

# The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday January 9<sup>th</sup> 2018 in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

### **Present:**

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

4 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

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### **Minute 162 (2017/18) Apologies for Absence**

None.

### **Minute 163 (2017/18) Public Participation**

#### The Chalice

The Chalice has recently been sold, but a resident has heard that the sale has fallen through – Councillor Trevor Eames to follow this up.

#### Recycling of Christmas Trees

Solihull MBC have done no recycling of Christmas trees this year – the Parish Council will raise this with the SMBC Neighbourhood Co-ordinator, Matt.

#### Costa

Councillor Trevor Eames confirmed that the Costa planning application has been approved.

### **Minute 164 (2017/18) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations**

None.

### **Minute 165 (2017/18) Report from the Borough Councillors**

None.

### **Minute 166 (2017/18) Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday November 14<sup>th</sup> 2017**

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

### **Minute 167 (2017/18) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meeting**

#### Dickens Heath In Bloom

The Clerk is looking at the portfolio requirements, Councillor Nargis Rashid offered to approach some contacts in the village including the school.

#### Fire Proof Cabinet/Box

The Clerk to source a reasonably priced cabinet or box, with fire protection, for storing memory sticks/disks/important documents.

#### Mechanical Brushing of Pavements

This was done early in November 2017, but none has been done since. There have been spells of bad weather, as well as the holiday period. Matt at SMBC to be asked to confirm when the brushing will next be done.

#### Welcome Gates

The Welcome to Dickens Heath signs will be installed on January 12<sup>th</sup> 2018 by SMBC.

#### 30mph Sign by Dykens Way

This has now been moved to before the entrance to Dykens Way.

#### Hedges out to Whitlocks End

These have been cut back for pedestrian use, further cutting back is needed for lights and signs, Matt Gardner of SMBC to speak to the landowner.

Overgrown Route into Village from Miller & Carter

Solihull MBC can trim around the trip rail by the ditch, but beyond that it is private land, and SMBC can only intervene if it is a public hazard. Matt Gardner to follow this up with the landowner, the hedge is not bad enough that SMBC can intervene.

Hedge at Tanworth Lane Island

The trimming of this hedge is in SMBC's maintenance programme.

Trimming of Trees at Proposed Memorial Site

This has been done.

Pedestrian Crossing

One of the lights is still not working – to be followed up with Matt Gardner.

Parish Council Away Day

It was agreed that this should be booked for Tuesday February 27<sup>th</sup> at The Limes.

**Minute 168 (2017/18) Planning Applications**

One planning application, 2017/03224, for a 2 storey side and single storey rear and front extension at 179 Tythe Barn Lane was considered. It was agreed that no comments would be made.

**Minute 169 (2017/18) Update on Solihull Local Plan (SLP) Review**

As part of the Review, a technical Highways assessment is being carried out by Mott MacDonald, Highway Consultants. It was agreed that it would be beneficial if the Parish Council could have some influence on this, and that Gary Palmer/SMBC Highways should be approached to see if the Parish Council could link in to this and potentially have some additional work done to look at issues in Dickens Heath. For example, they could look at the narrow roads where there is no space for a footpath. Highways and parking are the big issues for Dickens Heath.

**Minute 170 (2017/18) Playground & Village Green**

The playground has reopened following some repairs. With regard to the Parish Council's proposal to provide a new playground, members of the Parish Council will be meeting with Solihull MBC officers on January 18<sup>th</sup> 2018. It is hoped that SMBC can assist in negotiations with the Receivers who own the playground and Village Green. The Clerk to confirm the maintenance costs for the Village Green and playground included in the Dickens Heath Management Co. latest end of year accounts.

**Minute 171 (2017/18) Memorial**

Since the original memorial stone was accidentally broken, there has been much debate about a replacement. The stone needs to be of a suitable durable material as it will be a public monument. A memorial like the one at Chelmunds Cross could be suitable, and may have been installed by Solihull MBC – it was agreed that this could be followed up at the meeting with Matt Gardner and Nic Wright of SMBC.

**Minute 172 (2017/18) Litter Picks**

The national litter pick weekend (The Great British Spring Clean) will be happening early in March 2018. Councillor David Jones will look at the current litter situation in Dickens Heath, focussing on which roads need doing every week and which can be done less often. Litter picking should also take recycling into account. Councillor Jones and Councillor Maureen Holloway will meet with Simon, our litter picker, to progress this.

**Minute 173 (2017/18) Nature Reserve**

The Clerk to contact Adam Noon at SMBC to ask when further work will be taking place in the Nature Reserve.

**Minute 174 (2017/18) Christmas Lights in Hockley Heath**

Hockley Heath had some very attractive lamp post lights this Christmas which were powered by the electrical supply to each lamp post. In order to access this electrical supply, a Solihull MBC contractor has to be involved, and there is a very high initial one-off cost. The Parish Council would like to put Christmas lights on 4 lamp posts on each of the 8 islands in Dickens Heath. Based on the quote from SMBC – this would be at a cost of around £27,000 in the first year and £7,000 per year after that. The Parish Council agreed that this is just too expensive and that they would continue with the solar Christmas trees, providing them on more of the islands for next Christmas.

**Minute 175 (2017/18) Open Waterway on the David Wilson Site**

Councillor Doreen Wright is concerned about the safety of the open waterway on the David Wilson site. The waterway is part of the public amenity area of the site and so can't be closed off, but access is steep and potentially easy to fall down. Councillor Alan Scholes has spoken to David Wilson about this. The waterway has been altered several times but Solihull MBC have never been happy with it and so are not prepared to adopt it. David Wilson are happy to alter it again, as long as SMBC would then adopt it. Councillor Trevor Eames said that Solihull MBC have given assurances that they will adopt the waterway once it is legally satisfactory in terms of safety. This can be raised when the Parish Council meet with Nic Wright of SMBC, but there is not much more that the Parish Council can do, Solihull MBC need to sort it out with David Wilson.

**Minute 176 (2017/18) Financial Matters**

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Holloway, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the January 9<sup>th</sup> 2018 Agenda be approved – 15 payments for January 2018 totalling £2,499.63 and 19 payments for December 2017 totalling £4,888.95

Budget and Precept for 2018/19

The proposed budget for 2018/19 was considered and agreed. It was **Resolved** that the precept charge to residents should remain the same as in 2017/18 – ie the charge for a Band D property should remain at £39.91. As the number of dwellings in the tax base for Dickens Heath has increased, the precept for 2018/19 will therefore be £86,884. This was agreed, the Clerk to forward the precept request to Solihull MBC.

Councillor Di Potter verified that the bank reconciliation matched the bank statement as at December 31<sup>st</sup> 2017.

**Minute 177 (2017/18) Data Protection and Freedom of Information**

The Clerk has attended a WALC course on the imminent changes in law relating to data protection and freedom of information. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) takes effect on May 25<sup>th</sup> 2018, and the Data Protection Bill is currently going through Parliament (it builds on the 1998 Act). These have been necessitated by the huge changes in technology and the increase in personal data that is now captured. Various issues will need to be discussed and addressed, for example, a policy on record retention and destruction, and 'repermissioning' of email distribution lists. It was agreed that this needed to be looked into further, some Councillors may wish to attend the next WALC course on the subject, and that the Councillors should then meet up in March to discuss this further.

**Minute 178 (2017/18) Parish Rooms**Booking Query

A resident of Dickens Heath would like to set up a Spanish speaking club for children. Councillor Nargis Rashid said that the resident would need to confirm that she has a current DBS certificate before the Parish Council could approve this booking. It was agreed that the Clerk would follow this up.

Fire Risk Assessment

The Fire Risk Assessment was last done in February 2017. It was agreed that nothing has changed in the Parish Rooms, nor has the use of it, and so the next external Fire Risk Assessment would be done in February 2019.

**Minute 179 (2017/18) Grant Application from Dickens Heath Sports Club**

Dickens Heath Sports Club have submitted an application for a grant towards low level lighting for their car park. They have also offered the use of the Club's facilities to the Parish Council, for the community to use, for 5 days per year for the next 3 years. The offer is for 5 weekdays, but Councillor David Jones feels that this would need to include a Saturday and a Sunday if it is really going to be of benefit to the community. The cost of the lighting is £4,100. It was agreed that a grant of £2,050 would be awarded subject to the Club offering the use of their facilities for the 5 days including a Saturday and a Sunday.

**Minute 180 (2017/18) Parish Council News**

It was agreed that the next Parish Council News in March should include an appeal for residents to avoid putting their bins out on the verges – if bins are on the verge then the grass can't be cut. And for bin lids to be closed properly so that the contents are less likely to get blown everywhere.

**Minute 181 (2017/18) Correspondence**Data Protection Officers

With the imminent changes to Data Protection law, external companies are approaching Parish Councils with the view that each parish council will need to employ an independent Data Protection Officer, and one such company has provided a quote of £600 annually. The advice from WALC, however, is that the legislation is still not finalised and is subject to change. Therefore WALC are advising parish councils to wait for further advice on this issue.

Community Safety and Crime Question Time

This has been arranged by the Police and is taking place on Thursday January 18<sup>th</sup> at Arden Academy. Several Parish Councillors to attend.

**Minute 182 (2017/18) Items for Next Agenda**

Community Chest.

**Minute 183 (2017/18) It was Resolved that, in accordance with paras I and II Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public should be asked to withdraw due to the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.**

**Minute 184 (2017/18) Library**

Dickens Heath Library is struggling – it is very expensive to run and the building is not well used solely as a library, and the Parish Council fear that Solihull MBC may consider closing it. A potential solution would be for the Parish Council to relocate to the library and to meet some of the costs. If the PC were to move in, then they could also look at other additional potential uses of the building eg. a post office.

Councillor Maureen Holloway asked how the Parish Council might go forward on a proposal to move to the library, and suggested that estate agents should be approached regarding the possible sale of the Parish Rooms. It was agreed that initial enquiries should be made.

**Minute 185 (2017/18) Street Watch**

Deferred.

**Meeting ended 9.15pm**

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

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Signature.....

Date.....