

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday March 10th 2020 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.

6 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 165 (2019/20) Apologies for Absence

None.

Minute 166 (2019/20) Public Participation

Drainage Pond on The Paddocks

Two residents who live on the David Wilson site The Paddocks said that they are beyond fed up at the state of the drainage pond, and it is now causing them depression. It was wonderful when they first moved in, but it has been seriously neglected by both the developer David Wilson and by SMBC, it is now an eyesore and causing environmental issues. The pond is so full of weeds and bullrushes that the flow of water must be hampered, in the summer months the stagnant water smells unpleasant, and there is no room any more for wildlife. Airborne seeds from the bullrushes cause a problem between Autumn and April – covering windows, doors, cars and driveways such that windows can't be left open nor washing hung out to dry, and residents spend a great deal of time cleaning the seeds from their houses and cars. Councillor Alan Scholes added that Nick Page, Chief Executive of SMBC, visited the site in Autumn 2019 and said that he would contact his opposite number at David Wilson. The Clerk to contact Nick Page to ask whether he had received a response.

Reduction in Level of Precept

A resident said that he was disappointed that the Parish Council had reduced the level of the precept for 2020/21 as the additional funds could have been used, for example, to help fund a footpath to Dickens Heath Sports Club. Councillor Maureen Holloway replied that this would actually be in Tidbury Green Parish, and Dickens Heath PC couldn't justify spending £80,000 on a footpath in Tidbury Green. She added that the Parish Council had the best of intentions in reducing the precept.

Dog Mess

Another resident said that levels of dog mess in the village are a disgrace. The Clerk to order the spray paint already approved, and to publish reminders about picking up after your dog.

Library Opening Hours

A resident asked what was happening about the proposal to cut the Library opening hours. A first meeting for the Library Working Group has been arranged for later in March.

Minute 167 (2019/20) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

Both Councillors Maureen Holloway and Alan Scholes declared an interest during the discussion about the drainage pond on The Paddocks as they live nearby or have a family member who lives nearby.

Minute 168 (2019/20) Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Tuesday February 11th 2019

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

Minute 169 (2019/20) Actions from the Previous MeetingHanging Baskets/In Bloom

There has still been no reply from Savills regarding permission to replace the hanging baskets on Main St down to Waterside. It was agreed to just go ahead and do it.

The In Bloom entry form for 2020 has been completed. Matt Gardner has agreed that verges can be planted out as long as there is no obstruction to signs or vision splay, or roots that would cause damage, and the planting must be maintained.

Government Consultation on Unauthorised Encampments

This survey has been completed.

Flooding Drop in Session

This has been arranged for Tuesday March 17th 2020 between 4 and 7pm.

Cables Protruding from Ground by Bellway Site

This has been rectified by Bellway.

Minute 170 (2019/20) Planning Applications

The planning application for tree works at 135 Rumbush Lane was discussed. Councillor Trevor Eames said that the tree does need work, and that there is no reason to object, but that the Parish Council should recommend that the work is carried out by a reputable professional tree surgeon.

No comments on the other planning applications.

Minute 171 (2019/20) Library Review Working Group

The Library Review Working Group, which includes a number of Dickens Heath residents, will be holding its first meeting towards the end of March 2020.

Minute 172 (2019/20) Library Lease for Co-Occupation

This has been put on hold with the solicitor while the Library Review is taking place.

Minute 173 (2019/20) Transfer of the Village Green

The Village Green transferred from the Liquidators to Solihull MBC on February 21st 2020, with the Parish Council having a Licence to Occupy. SMBC's intention to lease the land to the PC is currently being advertised in the local press and on lamp posts near the Village Green. The quote from Fairways for maintenance of the Village Green includes fortnightly emptying of bins and visual inspections of the playground. It was agreed that this needed to be done weekly, and the additional cost of approximately £900 p.a. was agreed.

Minute 174 (2019/20) Planting of Trees in the Village

Councillor Mike Small gave an update – the saplings have been received from The Woodland Trust and most of them will be planted around the edge of the Village Green along the tree line. This will take place on Sunday March 15th in conjunction with Dickens Heath Scouts. Some of the saplings are also due to be planted at the School.

Minute 175 (2019/20) Attendance at Outside Groups or EventsFormal Opening of The Hub, the new Community Facility at the School

Councillor Nargis Rashid gave an update. This was a very enjoyable event which several Parish Councillors attended. The Hub was opened by Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins, the Headteacher of the School, and a former pupil. There will be evenings run by a youth worker twice a week – the Parish Council will fund one of these and the School will fund the other. The Parish Council will receive regular updates on how this is going.

Parish Council Conference

This was attended by several Parish Councillors and looked at various environmental issues. The Parish Council's project to plant trees is a great start, but we can do more. Examples that parish councils can look at include recycling, the optimal speed of cars and community energy schemes. Environmental issues will also now be a consideration in planning applications.

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Signature.....

Date.....

Minute 176 (2019/20) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Rashid, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the March 10th 2020 Agenda be approved – 16 payments totalling £6,874.32.

Report on Finances for the Year to Date

This was received, there is currently a surplus of £114,000 and a projected end of year surplus in excess of £100,000. The Clerk to chase up the Solicitor’s bill in relation to the Village Green, so that it can be included in the 2019/20 accounts.

Minute 177 (2019/20) Annual Parish Meeting

The arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting on April 14th were discussed. Chris Barr of Solihull MBC has agreed to speak about the new Community Facility at the School, and it was agreed that the Clerk should order a buffet from Coffee Cloud.

Minute 178 (2019/20) Parish Council Website Accessibility

Mark Emms, who hosts the Parish Council’s website, has had an initial look at its accessibility. He can either build a whole new website; or change the theme which should meet the requirements and be a lot less work. It was agreed that the theme should be changed. It looks like Hockley Heath PC’s website has already been updated by Mark Emms – the Clerk to ask their Clerk how much work was involved.

Minute 179 (2019/20) Community Use of Library First Floor

A request has been received from Create Dickens Heath with regard to an exhibition called ‘Hope in Dickens Heath’. It was agreed that the Parish Council would need further details on this before they could make a decision.

Minute 180 (2019/20) Festival on the Green 2020

A grant application has been received from the Festival on the Green Committee. The Festival has lost a significant amount of sponsorship from Smart Homes, and they are seeking a grant of up to £500 to pay for the event’s insurance plus a contribution towards the cost of the DJ. As this is an event for the whole village, all agreed a grant of £500.

Minute 181 (2019/20) Correspondence

Littering of Cigarette Butts at Clock Island

Borough Councillor Richard Holt has been following up on the antisocial littering of used cigarettes from one of the apartment windows at clock island. He has asked whether the Parish Council can assist in identifying which apartment they are being thrown from.

Meeting ended 9.10pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday April 14th 2020: (now suspended due to Coronavirus)