

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday July 17th 2012 at 7.30pm in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

Present:

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

SMBC Councillor; Linda Brown

8 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 41 (2012/13) Apologies for Absence

Councillor Arfan has tendered his resignation as a Parish Councillor as of today.

Minute 42 (2012/13) Public Participation

Unmaintained State of the Village

Many residents are concerned about the unmaintained state of the roads and traffic islands. The Chairman explained that the Parish Council are also very concerned and have expressed this to the Chief Executive of Solihull MBC. The problem is that these are unadopted by the Borough Council. The Parish Council has offered to tidy up the islands but is not allowed to because they are privately owned. Residents feel that SMBC needs to act, otherwise why should they pay all of their council tax. There should be insurance backed bonds that SMBC can use in a situation such as this – of a developer going into administration. A petition was discussed, but it was agreed that a standard letter could be produced, with a space for individual comments, that can be posted on the websites. It would also be useful to get the support of the DH businesses. Garden Squares is being marketed with a date of July 20th 2012 for final bids. It was agreed that the PC Chairman would again write to SMBC, and that an article would be placed in the September Dickens Heath Directory.

Griffin Lane Development

Following the Taylor Wimpey exhibition, there is still concern – that houses won't fit in with the rest of Griffin Lane, car parking will be a problem, and about the type of affordable housing. It was agreed that shared ownership or affordable bungalows for low income elderly would be preferable.

Proposed Gypsy/Traveller Site at The Uplands, Dickens Heath Rd

The pitches have been there a long time, but there is concern that the site could get bigger. SMBC have also proposed 43 pitches when only obliged to propose 38. It was felt that unauthorised development should not be supported and that SMBC do not need to include these 3 pitches.

Minute 43 (2012/13) Declarations of Interest

As and when.

Minute 44 (2012/13) To Receive a Report from the Borough Councillors

Councillor Linda Brown gave an update: the repair of the imprinting is again being looked at by SMBC and the cutting back of vegetation is behind schedule due to all the rain. She mentioned that the introduction of parking passes is being looked at in Monkspath and that Public Health Forums will be keen to involve Parish Councillors. She also reminded all about the village litter pick on Saturday July 28th 2012 at 10am.

Minute 45 (2012/13) Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday June 19th 2012

It was proposed by Councillor Cudmore and seconded by Councillor Brandum, **Resolved** that the minutes be approved as a true and accurate record.

Minute 46 (2012/13) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meetingUntidy Traffic Islands

It was agreed that Mike Swallow, Strategic Land Advisor at SMBC, should be contacted about getting the islands tidied up, their appearance can quickly be improved.

Parkridge in Receivership

The Parish Council still would like to see a copy of the agreement between the developers and SMBC for the development of the village – the 'Development Agreement'. It was agreed that the Chief Executive of SMBC should be contacted and invited to a Parish Council meeting.

Stone Carving

Nigel Felton, project manager, is seeking permission from the landlord to install this inside the Parish Rooms.

Boxing Project

The police have recommended this as a successful youth project. A trial session would be needed to see if there would be any interest, and it would need to be marketed. It was agreed that this should be considered for next summer, inviting a representative of the boxing team to a future meeting.

Minute 47 (2012/13) Planning Applications

There were no comments on the one planning application: 11 Brixfield Way – ground floor conservatory.

Minute 48 (2012/13) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Glenn, seconded by Councillor Cudmore. **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the July 17th 2012 agenda be approved,

Direct debit payments to Npower for gas were authorised and the form signed.

The budget for the current financial year was approved, bearing in mind that this will be the first full year which includes the Parish Rooms.

The Clerk reported that the Annual Return has been sent to the External Auditor.

The Community Account was discussed. It was agreed that once all the Jubilee entries have cleared through this account, it should be closed down and the balance transferred into the Parish Council account.

Minute 49 (2012/13) Village Meeting on July 10th 2012 and Complaints from Villagers

Residents are growing more and more unhappy about lack of maintenance in the village, overgrown vegetation, litter, roads and inconsiderate car parking. It was agreed that Mike Swallow at SMBC should be invited to a meeting with the Parish Council to discuss how the decline in the unadopted areas can be halted. The opening up of Old Dickens Heath Road so that traffic flow would be straight into the village centre had been discussed at the village meeting, but the Parish Councillors would not support this.

Minute 50 (2012/13) Internal Auditor's Report

The very positive Internal Auditor's report was noted. Some procedures and regulations to be updated in the coming year.

Minute 51 (2012/13) To Receive any Reports from Councillors who have attended any outside groups or events

Councillor Brandum has attended the Rural Partnership meeting, where neighbourhood planning was discussed. Having considered the practicalities of this, he believes that it is a time consuming and expensive mechanism by which people can obtain power for more development – which must be consistent with the SMBC Local Development Framework. Less development cannot be proposed. The neighbourhood plan must also be checked by an

external assessor followed by a ballot of the population. He believes that this is neither appropriate for Dickens Heath nor a priority.

Minute 52 (2012/13) 1 Wharf House

Another yoga teacher has asked whether she can hold classes during the day – this was agreed.

The possibility of local businesses using the Parish Rooms for a business forum was discussed. Debbie Smith to be contacted for possible advice re the marketing of the Parish Rooms.

Minute 53 (2012/13) Agreement with Solihull MBC for 3 Planters

This was signed – the Parish Council being responsible for the 3 planters.

Minute 54 (2012/13) Gypsy/Traveller Site Allocations – The Uplands, Dickens Heath Rd.

SMBC has proposed sites for 43 pitches when it only needs to provide 38 pitches. It was felt that the 3 sites in Dickens Heath were unnecessary. It was felt that the site is already over used for commercial purposes, with vehicles going in and out, so therefore it is not suitable.

Minute 55 (2012/13) Griffin Lane Development

The Clerk to contact the planning department and check whether the planning application is in and to make the point about a lack of affordable housing for the elderly in Dickens Heath.

Minute 56 (2012/13) Adoption of the New SMBC Code of Conduct

Solihull MBC have approved their new Code of Conduct. At a previous meeting, the Parish Council agreed to adopt this as their code of conduct. Each of the Parish Councillors present signed the new code of conduct. SMBC have also produced a new form for the declaration of pecuniary interests – the Parish Councillors to return these to the Clerk.

Minute 57 (2012/13) Outdoor Fitness Equipment

It was agreed that 1,000 leaflets should be printed to consult residents on whether they would be in support of some outdoor fitness equipment.

Minute 58 (2012/13) Neighbourhood Plan

It was agreed that this was not a priority at the moment and should be reviewed in a year.

Minute 59 (2012/13) Correspondence

Plantscape have forwarded information about mini Christmas trees that are solar powered and can be fitted to the brackets on lamp posts. It was agreed that the minimum of 10 should be ordered – to be grouped.

Minute 60 (2012/13) Resignation of Councillor

It was agreed that a letter of thanks should be sent to Councillor Arfan for his years as a councillor both with Dickens Heath and Hockley Heath Parish Councils. The Clerk to begin the process of advertising the vacancy over the summer.

Minute 61 (2012/13) Items for next agenda

None.

Meeting ended 10.15 pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday September 18th 2012: 7.30pm