

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday September 10th 2019 in the Library, Dickens Heath

Present:

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

9 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 73 (2019/20) Apologies for Absence

None.

Minute 74 (2019/20) Award of Prizes for In Bloom Best Front Garden 2019

Chair Maureen Holloway announced that Dickens Heath had won a Silver Gilt award for Heart of England in Bloom 2019. Along with Councillors Nargis Rashid and Doreen Wright, she had attended the presentation ceremony and all were delighted with the step up to Silver Gilt from Bronze in 2018. They now feel that Dickens Heath can aim for Gold – there are a few obvious areas to work on, for example the weeds on the block paving. There were an increased number of entries this year for the Best Front Garden Competition, and the Chair awarded the gold, silver and bronze prizes to the winners for their stunning gardens.

Minute 75 (2019/20) Public Participation

Missing Bollard on Gorcott Lane/Ascote Lane

A resident reported that he has spoken to SMBC about this and a replacement is on order. The Chair added that Savills have also been approached about getting some road markings put down at the top of Main St by the entrance to the Garden Squares II underground car park – this is a private road. A resident asked whether Main St would be adopted – it won't be but Solihull MBC may look into putting some parking controls in place along Main St.

Overgrown Pathways on Tythe Barn Lane

Vegetation along the pavements on Tythe Barn Lane out to Whitlocks End is very overgrown. The Parish Council spoke with the SMBC Neighbourhood Co-ordinator earlier in the day – the landowners have all been issued with notices to cut back the vegetation and if they don't, SMBC will cut it back and charge the landowners. There is always a time delay because SMBC have to give the landowners a certain amount of notice.

Pub in Tidbury Green

A resident asked about the new pub proposed for Tidbury Green at Tidbury Green Farm. Councillor Trevor Eames replied that SMBC Planning officers have this planning application down for refusal, but it is actually probably a deferral and they require some changes to the planning application.

Minute 76 (2019/20) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

Councillors Maureen Holloway and Mike Small both declared an interest when discussing planning applications as they are neighbours of 9 Packmores.

Minute 77 (2019/20) Report from Borough Councillors

None present.

Minute 78 (2019/20) Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Tuesday July 9th 2019

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

Minute 79 (2019/20) Actions from the Previous MeetingIn Bloom 2019

Simon, the Parish Council litter picker and handyman, has been working very hard watering the planters and keeping the roads clear of litter. Weeds in the pavements did result in lost marks during the judging – Councillors to take some photos to forward to SMBC, who should be cleaning the pavements as they get very slippery during the winter months.

Dickens Heath Football Club Grant

Dickens Heath FC were awarded half of the grant that they applied for, the second half to be awarded at Christmas as long as they keep the community regularly informed about the club. They have already started to publish updates on Facebook.

Library Volunteers

A meeting has been arranged for October with the Knowle Society to discuss how volunteers enable Knowle Library to open for extended hours.

Library Lease

The solicitors are 'nearly there' with the lease for the Parish Council to occupy the first floor of the library. The landlord has agreed that the Parish Council sign and noticeboards can be installed on the outside of the building. The landlord also wishes to know when the Parish Council might undertake the proposed alterations to the first floor and how long these might take. The Parish Council have asked for permission to install a meeting room, a toilet and kitchen area. The Parish Councillors agreed that they did not know at this stage the details of any alterations, but SMBC approved contractors would be used for the work.

Minute 80 (2019/20) Planning Applications

No comments.

Minute 81 (2019/20) Youth Facility at the School

Councillor Nargis Rashid reported that the youth facility building is now up, and construction well underway. An opening event will be organised in due course and they will notify us beforehand.

Minute 82 (2019/20) Village Green and Playground

Councillors Maureen Holloway and Alan Scholes, along with the Clerk, attended a meeting earlier today with representatives from Savills, the Liquidators and Solihull MBC. The transfer of the land from the Liquidators to SMBC is just weeks away and the solicitors are working on the final details. Once they own the land, SMBC will then need to advertise the disposal of the Village Green to the Parish Council – by advertising in local newspapers for 2 consecutive weeks. Councillor Alan Scholes to clarify with SMBC whether the landowner or leaseholder would be responsible for dealing with an issue such as an encampment of travellers.

Minute 83 (2019/20) Village Traffic Islands

The island by Calcutt Way needs spraying. The island by Brixfield Way is very scruffy and Chair Maureen Holloway proposed that it should be cleared and planted with wildflower seeds which would be low maintenance and very attractive. SMBC to be asked for advice about a company to clear out the island as they will need to be accredited to work on the highway. Matt Gardener of SMBC has agreed to supply wildflower seeds along with daffodil and crocus bulbs.

Minute 84 (2019/20) Solar Christmas Trees by New Developments

Solar Christmas trees can only be installed on lamp posts by the new developments if they have been adopted, or we have approval from the owner – this to be chased up.

Minute 85 (2019/20) Village Bus Service

Landflight have reviewed all of their services, and there has been a change to the buses through Dickens Heath. There is no change to the A4 – which goes through Dickens Heath to Wythall. The A5 now comes into Dickens Heath but only to the clock island, where it turns, and doesn't go further into the village. The bus timetables have also changed slightly.

Minute 86 (2019/20) Request for a Bus Shelter or Bench at Bus Stops

Following a request from a resident, the Parish Council discussed the possibility of a bus shelter or bench at the bus stop at clock island - as this is now the main bus stop in Dickens Heath. There would potentially be enough space by the planters. Along with the benefits for elderly residents or those with young children, there could be disadvantages – for example graffiti or smashed glass. Councillor Doreen Wright felt strongly that this could be a focus for anti-social behaviour. However, overall the Parish Council decided to follow up on the possibility of a bus shelter or bench in this location.

Minute 87 (2019/20) Remembrance Sunday Service 2019

Rev Theresa Jones has agreed to lead the service once again, and there are potentially other residents who will be able to assist now that Andrew Simpkins has moved away. It was agreed that the service should be held in front of the library, as it had been for many years prior to 2018. The service last year at the back of Tesco was a bit gloomy due to poor light and there were complications with the power supply for the sound system. The paperwork for the road closures has been completed. Some of the road signs required for the road closures had been borrowed by Dickens Heath Management Co for use in the underground car park at Waterside when water was being pumped out. One sign has yet be retrieved, and one sign has been damaged with paint. It was agreed that replacement signs should be purchased as necessary.

Minute 88 (2019/20) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Wright, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the September 10th 2019 Agenda be approved – 17 payments totalling £6,898.03 for August 2019 and 19 payments totalling £4,009.18 for September 2019 including additional payments of £33.30 to M. Holloway for travel expenses and £360.00 to PKF Littlejohn LLP for the external audit.

Report on Finances for the Year to Date

This was received, there is currently a surplus of almost £106,000. Councillor Di Potter verified the bank reconciliation to the bank statements.

Annual Governance & Accountability Return

This has been returned and signed off by the External Auditor with no concerns.

Bank Mandate

Unfortunately this has been returned as HSBC wish to change the type of account – to a local authority one. The Clerk to arrange an appointment with HSBC to sort this out.

Minute 89 (2019/20) Updated Policies and Procedures

Standing Orders

This was approved subject to a minor adjustment to standing order 23(b).

Financial Regulations

This was approved.

Petitions Policy

This was discussed and a few amendments agreed.

Minute 90 (2019/20) Community Use of Library First Floor

A request had been received for a residents' meeting to be held on the library first floor – which might involve up to 100 residents. Having now received a copy of the fire risk assessment for the library, the maximum number of people who can be in the building at any time is 50. Therefore the Parish Council will have to abide by this limit.

Minute 91 (2019/20) Annual Away Day

The main topic for this day later in September will be Neighbourhood Planning. Councillor Trevor Eames reported that Councillor Andrew Burrow, Chair of Balsall PC and a lead on the Berkswell Parish Neighbourhood Plan was able to attend along with Charlene Jones and Emma Tildsley-Evans from SMBC Planning. The Clerk to liaise with Coffee Cloud regarding lunch.

Minute 92 (2019/20) Correspondence

WALC Courses

The End of Year Financial Procedures day is planned for January 2020 – it was agreed that the Clerk could attend. The WALC Annual Briefing Day and AGM is on Saturday November 9th 2019 – the Clerk to circulate the details to Councillors.

Nuisance Noise from Mortons

A resident from the flats above Mortons has complained that noise has been a real problem since earlier in the year when Mortons changed their sound system, with music pounding into the flats for hours on end. He has spoken to managers at Mortons but nothing has changed. The Parish Councillors agreed to advise the resident to contact SMBC Environmental Health who can put in a monitoring system to assess the level of nuisance.

JAMS Publishing Writing Competition

JAMS Publishing received a Community Chest grant for prizes for their writing competition. The prizes are to be presented at the Food and Craft Fair in the Village Hall on Saturday September 14th 2019.

Meeting ended 9.30pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday October 8th 2019: 7.15pm in the Library (1st floor)