



Dickens Heath Parish Council

Policy for Use of the Village Green

Introduction

Dickens Heath Village Green is central to the village community and is provided as a green open space for all residents to enjoy. It is owned by Solihull MBC and leased to Dickens Heath Parish Council, with the Parish Council being responsible for its upkeep. Dickens Heath Village Green is not 'registered' as a Village Green, unlike many village greens in other locations. This is because SMBC, as landowner, has advised that it is already sufficiently protected - being in their ownership.

Responsibilities

The Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance and protection of the Village Green. All matters relating to the Village Green should be referred to the Parish Council in the first instance. Decisions relating to the Village Green will be made in accordance with legislation and any conditions or covenants in place on the land. If necessary, decisions will be referred to SMBC as landowner. As leaseholder, it is the Parish Council's role to protect the Village Green against encroachment, damage and uses other than those consistent with normal enjoyment of the Village Green by members of the public.

Parking on the Village Green is not allowed, and bollards are in place to prevent access from vehicles other than those authorised by the Parish Council.

All maintenance and repairs will be carried out by the Parish Council, or by contractors appointed by the Parish Council to carry out such works.

Lawful uses of the Village Green include:

- Walking across it with or without a dog
- Sitting on public benches
- Playing sports and games
- Use of existing paths for access/egress on foot
- Village fetes, or other similar activities, approved by the Parish Council
- Access by authorised vehicles for the purpose of mowing or maintenance

Prohibited uses of the Village Green include:

- Any physical alterations to the Village Green, other than by permission of the Parish Council
- Fencing, or otherwise, which makes the Green inaccessible to the public
- Planting trees except by the Parish Council or its contractors
- Pruning or cutting down of trees except by the Parish Council or its contractors
- The building or installation of any structure (including bollards/posts/steps) except by the Parish Council or its contractors
- Parking of a vehicle on the Green, except with permission of the Parish Council
- Driving of a vehicle across the Green, except with permission of the Parish Council
- Wilful or excess damage to the Green eg. by vehicles, bikes, sports equipment

Enforcement

Where persons are proved to have misused or damaged the Green, or altered its fabric, those responsible will be expected to pay all costs in relation to the Green's repair/reinstatement. If the Parish Council has to employ a contractor to carry out the repair/reinstatement, all costs incurred (including legal costs) will be charged to the persons responsible for the damage or alteration. If necessary, damage may result in criminal proceedings being taken by the Parish Council.

If you wish to engage in an activity on the Village Green, which is not covered by the list of lawful uses, please contact the Parish Council for further information.

Inspections

The Village Green will be inspected at least once a year to determine its condition and any works required.

Protection of Trees

Trees planted on the Village Green must not be pruned nor cut down without permission from the Parish Council. Solihull MBC and the Parish Council have the authority to take decisions on removal and planting of trees and other plants on the Green.

Use of Village Green by Local Clubs & Organisations

- The Village Green may be made available for use by local community clubs or organisations. This is subject to approval by the Parish Council, and the agreement of a suitable donation towards the Village Green's upkeep.
- All approved use of the Village Green by local clubs or organisations will require evidence of a satisfactory risk assessment and public liability insurance cover for the activity.
- Any tents or gazebos erected as part of an approved use of the Village Green by local clubs or organisations must be removed at the end of the approved activity.
- The Village Green will not be available for use by a commercial organisation where the reason for use is their financial gain – unless there is deemed to be significant benefit to the community.
- The decision of the Parish Council is final.

Date of Approval: May 4th 2021