the Dickens Heath Management Company to deal with this, but have also taken the decision to increase the hours of the Parish Council's own village handyman to provide an enhanced litter picking service. Simon, a Dickens Heath resident, has been recently appointed.

In terms of issues for the wider Parish area, the Parish Council has supported Centro's proposal for an extension to the Whitlocks End train station car park, this is now at the pre planning consultation stage.

The Parish Rooms continue to be used for a wide variety of activities - including coffee mornings for retired residents, a lace group, a guitar cafe, youth club, children's Pop Choir and a table tennis club. We are also pleased to have held, in partnership with the 2 local churches, another successful Remembrance Service – this year held in front of the Village

Hall on the Village Green to accommodate the many beavers and cubs from the new Dickens Heath Scouts group.

We have approved several requests for financial assistance during 2015/16. This year we were pleased to provide support for Dickens Heath Sports Club, Dickens Heath FC, Leaffield Under 9s FC, Dickens Heath Scouts, the library, the youth club, and Festival on the Green.

I would again like to thank my fellow Councillors for their hard work in the community during the past year. More importantly a special thank you to the village residents and those of you who attend our monthly meetings. Your involvement and input is critical to our village' s success and very much appreciated.

Stephen Gussin

Chairman, Dickens Heath Parish Council.

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