

# The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday July 10<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.

5 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

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### **Minute 41 (2018/19) Apologies for Absence**

None.

### **Minute 42 (2018/19) Faster Internet Project**

Unfortunately, Sarah Oakley – who was due to give an update on the Faster Internet Project – had to give her apologies.

### **Minute 43 (2018/19) Public Participation**

#### Football World Cup

There has been a lot of enthusiasm on the village Facebook group for a suggestion that, if England progress to the final of the World Cup, the match could be shown on a big screen on the Village Green. The resident present feels that it would be a really nice family event, he has spoken to Michael Johnson of Dickens Heath Management Co., and has been looking at sourcing a suitable screen. A licence to screen the match is not required from FIFA as long as the event is non-commercial and is for fewer than 5,000 people. He has managed to source a screen locally and asked whether the Parish Council would be prepared to fund it if he could get it for around £3,000? The Parish Councillors had several reservations about this – Mortons and the Chalice are already showing it, noise for surrounding houses, litter including smashed glass, the need for a Police presence, possible trouble if England were to lose. Overall the Parish Council decided that they were not prepared to fund such an event. The resident did acknowledge that, despite the enthusiasm of many residents on Facebook, no one else had come along to the meeting.

#### Events on the Village Green

The resident then suggested that better use could be made of the Village Green – for example other events could be held, such as outdoor film screenings. Councillor David Jones commented that the Parish Council had been advertising for members of a 'Friends of Dickens Heath' committee to organise social events, and no one was interested. If the resident can find volunteers to form a committee, then the Parish Council would be prepared to offer support.

### **Minute 44 (2018/19) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations**

Councillor Doreen Wright declared that she is a resident of Birchy Close with respect to the debate about the planning application for 85 Birchy Leasowes Lane, which backs on to Birchy Close.

### **Minute 45 (2018/19) Report from Borough Councillors**

None present, but apologies have been received from Councillor Ken Hawkins, and he has forwarded a copy of his objection to the planning application for 85 Birchy Leasowes Lane.

### **Minute 46 (2018/19) Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday June 12<sup>th</sup> 2018**

Two minor amendments were noted. Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Rashid, it was **Resolved** that the minutes be approved in principle as a true and accurate record, subject to the 2 amendments.

### **Minute 47 (2018/19) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meeting**

#### Heart of England In Bloom

The In Bloom judging will take place on Friday July 20<sup>th</sup> 2018 at 11am. Councillor Maureen Holloway has put together a route. There have now been 4 entries for the best front garden competition which Rev Theresa Jones will be judging – these will be incorporated into the route if possible, depending on their location.

#### Newsletter

A single sheet newsletter would cost £65 to be distributed with a month's copy of the Dickens Heath directory, printing would cost extra. It was agreed that this should be trialled – with a draft produced for September.

#### Solihull MBC Issues

Members of the Parish Council are meeting with Matt Gardner and David Keane of SMBC for an update later in July.

#### Terrible State of Roads on Bellway Site

Bellway have confirmed that the roads will be finished off by the end of June.

#### Memorial

The replacement licence for the memorial has been signed and returned to Solihull MBC. It was agreed that an alternative road closure for the Remembrance Service should be discussed with SMBC – which would involve shutting a shorter stretch of highway which should be easier to manage, along Old Dickens Heath Rd between Tesco and Copperfield Court.

### **Minute 48 (2018/19) Planning Applications**

#### 85 Birchy Leasowes Lane

The planning application for 85 Birchy Leasowes Lane was discussed – a resident has spoken to Councillor Trevor Eames, who has produced a report. Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins has also forwarded a copy of his objection to this planning application. Councillor Eames believes that there are adequate planning grounds to object. The resident at no. 25 Birchy Close is in a bungalow and will be overlooked by 3 storey houses on 3 sides. This is garden land, and therefore the principle of development is accepted. But the usual planning constraints still apply – for example any adverse impact on neighbours. The applicant felled all of the significant mature trees on the site before submitting the planning application, and this is frowned upon by SMBC Planning. The 5 proposed houses are all large 3 storey properties, which are out of character and inappropriate in that location, they create over-looking and loss of privacy. They should be 2 storey properties instead. Two of the neighbouring properties have decided to sell part of their garden land, so it is acceptable to them – but Planning must also consider whether it would be acceptable to future owners of these properties. A significant issue is the risk of flooding – further development will increase the flood risk after the major flood of May 27<sup>th</sup> this year. Before the planning authority can consent to this, they should await the results of the flood investigation. Councillor Eames advised that the Parish Council should object and ask that the planning application is either refused or deferred until the outcome of the flood risk review. Circumstances have changed and flooding needs to be considered.

All were in favour of making an objection.

#### 6 Marshfield

This planning application will result in a shortened driveway, reducing parking to one space. It was agreed that the Parish Council would not object, but did wish to flag up concern about the shortened driveway which results in the loss of a parking space.

No comments on the other planning applications.

### **Minute 49 (2018/19) Proposal to Move the Parish Offices from 1 Wharf House to the Library**

Solihull MBC are currently looking into the detail involved in the proposal to move the Parish Offices to the Library. There followed a debate about the Parish Rooms, and what to do with them, with Councillors discussing the potential for selling or leasing the property.

Comments in favour of selling included:

- Parish Councils are not commercial organisations, letting a property and dealing with tenants would be a millstone around the PC's neck.
- Parish Councils are there to serve residents and not to get entangled in leasing buildings.

Comments in favour of leasing included:

- It is an asset, and the best decision in financial terms is to lease it out.

There was some discussion about other properties at Waterside that were currently up for sale or for rent. It was commented that one commercial property at Waterside has recently been sold with planning approval for conversion into residential.

The decision was then put to a vote. Councillor David Jones voted against selling, Councillor Doreen Wright abstained, all other Councillors voted to sell the Parish Rooms. A majority decision was therefore carried to put the Parish Rooms up for sale.

The Clerk has previously obtained valuations of the premises, plus quotes for marketing them, from 3 commercial estate agents – Shepherd Commercial, Hurdley & Co. and Veritas. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact Chris Peutherer at Shepherd Commercial to progress the sale. Councillor Trevor Eames will have a look at the property's lease.

### **Minute 50 (2018/19) Solihull Local Plan Review Traffic Study**

There has been no formal feedback as yet, a follow up meeting to be arranged for October.

### **Minute 51 (2018/19) In Bloom**

The new water bowser is working very well in keeping the planters watered during the hot weather – though it is quite heavy to move when it is full. It was agreed that Simon be asked to include the watering within his working day, he usually works 4 days per week. The Councillors will cover the watering on the other days.

### **Minute 52 (2018/19) Village Green and Playground**

Councillors Maureen Holloway and Alan Scholes will be meeting with Andrew Kinsey, SMBC Solicitor, about the Village Green. It is not currently formally registered as a Village Green, and members of the Parish Council feel that it should be - to safeguard the land for the community. When land has been used by the general public for 20 years, with the knowledge of the land owner, but without having to seek permission, it can be registered as a Village Green. Councillor Trevor Eames commented that the Village Green does have a covenant on it, and that planning constraints stay with the land when ownership changes. He also said that the Village Green is 'managed land' and therefore may be difficult to register as a Village Green – usually it is common land that is registered when there is no resistance from the land owner. Councillors Holloway and Scholes to take the petition, in support of the Parish Council acquiring the Village Green, to the meeting.

### **Minute 53 (2018/19) Memorial**

The replacement licence for the memorial has been sent to Solihull MBC, the stone is being cut to shape, and Councillor Scholes will be following up on an approved contractor for the installation. The memorial will need to be dedicated – a date will need to be agreed with Rev Julie Humphries and Rev Theresa Jones. Councillors Alan Scholes and David Jones to progress this. The Clerk to contact Solihull MBC about alternative road closures for Remembrance Sunday.

**Minute 54 (2018/19) Community Facility at Dickens Heath School**

Councillor Nargis Rashid has had an update meeting with Chris Barr of SMBC. They have been delayed with the plans for the community facility – they are hoping to identify a ‘builder’ in September, although it will actually be a flat pack building. Sarah Jones of SMBC will be linking up with Councillor Rashid and Rae-Anne (a youth worker resident) to do some community engagement and involve youth focus groups. Chris Barr will let the PC know when the planning application is due to go in.

**Minute 55 (2018/19) Financial Matters**

Proposed by Councillor Rashid, seconded by Councillor Potter, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the July 10<sup>th</sup> 2018 Agenda be approved – 2 direct debits and 20 payments totalling £12,805.59. This included additional payments of £51.24 and £50.00 to Maureen Holloway for plants, compost and clearing of the area by Tesco for 2 new planters, and £100 to Trevor Griffiths for plants for the Waterside planters. It was also agreed that the Clerk should make all necessary payments for August, and these will be reported to the September 2018 meeting.

Report on the Finances of the Council

This was received – there is currently a surplus of £111,000.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2017/18, along with all the associated paperwork, has been sent to the External Auditor by the required deadline.

Audit Report

Deferred.

**Minute 56 (2018/19) GDPR Progress Report**

A start has been made on destroying some of the out of date data – old Parish Rooms booking forms have now been shredded.

**Minute 57 (2018/19) Parish Rooms**U3A Table Tennis Club

The U3A table tennis club will be moving to Dickens Heath Sports Club in a couple of weeks time.

Yoga

A resident has asked if they can offer yoga sessions on a Saturday morning. The Parish Council agreed this – in return for a donation to In Bloom. The problem at the moment is availability of keys and fobs.

**Minute 58 (2018/19) Date of September Meeting**

It was agreed that the date of the September meeting should be moved to September 18<sup>th</sup> – the Clerk to advertise this.

**Minute 59 (2018/19) Correspondence**Antisocial Behaviour on the Bellway Estate

The Parish Council have been copied in to a complaint to the social housing officer about antisocial behaviour. Councillor Maureen Holloway has followed this up with Sergeant Diane Sheppard.

**Meeting ended 10pm**

**Next Meeting : Tuesday September 18<sup>th</sup> 2018: 7.15pm The Parish Rooms**  
**(subsequently rearranged for September 25<sup>th</sup> 2018)**