

Parish Council News – July 2013

Chairman's Review of the Year 2012/13

I am pleased to be able to report on the progress of the Parish Council in Dickens Heath over the last year.

Despite atrocious weather for the Diamond Jubilee in June 2012, the celebrations took place on the village green. A real sense of community spirit was felt with the establishment of the Jubilee Committee – all residents of the village who worked tirelessly to make the occasion success. And we were delighted to welcome the Mayor Cllr Ken Hawkins to our Jubilee Celebrations. Our hanging baskets were well received this year, the internal water tank system seemed to help the baskets along nicely with a great display of colour. The same company also supplied miniature solar Christmas trees for the lampposts, which were quite novel and were also well received.

In September an election was requested and we welcomed Josh O'Nyons as a member to the council. We marked Remembrance Day with a formal act of remembrance in the village centre on Sunday 11th November. We propose to enquire about a formal memorial suitable for the village and will keep you updated in this respect with our plans. Christmas carol singing was very well attended with generous assistance from Tesco, they kept us fed and watered at a very cold time of the year.

The weather played an important role in our civic events this year, with the installation of our new clock and its official opening being postponed due to the extreme snow we experienced in March and a severe flood at Waterside caused by a blocked drain which should flow under the canal. We remain very concerned about this matter and continue to press for information and do what we can to support the plight of those affected by flooding.

The Parish Rooms are becoming well used for community use, something that my colleagues and I have been keen to support. Examples include: the Tuesday Club for our retired residents - an opportunity to meet over a coffee and share common interests, and yoga for seniors which now follows on from the Tuesday Club (with some of these sessions being free of charge). Community pay back from commercial interests by offering a free session has proven to be popular. The Dickens Heath table tennis club has been established this year – with a session for juniors on Mondays in the early evening, and sessions for adults on Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons.

We set ourselves the target of engaging with our young people and are exploring with our local partners a site for a youth facility and the possibility of a youth club - any volunteers would be very welcome. We have pressed Centro to sort out the path adjacent to Whitlocks End Railway station and the dangerous blind bend and inability to safely cross from Tythe Barn Lane towards the station, especially in the dark winter nights - we are told this is work in progress. We remain vigilant to tackle inappropriate planning applications, despite the pressure to build and meet SMBC targets for their local plan, we remain seriously concerned that the centre of Dickens Heath should be completed and allowed to

settle before more planning disruption is caused.

We have taken action in employing a village handyman, Mike, who is engaged for a few hours per week for general litter picking and maintenance. Whilst not a substitute for the service we should expect from Solihull MBC it will help us to respond to annoying items and ensure the pressure is kept up. If you have any concerns let us know and we will see what we can do.

We need to continue our incremental improvements to Dickens Heath, to continue to support a sense of pride in our area, engender community spirit and a sense of well-being, and that is our aim for the coming year.

Next Meeting Dates

The Parish Council meets at 7.30pm, on the third Tuesday of most months, in the Parish Rooms, Waterside, off Rumbush Lane. The next meeting will be on Tuesday 16th July 2013, and then Tuesday 17th September 2013 - please come and join us!

Richard Holt, Chairman.

Contact Us:

If you would like to get in touch, please contact Parish Clerk – Helen Marczak on 07772 469271, by emailing dickensheathpc@hotmail.com, or at 1 Wharf House, Waterside, Dickens Heath, Solihull B90 1UE.