

## The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held in the Library on Tuesday July 6th 2021

**Present:**

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

2 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

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**Minute 52 (2021/22) Apologies for Absence**

None.

**Minute 53 (2021/22) Public Participation**

Tesco Car Park

A resident asked why the Tesco car park has been an item under the private section for several months – he suggested that residents should know what is happening, particularly if there will be a financial impact on them. He said it should be discussed in public before any final decision. Councillor Trevor Eames agreed to give a summary of the debate – as part of the company voluntary winding up process, the development company which owns the Tesco car park has offered the car park land to the Parish Council at no cost, otherwise the land will go to the Crown and could then be picked up by any developer looking to make some money out of it. The Parish Council's ownership would ensure that it will remain a public facility. There followed some discussion about additional facilities on the land, for example a substation, pumping station and waste area, and who might own them – they are currently managed by third parties.

Additional Lighting on the Playground

A resident raised concerns about inadequate lighting on the playground. This has been raised before, and the Parish Council had responded that they didn't feel it was appropriate to provide additional lighting – as it is a playground for young children, and they didn't want to encourage anti-social behaviour late at night. The resident commented that a group of youths have been very noisy, playing loud music, on the Village Green – into the early hours on some nights. Some residents have gone out to confront them, but it is very dark on the Village Green – would the Parish Council be willing to reconsider additional lighting and CCTV to act as a deterrent? Councillor Trevor Eames replied that the Police have been out as a result of these incidents – but generally it is difficult to get the Police out, and the threshold for action on anti-social behaviour is quite high. Councillor Eames added that he has actually been out to have a look himself on several late nights, and found nothing. Dickens Heath Management Co. are monitoring the situation, and recording when there is a problem – there have been 3 episodes in the last 5 weeks, and the Police have said that this does not warrant regular visits. The resident replied that he is pleased that the situation is being monitored, but would still like to see the request for additional lighting revisited, as this might deter the anti-social behaviour. Councillor Mike Small added that the Parish Council have tried everything to get the Police involved in village issues – but they are very busy. There was also some discussion on Neighbourhood Watch, and whether they could check on the Village Green.

Replacement Playground

A resident asked for an update on the replacement playground – Councillor Trevor Eames replied that the funds are in place, the specification needs to be finalised and it can then go to tender, with installation hopefully next Spring.

**Minute 54 (2021/22) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations**

None.

**Minute 55 (2021/22) Report from the Borough Councillors**

None present.

**Minute 56 (2021/22) Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021**

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

**Minute 57 (2021/22) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meeting**

Static Cycling Activities

Jade Reddie of Solihull MBC has asked whether the Village Green could be used for fitness activities using static cycling machines. It was agreed that the Use of the Village Green policy should be sent to Jade, and to ask how many machines there would be and how often the activities might be happening.

Hanging Baskets

The hanging baskets have arrived, the colours look really lovely. But unfortunately the new developments have been missed once again. Plantscape will be relocating 6 hanging baskets to lamp posts by the new developments early next week when they are in the village to do the watering.

Trip Rails on Dickens Heath Rd

SMBC have repaired most of the trip rails on Dickens Heath Rd from Miller and Carter, but 2 have been missed. The Clerk to put in another request.

**Minute 58 (2021/22) Planning Applications**

Three additional planning applications were also considered:

- 2021/01635 - 73 Rumbush Lane - Single storey rear extension.
- 2021/01705 - 250 Dickens Heath Rd - Two storey front & side extension, increased ridge height with dormer roof over existing garage along with new pitched roofs over existing building.
- 2021/01837 - 113 Three Acres Lane - Ground floor rear extension.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would not object to the planning application at 250 Dickens Heath Rd, but would request consideration for retention of the mature trees and hedgerow boundary screening.

No comments on the other planning applications.

**Minute 59 (2021/22) Improvements to the Village Green**

Bins and Benches

Councillor Trevor Eames outlined the improvements planned – with replacement benches and new larger bins. There is a delay in supply, but it is hoped that the new bins and benches will be in place later in the Summer.

**Minute 60 (2021/22) In Bloom**

The Best Front Garden Competition has been publicized and there are 2 entries so far. It was agreed that reminders should be sent out, and that Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins once again be asked if he would be willing to be the Judge. The In Bloom portfolio is in progress.

**Minute 61 (2021/22) Financial Matters**

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Small, the payments in Appendix I of the July 6<sup>th</sup> 2021 Agenda were approved – 16 payments totalling £7,906.05 including an additional payment of £4,397.30 to Solihull MBC for the Q1 Library rent.

The routine payments for August were also approved, which will include the payment to Plantscape for the hanging baskets and watering.

Report on the Finances of the Council

There is currently a surplus of £150,000. Councillor Di Potter verified the bank reconciliation to the bank statements as at June 30<sup>th</sup> 2021.

**Minute 62 (2021/22) Correspondence**

Electrical Charging Point

Following a complaint from a resident about the inappropriate location of the charging point, SMBC officers have visited the site and decided that the charging point is appropriately placed and there is no requirement to make any changes. The resident is going to complain further.

**Minute 63 (2021/22) Items for next agenda**

It was agreed that the September 14<sup>th</sup> 2021 meeting should be another shortened meeting to cover essential routine issues.

**Minute 64 (2021/22) 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 65 (2021/22) Car Park behind Tesco**

The Parish Council's solicitor who is dealing with the transfer of the car park land has produced a detailed report. Councillor Alan Scholes said that the report contains many warnings. Councillors Doreen Wright and Maureen Holloway pointed out that the solicitor had recommended getting surveys done, along with a search regarding the pumping station. Councillor Trevor Eames responded that this was not done due to the short timescale, and that there was no new information in the report. Councillor Maureen Holloway said that her view was that the vote in favour of taking on the land was based on inadequate information – there is a lease on the substation, but more clarity is required on the pumping station. There could potentially be significant costs if there were issues with the pumping station. Councillor Mike Small asked what the alternative would be if the Parish Council didn't take on the car park, Councillor Trevor Eames replied that it would go to the Crown.

The Clerk advised that, on the basis of this additional information, the Parish Council could vote on whether to act on their previous decision or not.

It was agreed, by 4 votes to 3, that the Parish Council should continue to act on its decision to acquire the car park behind Tesco. Councillors Trevor Eames, Nargis Rashid, Di Potter and Mike Small voted in favour, with Councillors Maureen Holloway, Alan Scholes and Doreen Wright voting against.

It was agreed that Councillors Trevor Eames and Nargis Rashid would sign the transfer document.

**Minute 66 (2021/22) Resignation of Clerk**

The Clerk's permanent contract will end on July 11<sup>th</sup> 2021. It was agreed that she will continue to work on an ad hoc temporary hours basis over the Summer and will assist with the transition period when the new Clerk is appointed in due course – an amendment to be made to the Clerk's current contract to reflect this. It was agreed that the Parish offices should be closed over the Summer, and email queries from residents/SMBC etc should be forwarded to Councillors. Councillors Trevor Eames and Nargis Rashid to assess the job specification in advance of recruitment. Councillors thanked the Clerk for her contribution to the Parish Council over the last 11 years.

**Minute 67 (2021/22) Resignation of Councillor**

Alan Scholes will be standing down as a Councillor – the Parish Councillors thanked him for all of his hard work over the last few years.

**Meeting ended 9.20pm**

**Next Meeting : Tuesday September 14<sup>th</sup> 2021: 7.15pm in Dickens Heath Library**

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Signature.....

Date.....