

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday March 9th 2021

Present:

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

Solihull Borough Councillor; Richard Holt

5 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 149 (2020/21) Apologies for Absence

None.

Minute 150 (2020/21) Public Participation

None.

Minute 151 (2020/21) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

Councillor Maureen Holloway is a Director of the Village Hall and therefore will take no part in any vote on this subject.

Minute 152 (2020/21) Report from Borough Councillors

None – already covered in Annual Parish Meeting earlier.

Minute 153 (2020/21) Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Tuesday February 9th 2021

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

Minute 154 (2020/21) Actions from the Previous Meeting

Dog Mess Notices

Annie Masters at SMBC has provided around 20 notices, and the Clerk and Councillors Di Potter and Alan Scholes have been putting these up in various locations around the village.

In Bloom 2021

Dickens Heath has been entered into In Bloom for 2021. The Clerk has spoken to a resident who is keen to be involved with the planters at Waterside, and Councillor Mike Small confirmed that Shameena at SMBC, the Scouts and the local Environment Group are all also keen to be involved in improving the environment.

Internal Audit

This has been arranged for late April.

New Larger Bins for Village Green

The head offices of both Tesco and Costa have been approached to ask whether they would be prepared to make a contribution towards new bins for the Village Green – as much of the litter originates from these 2 stores. Tesco have forwarded the request to the area and store managers, they do not make donations centrally. Costa have responded that their foundation only supports education, but suggested contacting the local Costa. The Clerk to follow up.

Minute 155 (2020/21) Planning Applications

Five planning applications in total were considered:

- 55 Birchy Close – it was agreed that a representation should be made to the effect that these treeworks are excessive and should be looked at by the tree officer.
- 40-50 Whitchurch Lane – no comments.

Three additional planning applications were discussed:

- 237 Tythe Barn Lane – woodland thinning. This involves substantial work to a coppice and it was agreed that it could be left with the SMBC tree officer, no comments.
- 30 Griffin Lane – erection of single storey rear extension – no comments.
- 48 Birchy Close – front elevation alterations, single storey rear extension, two storey side and rear extension, and loft conversion. This is extensive works which effectively amount to a rebuild of the property. The proposal is a very large increase in size and height, it is out of character with the rest of the road, and the raised roof height to accommodate the loft conversion is incongruous and over dominant on the street scene – it should be scaled back. It was agreed that representations to this effect should be made.

Minute 156 (2020/21) Reporting of Village Issues to SMBC

The Parish Council had another very positive meeting with Annie Masters of SMBC this morning, her updates are very helpful. Annie has confirmed that the trip rails on Dickens Heath Rd from Miller and Carter are due to be repaired at the end of March.

Minute 157 (2020/21) Village GreenUsage of Village Green

An approach has been made by a user of the Village Hall for permission to use the Village Green while the hall is closed. It was agreed that the Parish Council should look at putting in place a policy regarding usage of the Village Green. Dickens Heath Village Green is a village green, although it is not registered as one because landowner SMBC have decided not to.

Bins, Benches and Bollards

It was agreed that our contractor Fairways should be asked to quote for installing new bins, replacing bollards and improved foundations for the benches.

Minute 158 (2020/21) Procurement of Replacement Playground

Now that the schools are back, Councillor Nargis Rashid and the Clerk to finalise the consultation and liaise with the school.

Minute 159 (2020/21) Dickens Heath Medical Centre

Martyn Sargeant of SMBC Community Champions has confirmed that concerns about when the medical centre will reopen will need to be followed up with SHP, reports are that it is due to be the last SHP surgery to reopen for face to face appointments.

Minute 160 (2020/21) Outside Events attended by CouncillorsWALC Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Course

This was attended by Councillors Trevor Eames and Doreen Wright, along with the Clerk and Assistant Clerk – it was very interesting, and illuminating in many respects.

Minute 161 (2020/21) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Rashid, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the March 9th 2021 Agenda be approved – 15 payments totalling £3,712.46 including an additional payment of £30.00 to WALC for a place on the Social Media Skills for Councillors course.

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Signature.....

Date.....

Report on Finances for the Year to Date

There is currently a surplus for the year of £16,000, with few adjustments anticipated before the year end. The projected total surplus for the year end is therefore £122,000. This figure includes the playground procurement reserve.

Councillors' Allowances

As agreed earlier in the financial year, councillors' allowances will uplift by 2.56% on April 1st in line with those at SMBC.

Minute 162 (2020/21) Parish Council Website

Assistant Clerk Hannah is still following up on issues with the mobile version.

Minute 163 (2020/21) Parish Council News

The Parish Council News for April to include a summary of the Chair's Report for the year plus an update on the playground consultation with the school.

Minute 164 (2020/21) CorrespondenceOverflowing Bins and Dog Bins

Several residents have requested more frequent emptying of SMBC bins and dog bins. SMBC have responded that they are unable to do this as they simply don't have the resources at this time.

Annual Meeting of the Council (AGM)

The current legislation which allows parish councils to hold virtual meetings is due to end on May 6th 2021. WALC are therefore suggesting that local councils consider holding their annual meetings virtually before this date. It was agreed that the Annual Meeting of Dickens Heath PC should be provisionally brought forward by a week to May 4th pending further information from the Government.

Second Goal Post on the Village Green

A young resident of the village has requested a second goal post on the Village Green. It was agreed that this would be too much of a safety risk.

Vicious Dogs not on a Leash

A resident has questioned whether dogs should be kept on leashes in Dickens Heath. Councillor Trevor Eames said that there are no rules to this effect, dog owners are responsible and it is a police issue only if a pet or a person is attacked by a dog.

Small Rocker in the Playground

A resident has reported concerns with this small rocker, that it is in danger of coming away from the ground. It has been inspected by Councillors Alan Scholes and Maureen Holloway, with a view to removal, but it did not appear unsafe. The resident who reported this has been invited to meet so that we can look into it further if necessary.

Minute 165 (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 166 (2020/21) Car Park Behind Tesco

This was discussed.

Minute 167 (2020/21) Village Hall

This was discussed.

Meeting ended 9.55pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday April 13th 2021

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Signature.....

Date.....