

# The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday March 21<sup>st</sup> 2017 in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

### **Present:**

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

4 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

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### **Minute 174 (2016/17) Apologies for Absence**

None.

### **Minute 175 (2016/17) Public Participation**

#### Dickens Heath Sports Club

The leaders of the Youth Group would like to have a look at the Sports Club – as a possible venue for the Group. The Clerk to facilitate this.

#### Akamba

An advert in the paper has stated that Akamba has applied for a zoo licence, and residents are concerned. It currently has a few reptiles, but is primarily a bar and evening venue. Councillor Trevor Eames said that it appears to be a licence for the animals that Akamba already has and is retrospective. The landowner wouldn't allow any unsuitable animals. The Parish Council hasn't as yet been notified about the licence, but should be. The future of Akamba is tied in with the Solihull Local Plan.

#### Garden Squares Site

A new resident of Waterside asked about the plan of the Garden Squares development. Councillor Trevor Eames showed her a copy of the plans.

#### Service Charge at Waterside

This resident also asked about the Dickens Heath Management Co. service charge – which varies for different apartments. Councillor Jill Lovett advised that the service charge is based on square footage, and she is happy to speak to the resident about any further queries.

### **Minute 176 (2016/17) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations**

None.

### **Minute 177 (2016/17) Report from the Borough Councillors**

None present.

### **Minute 178 (2016/17) Minutes of previous Meeting held on Tuesday February 21<sup>st</sup> 2017**

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

### **Minute 179 (2016/17) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meeting**

#### Failure of Solar Xmas Trees

Plantscape have offered a discount of 25% because of the failure of some of the trees, and also a discount of 25% off the cost of trees ordered for Christmas 2017. The Parish Council were willing to accept this – on the assumption that the trees will be reliable next Christmas, and if not they would be looking for an additional discount.

#### Proposed Youth Facility at the School

Chris Barr at SMBC has confirmed that this project is on hold while they investigate the feasibility of the alternative proposal at Dickens Heath Sports Club.

Brushing of Pavements

This doesn't appear to be happening, Matt Gardner of SMBC will look into it.

Tree Stakes on Rumbush Lane

The tree stakes have been detached from the trees, but have not been removed. Matt Gardner has said that SMBC are happy for the Parish Council to remove the stakes and get rid of them. The Clerk to liaise with Councillor Lovett over this.

Weeds on Clock Island

Clock island has now been sprayed, and will be power washed in the near future. This good news to be publicized.

Welcome to the Village Signs

The new Welcome to the Village signs are not very attractive – the one approaching the clock island is up on stilts. At Chadwick End, their signs have lovely white gates. Matt Gardner has agreed that Dickens Heath can have some too – if the Parish Council purchase them, then SMBC will install them.

Post Box on Rumbush Lane

The verge is being damaged by cars that pull up briefly to use the post box. Councillor Jill Lovett said that some planters could be made and placed on the verge which would prevent cars from driving on it. All were happy with this.

Staff Pay Award

It was agreed that the 1% pay increase for staff be implemented as of April 1<sup>st</sup> 2017.

**Minute 180 (2016/17) Planning Applications**

Four additional planning applications were considered:

- 2017/00624 - 8 Meadow Pleck Lane which is for tree works to 1 tree
- 2017/00680 - Building 19, Rumbush Lane for minor changes at Garden Squares II
- 2017/00675 - Building 21, Rumbush Lane for minor changes at Garden Squares II
- 2017/00663 - 2 Haresfield, for a ground floor extension

The Parish Council agreed that they were happy to support the Tree Officer's view on the 2 planning applications for tree works.

The 2 planning applications for Garden Squares II are effectively cosmetic changes – no comments.

Councillor Trevor Eames to look at the planning application for 2 Haresfield, which only came in today.

**Minute 181 (2016/17) Solihull Local Plan Consultation (SLP)**

Councillor Trevor Eames gave an update – there are plans for a dementia care home in Shirley South, on the Sans Souci site. The entrance will be near the Miller and Carter, which SMBC will have to look at. It is a good project, it fits in, there is a need for dementia care – but the access and traffic will need looking into.

Councillor Eames also clarified that the recreational land, which is part of the Shirley South Site B within the SLP, is not actually in Dickens Heath parish – it is in Shirley. The rest of Site B is in the Parish.

Resident Adam Weber advised that the Neighbourhood Plan contacts at SMBC are now Charlene Jones and Morris Barlow.

**Minute 182 (2016/17) Meeting with Tidbury Green Parish Councillors**

It was agreed that a couple of dates in April should be suggested to Tidbury Green PC.

**Minute 183 (2016/17) Literary Litter Pickers – a Community Litter Pick for DH**

Chair Maureen Holloway congratulated Councillor Dave Jones on the fantastic success of the first community litter pick. Councillor Jones said that 51 people had attended, including many children, the Scouts and their leaders. The litter pick had been planned for an hour, but some were out for 2 hours and really enjoyed it. They filled 19 bags of rubbish, and SMBC removed them as promised on Monday morning. Councillor Jones thanked Tesco for providing the refreshments, the Scouts and their leaders, and everyone who attended and was so enthusiastic. A resident at the meeting, Phil, who is Tesco area manager, said that Tesco will continue to support the community litter picks – the Parish Council thanked him for this. The next litter pick is planned for April 15<sup>th</sup> 2017.

**Minute 184 (2016/17) Conservation Work in the Nature Reserve**

Following a meeting between Parish Councillors and SMBC Ecologist Adam Noon, there will be a day of conservation work in the Nature Reserve on Sunday April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017. Residents are invited to join the Solihull Conservation Volunteers to work on trees and the pathways. Phil said that again Tesco would be happy to help – which was appreciated.

**Minute 185 (2016/17) Hanging Baskets and Floral Displays**

A quote has been received from Plantscape for the same number of hanging baskets and floral boxes as they supplied for 2016. It was agreed that this number of floral baskets and boxes would be ordered for summer 2017, along with the watering. Councillor Jill Lovett to look at the colour scheme for this year.

**Minute 186 (2016/17) Dickens Heath in Bloom**

Councillor Lovett has been looking into expanding on the floral displays of previous years – to concentrate on having a positive effect on the village. There have been meetings with Matt Gardner of SMBC and Barbara of DHMC – which have been really positive, and very helpful advice from representatives of Studley in Bloom. The PC has been given permission to enhance the piece of land by Copperfield Court, behind Tesco. We used to participate in Solihull in Bloom, but this is now defunct – hence Dickens Heath in Bloom. Councillor Jill Lovett suggested that some planters could be sponsored, others could be taken over by the Youth Group and Scouts. DHMC have located an old bowser that could potentially be used to do our own watering. All agreed that this project should have a really positive effect on Dickens Heath.

**Minute 187 (2016/17) SMBC Issues**

The roads and islands are not in a good state. The imprinting on the islands will, at some point, be taken up and replaced with tarmac – as it is not fit for purpose. However, SMBC will wait for the developers to finish before doing so – they cannot afford to do this only for the road to be wrecked again by lorries.

**Minute 188 (2016/17) Village Issues**Youth Facility

The SMBC Education Dept has provided us with some current figures on the number of children in Dickens Heath. There are 888 children between the ages of 2 and 16, of which 370 are aged between 11 and 16 – a youth facility is required for these 370. In 2012 the son of then Chairman, Richard Holt, spoke about a need for a youth facility. Chris Barr at SMBC was then asked to look into this. The views of Parish Councillors are that a facility at the school is ok for younger children, but older children need space outside. The Youth Group are keen to look at Dickens Heath Sports Club – they don't want to be inside during the Summer, but also there can be trouble from young people hanging around outside the Parish Rooms. When the Bellway site is finished, there will be additional pavements – but the last bit out to the Sports Club would need to be addressed.

Memorial

Nic Wright of SMBC met with some members of the Parish Council, he is looking at the detail of installing the alternative memorial stone, and will provide a quote. He will also do the planning application, and if it is submitted by April 20<sup>th</sup> will incur no additional charge. He discussed the possibility of a bench by the memorial, and also a plaque that could be sited on the pavement.

Traders' Temporary Parking

An update was received from Councillor Trevor Eames. There has been a further survey on the use of spaces in the underground car park, and most are being used. Councillor Eames to follow up those that aren't being used, and fobs can be reallocated to those on the waiting list. There will be parking restrictions on Main St, but this is a few months away and would follow a consultation.

**Minute 189 (2016/17) WALC Annual Briefing Day**

This was a very interesting day, and some useful contacts were made.

**Minute 190 (2016/17) Financial Matters**

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Eames, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the March 21<sup>st</sup> 2017 Agenda be approved – 17 payments totalling £2,714.27 including an additional payment of £69.99 for a new printer.

Pension Arrangements

The Employer Contribution Rate for the West Midlands Pension Fund has increased quite considerably for 2017/18 – the Clerk is a member. Hannah and Simon have been offered a NEST pension scheme, but neither have so far accepted.

Contract for Payroll Services

It was agreed that the contract with Diane Malley should be renewed for 2017/18.

Report on Parish Council Finances

The Parish Council currently has a surplus of £89,000 and is projecting a surplus of £87,000 at the year end.

**Minute 191 (2016/17) Date of Annual Parish Meeting 2017**

The date of the Annual Parish Meeting has been changed to May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017 – the Police are able to attend on this date and answer questions about crime in the area. There have been a few changes at local church St Patricks, and it was suggested that Rev Julie Humphries be invited as well to say a few words about the new arrangements. It was agreed that up to £120 should be spent on the buffet for the evening.

**Minute 192 (2016/17) Parish Council Website**

It was agreed that there should be a page for Dickens Heath in Bloom.

**Minute 193 (2016/17) Grant Application for Festival on the Green 2017**

There was some discussion about the event, and a decision on the grant application was deferred to the next meeting.

**Minute 194 (2016/17) Correspondence**Website Hosting Provider

Our website hosting provider has apologised for recent problems, which Councillor Alan Scholes finally sorted out.

Disclosure of Interests

WALC have advised that, under the Localism Act 2011, both members of the Council and members of any committee of the Council must adopt a Code of Conduct and disclose any interests (both pecuniary and non pecuniary).

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Signature.....

Date.....

Negotiation of Better Energy Prices

A resident has asked whether the PC should get involved in the joint negotiation of better energy prices for the community. Solihull MBC already do this, and information has been sent out with the rates bills. He also asked whether the PC has any plans to encourage green energy like solar panels or wind turbines – they don't at this time.

**Minute 195 (2016/17) Items for Next Agenda**

Festival on the Green grant application.

**Minute 196 (2016/17) 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 197 (2016/17) Meeting with Dickens Heath Management Co.**

Councillors Maureen Holloway and Jill Lovett met with Barbara of DHMC and Amit of Savills. They were happy for the Parish Council to go ahead with their plans for Dickens Heath in Bloom in the areas for which DHMC is responsible.

**Meeting ended 10pm**

**Next Meeting : Tuesday April 18<sup>th</sup> 2017: 7.00pm The Parish Rooms**