

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday November 14th 2017 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.

5 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 141 (2017/18) Apologies for Absence

None.

Minute 142 (2017/18) New Member of the Parish Council

Chair Maureen Holloway welcomed Councillor Nargis Rashid to her first meeting as a Parish Councillor.

Minute 143 (2017/18) Public Participation

Costa Coffee Planning Applications 2017/02955 and 2017/02956

Tim and Deanna of Coffee Cloud raised the issue of the planning application recently submitted to SMBC by Costa, and said that they are looking at organising a petition and campaign against another coffee outlet in Dickens Heath, particularly a chain. The Parish Council agreed to bring forward this agenda item. The planning application is for 15 Main St, which was a photography shop, and is almost opposite to Coffee Cloud. Councillor Trevor Eames said that the application is for a café, which would also sell some goods such as coffee beans etc. The premises is quite large, there will be no cooking and therefore no extraction units are required (previous planning applications have been refused on the basis of extraction units). Costa claim that they add footfall in locations where they operate. There are no major planning issues, but it would compete with Coffee Cloud. The nature of use is rapid turnover, so it wouldn't affect car parking in planning terms. The external fascia involves little change, and there is a fair degree of interchangeability regarding internal use. Any changes will be subject to Dickens Heath Management Co. approval. A planning officer would probably approve it under delegated powers. Comments could be made regarding litter (take away cups), but this would only be a condition on how they operate. Competition in itself is not a planning consideration. Councillor David Jones commented that he has worked in retail for a long time – a company like Costa will work out its plans very thoroughly, and if a big name like Costa moves to Main St, then others may follow. Competition may mean that everyone flourishes, it often is the way. People that go to Costa aren't necessarily the ones who go to Coffee Cloud. The young people of the village may go to Costa. Some people may come to Costa who wouldn't otherwise come into Dickens Heath. Councillor Eames said that the Parish Council wishes to support the community and existing businesses, but agreed with Councillor Jones regarding complementary shopping, and that Costa are offering a different service to Coffee Cloud.

Tim and Deanna of Coffee Cloud commented that Dickens Heath centre is a village not a High St, and parking facilities are poor. Councillor Eames agreed that this would be a more intensive use regarding parking than the photography shop was, but in planning terms this is not an objection. He suggested that Tim and Deanna look into reasons why Costa may have been refused elsewhere, and to let the Parish Council know of any. Tim said that a Costa would definitely have an impact on parking, this Saturday there had been no parking spaces for a 2 hour period.

It was agreed that a response to this planning application would be drafted towards the end of November.

Halloween

A resident of Whitchurch Lane raised the issue of Halloween in Dickens Heath. Many residents, particularly those in Whitchurch Lane, decorate their houses, the village was very busy this year and the parking and traffic was absolutely chaotic. She wondered whether anything could be done to improve this for future years. There have been roadworks on the roads at the back of the village which probably aggravated the situation. Suggestions for next year included the Parish Council asking the traffic wardens to come out and ticket all the pavement parkers, and asking visitors to park at the train station (which should have plenty of spaces by the evening).

Playground

The playground is still shut, and a resident asked whether it was likely to reopen before Christmas? Dickens Heath Management Co. have said that they will do some repair work, but there has been no further update. Residents have expressed support for the Parish Council's proposal to provide a new playground. But a new playground would need to be legally protected as the Receivers own the land. Councillor Alan Scholes has been in touch with the Receivers to find out whether they would either sell the land to the Parish Council, or agree a Retention of Title for a new playground (so that the Parish Council would legally own the equipment), but he is still awaiting a response.

The playground in its current state is a problem – parents and children are climbing over the fence and continuing to use it. Chair Maureen Holloway said that DHMC should remove the dangerous piece of equipment and reopen the rest of the playground, and Councillor Doreen Wright suggested that residents put together a petition to present to DHMC. Some of the residents present indicated that they did intend to press DHMC on this. The Chair added that a RoSPA report has recently been done on the playground, and the Parish Council would ask to see it. She said that the Parish Council had expected DHMC to have had the playground fixed and reopened by now, and she was sorry that it hadn't been.

Minute 144 (2017/18) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None.

Minute 145 (2017/18) Report from the Borough Councillors

None.

Minute 146 (2017/18) Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday October 10th 2017

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

Minute 147 (2017/18) Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council held on Thursday November 2nd 2017

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

Minute 148 (2017/18) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meetingDickens Manor

A couple of our residents live on the Bellway site, are studying for Youth and Community Work degrees, and are keen to do some youth engagement with the children who hang around because there is nothing else to do. PCSO Wendy Shale feels that this is very positive and has put them in touch with Solihull MBC and their Youth Team.

Renewal of Website Domain

This has been done for 10 years as it was a very cost effective option.

Brushing of Pavements around Islands

Some mechanical brushing was done on Friday November 3rd, however there have been comments that the pavements at the clock island are still bad. Clock island has not been done, but a start has been made on a couple of the other islands (Gorcott and kidney islands). It will probably take 3 months to get round all of the islands – it was agreed that this needs to be monitored.

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 14th November 2017

Signature.....

Date.....

Welcome to the Village Signs

Councillor Alan Scholes confirmed that these should be with SMBC ready for installation in around 2 weeks' time.

Litter

Councillor David Jones commented that Dickens Heath Rd towards the Bellway site is not litter picked and it should be on the SMBC street cleaning programme.

Knocked Over Lamp Post

It was confirmed that this lamp post is on Main St, and Matt Gardner of SMBC will follow this up with DHMC.

Highgate United

There have been complaints that posters for Highgate United's bonfire night have been stuck all over the village in a very antisocial way. It was agreed that a message should be publicized on the website warning that fly posting on the islands is not allowed.

Minute 149 (2017/18) Planning Applications

There was some debate about the planning application for 120 Main St – this is the former Barnardos shop, and the proposal is for a yoga/fitness/relaxation studio to be open between 8am and 8pm with a staff of 5. Councillor Trevor Eames feels that the pressure on car parking will be very significant at class changeover time. Councillor David Jones said that the Parish Council should encourage these business people, and not focus too much on parking. A majority of Parish Councillors agreed that no comments should be made.

Two additional planning applications were also considered:

2017/02964 for tree works at 95 Birchy Leasowes Lane – these proposed tree works to reduce the height of the trees to 20ft to form a hedge would effectively cut them back to stumps. As these trees have ecological value, being very mature trees and part of ancient woodland, Councillor Trevor Eames advised that the Parish Council send in an objection – this was agreed.

2017/02955 and 2017/02956 are the planning applications relating to 15 Main St and Costa Coffee. Councillor Trevor Eames to draft a response.

No comments on the other planning applications.

Damson Homes have asked the Parish Council for their view on a proposed road name for a small new development at 245 Dickens Heath Rd. The Parish Council agreed that the suggested road names were all too similar to current road names within the village, and that 'Silver Birch Close' be suggested instead as that is the name of the original house on the old maps.

Minute 150 (2017/18) Remembrance Sunday Service and Installation of Memorial

Remembrance Sunday Service

This was very successful and very well attended, the Clerk has thanked all those involved. Chair Maureen Holloway has spoken to Tesco about the milk lorry that arrived during the service, and Tesco will speak to the company for next year. It was agreed that special thanks were due to Adam Weber's brother who played The Last Post, and that the Parish Council would offer to pay his travel expenses.

Memorial

Councillor Alan Scholes has produced a picture of how a memorial stone might look on the patch of ground at the back of Tesco. Chair Maureen Holloway has been in touch with a memorial company, and they would be able to cut a stone to the Parish Council's requirements. All agreed that the Chair and Councillor Alan Scholes should visit this company and get some further information.

Minute 151 (2017/18) Petition for Rumbush Lane Footway Extension

Solihull MBC have advised that an extension of the footway on Rumbush Lane to Dickens Heath Sports Club will cost an estimated £75,000. They do not have the money to do this, there are some technical difficulties with the footway extension, and it has been left as a pending future item for footway issues. If/when future developments happen, there should be CIL funds available which could be used. Councillor Trevor Eames will draft a response to Dickens Heath Sports Club. The Sports Club have also advised that they will apply to the Parish Council for a grant towards car park lighting.

Minute 152 (2017/18) Traders' Temporary Parking

This seems to be working well now that there are more fobs in use than available parking spaces.

Minute 153 (2017/18) Parish Councillor Surgery

Unfortunately the Parish Councillor surgeries have not been well attended – so it was agreed that no further surgeries would be arranged at this time. The Chair thanked Councillor Trevor Eames for his input into this initiative.

Minute 154 (2017/18) Councillors who have attended Outside Groups or EventsSolihull Area Committee (SAC) Meeting October 2017

There was a presentation from West Midlands Fire and Rescue, and how they are dealing with cutbacks and service delivery. They are now providing some transport services to the NHS, which provides income while not affecting fire services. A representative of West Midlands Pension Fund also attended to discuss the monthly submissions, which are fairly onerous for Parish Councils who often only have one member of staff in the Fund. However, in the monthly submission process, all organisations are treated the same irrespective of their size.

Minute 155 (2017/18) Christmas Carol Singing on December 12th 2017

Andrew Simpkins of Dickens Heath Church is arranging for some posters to be produced which will advertise all of the Christmas events in Dickens Heath, it was agreed that the Parish Council would fund this. It was also agreed that the Parish Council would fund the Village Christmas tree up to the value of £100.

Minute 156 (2017/18) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Holloway, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the November 14th 2017 Agenda be approved – 24 payments totalling £4,540.17 including additional payments of £100.54 to BT, £1,548.00.00 to Plantscape for the solar Christmas trees and £45.00 for Remembrance Sunday refreshments.

Proposed by Councillor Wright, seconded by Councillor Holloway, **Resolved** that the routine payments for December 2017 be approved as there is no Parish Council meeting in December. The Parish Councillors will be meeting on December 12th 2017 to discuss the 2018/19 budget.

Minute 157 (2017/18) Litter Picking

The two new village developments are not covered by any of the litter picking services. Councillor David Jones suggested that the Parish Council's litter picker, Simon, could potentially increase his hours slightly to cover these additional roads. It was agreed that Simon be asked whether he would be prepared to do an additional couple of hours per week.

Minute 158 (2017/18) CorrespondenceSafer Routes to School Scheme – Tythe Barn Lane

Solihull MBC had proposed to improve the junction of Tythe Barn Lane and Three Acres Lane with a new mini roundabout. However, following consultation feedback, this is now not going ahead.

Dickens Heath Nature Reserve

At the end of October, some weed control was successfully undertaken by SMBC as part of a grassland enhancement scheme.

External Auditors 2017/18 to 2021/22

We have been notified that the Parish Council's external auditors for the next 5 years will be PKF Littlejohn LLP.

Minute 159 (2017/18) Items for Next Agenda

None.

Minute 160 (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 161 (2017/18) Street Watch

Street Watch was discussed - it is a community led Police initiative, with street patrols by members of the public in hi viz jackets, but with no Police powers.

Meeting ended 9.40pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday January 9th 2018: 7.00pm The Parish Rooms