

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday January 14th 2020 in the Library, Dickens Heath

Present:

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

3 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 135 (2019/20) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were accepted from Councillors Nargis Rashid and Mike Small.

Minute 136 (2019/20) Public Participation

Dog Mess

A resident raised the problem of dog owners who don't pick up after their dogs – and suggested that the Parish Council purchase some yellow paint that can be sprayed on the dog mess. This raises awareness of the problem, and also makes it more visible so that people are less likely to step in it. There are 2 types of spray paint – one is chalk based and washes away quite quickly, the other will last a few weeks. The resident to forward details to the Clerk.

Parking in Willowherb Way

Parking has become a problem in Willowherb Way. Residents of village centre apartments park in Willowherb Way, including a large commercial vehicle, and this is causing problems for the road's residents. Councillor Trevor Eames said that many of the village centre apartments have no allocated parking spaces, which is why they are parking in neighbouring roads. If a vehicle has tax and MOT, then motorists can legally park anywhere without double yellow lines, and nothing can be done about it. Councillor Maureen Holloway said that she did sympathize, and such parking affects many residents of Dickens Heath – but Solihull MBC and the Police will not get involved, even if the parking affects a junction. Councillor Eames also pointed out that the additional double yellow lines and ban on pavement parking has simply moved the parking problem to other areas within the village.

Minute 137 (2019/20) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None.

Minute 138 (2019/20) Report from Borough Councillors

Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins has sent his apologies, but has notified us that the Flooding Report is now out.

Minute 139 (2019/20) Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Tuesday November 12th 2019

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

Minute 140 (2019/20) Actions from the Previous MeetingChristmas Tree Lighting and Carol Singing

The Christmas Tree Lighting Service in the Village Hall was very busy, and next Christmas there are plans for lights on the outside of the Village Hall as well as on the tree.

Unfortunately, only 1 resident turned up to join Parish Councillors for the Carol Singing – which ended up being cancelled. Tesco support both events. It was agreed that it would be better if both events were combined for 2020.

Wildflower Sowing

Two sites are being considered for the sowing of wildflower seeds – on the wide verges of approach roads into the village.

Bus Shelter at Clock Island

There has been no reply from Transport for West Midlands to the request to look into a bus shelter for clock island. Councillor Trevor Eames to follow this up.

Bellway Lamp Posts

Despite assurances from Bellway that they would look into this – some of the lamp posts on Dickens Heath Rd, near the Fishers Drive bus stop, are still not working. Councillor Doreen Wright to mark the lamp posts on a map so that this can be followed up again.

Minute 141 (2019/20) Planning Applications4 Primrose Lane

It was agreed that the Parish Council has no objection to this planning application, but would request that the tree protection measures are secured by a planning condition.

No comments on the additional planning application at 21 Meadow Pleck Lane for tree works to an oak tree and holly tree.

Minute 142 (2019/20) Village Green and Playground

The legal process for the transfer of the Village Green from the Liquidators to Solihull MBC is nearing completion. Solihull MBC and the solicitors are still working on the lease of the land to the Parish Council. Dickens Heath Management Co. and Savills had verbally indicated that they would be prepared to continue providing maintenance for the Village Green and Playground, with the Parish Council funding it, and an estimate of costs had been received. Unfortunately Savills have in the last week changed their mind on this, which has left the Parish Council urgently seeking an alternative contractor who can provide the whole package for maintaining the Village Green along with the health and safety aspect of the Playground. A quote from Fairways has been received which meets this specification. Fairways have been recommended by Hockley Heath Parish Council, they also maintain public open space for Wythall Parish Council and have done work in Dickens Heath for Elegant Homes. All agreed that the Fairways quote for £3,470 p.a. for ongoing maintenance of the Village Green and Playground should be accepted, with the optional improvement extras to be considered in due course.

The paperwork regarding historical maintenance and health and safety records to be requested from Dickens Heath Management Co. once the land has been transferred.

Minute 143 (2019/20) Community/Youth Facility at the School

An estimate of the cost of a youth worker to run a Youth Group at the new Community Facility has been received from Solihull MBC – which is £2,747.52 for 48 weeks p.a. It was agreed that the PC would fund this – the Clerk to liaise with SMBC over how this was to be paid.

Minute 144 (2019/20) Solar Christmas Trees and Hanging Baskets

It was agreed that the PC would like to expand the number of solar Christmas trees for 2020. The Parish Council would also like to order additional hanging baskets from Plantscape for the summer – including taking on the hanging baskets down Main St, permission to be sought from Dickens Heath Management Co. There are also baskets on railings down at Garden Squares II by Waterside – these are now full of weeds and need replanting. The Clerk to confirm the details with Plantscape.

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Signature.....

Date.....

Minute 145 (2019/20) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Wright, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the January 14th 2020 Agenda be approved – 16 payments totalling £7,123.45 for January including additional payments of £754.10 to Zurich Municipal for the insurance 2020/21 and £2,905.00 to SMBC for the third quarter's rent for the Library first floor, plus 15 payments totalling £4,849.33 for December 2019.

Report on Finances for the Year to Date

This was received, the VAT reclaim for 2018/19 of £6,078 has been received. There is currently a surplus of £128,000 and a projected end of year surplus in excess of £100,000. Councillor Di Potter verified the bank statements to the bank reconciliation as at December 31st 2019.

Payroll Contract for 2020/21

The payroll contract for 2020/21 was agreed at a cost of £222 p.a.

Insurance 2020/21

The Parish Council is currently in a long term agreement with Zurich Municipal, and the payment of the premium for 2020/21 was agreed. The annual cost of insurance has decreased by around 25% to £754.10 for 2020/21 as a result of the relocation from the Parish Rooms to the Library. There will of course be an additional insurance cost once the Parish Council take on responsibility for the Village Green and Playground.

Budget and Precept 2020/21

The Parish Council considered a proposed budget for 2020/21, and agreed that a balanced budget with appropriate levels of reserves (including funds for a replacement playground) could be achieved with a 3% reduction in the precept charge.

Resolved that the Band D precept charge be reduced by 3% to £36.77 which results in a total precept of £82,003 for 2020/21. The Clerk to complete the forms for Solihull MBC.

Minute 146 (2019/20) Updated Policies and ProceduresGrievance Policy

NALC have circulated an update to the model grievance policy as a result of the Ledbury Court Case – regarding employee complaints about the conduct of a councillor. The update was agreed subject to final approval of the wording by Councillor Nargis Rashid.

Minute 147 (2019/20) Parish Council Website

Councillor Alan Scholes has set up a page on the website for advice on planning applications. Councillor Trevor Eames to liaise about the content.

Minute 148 (2019/20) Grant ApplicationsDickens Heath Football Club

Dickens Heath FC have sent us an update – they have missed a lot of home games due to waterlogged pitches. It was agreed that the second instalment of their grant should now be paid.

Minute 149 (2019/20) Annual Parish Meeting

It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting for residents would take place on Tuesday April 14th 2020 at 7.30pm. The April Parish Council meeting to be rearranged for 6pm on the same evening.

Minute 150 (2019/20) Correspondence

Flooding on Dickens Heath Rd by Miller and Carter

Residents complain about the constant flooding of the road in this location. Now that the Flooding Report has been published by SMBC, the Clerk to remind the Flood Officer about the promised drop in session for residents to discuss their flooding concerns.

White Road Markings on Dickens Heath Rd

A resident has asked whether the white road markings can be refreshed. This has been raised with the SMBC Neighbourhood Co-ordinator.

Government Consultation on Strengthening Police Powers to Tackle Unauthorised

Encampments

Councillor Trevor Eames to look at this.

Street Food Events

A company that runs street food events has asked whether this would be of interest for Dickens Heath. The Clerk to forward the details to the Festival on the Green committee.

Velo in the West Midlands

This event was first staged last year, and the organisers have a contract for 3 years. A resident of a neighbouring parish council is objecting to the disruption to residents of the area, and is encouraging affected parish councils to also object. Especially given that it is not a charity event. Councillor Trevor Eames commented that there were some difficulties last year with alternative routes, and with some people getting stuck. These problems have supposedly been sorted out for this year's event. He added that there has been a lot of support for the event, and just a few objections. The Clerk to forward the map to Councillors so that they can assess the impact on the Dickens Heath area.

Meeting ended 8.50pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday February 11th 2020: 7.15pm in the Library (1st floor)