

# The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday March 18<sup>th</sup> 2014 at 7.30pm in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

**Present:**

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

10 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

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**Minute 150 (2013/14) Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were later received from Councillor Glenn who was unwell.

**Minute 151 (2013/14) Public Participation**

Chicane by Dickens Heath School

Traffic from Rumbush Lane is too fast for cars to get through in the other direction. At rush hour this is a particular problem with a lot of frustrated motorists. Residents and the Parish Council feel that a village wide 20mph speed limit would be better than all the humps and chicanes – which are unpopular with residents and cause more pollution.

Parking Restrictions

Many residents in apartments have only 1 parking space, but 2 cars, and are now struggling to park in the evenings. The private underground car parks are generally under-utilized. The conversion of the Parkridge offices into apartments has been approved – this will mean the loss of around 15 parking spaces in the centre of the village. Parking is a serious problem.

Radio Controlled Model Club

A resident would like to set up such a club in Dickens Heath. For model aircraft, a suitable place to fly them would need to be identified – such as the meadow by the nature reserve. Other suggestions included the local sports clubs or farmers’ fields. The Clerk to provide relevant contact details.

Trees on Dickens Heath Road

Three trees at Dickens Heath Road/Cleobury Lane have been chopped down. The Clerk to contact Solihull MBC regarding any Tree Preservation Orders.

Wooden Steps by the Canal to Dickens Heath Road

Taylor Wimpey are in the process of negotiating the adoption of public space, including these wooden steps, by Solihull MBC. Since they are in an unsafe condition, Taylor Wimpey would prefer to remove the steps completely and would like the Parish Council’s views. The Parish Council agreed that they need further information on the location of these steps.

**Minute 152 (2013/14) Gardening Club**

The barren look of the clock island was discussed again, and it was agreed that the Clerk ask Plantscape for ideas for floral decorations without impeding visibility – such as baskets fixed to the base of the railings.

**Minute 153 (2013/14) Minutes of previous meeting held on February 18<sup>th</sup> 2014**

It was proposed by Councillor O’Nyons and seconded by Councillor Holt, **Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday February 18<sup>th</sup> 2014 be approved as a true and accurate record.

**Minute 154 (2013/14) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meeting**Brockhurst Lane Pedestrian Safety Proposal

Councillor Holt declared a personal interest as a resident of Brockhurst Lane.

Parish Councillors are meeting with SMBC officers on March 24<sup>th</sup> 2014 to discuss this. It was agreed that small bollards at the end of the current footpath would deter children from walking or cycling straight out into the road.

The Chalice

The Parish Council have been pleased to see that notices asking customers to be considerate about noise late in the evening have been reinstated.

Request for Grant towards Replacement Playground Equipment on the Village Green

This was refused at the previous Parish Council meeting. However, given that the playground is for the benefit of all village residents, Dickens Heath Management Co. don't feel that the businesses and residents of the apartments who pay a service charge should be expected to foot the complete bill for replacing the playground equipment. It was agreed that Councillor Brandum should discuss this further with the Dickens Heath Management Co.

Plantscape

The hanging baskets for this year, and the solar Xmas trees for later in 2014 have been ordered.

Welcome to the Village Signs

These have been included in the SMBC Rural Action Plan 2014/15.

Whitlocks End pedestrian crossing

Work has commenced on this.

Woodlands Trust Tree Planting

SMBC will allow DH Guides to plant trees in the nature reserve, subject to agreeing the number and type of trees.

SMBC Housing Allocation Scheme

The scheme does cover people moving into the Borough for employment reasons.

**Minute 155 (2013/14) Planning Applications**

No comments on the planning applications.

The Solihull News have asked for a comment from the Parish Council regarding the now approved conversion of the Parkridge Offices into apartments. It was agreed that the Clerk draft a press release stating that the Parish Council is extremely concerned at the resulting net loss of 15 available parking spaces in the village centre, which could affect trade in Dickens Heath.

**Minute 156 (2013/14) Financial Matters**

Proposed by Councillor O'Nyons, seconded by Councillor Cudmore, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the March 18<sup>th</sup> 2014 agenda be approved.

It was agreed that Bill Robinson be appointed internal auditor.

The finance report currently shows a surplus of £54,488, and the end of year position is likely to be in the region of a surplus of £50,000. Some of these funds will be available to fund a village memorial in 2014/15 and possibly pay off some of the loan from the Public Works Loans Board.

**Minute 157 (2013/14) WWI Commemoration**

It was agreed that the Clerk ask WALC if there is any national day of commemoration, and ask SMBC if there is any local commemoration.

**Minute 158 (2013/14) Annual Parish Meeting**

It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting should be held on the same evening as the May Parish Council meeting. For personal reasons, the Clerk asked if the date of the meetings could be changed from May 20<sup>th</sup>. It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting, and the May Parish Council meeting, now be held on May 27<sup>th</sup> 2014.

**Minute 159 (2013/14) Parish Rooms**

A resident asked whether they could use the Parish Rooms to hold a children's party. A majority of Parish Councillors felt that private children's parties were not an appropriate use of the Parish Rooms, and therefore should be declined.

It was agreed that a breast feeding group could meet in the Parish Rooms.

The cleaners are increasing the cost of a fortnightly clean from £30 to £35. This was agreed.

**Minute 160 (2013/14) Ongoing References**Youth Club

The youth club has been presented with a cheque for further funding of £325. The club continues to be a success.

**Minute 161 (2013/14) Correspondence**Payments by Cheque

The requirement for Parish Councils to make all payments by cheque signed by 2 Councillors has been repealed, this will allow legal internet banking. The Clerk to draft new financial regulations in due course.

Public Right to Record Local Council Meetings

The Clerk to seek advice from WALC.

**Minute 162 (2013/14) Items for Next Agenda**

None.

**Meeting ended 9.25 pm**

**Next Meeting : Tuesday April 15<sup>th</sup> 2014: 7.30pm**