

# The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday February 13<sup>th</sup> 2018 in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

### Present:

**Dickens Heath Parish Councillors;** Trevor Eames, Maureen Holloway (Chair), David Jones, Nargis Rashid, Alan Scholes, Doreen Wright.

No members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

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### **Minute 186 (2017/18) Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were accepted from Councillor Di Potter.

### **Minute 187 (2017/18) Public Participation**

None.

### **Minute 188 (2017/18) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations**

None.

### **Minute 189 (2017/18) Report from the Borough Councillors**

None.

### **Minute 190 (2017/18) Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday January 9<sup>th</sup> 2018**

Proposed by Councillor Rashid, seconded by Councillor Wright, it was **Resolved** that the minutes be approved as a true and accurate record.

### **Minute 191 (2017/18) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meeting**

#### In Bloom

The seminar date is March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018.

#### Solihull Local Plan Review

There has been no reply to the Clerk's request for a meeting with Gary Palmer at Solihull MBC. Councillor Trevor Eames will follow this up.

#### Highgate United's Posters for Bonfire Night

Posters were stuck everywhere around the village, including on the outside of our noticeboard, and some are still littering the roundabouts. Following a complaint, the Director at Highgate Utd has apologised and hopefully the Club will be more considerate for the next event. If they forward a poster to us, we can put it inside the noticeboard!

#### Spanish Club in Parish Rooms

The resident who would like to run a children's Spanish club does have a DBS, but she has decided to book the library as they have a room free on Mondays.

#### Fire Proof Box

A fire proof box has been purchased.

#### Mechanical Brushing of Pavements

We have still not heard when this will be done again – the Clerk to chase up again.

#### Nature Reserve

Adam Noon of SMBC has provided a very informative management plan for the Nature Reserve for 2018 and 2019. There is due to be a meadow cut at the end of July or start of August following seed setting. There will then be a second cut and collect in late September. From 2020 on, there will just be an annual cut and collect unless additional funds can be secured for a second cut in September/October.

Welcome Gates

These have been installed just past Miller and Carter and look great! The old sign on stilts will need to be taken down. It was agreed that Solihull MBC be asked to assess whether welcome gates can be installed at the other entrances to Dickens Heath.

Hedge at Tanworth Lane Island

This has now been trimmed.

Pedestrian Crossing

The light has now been fixed.

Roadway by Bellway Site

Notices have been issued to inform homeowners that Bellway are due to start cutting trees back before installing lamp posts.

Sale of The Chalice

Councillor Trevor Eames reported that the sale of The Chalice has fallen through and so it will be staying for the time being.

Open Waterway on David Wilson Site

The safety concerns of the open waterway have been discussed with Nic Wright of SMBC, and it is something that David Wilson and SMBC need to sort out so that it can be adopted by SMBC.

Memorial

Nic Wright of SMBC had agreed to look into the specifications of the memorial at Chelmunds Cross but, despite reminders, he has not got back to us. Councillor Alan Scholes has therefore made his own enquiries, he has spoken to a stone mason who can source a stone and it looks very promising. The Parish Council agreed that they were happy for Councillor Scholes to follow this up.

**Minute 192 (2017/18) Planning Applications**

The planning application for 2 Haresfield was discussed and it was agreed that this could be left to the SMBC Tree Officer and no comments would be made.

Planning application 2018/00239 for a single storey rear extension at 16 Griffin Lane was also considered. It was agreed that no comments would be made.

**Minute 193 (2017/18) Premises Licence Application**

A premises licence application has been submitted by Warwickshire Spirits Ltd for the on-line sale of alcohol from 19 Griffin Lane.

Councillor Trevor Eames gave a summary of this – Warwickshire Spirits Ltd was set up in January 2018, the plan is that it will be crowd funded, and will produce craft spirits (vodka, gin and whisky). They have applied for a licence to sell on-line 7 days a week and 24 hours a day. The applicant has to display a notice to this effect, and he is doing this. The Licensing Officer will be going to visit the premises. Councillor Eames has spoken to Planning, and they feel that planning consent will be a problem. But the applicant is trying to get the licence first. The deadline for objections is March 5<sup>th</sup> 2018, and objections can only be made on the basis of 4 guidelines, with evidence. The 4 guidelines cover i) crime and disorder ii) public safety iii) public nuisance and iv) harm to children. The problem is that there is nothing there yet, so it is difficult to assess and provide evidence. A licence can however be taken away at any time if the applicant falls foul of any of the 4 categories.

The Parish Councillors felt that this is a cause for concern, a property of this type being used for the on-line sale of alcohol. Councillor Eames to get feedback from the Licencing Officer and assess whether an objection would be appropriate.

**Minute 194 (2017/18) Update on Solihull Local Plan (SLP) Review**

A new timetable for the Solihull Local Plan Review has been published. The submission draft for consultation is now due to be published in the Summer/Autumn 2018, with submission to the Secretary of State proposed for Winter 2018, Examination of the Plan in Spring 2019 with Adoption proposed for Summer 2019.

Councillor Trevor Eames said that Solihull MBC should be bringing in to this the number of additional new houses that it needs to provide for Birmingham. SMBC have included 2,000

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but there is feedback that they will have to provide for another 2,000 houses on top of this. SMBC are not yet specifying a particular figure, but there is pressure on Solihull to take more houses. 14 adjoining councils have to accommodate an additional 37,500 houses for Birmingham, and the other councils are all saying that Solihull is not doing enough by only taking an additional 2,000 houses.

#### **Minute 195 (2017/18) Islands**

The island at Copperfield Court needs some work done to tidy up the plants. Councillor Doreen Wright agreed to do this.

#### **Minute 196 (2017/18) Hanging Baskets**

The Parish Council agreed that they would like to order the hanging baskets again for this summer, and in fact will probably order more than last year. It was agreed that all of the main islands should have some hanging baskets, which would be an extension on those ordered in previous years.

#### **Minute 197 (2017/18) Community Facility at the School**

There has still been no planning application for the community facility at the school, which is a surprise as the Parish Council had been led to believe that it was imminent in the New Year.

#### **Minute 198 (2017/18) Village Green and Playground**

Members of the Parish Council met with Alan Brown and Andrew Kinsey of Solihull MBC to discuss whether they could assist the Parish Council in negotiating with the Receivers over the purchase or lease of the Village Green. The SMBC officers had agreed to write to the Receivers and to forward a copy of the letter to the Parish Council. We have heard nothing – the Clerk to follow up.

#### **Minute 199 (2017/18) Traders' Temporary Parking**

Councillor Trevor Eames gave some feedback – this seems to be working, with traders sharing 15 spaces. Elegant Homes are moving some spaces around as some are allocated to new homes. Elegant Homes have now also finished with the model of Dickens Heath – Councillor Eames to speak to the library about the model going back there.

#### **Minute 200 (2017/18) Litter Picking**

Councillors Maureen Holloway and David Jones have met with our litter picker, Simon, about increasing his hours of work. They have identified roads which need to be done every week, with Simon choosing which of the smaller roads to do each week (to include the 2 new developments). It is hoped that some of the main roads can be litter picked twice a week given the additional hours. It was agreed that Simon's hours would be increased to 16 per week as of March 1<sup>st</sup> 2018. Councillor Jones is concerned that the Parish Council is not recycling, all of the waste is put in the rubbish, and feels that the Parish Council should invest in a trolley which will allow Simon to separate out the recycling as he works. Councillor Jones has identified a suitable trolley for £395 plus VAT. All agreed that this should be ordered, as long as Simon has somewhere suitable to store it.

#### **Minute 201 (2017/18) Councillors who have attended Outside Groups or Events Solihull Area Committee (SAC) Meeting**

Alison McCrory was the speaker at the SAC meeting, she has a wide responsibility within Solihull MBC. SMBC are splitting Solihull into 3 areas – North, West and Rural – and will allocate a lead person with specific responsibility for each area.

#### **Minute 202 (2017/18) Financial Matters**

Proposed by Councillor Holloway, seconded by Councillor Wright, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the February 13<sup>th</sup> 2018 Agenda be approved – 23 payments totalling £7,716.23 including additional payments of £223.13 to BT for the phone line and broadband, and £192.00 to Horton Automatics for the doors service.

Insurance

The renewal of the Parish Council's insurance has been considered – with quotes obtained from current insurer Zurich, plus quotes from 3 alternative insurers on both one year deals and multi year deals. The Parish Council agreed that the insurance should be renewed with Zurich, on a 3 year deal, with the first year's premium being £892.42.

Internal Audit 2017/18

It was agreed that the Clerk ask Bill Robinson if he could carry out the internal audit for 2017/18.

The Parish Council is currently showing a surplus to date of £103,000 with the end of year surplus projected to be £97,000.

**Minute 203 (2017/18) Annual Parish Meeting (APM)**

It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting should be held on the same evening as the May Parish Council meeting, on May 8<sup>th</sup> 2018, with the Parish Council meeting being moved to the earlier time of 6pm and the Annual Parish Meeting following at 7.30pm.

It was agreed that the proposal for a Community Chest of £3,000, for which community groups can bid, should be advertised in advance of the APM with the intention that the allocation of this £3,000 be decided by a community vote at the APM.

**Minute 204 (2017/18) Grant Application from the Scouts**

Dickens Heath Scouts have applied for a grant of £500 towards a small trailer to transport their camping equipment. This was approved.

**Minute 205 (2017/18) Parish Council News**

Various topics were agreed for the Parish Council News in the Dickens Heath Directory for March 2018.

**Minute 206 (2017/18) Correspondence**Playground

Dickens Heath School Council have asked if they could have some input into a new playground – Councillor Nargis Rashid will visit the school to speak to the School Council.

General Data Protection Regulation

Deborah Merry at SMBC have advised that SMBC cannot act as Data Protection Officer for parish councils. Advice is still being awaited from WALC. It was agreed that members of the Parish Council would meet in April to discuss this.

Flooding at Braggs Farm Lane

There is a gateway from the Nature Reserve on to Braggs Farm Lane, but there has been flooding for most of this winter. Matt Gardner has asked the SMBC drainage team to look at this.

Policing Change

From April 2018, Dickens Heath will no longer be covered by the Rurals Police team, but by the Shirley area Police team. WPC Sharon Grant and PCSO Wendy Shale would like to thank everyone they have worked with over the past 11 years.

Complaint about Waterside Car Park & Wharf House Lift Lobby

The gates into the Waterside car park have now been fixed, but the problems with the Wharf House lift lobby and its leaking ceiling are on-going.

Passing of Former Parish Councillor Phil Kendall

We have received the sad news that Phil Kendall, who was a Parish Councillor between 2008 and 2011, has passed away.

WALC Annual Briefing Day on Saturday March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018

The Clerk to book places on this day for all wishing to attend.

**Minute 207 (2017/18) Proposal to Move the Parish Offices from 1 Wharf House to the Library in Dickens Heath**

The library has been provided for the benefit of the community in perpetuity, there is no capital cost, the freehold is owned by the Receivers, and there are restrictions on what can be done with the building. Solihull MBC have suggested terms under which the Parish Council could move into the upstairs floor of the library – a licence giving a fixed term of 5 years plus the option for either party to give 6 months’ notice to terminate between years 5 and 10. The expected financial contribution from the Parish Council would be 45% of running costs, based on the floor area of the space upstairs in the library. This 45% is estimated to be no more than £20,000 p.a.

There followed some debate – including the fact that the first floor of a commercial premises tends to be worth less than the ground floor. It was agreed that, if the Parish Council is to make the move to the library, then it cannot leave itself worse off financially than it is now. The licence would have to be for a fixed term of a minimum of 10 years, and the Parish Council would need assurance about the future of the building. And, having looked at the figures, the most that the Parish Council could contribute each year towards the library running costs would be £15,000 – which would equate to around 30% of the total running costs. It was agreed that this should be communicated back to the SMBC officers.

Councillor David Jones feels that, if the move is made to the library, then the Parish Council should look to rent out 1 Wharf House rather than sell it. The Clerk to ask Shepherd Commercial for advice on this.

**Minute 208 (2017/18) Items for Next Agenda**

None.

**Meeting ended 9.45pm**

**Next Meeting : Tuesday March 13<sup>th</sup> 2018: 7.00pm The Parish Rooms**