

# The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday May 21<sup>st</sup> 2013 at 7pm in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

### **Present:**

**Dickens Heath Parish Councillors;** Philip Brandum, Robert Cudmore, Richard Holt (Chairman), Josh O'Nyons

WPC Sharon Grant

19 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Parish Councillor Glenn, Borough Councillor Brown and Borough Councillor Burgess.

### **2. Minutes of the Previous Year's Meeting held on May 15<sup>th</sup> 2012**

These were accepted as a true and accurate record, proposed by Councillor Holt and seconded by Councillor Cudmore.

### **3. 'Speedwatch'**

WPC Grant outlined her involvement with Speedwatch. It started in 2008, with a pilot in Tidbury Green which took 18 months to get off the ground - and WPC Grant still supports them now.

Some equipment is required, which is provided in a box which costs £385 (the Parish Council is prepared to financially support this). There is a road sign that has to be placed on the roadside to let motorists know what they are doing. Volunteers have to wear hi-viz vests, and they must be visible to motorists. Speedwatch is an education and awareness programme rather than a prosecution programme. Volunteers will need to attend a 2 hour training course with the police - which includes how to speak to people and conflict resolution.

The speed gun provided is not as expensive as a police device, and can only pick up the first car in a convoy, but it is very accurate. Volunteers will also have a tally counter so that they can work out what percentage of cars are speeding, and whether the problem is real or perceived in particular locations.

It is recommended that a group of 4 volunteers work together, with others writing down information on forms which are provided by the police. This information includes the makes and models of cars, which volunteers quickly get used to recognising.

A co-ordinator will be needed, WPC Grant will assist but it is a volunteer led scheme, and the volunteers decide on the locations. Although any proposed locations for volunteers to be based on will need to first be judged as safe by a police trained risk assessor.

Letters to be sent to the registered keepers of speeding cars will be provided by the police, and WPC Grant's details will be on the letter - so that any queries will be dealt with by the police.

For the scheme to be a success, the volunteers will ideally need to go out once a week or at least once a fortnight. The co-ordinator will need to agree timings with the volunteers. It is only a day time initiative, and cannot go ahead in the rain - because of the paperwork required. Volunteers go out for a one hour session, some locations are very busy and the volunteers are constantly writing. As for timings, some volunteers go out at 7am, some go out at 7.30pm during the lighter months.

WPC Grant will go out with the volunteers for the first 8 weeks, to give them confidence and ensure that they are following procedures. After that, she would go out with them every 6 weeks or so.

There are quite a few successful Speedwatch schemes, it does work, and they do see a drop in the number of speeding vehicles.

### **4. Report from the Parish Council Chairman - Richard Holt**

The Chairman welcomed everybody and gave a summary of the Parish Council's achievements

Minutes of Dickens Heath Annual Parish Meeting held Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2013 at 7pm

Signature.....

Date.....

and highlights of 2012/13, along with some of the difficulties and frustrations faced by residents during the year. The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebration was a great success at the beginning of the year; the red, white and blue hanging baskets looked lovely; and the solar Christmas trees that decorated some of the lamp posts were very well received. The Remembrance Day Service and Christmas Carol Singing in the village were well attended occasions. Councillor Josh O’Nyons joined the Parish Council in the Autumn. The weather then brought some difficulties for Dickens Heath and its residents, with several properties at Waterside being damaged by severe flooding. The Parish Rooms are being increasingly used – with yoga for seniors now following on from the Tuesday Club, and the establishment of the Dickens Heath Table Tennis club. Other important issues for the Parish Council have included the continual pursuit of a youth facility or club, and speaking up for local residents with regard to inappropriate planning applications and proposals for development. The Parish Council will continue to support a sense of pride in Dickens Heath and encourage community spirit and a sense of well-being.

**5. Annual Accounts for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013**

These were provided for information.

**6. Issues of Particular Local Importance**

A resident asked about Garden Squares phase 2 – the Parish Councillors understand that it has been sold, but have no further information.

The number of pot holes in the roads was brought up – Solihull MBC have been out to mark many of them, and are prioritising the work.

There was a suggestion that there should be signs indicating where the car parks are in the village centre, and that this would help the businesses – the Parish Council may be able to make a contribution.

**Meeting ended 8 pm**