

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday July 14th 2020

Present:

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

4 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 16 (2020/21) Apologies for Absence

None.

Minute 17 (2020/21) Public Participation

Island at Brixfield Way

A resident asked whether there was more work to be done on the island at Brixfield Way. The Chair replied that it had been cleared but needed to be finished off after lockdown.

Quad Bikes on Main St

A group of very noisy quad bikes have been doing wheelies down Main St, if it starts to become a problem then this needs to be reported to the Police. It was agreed that the PC staff would look for the video on Facebook and forward it to the Police, copying in Phil of DHMC. Councillor Trevor Eames added that the quad bikes are likely to be legal vehicles, and that permitted noise levels are actually quite high. If it happens infrequently, then the Police will not be able to do anything. In North Solihull, where the Police have intervened, the vehicles in question weren't street legal.

Refuse at the back of Janaki

A large amount of refuse has been dumped at the top of the car park behind Mortons, at the back of Janaki. Councillor Eames said that Dickens Heath Management Co. will have to deal with this, there will have to be a special collection, and the cost will have to be added to the service charge. It looked like more than 1 van load had been dumped. It was agreed that this should be publicized, with a plea for anyone who sees this type of activity happening again to note registration numbers (with a photo if possible) and to report it to DHMC.

Minute 18 (2020/21) Election of Vice Chair

The Chair proposed that a Vice Chair should be elected to assist with the workload of the PC.

Councillor Doreen Wright nominated Councillor Trevor Eames, seconded by Councillor Alan Scholes.

Councillor Di Potter nominated Councillor Nargis Rashid, seconded by Councillor Mike Small.

By 4 votes to 3, Councillor Trevor Eames was elected Vice Chair.

Minute 19 (2020/21) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None.

Minute 20 (2020/21) Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Tuesday June 9th 2020

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

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 14th July 2020

Signature.....

Date.....

Minute 21 (2020/21) Actions from the Previous MeetingWebsite Accessibility

The new accessible theme for the website is now up and running. Documents linked to the website should also meet accessibility requirements – the Clerk will be attending a webinar on this later in July.

Administration of Village Hall

SMBC have given permission for the PC to discuss taking on the administration of the Village Hall.

Cre8 Fitness Classes on Village Green

SMBC, as landowner, have given temporary permission for Cre8 to hold commercial fitness classes on the Village Green while they are unable to use their own premises due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2019/20

This has been completed and forwarded to the External Auditors by the original, pre coronavirus, deadline.

Spraying of Weeds on Islands

Tammy Rowley of SMBC has requested this, in the meantime the PC staff have tidied up clock island so that the weeds do not detract from the floral boxes.

Litter Picking Equipment for Residents

A request has been forwarded to SMBC to find out whether they still provide litter pickers for residents who wish to help out. No reply has been received as yet. It was suggested that, as there are a good number of litter pickers in the Library – maybe these could be offered out for residents to use.

Litter Bin by GP Surgery

SMBC's map shows a bin in a slightly different location to this one, but they have confirmed that their contractor will empty it.

Pensions Regulator

The Parish Council's registration with the Pensions Regulator has been updated. It will next need to be updated in July 2023.

Minute 22 (2020/21) Parish Council Meeting Dates 2020/21

Chair Maureen Holloway said that virtual meetings of the Council are working well, and Councillor Mike Small agreed that they were also more accessible for residents. The proposed dates, with meetings continuing on the 2nd Tuesday of each month (apart from August and December) were agreed. The meetings would continue to be held virtually for the foreseeable future.

Minute 23 (2020/21) Planning Applications

Four planning applications, including 3 additional ones, were considered. These were:

- 2020/01224 - 66 Tythe Barn Lane - Tree works
- 2020/01082 - 25 Boundary Lane - Extend brick wall along the side of house replacing an existing wrought iron fence currently in situ. The new brick wall will be the exact dimensions of a brick wall that is already built further down the side of the property.
- 2020/01286 - 4 Primrose Lane - Single storey rear extension
- 2020/01281 - 15 Ladys Hall Lane - Single storey rear conservatory

It was agreed that there were no objections to the extension at 4 Primrose Lane, but support for the imposition of appropriate conditions for during and after construction with respect to possible impact on trees. It was agreed that there were no objections to the conservatory at 15 Ladys Hall Lane, but there are lease considerations as it is on the new development and so Councillor Eames has advised Karen Jackson of Ground Solutions. No comments on the other planning applications.

Minute 24 (2020/21) Village Green and Reopening of Playground

The playground reopened on July 6th with temporary Covid-19 signage. Councillor Trevor Eames reported that the permanent signage is being put up today. Councillor Doreen Wright asked about permanent signs to warn that commercial use of the Village Green is not allowed. Councillor Eames to look into this. Cre8 have been given permission to temporarily use the Village Green for small group fitness classes whilst they are unable to use their own premises due to coronavirus. A resident has asked whether larger bins could be provided for the Village Green, as the current ones are often full to overflowing. This was agreed – to be looked at as part of the playground refurbishment.

Minute 25 (2020/21) Procurement of a Replacement Playground

The ESPO (a public sector purchasing organisation) framework will be used to procure a replacement playground, which will ensure that tender requirements are met. Chair Maureen Holloway said that the PC need to have an idea of what can be purchased for the budget of around £40,000. It was agreed that ideally the same soft footprint areas would be used, and play equipment would be for the same age range of up to 11 years. It was proposed that advice should be sought from 2 of the suppliers which specialise in small playgrounds on their ranges of equipment, and then the school children can be consulted in the Autumn term. A working party with parents was also suggested. The Clerk to complete the form for ESPO and contact relevant suppliers.

Minute 26 (2020/21) Administration of Village Hall

It has been agreed in principle by both the PC and SMBC that the Parish Council could take on the administration of the Village Hall, but this is on hold for the time being.

Minute 27 (2020/21) Hanging Baskets

There are additional hanging baskets this year, with lamp posts included on the stretch of Main St down to Waterside, and some by the new developments. A total of 74 lamp posts in the village now have hanging baskets on them, along with the flower boxes on clock island.

Minute 28 (2020/21) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Wright, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the July 14th 2020 Agenda be approved – 18 payments totalling £14,966.58

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Wright, **Resolved** that the routine payments for August 2020 be approved.

Report on Finances for the Year to Date

There is currently a surplus of £125,000 with an end of year projected surplus of £121,000. This figure includes the playground procurement reserve.

Minute 29 (2020/21) Equality and Diversity Policy

Councillor Nargis Rashid proposed, seconded by Councillor Mike Small, that the Parish Council adopt the Equality and Diversity Policy based on that of Harbury Parish Council. Councillor Doreen Wright said that the Parish Councillors are already bound by the Code of Conduct and therefore this additional policy isn't necessary. Councillor Trevor Eames added that it is a very detailed, complex and wide ranging policy, and it wouldn't be possible to go through it all in today's meeting. He feels that, as a small local authority, the PC has its Standing Orders and could add some wording to the Councillors's Code of Conduct.

Councillor Nargis Rashid said that the Parish Council needs an Equality and Diversity policy to cover its legal duties as a public authority under the Equality Act 2010. She added that if this policy is too wordy, then it can be made more succinct.

Councillor Alan Scholes' view is that this policy is a bit over the top, and there are other less detailed policies available – for example from ACAS.

Councillor Mike Small said that the policy is very comprehensive, but it can be pruned, and it will give the Parish Council a depth of protection. He added that it is 2020, this policy covers race, gender, disability etc, and it protects the Parish Council – we haven't got such a policy and therefore it is worth discussing.

Chair Maureen Holloway summarised that the Parish Council does already have a Code of Conduct which covers all responsibilities. She then asked for a vote on whether to adopt this new policy or not.

There were 3 votes in favour and 4 votes against – therefore the policy will not be adopted.

Minute 30 (2020/21) Social Media Policy

Some minor amendments to the Social Media Policy were proposed – these were approved.

Minute 31 (2020/21) Grant Applications

Dickens Heath Allotments

A grant of £240 was agreed for hiring a digger to clear obsolete ground.

Community Essentials CIC

It was agreed that this proposal is admirable but the application doesn't meet the Parish Council's grants policy, and would be more suited to a business start up grant.

Dickens Heath Community Primary School PTFA

The PTFA have been unable to raise any income for 6 months, and so a grant of £500 was agreed for feed for the farm animals.

Minute 32 (2020/21) Parish Council Website

The website has been upgraded to a template which meets Website Accessibility requirements. It really needs a variety of high quality photos to enhance it – it was agreed that an appeal for photos could be launched, with prizes for the photos used on the website. The Clerk had suggested there could be a feed from the Parish Council Facebook page on to the website Home page – but this requires a plug in which costs \$49 per year. It was agreed to try this for a year.

Minute 33 (2020/21) Correspondence

Postal Address

A resident has asked why the postal address for Dickens Heath is still Shirley, and can it be changed? This was looked at in the early days of the village, but it was agreed that it should be looked at again. The Clerk to contact Cheswick Green PC who have changed their postal address in recent years.

Marie Curie Hospice

Marie Curie Hospice have made an appeal for funds to the PC – but donations to charities are not allowed under the Parish Council's policy.

Catch Up with SMBC Officers about the Library

The Clerk to arrange this.

Junction of Rumbush Lane and Copperfield Court

The markings at this junction have been renewed, but it still needs a Give Way sign.

Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins has commented that such a sign is essential – the Clerk to contact SMBC.

Minute 34 (2020/21) Items for Next Agenda

Solar Xmas trees, Lamp posts.

Minute 35 (2020/21) 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 36 (2020/21) Clerk Annual Leave and Future

This was discussed.

Meeting ended 2pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday September 8th 2020