

# The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday September 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 in the Parish Rooms, Waterside

### **Present:**

**Dickens Heath Parish Councillors;** Trevor Eames, Maureen Holloway (Chair), Diane Potter, Doreen Wright.

17 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

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### **Minute 67 (2016/17) Apologies for Absence**

None.

### **Minute 68 (2016/17) Public Participation**

#### Anti-Social Behaviour

A lot of residents are very concerned about the anti social behaviour in the village, and something needs to be done. Youths are coming into Dickens Heath on bicycles and behaving in a bullying and intimidating manner – kicking cars and being abusive. There is talk on social media that 'vigilantes' are required. At Waterside, youths cycle in the empty water feature – and when residents challenge this, they are met with a torrent of abuse. This is a regular occurrence. If they ring security, no one comes. One resident tries to ring 101 but gets no answer, and another said that the Police have been notified but have not followed it up. Residents are being intimidated on their own doorstep.

The Chair said that if a resident rings 101 from a mobile, then the call will go to a central point. Whereas, if they ring 101 from a landline then it will be directed to the West Midlands. The Chair said that earlier in the day she had attempted to speak to the Police, it had taken a long time to get through but eventually she had spoken to Inspector Green – who said that the Police are very aware of the situation in Dickens Heath, and that Police activity is on-going. National Police policy states that the Police cannot pursue young people on bikes, and this is the biggest hurdle for them – they need to know who these youths are.

There was also some discussion that residents will worry about letting their lads out on bikes because they might come under suspicion, and that it was important not to alienate the youth in the village who have done nothing wrong.

#### Fight outside The Chalice

A resident reported that there was a fight outside The Chalice on Saturday evening (The Chalice was closed), the language and noise was horrendous and it was very frightening.

They rang security and asked them to ring the Police. The Chair replied that if residents are that frightened, they should ring 999 and not rely on security to call the Police.

In summary, the Chair reiterated that for anti-social behaviour, residents should call 101 and get a log number, but if they are frightened then they should call 999. She said that the Police are currently taking action to deal with the anti-social behaviour, but details cannot be shared at the moment.

#### Garden Squares Car Park

A resident expressed concern that the wall in the Garden Squares car park has been knocked down and that anyone can now walk in. This is on the agenda for discussion later in the meeting.

### **Minute 69 (2016/17) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations**

None.

### **Minute 70 (2016/17) Report from the Borough Councillors**

None.

**Minute 71 (2016/17) Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday July 19<sup>th</sup> 2016**

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

**Minute 72 (2016/17) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meeting**Proposed Changes to Funding for Pharmacies

Comments in support of rural pharmacies have been sent by the PC to Caroline Spelman MP. Councillor Trevor Eames said that the Government have now deferred the decision and are taking another look at the proposal.

No Left Turn Sign at Library

Paul Tovey at SMBC has replied that the No Left Turn is part of the traffic management plan for the village and that removing it may require changes to the kerb line. He said that it can be added to their list to review, but would be unlikely to be a priority. The Parish Council agreed that they would still like this to be considered by Highways.

Cleansing of Lamp Posts & Signposts

The signposts have been cleaned, but SMBC have no funds in the budget for cleaning lamp posts but they can potentially target specific locations.

Replanted Traffic Islands

The weeds are due to be removed by SMBC and sprayed this week.

Welcome to the Village Signs

These are expected imminently, Matt Gardner of SMBC is chasing them up.

Dickens Heath Management Company

Representatives of DHMC were invited to attend a PC meeting to discuss the service charge, but they didn't feel it was appropriate to do this in an open forum.

Missing Life Vest by Canal at Waterside

Dickens Heath Management Co. say this is not their responsibility, and the Canal & River Trust say that as they don't own the location they wouldn't have installed a life vest.

Solar Christmas Trees

These have been ordered from Plantscape for 2016.

The Parish Council's Pensions Obligations

The Clerk has attended a WALC course on Pensions and will bring a report to the next meeting.

Halloween 2016

A Police presence to be requested.

**Minute 73 (2016/17) Planning Applications**

No comments.

**Minute 74 (2016/17) Village Issues**Hanging Baskets

The watering contract has now come to an end and Plantscape has asked if the PC would like to extend it. It was agreed that the hanging baskets are now past their best and no additional watering was necessary.

Memorial

A more detailed quote has now been received, for all of the materials and work required – except for the groundworks. The estimated total is in excess of £12,000.

The Parish Councillors were in general agreement that this is costing too much, but decided to defer the decision until the vacancies on the Parish Council have been filled and the full Parish Council is in a position to make the final decision.

Sign to Identify Village Businesses

One of the village businesses has asked the Parish Council to consider funding a large sign to identify the village businesses, like there is at the Retail Park. Councillor Trevor Eames agreed that trade is a problem for the businesses. However, the Councillors felt that Dickens Heath is not a retail park, there are already too many signs, and the shops do keep changing, so they didn't feel that they could support this.

### Canal Towpaths – Voluntary Work

Councillor Trevor Eames spoke to Pete Sherwood of the Canal & River Trust (CRT) at Festival on the Green. The CRT would like to organise volunteers to work on the towpath through the village - they would provide the materials, equipment and supervision, and the PC would organise a community team to assist with the work. The Scouts have already expressed an interest in this. It was agreed that a meeting should be arranged with Pete Sherwood.

### **Minute 75 (2016/17) Planning Sub-Committee**

#### Membership of Planning Sub-Committee

Councillor Maureen Holloway has decided to stand down from Planning Sub-Committee. Jill Lovett, a local resident who has an interest and experience in planning issues, has expressed an interest in joining the Sub-Committee. All agreed that Planning Sub-Committee would now consist of Councillor Trevor Eames, Jean Walters and Jill Lovett.

#### Procedures for Planning Sub-Committee

The Planning Sub-Committee had been set up as an informal committee which could not take any decisions but would look into issues and make recommendations to the full council who would then take a decision. In between Parish Council meetings, Councillors do not therefore have the power to make a decision, but in an urgent situation - power has been delegated to the Clerk to make a decision in consultation with at least one Councillor. Councillor Trevor Eames stated that holding formal meetings for the Planning Sub-Committee would be very time consuming which is why they had been informal. Most planning issues are straightforward and recommendations can be brought to full Parish Council meetings for decisions, and so it was agreed that Planning Sub-Committee would continue in its informal format.

#### Neighbourhood Plan – Residents’ Questionnaire

Members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee have put together a draft Residents’ Questionnaire, and there was some discussion about the questions that would need to be included. It was agreed that the format is good, and that the Steering Committee should look at the detail of the questions required, and then an expert advisor could be asked to take a look at it. Councillor Doreen Wright thanked those who had set up the questionnaire. The Parish Council agreed the composition of the Steering Committee and agreed that the Clerk should invite all members of the Committee to meet on October 11<sup>th</sup> at 7pm in the Parish Rooms.

### **Minute 76 (2016/17) Proposal for Traders’ Temporary Parking in the Village Centre**

Negotiations have been taking place with Elegant Developments and Dickens Heath Management Co. to provide 41 underground parking spaces for traders. Fifteen of the traders had requested 59 spaces, and the object is to move 41 cars from the surface car parks in order to free up spaces for shoppers and residents to use. This is being done, at considerable expense, by Elegant Developments. In the Dickens Heath Management Co. car park at Garden Squares West, there are 12 spaces which are not allocated to residents. The additional 29 spaces are being made available in the Garden Squares East car park – the flooding problems should have been dealt with, the wall has been removed, and a new one should be in place in a week’s time. This proposal is a temporary measure for 12 to 15 months, and then the wall will be returned to its original position.

### **Minute 77 (2016/17) School/Youth Facility Consultation**

This consultation began on August 11<sup>th</sup> 2016, but it was disappointing that information about the consultation had not been forwarded to the Parish Council. Councillor Trevor Eames said that it is a concern that the funding was earmarked to be used for the community, but this proposal would only be available for community use for a small proportion of the time. The funding would not in this case be wholly used for what it was intended. The improvements at Dickens Heath Sports Club are now 95% complete and they have invited the Parish Councillors to take a look at the facilities. It was agreed that the Clerk should arrange this once the new Councillors are in post. However, Solihull MBC are reluctant to allow funds to be used for a youth facility here because it would be on private land.

### **Minute 78 (2016/17) Reports from Councillors who have attended Outside Groups Youth Group Meeting**

Councillors Di Potter and Doreen Wright attended a management meeting of the Dickens Heath Youth Group. The Youth Group is run by the 2 churches – Dickens Heath Village Church and the Parish of Salter St. The boundaries of the diocese are changing, but the churches will continue to run the Youth Group and it will continue in the Parish Rooms for the moment. They stopped employing the youth worker because of low attendance. Now there are 15 to 20 girls attending (the maximum number is 25) with some older youths doing some supervision.

The Group would like to carry out a fire drill, the Clerk to liaise with Admin Assistant Hannah about this. They have also discussed going out for a bowling evening, the Parish Council agreed that they would be willing to contribute up to half of the cost of such an evening.

#### Richborough Estates

The Chair and the Clerk met informally with the landowner David Horne and 2 colleagues representing Richborough Estates - who are putting forward 15 acres (which currently have sports grounds on them) to potentially develop. They would like to improve the facilities by providing a sports hub, improved clubhouse, pitches plus a trim trail. The landowner would fund all of these, rather than them being paid for with s106 funds. This is mainly a sporting proposal rather than development, but they would also build around 300 houses. The Chair said that the Parish Council cannot support this proposal, but they could use the Parish Rooms to do a consultation with residents, and that views on sporting facilities should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire.

### **Minute 79 (2016/17) Arrangements for Remembrance Sunday**

The forms requesting road closures have been completed and sent in to SMBC, and the service has been discussed with Rev Theresa Jones and Andrew Simpkins.

The following were agreed:

- A £100 donation for the Royal British Legion and an order to be placed for 1 wreath and some wooden crosses.
- Fastaid to be invited to attend again, and a donation to be made.
- The Police Specials to be invited to assist with the road closures.
- The Clerk to source some barriers – to ask Elegant Homes, or a traffic management co. There may be a cost to this.
- Coffee Cloud be asked to provide refreshments after the service.
- An ex serviceman is a resident – the Clerk to get in touch about laying a wreath.
- The library to be contacted about access to a power source for the PA and keyboard.

### **Minute 80 (2016/17) Applications for the Vacancies on the Parish Council**

Two full applications and one partial application had been received by the closing date. The partial application was due to the applicant taking suddenly ill over the days preceding the closing date, and a full application had been submitted a few days late. No other applications have been received. It was agreed that the Council should consider all 3 applications. There are therefore 3 applications for the 3 vacancies. All agreed that the 3 were very suitable candidates and so it was **Resolved** that all 3 should be co-opted on to the Parish Council. David Jones, Jill Lovett and James Alan Scholes were therefore welcomed on to the Parish Council, the Clerk to sort out all the necessary paperwork.

### **Minute 81 (2016/17) Financial Matters**

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Eames, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the September 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 Agenda be approved – 15 payments and 1 direct debit totalling £11,708.91 for September and 16 payments and 3 direct debits totalling £8,966.47 for August 2016.

The Parish Council currently has a surplus of £75,000, and is projecting a surplus of £75,000 at the year end.

The gas and electricity contracts for the Parish Rooms had to be renegotiated during the Summer – 3 quotes were obtained for each, and the Parish Council decided on a 2 year contract with Opus Energy for both gas and electricity as this was the most cost effective.

The Clerk has covered a meeting for Tanworth in Arden PC – it was agreed that the additional hours should be put through our payroll and then invoiced to Tanworth in Arden PC.

### **Minute 82 (2016/17) Parish Council Emails**

Councillor Trevor Eames to test that Councillors' emails are forwarding successfully into all of their personal email addresses.

### **Minute 83 (2016/17) Correspondence**

#### Council Tax Reduction Scheme Consultation

Rebates were funded by the Government, but they are cutting back on the proportion that they will reimburse. Solihull MBC can charge a minimum that people must pay – that everyone of working age should pay 15% of the bill. Other adjacent councils have introduced this. It was agreed that a response should be made that this minimum charge be phased in over 2 years.

#### Parking on Sharp Bend on Tythe Barn Lane

All the parking on the sharp bend near number 29 Tythe Barn Lane makes the road hazardous. There are no double yellow lines and so the parking is legal, the Parish Council have asked SMBC to look at this section of road before and they declined to make any changes.

#### A Request that Road Humps be Considered on Rumbush Lane

The Parish Council did not agree that this would be appropriate, cars parked on the road slow the traffic down.

#### Restrictive Covenant

A resident owns a Redrow house, and their restrictive covenant states that 'For Sale' boards should not be displayed – can anything be done to stop all the boards which blight the village? This is not something that the Parish Council can take up, the resident needs to consult a solicitor.

#### Tree in Brixfield Way

Supporting stakes have recently been removed, and a tree in Brixfield Way has blown over into the road. This has been reported to SMBC.

#### Community Protection Notice

WALC have forwarded various documents advising on ways to tackle anti-social behaviour. The Clerk to forward information about Community Protection Notices to all Councillors.

#### Local Government Pension Scheme

The Clerk is attending a briefing session in October 2016.

### **Minute 84 (2016/17) Items for Next Agenda**

Pensions obligations.

**Minute 85 (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 86 (2016/17) Meeting with Danny Gouveia**

The Parish Council agreed that it was not appropriate to go ahead with a meeting with Danny Gouveia of SMBC at this time.

**Meeting ended 9.35pm**

### **Next Meeting : Tuesday October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016: 7.00pm The Parish Rooms**

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Signature.....

Date.....