

Dickens Heath Parish Council News

Recent News:



The Parish Council meets at 7.30pm, usually on the second Tuesday of every month, in one of the classrooms at Dickens Heath Community Primary School. The next meeting will be on Tuesday 8th February 2011 and then Tuesday 8th March 2011, please come and join us!

Action Against Poverty Strategy for Solihull Borough

The Child Poverty Act requires all councils to develop a strategy for tackling child poverty. In Solihull, the strategy will look at all households living in poverty (including those without children) and will look at all aspects of poverty and the effect it can have on individuals and neighbourhoods in terms of health, education, unemployment and housing.

At the Parish Council meeting on March 8th, Jan Phillips of Solihull MBC talked about 'poverty in Solihull' - not two words you might associate together maybe?

The discussion was very informative - there are many pockets of deprivation in Solihull and, dare I say, there is something of a social stigma to the subject in our area? Think about the teenager who has fallen out with their parents and now finds him/herself sleeping over at a friend's house, no longer welcome at home. They may not be selling the 'Big Issue' but are homeless, and slip beneath the radar. Think about the white collar worker who has worked since uni/school and now finds that they are redundant - the current recession has hit hard the middle management sector unlike the previous recessions that dealt a heavy blow to manufacturing blue collar workers. For homeowners the impact of loss of income can be catastrophic, with home repossession and children having to move schools.

One of the key issues for local residents who find themselves in difficult times is to get the best advice possible in respect of state benefits. Jan mentioned the mortgage rescue scheme and the range of state benefits that are available to keep you afloat:

1. The Solihull MBC website has a 'Money Counts' page - www.solihull.gov.uk/moneycounts - which has been developed with the help of

local organisations to provide advice and tips on a range of money related matters, such as: Budgeting, Benefits, Money and Debt advice, Energy efficiency, a list of useful contacts and advice for business.

2. A Top 10 Tips leaflet is also available from Dickens Heath Library and Solihull Connect office in Library Square, Solihull.
3. The Citizens Advice Bureau has offices in Shirley and Solihull - 0844 826 9716.

So for those of us in difficulty, don't bury your head in the sand, help is at hand. If you find it difficult making contact, feel free to contact our Parish Clerk, Helen, on 07772 469271, who can point you in the right direction.

Parish Rooms

The Parish Council will soon be putting the finishing touches to the fitting out of our Parish Rooms at Waterside on Rumbush Lane. This will provide a location for local residents to meet, socialise and get help in making contact with key stakeholders - I will update you in the next bulletin.

Floral Decorations

Our Gardening Club is going from strength to strength. Despite their hard voluntary work and best efforts in planting out flower boxes next to the traffic island, these were stolen within a couple of weeks - I sincerely hope that the person who took them is alright, after all they must be desperate! We will not be put off however, and have ordered hanging flower boxes for around the traffic island for the summer - our contractor is currently undertaking enquiries with Solihull MBC for 'stress testing' of the lamp posts! I won't make a link with the Library roof, but we have asked for an explanation regarding this matter.

And Finally.....'The Village Clock'

We are asking Solihull MBC and Dickens Heath Working Party about 'The Village Clock' - it was recommended at the last Working Party meeting that a clock be installed on the square about traffic island as you enter Dickens Heath from the canal bridge. We have had no progress report on this and would like to see it installed. The money for this is to come from the Consortium of Builders who put aside money for these village infrastructure items, so it is not coming from the Council Tax. You have paid for it already having bought your property. So next time you meet a Councillor or Officer from Solihull MBC - can you ask them 'Where is the clock please?'

Richard Holt, Chairman