

## The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

### Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday November 10th 2020

**Present:**

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

2 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

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**Minute 82 (2020/21) Apologies for Absence**

None.

**Minute 83 (2020/21) Public Participation**

No village issues raised.

**Minute 84 (2020/21) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations**

None.

**Minute 85 (2020/21) Report from Borough Councillors**

Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins has emailed an update on parking problems by the School in Tythe Barn Lane – he has contacted SMBC officers to ask them to look into it, and he will also be taking a look at the parking at the School himself.

**Minute 86 (2020/21) Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Tuesday October 13th 2020**

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

**Minute 87 (2020/21) Actions from the Previous Meeting**

Solihull Local Plan Review Consultation

This has been publicized twice on the website and Facebook page asking for residents' views – to date there has been just one response.

Adoption of Whitlocks End Train Station

Whitlocks End is currently the only station on the Birmingham to Stratford line that is yet to be adopted by the local community. The latest update is that a local resident is interested in adopting the station, and the Shirley station team are covering it in the interim. Four large planters plus soil have been ordered, and plants and further resources can be made available. A number of residents in Dickens Heath have shown an interest in getting involved – the Clerk to liaise with them with a view to setting up a zoom meeting with the Shakespeare Line Promotion Group who are progressing this.

**Minute 88 (2020/21) Planning Applications**

No comments.

**Minute 89 (2020/21) New SMBC Reporting System for Village Issues**

The problems with this new reporting system were raised at Solihull Area Committee by Councillors Trevor Eames and Doreen Wright. This has resulted in the Parish Council being offered monthly meetings with a new Neighbourhood Delivery Project Officer – Annie

Masters. This does sound very similar to the previous system – but should resolve the problems. An initial meeting to be arranged for early December 2020.

### **Minute 90 (2020/21) Village Green and Playground**

#### Trees

The 3 dead horse chestnut trees have been removed, the replacement trees are yet to be collected as SMBC have problems with staff self isolating at the moment.

#### Procurement of Replacement Playground

Information from one of the suppliers is still awaited.

#### Playground Annual Inspection

The RoSPA annual inspection has been carried out for the playground and Village Green. There are no urgent concerns but the report indicates that 2 items will need some attention. Councillors Trevor Eames and Nargis Rashid commented that the risks are fairly low at the moment. As the procurement of a replacement playground is currently underway, it was agreed that an eye should be kept on these pieces of equipment for the time being.

#### Village Christmas Tree

An electrical supply is now in place, and an order has been placed for a 20ft tree plus a base to be installed. There followed some discussion about suitable lights – Councillors Maureen Holloway and Alan Scholes to source these.

#### Bollards

The bollard on the Village Green that has been removed will be reinstated. The bollard that was knocked out by a car will be replaced by a post with signage.

### **Minute 91 (2020/21) Solihull Local Plan Review Consultation**

Councillor Trevor Eames gave an overview of the SLP Review, and that the PC has had an opportunity to raise it with Sadiq Bhatti MP. The impact of the Plan on the parish is much reduced, by 50%, with 650 homes now included. The Plan will now be subject to a 6 week consultation, ending on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2020, with SMBC hoping to submit it in January 2021 with the Public Examination in the Summer 2021.

Councillor Eames added that the Government is currently running 2 consultations on changing the planning process in order to speed it up – which could reduce the input of local authorities and the public. It is therefore important that this Plan should not be delayed and should be adopted before the new proposals come in. Bromsgrove District Council has a lot of housing proposed for on the border of this area – but their plan has been put on hold because they don't think they can get it adopted before the new proposals come in.

Councillor Eames outlined the issues in the SLP Review that the Parish Council are concerned about, with an emphasis on protecting hedgerows and woodland, along with retaining playing fields within the local area. This version of the Plan contains reduced housing of lower density, but the existing playing fields will need to be replaced – SMBC have not yet decided where the replacements should be located. The Parish Council wish to see them relocated nearby, and they could be relocated on to the land currently designated to be wild land.

The Parish Council has asked for the views of residents, up to the end of November, although there has been little response as yet. It was agreed that Councillor Eames should start to draw up a report for the Parish Council to consider.

### **Minute 92 (2020/21) Proposal to hold an Annual Parish Meeting**

It was agreed that an Annual Parish Meeting would be held when the PC are in a position to consult on the replacement playground. It would be preferable for this to take place in the Village Hall, but that will need to be assessed as and when lockdown restrictions are lifted.

**Minute 93 (2020/21) Outside Events attended by Councillors**Solihull Community Champions Update re Covid-19

Councillors Maureen Holloway and Trevor Eames continue to attend these SMBC updates on Covid-19.

Solihull Area Committee

Councillors Trevor Eames and Doreen Wright attended the SAC meeting, where they raised concerns about the loss of Matt Gardner as Dickens Heath's SMBC Neighbourhood Co-ordinator and introduction of a new reporting system for issues and concerns. The feedback is that most parish councils are unhappy with the new system and so SMBC are now proposing going to a system that is similar to the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator system but with a different officer.

Solihull Local Plan Briefing

Councillor Trevor Eames attended this useful update.

Meeting with Saqib Bhatti MP

Members of the PC attended a virtual meeting with Saqib Bhatti MP and discussed various local issues and concerns, including the Solihull Local Plan.

WALC Facebook Course

The Clerk attended a course on how to raise the profile of the PC on Facebook – which recommended making very regular posts, which can be quite time consuming. Some parish councils are streaming their full council meetings on Facebook – Councillor Mike Small commented that it is easy enough to attend a meeting on Zoom, and if residents don't wish to do this then they probably wouldn't watch it on Facebook either.

**Minute 94 (2020/21) Financial Matters**

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Small, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the November 10<sup>th</sup> 2020 Agenda be approved – 19 payments totalling £8,735.35 .

Routine Payments for December 2020

As there is no Parish Council meeting during December, the payment of December's routine monthly payments was agreed.

Report on Finances for the Year to Date

There is currently a surplus of £138,000 with an end of year projected surplus of £115,000. This figure includes the playground procurement reserve.

Budget Setting Meeting 2021/22

A date was set in December for an informal meeting of the Parish Council to discuss the budget and precept for 2021/22.

**Minute 95 (2020/21) Correspondence**Parking on Main St

A resident has concerns about antisocial parking on Main St towards Waterside. The Parish Council, although sympathetic, commented that SMBC parking services cannot take action as it is a private road, and Dickens Heath Management Co. are unlikely to take action.

**Minute 96 (2020/21) Items for Next Agenda**

Traffic islands, newsletters/communication.

**Minute 97 (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 98 (2020/21) Car Park Behind Tesco**

This was discussed.

**Minute 99 (2020/21) Village Hall**

This was discussed.

**Meeting ended 9.45pm**

**Next Meeting : Tuesday January 12<sup>th</sup> 2021**