

## The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held in the Library on Tuesday September 14th 2021

**Present:**

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

Police Sergeant Paula McDowell

5 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

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**Minute 68 (2021/22) Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were accepted from Councillor Holloway.

**Minute 69 (2021/22) Update from Police Sergeant Paula McDowell**

Chair Trevor Eames welcomed Sergeant McDowell to the meeting. She outlined details about her team, which covers Dickens Heath, Cheswick Green, Tidbury Green, Shirley and the new estates. She currently has a team of 14 – 7 officers and 7 PCSOs, several of these are trainees and she will lose up to 7 of her students in the New Year. She said that crime is generally very low in Dickens Heath, there are occasional house break-ins but most of the crime is car thefts. There are nice cars here, and thieves use keyless theft technology. House break-ins are often to steal car keys, with Land Rovers being a particular target. A resident asked about CCTV – Sgt McDowell replied that there are no council cameras, just those belonging to Dickens Heath Management Co. (DHMC) There are council cameras along the Stratford Rd and in the retail areas, and there is a large camera room in Birmingham City Centre.

Current problems in Dickens Heath include anti-social behaviour. Sergeant McDowell was not aware that there were issues of ASB late at night on the Village Green. She encouraged residents to log any concerns regarding ASB – by ringing 101 or using the Live Chat online. These will then be logged and brought to the attention of the Police team. They can then try to sort out these issues – they try to avoid going down the criminal route, by using cautions or by getting the two sides together.

A resident asked whether cameras on the Village Green might deter the ASB. Councillor Trevor Eames replied that DHMC do have CCTV and do patrol the area – if there is significant nuisance behaviour then they will call the Police. But the Village Green is a community open space.

Another resident asked whether there could be some improved lighting, the ASB has got worse over the last 2 years. Sergeant McDowell commented that Covid has made things worse, she encourages her team to get out and speak to kids. Any ongoing ASB will be given an investigation number and the Police may go into the young persons' schools or to their homes. She added that in order to get improved lighting, a request to SMBC for funding will require evidence – so residents need to report ASB.

Sergeant McDowell reiterated that, according to statistics, crime in this area is lower than in Shirley and other areas of Solihull. She encouraged residents who observe vandalism, underage drinking or potential drug taking to ring 101 to log it. ASB always starts at a low level and then escalates, so the Police need to be informed. When they can, her officers do drive through this area at various times.

She added that SMBC do have enforcement powers with regard to noise nuisance – they ask you to download an app which can pinpoint location and noise levels.

A resident asked about support for Neighbourhood Watch – Sergeant McDowell replied that she will speak to her team about it.

### **Minute 70 (2021/22) Public Participation**

#### Traffic Islands

A resident commented that Brixfield island is looking very neglected – Councillor Trevor Eames replied that this will be followed up with PC Contractor Fairways once the Village Green improvements have been completed. The resident also asked about the 2 islands that have not yet been adopted – this needs to be followed up with SMBC.

#### Grass Verges on Old Dickens Heath Rd

A resident asked about the grass verge which is no longer mown – the PC to look into this.

#### Village Green Trees on Old Dickens Heath Rd

Some of the trees are now blocking 2 street lamps – this also to be followed up.

#### Welcome Signs on Cleobury Lane

One of the Welcome Gates on Cleobury Lane blocks the vision of drivers. Councillor Trevor Eames agreed that this would be looked at, but that SMBC had specified where the Gates should be located.

#### Proposal for New Village of Fulford Green

A resident asked whether this proposed new Village would have a knock on effect on Dickens Heath. Councillor Trevor Eames replied that this site had not been included in the Solihull Local Plan, and was unlikely to get approval this time. It is likely that developers are floating it now with a view to future inclusion.

#### Flooding Meeting

A resident asked about the SMBC Flooding Meeting that had been cancelled during the first lockdown – the PC to follow up whether it can now be rearranged.

### **Minute 71 (2021/22) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations**

None.

### **Minute 72 (2021/22) Report from the Borough Councillors**

Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins has sent an update – the petition opposing the proposed Fulford Green development has attracted over 1,500 supporters, and he will present this to the Council on October 5th. He is also chasing up the pruning of the hedgerow on Rumbush Lane, coming in from Tidbury Green.

### **Minute 73 (2021/22) Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday July 6<sup>th</sup> 2021**

The Clerk's minutes have been circulated, as have suggested amendments from 3 Councillors – which relate to the discussion about the Tesco Car Park. A vote was taken on whether any of these amendments should be accepted. By 3 votes to 1 it was agreed that the Clerk's minutes, without any amendments, should be approved as a true and accurate record. Councillor Doreen Wright then read a statement in which she said that the 3 Councillors who voted against the acquisition of the Tesco Car Park, herself and Councillors Maureen Holloway and Alan Scholes, had no objection in principle to the acquisition of the car park, but as they were unhappy about some of the issues raised in the solicitor's report they voted against the proposal. She stated that these 3 Councillors want no personal responsibility for any expenses that may arise from ownership of the Tesco Car Park, now or in the future.

### **Minute 74 (2021/22) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meeting**

#### Residents' Coffee Morning

The Village Hall Committee have offered the Parish Council the use of the Village Hall, at no charge, on a Thursday morning for a residents' coffee morning. Before Covid, the retired coffee morning had been held on Tuesday mornings in the Library. The initial response from the coffee morning regulars is that they would prefer to return to the Library on Tuesday mornings.

Playground

Fairways, who carry out the weekly playground inspections, have flagged up a trip hazard where one of the rocking horses was removed. It was suggested that this should be highlighted by using fluorescent spray paint.

**Minute 75 (2021/22) Report from Councillors who have attended Outside Groups, Events or Courses**

The Chair's circulated report included updates on Solihull Area Committee, WALC Chairs' meetings, the Village Hall Committee, and a residents' meeting on the Fulford Green scheme.

**Minute 76 (2021/22) Planning Applications**

It was agreed that the Parish Council should make a representation on the proposed tree works at 31 Tythe Barn Lane – that the SMBC Tree Officer should specify the amount of pruning and that it should be carried out professionally.

No comments on the other planning applications.

**Minute 77 (2021/22) Village Green**Late Night Incident on Village Green

On the evening of Friday July 13<sup>th</sup> 2021, there was an incident involving youths on the Village Green. Dickens Heath Management Co. called the Police, who attended and then called an ambulance. This caused a major disturbance into the early hours, resulted in a lot of complaints, but it was a one off event. DHMC continue to monitor the Village Green for further significant events so that this can be reviewed with the Police.

Improvements to the Village Green

Most of the order for new bins and benches has now arrived and it is hoped that the work can be done early in October 2021, subject to delivery.

**Minute 78 (2021/22) Car Parks**Tesco Car Park Works

The patching and drain work has all been carried out. There are outstanding garden works still to be done by Fairways, and paid for by Elegant Developments. The Parish Council will be responsible for future maintenance.

Car Park Management

Car parking in the village centre is a serious problem. DHMC have concluded that the situation is untenable for the Morton's car park, and they have been talking to management organisations with a view to putting in a system which allows residents to park by registering a vehicle. The managed scheme, including the private roads, would be for the benefit of traders and residents. It would encourage those with underground parking spaces to use them. Some traders will have technology whereby customers can enter their car registration numbers to allow for longer stays. Such a scheme will need to cover both of the car parks and therefore the Parish Council can have some input.

Electric Charging Points

These are being considered for the car parks in the future, each one takes up 2 parking spaces.

**Minute 79 (2021/22) In Bloom Best Front Garden Competition**

The Best Front Garden Competition was judged by Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins – he has awarded 2 joint first prizes and 2 runners up prizes. It was agreed that £50 garden vouchers would be awarded to the first prize winners, and £25 garden vouchers to the runners up. The prize winners to be invited to the October PC meeting.

**Minute 80 (2021/22) Remembrance Sunday**

It was agreed that the Parish Council should plan to hold the Remembrance Sunday Service. There has been no communication from Solihull MBC about road closures, the Clerk is following this up. Parish Councillors to contact Reverend Theresa Jones to ask if she would be willing to lead the service once again. Councillor Doreen Wright suggested another resident who might be able to lead the service if Rev Jones is unavailable.

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Signature.....

Date.....

**Minute 81 (2021/22) Christmas Tree and Solar Trees**

A member of the Village Church group has booked the Village Hall on Saturday December 4<sup>th</sup> at 5pm for the Christmas Tree Lighting and has asked if the Parish Council would be willing to organise the event. It was agreed to go ahead with this, to order a Christmas tree for the Village Green and to order the usual number of 28 solar lamp post Christmas trees.

**Minute 82 (2021/22) Solihull Local Plan**

The Solihull Local Plan Examination is taking place this Autumn, the Parish Council has given notice to attend and to speak on certain items. A resident has asked the Parish Council to reconsider their position on the site BL1 West. Councillor Trevor Eames responded that at the time of making their representations, the Parish Council had only received 2 objections from members of the public. SMBC will not be changing the sites at this stage – they would lack credibility if they did. He added that if SMBC do not accommodate the sports grounds in the Plan, then the PC will not support it.

The PC will be making representations concerning the Fulford Green proposal – it would have an adverse impact and shouldn't be included in the Plan.

**Minute 83 (2021/22) Electric Charge Point in Cornwood Lane**

SMBC do not need to carry out any consultation on the location of electric charge points, it is at their discretion – this has been decided at Government level. The electricity supply box for the charge point in Cornwood Lane has been moved, allowing more space on the footpath. One resident is still complaining to SMBC about the location, but SMBC have decided not to change it as it is compliant.

**Minute 84 (2021/22) Financial Matters**

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Small, the payments in Appendix I of the September 14<sup>th</sup> 2021 Agenda were approved – 16 payments totalling £17,633.68 for August and 20 payments totalling £8,842.17 for September 2021.

Report on the Finances of the Council

There is currently a surplus of £119,000.

**Minute 85 (2021/22) Policies**

There is a new version of model standing orders, the Parish Council's to be updated.

**Minute 86 (2021/22) Correspondence**Parish Council Bank Accounts

The Parish Council's bank, HSBC, is no longer offering community accounts to non charitable organisations – the Parish Council's accounts will therefore be changed to small business accounts, which carry some transaction charges.

WALC Annual Conference

Councillor Mike Small would like to attend this online conference – the Clerk to book a place.

Use of Library First Floor

The Origami group would like to return to meeting in the Library. This was agreed, users will need to be responsible for locking up.

**Minute 87 (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 88 (2021/22) Car Park behind Tesco**

This was discussed.

**Minute 89 (2021/22) Interim Working Arrangements and Recruitment of Replacement Clerk**

The former Clerk is continuing to work on a temporary hours basis. Councillors Nargis Rashid and Trevor Eames have been progressing the job specification and advert.

**Meeting ended 10.15pm**

**Next Meeting : Tuesday October 12<sup>th</sup> 2021: 7.15pm in Dickens Heath Library**