

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday June 11th 2019 in the Library, Dickens Heath

Present:

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

Borough Councillors; Ken Hawkins

6 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 34 (2019/20) Election of Chair for the Meeting

In the absence of Chair Maureen Holloway, Councillors Di Potter and Doreen Wright proposed that Councillor Nargis Rashid should chair the meeting – Councillor Rashid accepted.

Minute 35 (2019/20) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were accepted from Councillors Maureen Holloway and Mike Small.

Minute 36 (2019/20) Public Participation

Defibrillator in the Village

A resident asked whether there had been any progress on obtaining a defibrillator for Dickens Heath. Councillor Mike Small has been looking into this. The resident suggested that the defibrillator should be sited outside Tesco as this is where the greatest footfall is.

Whitlocks End Train Station Car Park

A resident suggested that, as the train station's car park is always full, maybe a minibus service could be provided from the village centre out to Whitlocks End. Councillor Trevor Eames replied that a survey has been done by Transport for West Midlands, and there is a proposal to extend the car park by 261 spaces. The land is already owned by the West Midlands Combined Authority, but this is not likely to happen until the additional housing development is confirmed. He also commented that the bus is not proving to be as popular as hoped. Councillor Nargis Rashid added that this type of community service can be included in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan process.

Parish Council Response to Draft Solihull Local Plan Supplementary Consultation – Site 4

A resident of Birchy Close questioned the Parish Council's response to this consultation, which was sent to SMBC in March 2019. He said that the minutes of the Parish Council's March 2019 meeting clearly state that the Parish Council will object to Site 4, but the letter sent in response by the Parish Council does not include the words 'the Parish Council objects'. He said that the letter should have clearly expressed the view of the Parish Council and stated that they object to site 4 – it is important that both SMBC and the Planning Inspector are clear on the view of the Parish Council. Councillor Trevor Eames replied that this was an interim consultation, there will be another one later in the year, and the Parish Council's response to the consultation was very carefully constructed. Councillor Eames said that the Parish Council is opposed to any scheme that doesn't retain the sports grounds. If the Parish Council were to object to any development at all on site 4, then its views would be discounted by SMBC and the Planning Inspector as an unreasonable approach. Solihull will have to take more housing, we have to be realistic, and for Dickens Heath not to take any houses is unreasonable. The Parish Council believe that they have made an objection to site 4, the 4 residents of Birchy Close present at the meeting disagree and asked the Parish Council to send a further letter to SMBC to clarify the position. Chair Nargis Rashid added that, given there will be another consultation, the Parish Council has another opportunity to send in a response.

Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins added that he didn't object to site 4 and sides with Councillor Eames' point of view. Site 4's developer, Richborough, will also be objecting, they can't build their proposed sporting facilities if they can only build 350 houses. And Sport England will only sign up to it if there is betterment in terms of sports pitches – which there isn't currently. The residents of Birchy Close present at the meeting were still of the view that the PC should send in a further letter. Chair Nargis Rashid replied that the Parish Councillors would discuss this and let them know.

Minute 37 (2019/20) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None.

Minute 38 (2019/20) Report from Borough Councillors

Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins said that he was looking into whether he could get hold of a free defibrillator for Dickens Heath. He has also got involved in the planning application to cut back the oak tree at 15A Whitchurch Lane as he feels that the work proposed is excessive. With regard to parking at Whitlocks End train station, he said that some surveys need to be done to find out where the cars come from. The concern is that if the car parking is extended, cars will simply come from further afield. Councillor Doreen Wright suggested that priority could be given to local residents via a permit scheme. Councillor Hawkins agreed that some alternative approaches needed to be considered.

Minute 39 (2019/20) Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday May 14th 2019

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

Minute 40 (2019/20) Actions from the Previous Meeting

In Bloom

The Parish Council's 'Best Front Garden' competition has been launched again for 2019, and Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins was invited to be the judge.

Lease for Library 1st Floor

The Parish Council's solicitor suggests that if the Parish Council wishes at some point to make alterations to the Library 1st floor, then these should ideally be agreed with the Landlord as part of the lease agreement. The Parish Council agreed that the alterations already drafted by SMBC should be forwarded to our solicitor for inclusion in the lease negotiations. It was agreed that a further meeting with Library officers was required – the Clerk to arrange.

Additional Hanging Baskets

The Parish Council had hoped to extend the hanging baskets out to the new developments. Unfortunately the lamp posts in question are not yet adopted by SMBC, and neither the developer nor SMBC have been prepared to agree that the lamp posts can be used prior to adoption. The Parish Council therefore agreed that the additional hanging baskets ordered should now be added to other suitable SMBC adopted lamp posts within the village. The hanging baskets are due to be installed on June 15th 2019.

Litter Picking/Rubbish Friends Litter Pick Organised by Coffee Cloud

Members of the Parish Council are due to meet with officers from SMBC – who are happy to lend us litter picking equipment and to discuss the required arrangements for a community litter pick. This information to be passed on to Coffee Cloud's Rubbish Friends initiative.

Bellway Substation

Councillor Alan Scholes has reported that 'Danger of Death' notices have now been fitted at the substation.

Noise at New Chalice Restaurant

A resident has reported that the SMBC Licensing Officer has spoken to the bar manager, and it has been generally quieter since.

Minute 41 (2019/20) Planning Applications

Councillor Trevor Eames reported on the planning application for work to an oak tree at 15A Whitchurch Lane – the SMBC Tree Officer’s report is very critical and states that a tree of that age is likely to be killed by this scale of cutting back. The Parish Council has objected, and Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins confirmed that refusal is recommended.

No comments on the other planning application.

Councillor Eames also confirmed that the drainage report for 85 Birchy Leasowes Lane is due to go back to SMBC Committee and, when it is finalised, the PC would like to be consulted on it.

Minute 42 (2019/20) Youth Facility

Planning for the community/youth facility at the school has now been approved. Youth consultation is planned regarding activities at the new facility, and Councillor Nargis Rashid will be involved with this.

Minute 43 (2019/20) Village Green/Playground/Small Nature Reserve

Councillor Alan Scholes and the Clerk attended a meeting at Savills last week, and Councillor Scholes gave an update. SMBC will not take ownership of the small nature reserve without a commuted sum for maintenance, however SMBC have still not come up with a figure for this. It now looks like the transfer of the Village Green from the Liquidators to SMBC will take place before details are finalised for the Small Nature Reserve. SMBC officers have drawn up Heads of Terms for transfer of the Village Green from the Liquidators to Solihull MBC, and then a subsequent lease from SMBC to the Parish Council. The Heads of Terms are due to go to SMBC Cabinet on July 10th 2019 and, all being well, the process will be started on July 17th 2019. Following acquisition by SMBC, they will need to advertise for 2 weeks the proposed lease to the Parish Council.

All agreed the approval of the Heads of Terms, the Clerk to notify the SMBC officer.

Minute 44 (2019/20) In Bloom

Most of the planters have now been planted up and will be completed in the next few days.

Minute 45 (2019/20) Festival on the Green

Councillor Trevor Eames gave an update on the plans for Festival on the Green this Saturday. The £950 relating to the Festival which has been paid into the Parish Council’s ‘In Bloom’ account, plus the grant for £250, to be made available in cash to the Festival organisers – to pay performers on the day. Councillor Eames to arrange for the cash to be delivered and to obtain a receipt.

Minute 46 (2019/20) Events Attended by CouncillorsLocality Day

Councillor Trevor Eames attended this event – a lot of work has been done analysing areas in Solihull, the positive and negative aspects. This will be very useful for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Copperfield Court Residents’ Group

Councillor Trevor Eames attended this event, where a good turnout of residents met with representatives of Savills. There has been an increase in the service charge but still a backlog of work needs doing – the meeting was very positive.

Minute 47 (2019/20) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Wright, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the June 11th 2019 Agenda be approved – 23 payments totalling £6,198.81 including payment of the £250.00 grant for Festival on the Green.

An invoice has been received from Plantscape for £9,518.40 for the hanging baskets plus watering over the summer. It was agreed that this should be paid once the hanging baskets have been delivered.

Report on Finances for the Year to Date

This was received. We have yet to receive an invoice from SBMC for occupation of the Library, the suggestion is that the Parish Council is invoiced quarterly in arrears – based on the previous year's costs plus a balancing invoice at the year end. It was agreed that this was reasonable.

Councillor Di Potter verified the bank reconciliation to the bank statements and signed them.

Repayment of PWLB Loans

The Parish Council is still holding in its bank account the receipt of over £196,000 from the sale of 1 Wharf House. This has not been repaid in the last month because the penalty that the Public Works Loans Board will charge for early repayment has been rising daily – due to falling interest rates. Following some discussion around interest rates and how they might change in the future, all agreed that the loans should be repaid as soon as possible.

Councillor Di Potter and the Clerk to action this.

Annual Internal Audit Report 2018-19

Parish Councillors have all read the report – new policies and procedures are required relating to the Parish Council's occupation of the Library, plus a number of other policies require updating. Councillor Nargis Rashid to assist the Clerk with this. The Chair thanked the Clerk for her contribution to the very positive internal audit.

Minute 48 (2019/20) Community Use of Library First Floor

There have been a couple of requests to use the Parish Council's space in the Library. One is for a meeting of Waterside Residents' Association – this was agreed. The other is for a group called 'Relax Kids' which is an after school club – it was agreed that a new bookings policy needs to be agreed before such a booking can be considered.

Minute 49 (2019/20) Parish Council Away Day

It was agreed that an 'Away Day' later in the year would be very useful to discuss progressing the Neighbourhood Plan.

Minute 50 (2019/20) Correspondence

Schools No Car Zone Programme

Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins has asked for the Parish Council's view on whether Three Acres Lane should be included in this programme which prohibits school traffic from using school access roads at certain times of the day. The PC agreed that they would initially like to monitor how this scheme progresses at other Borough schools.

Parking Restrictions on Dickens Heath Rd alongside the Village Green

It was agreed that this should be picked up with Councillor Hawkins - Councillor Trevor Eames to draft.

Solar Christmas Trees

Plantscape have asked whether the Parish Council wish to order the solar Christmas trees for this year – the Parish Council agreed that they did.

Skatepark Request

A young resident has contacted the Parish Council to request a skatepark for young scooter riders and skaters so that they have somewhere to go rather than the streets of Dickens Heath where people tell them to stop damaging property. At the moment there is no land where a skatepark could be sited, and it is not currently acceptable to site such a facility alongside residential property. The Parish Council will look into this as part of the Neighbourhood Plan and future development.

Waterside Apartments – Builders burying Plaster

At the Waterside apartments that are being refurbished following the floods – builders have been disposing of plaster by burying it in the ground, which is environmentally hazardous. The SMBC Neighbourhood Co-ordinator has spoken to the builders’ site manager and told them to clear it.

Proposed Installation of Road Humps on Dickens Heath Rd (Bellway)

SMBC are running a consultation on installing 5 pairs of speed cushions on the stretch of Dickens Heath Rd from just before Birchy Close to just past the Cleobury Lane junction. There are flooding issues along this stretch of road – Councillors Trevor Eames and Alan Scholes to look at the proposal in more detail.

Minute 51 (2019/20) 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 52 (2019/20) Draft Solihull Local Plan Supplementary Consultation – Parish Council Response

The Parish Council discussed their response to this consultation in the light of residents’ comments during public participation. It was agreed that the Parish Council were satisfied that they had put forward the views of the community in their response, and so would not be sending a further letter to SMBC at this stage, there will be a further consultation later in the year.

Minute 53 (2019/20) Village Centre Car Parking

Councillor Trevor Eames gave an update on this.

Meeting ended 10pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday July 9th 2019: 7.15pm in the Library (1st floor)