

# The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday April 9<sup>th</sup> 2019 in the Library, Dickens Heath

### **Present:**

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

8 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

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### **Minute 166 (2018/19) Apologies for Absence**

None, Councillor Trevor Eames arrived after public participation.

### **Minute 167 (2018/19) Presentation to Andrew and Sara Simpkins**

Chair Maureen Holloway said that the Parish Council wished to say farewell to Andrew and Sara Simpkins, who have worked tirelessly and have made a real difference to the village. They are now moving on, and they have left a legacy in Festival on the Green which a new team will be taking forward. The Parish Council wished them all the best for the future, and presented Andrew and Sara with a gift and flowers. Andrew replied that he has been involved in Dickens Heath for 5 years and has really enjoyed being part of the community.

### **Minute 168 (2018/19) Public Participation**

#### Footpath along Rumbush Lane to Dickens Heath Sports Club

A resident said that there really needs to be a footpath along Rumbush Lane to improve access from the village to Dickens Heath Sports Club. This has been looked at recently, Solihull MBC are responsible for the highway and gave a quote for putting in the pavement which was in the region of £75,000, but SMBC were not prepared to pay for it at that time. The Parish Council argued that some s106 monies could be used, but SMBC turned this down.

#### Canal Towpaths

A resident commented that, following rain, the towpaths are in no fit state to walk along. They are an asset and some permanent work needs to be done on them by the Canal & River Trust (CRT). Councillor David Jones replied that one part of the canal towpath has been done, but it is now deteriorating again. If there are some volunteers to work on the towpath, the CRT will provide the skills and materials required. The resident expressed concern that such work would not last. Councillor Jones added that the Parish Council had tried to get in touch with the CRT, and had spoken to them at Festival on the Green, but they have not got back to us about it. Councillor Maureen Holloway said that she would contact the CRT once again and ask them about getting specific work done on the towpaths.

#### Defibrillator in the Village

A resident asked whether there could be a defibrillator in Dickens Heath. This has been looked at before a number of times, and has not been taken forward as the national evidence is that such devices are very rarely used. There is one inside the GP practice, it was suggested that the GP be asked whether a defibrillator could be sited on the outside of their building.

#### Bins

A resident said that there are no bins along the canal towpath from Waterside – can there be a bin by the footbridge? Solihull MBC will not empty additional bins, but Councillor Maureen Holloway agreed to ask the CRT.

### **Minute 169 (2018/19) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations**

None.

**Minute 170 (2018/19) Report from Borough Councillors**

None.

**Minute 171 (2018/19) Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday March 5<sup>th</sup> 2019**

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

**Minute 172 (2018/19) Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday March 12<sup>th</sup> 2019**

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

**Minute 173 (2018/19) Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday March 12<sup>th</sup> 2019**

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

**Minute 174 (2018/19) Thank You to Retiring Councillors**

Chair Maureen Holloway extended the thanks of the Parish Council to Councillors David Jones and Alan Scholes, who are not standing for re-election, for their contribution to the Parish Council and work on behalf of the community.

**Minute 175 (2018/19) Actions from the Previous Meeting**In Bloom

Councillor Nargis Rashid has been in touch with the School who are keen to be involved. The Clerk to contact Dickens Heath Allotments who have also expressed an interest.

Community Chest Fund

The relaunch has been successful and some applications have been received.

Festival on the Green

The Festival on the Green funds balance of £262.72 has now been received in the Parish Council's 'In Bloom' bank account, which will allow it to be kept separate from the main PC funds.

WALC Playground Course

This is taking place on May 10<sup>th</sup> and 2 places have been booked. Along with the Clerk, Councillors Nargis Rashid and Doreen Wright are both keen to go. The Clerk to look into booking a third place.

**Minute 176 (2018/19) Planning Applications**

Three additional planning applications have also been received:

2019/00865 - 57 Birchy Close - Single storey rear extension, first floor rear extension

2019/00895 - Pickwick House, 268 Tanworth Lane - Single storey rear playroom extension & link to house

2019/00940 - 71 Birchy Close - Conversion of detached garage to granny annex

Councillor Trevor Eames to look into the details of the 71 Birchy Close planning application. No comments on the other planning applications.

**Minute 177 (2018/19) Update on the Parish Council's Move to the Library and Sale of 1 Wharf House**

The Parish Council has successfully moved to the first floor of the library, the temporary licence to occupy the library is in place, and the sale of 1 Wharf House has completed. Some alterations to the first floor of the Library will be made, but the Parish Council plans to wait for a while to see how the space can best be used.

**Minute 178 (2018/19) Village Issues**Dickens Heath Football Club

Councillor David Jones was pleased to report that Dickens Heath Football Club have progressed to their first final, on penalties, and this will take place in May.

Litter Picking

A resident has suggested that litter pickers be made available in the library for residents to borrow. Councillor David Jones agreed that this was a good idea, the Clerk to follow it up with SMBC.

Local Churches – Update on Diocese

Councillor David Jones gave an update on the local diocese. He said that Dickens Heath is part of the Greater Birmingham Diocese, which is one of the poorest in the country. Rev Julie Humphries is leaving in May, the diocese is making cutbacks and clergy can end up with 3 or 4 churches to look after along with all of the work that entails in the church and community. The church relies on its members for funding, along with weddings and funerals, but churches are missing out on many weddings now. The church needs to be convinced to replace Rev Julie Humphries, and this can take 6 months to a year. There is no guarantee that she will be replaced. The loss of both Rev Julie Humphries and Andrew Simpkins is very worrying. Councillor Jones added that there are some lay people who can stand in, but they are not able to perform weddings or baptisms for example.

Festival on the Green

This will take place on June 15<sup>th</sup> between 1 and 5pm. A committee has been formed which has everything in hand. They have asked whether the first floor of the library could be made available on the day for the dance groups to use as a changing facility. This was agreed.

**Minute 179 (2018/19) Update on Meetings with Solihull MBC and the Liquidators about the Village Green, Playground and Country Park (Small Nature Reserve)**

Councillors Maureen Holloway and Alan Scholes have today attended a meeting at Savills, and things are progressing but very slowly. Matters are currently with the solicitors – the Clerk to chase our solicitor up. Costings are still awaited regarding a commuted sum for maintenance of the Small Nature Reserve.

**Minute 180 (2018/19) Parish Council Conference**

Councillor Trevor Eames gave an update on the Parish Council Conference at SMBC – this introduced the people in key services within SMBC, which was very useful. It also introduced an updated version of the parish council charter on how SMBC and parish councils work together.

**Minute 181 (2018/19) Financial Matters**

Proposed by Councillor Wright, seconded by Councillor Rashid, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the April 9<sup>th</sup> 2019 Agenda be approved – 1 direct debit and 17 payments totalling £13,015.77 including additional payments of £3,748.00 to Shepherd Commercial for the marketing of 1 Wharf House, £211.00 to the Post Office for redirection of the post following the move, £50 for a leaving gift for Andrew and Sara Simpkins, and £84.98 for a radiator. Five End of Year payments for 2018/19, totalling £550.14, were also approved.

End of Year Financial Statements

The 2018/19 End of Year Accounts were approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk. Councillor Di Potter verified the bank statement to the bank reconciliation.

Sale of 1 Wharf House

The proceeds of the sale (£196,176.25 following legal expenses) have been paid into the Parish Council's savings account which currently pays interest of 0.24%. There followed some discussion on whether the PWLB loans should be repaid. It was agreed that this should be placed on the agenda for the May meeting.

**Minute 182 (2018/19) Elections on May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019**

There will be no election for Dickens Heath Parish Council. 6 nominations have been received – so all will be elected, and there will be 1 vacancy as of May.

**Minute 183 (2018/19) Website**

Details of the Parish Council’s new address will have to be updated – Councillor Alan Scholes agreed to look at this.

**Minute 184 (2018/19) Community Use of Library First Floor**

A few groups have already started to use the Library first floor, while the library is open or when Parish Council staff are present.

**Minute 185 (2018/19) Correspondence**

Service Station at Junction 4 of M42

A resident has seen this proposal, but feels that it is very congested at this junction and wonders whether the PC has a view. Councillor Trevor Eames said that the decision about the service station will be taken at Government level. There are 2 options – a huge site at Catherine de Barnes or a smaller site, Applegreen, at junction 4. The Parish Council has not been consulted. The Applegreen option is less damaging to the environment. Councillor Alan Scholes commented that the road infrastructure needs to be improved, the service station is likely to compound current traffic problems. Councillor Eames said that SMBC may well object to both sites, but it will be the Government that makes the final decision.

Double Yellow Lines on Dickens Heath Rd alongside the Village Green

The experimental order to close Braggs Farm Lane has been put on hold for the moment – due to local concern regarding the impact on traffic volumes. A traffic impact assessment will be carried out by SMBC before they make a final decision. Solihull MBC have decided that the double yellow lines on Dickens Heath Rd will not proceed in isolation, as they did not score enough ‘points’ on the assessment for SMBC’s 2019/20 Highways programme. If residents are concerned, they need to complain to SMBC as this is the only way that sufficient ‘points’ will be registered.

**Minute 186 (2018/19) Items for Next Agenda**

Community Chest Fund, In Bloom.

**Meeting ended 9.05pm**

**Next Meeting : Tuesday May 14<sup>th</sup> 2019: 7.15pm in the Library (1<sup>st</sup> floor)**