

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held in the Library on Tuesday October 12th 2021

Present:

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

5 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 90 (2021/22) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were accepted from Councillor Holloway.

Minute 91 (2021/22) In Bloom Best Front Garden Competition

Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins was the judge of the 2021 Best Front Garden Competition, and he awarded 2 joint first prizes and 2 runners up prizes. Priscilla, winner of a first prize and Amber and Zoe, winners of a runners up prize were present at the meeting. Chair Trevor Eames congratulated them on their fantastic gardens and awarded the prizes. David, joint first prize winner, and Tony, a joint runner up, will receive their prizes at a later date. Councillor Eames added that the Parish Council were delighted to receive a Silver Gilt award for In Bloom 2021, and the large number of wonderful front gardens around the village had played a significant part in this.

Minute 92 (2021/22) Public Participation

Traffic Islands

A resident asked again about the Brixfield island which is looking very neglected – Councillor Trevor Eames replied that this is on the To Do list for the Parish Council’s contractor Fairways, but they are currently carrying out improvements to the Village Green. The resident also added that the two unadopted islands need to be followed up on now that Garden Squares is completed – SMBC need to meet with the developers. This will be followed up with the Parish Council’s contact at SMBC Highways. All the islands also need the weeds to be sprayed.

Minute 93 (2021/22) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None.

Minute 94 (2021/22) Report from the Borough Councillors

Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins has sent an update – the petition opposing the proposed Fulford Green development has been submitted with over 2,000 supporters. He is still chasing up the pruning of the hedgerow on Rumbush Lane going out of the village, and there will be a new SMBC Waste and Environmental contractor as of next April.

Minute 95 (2021/22) Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday September 14th 2021

Proposed by Councillor Rashid, seconded by Councillor Small, it was **Resolved** that the public part of the Clerk’s minutes should be approved as a true and accurate record.

Minute 96 (2021/22) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meetingCancelled SMBC Flooding Meeting

The SMBC flooding update meeting for the public, that was cancelled due to Covid, is not due to be rearranged. Properties in Beech Lane and at Waterside have been fitted with resilience measures, and SMBC are working with consultants to upgrade the Griffin Lane pond.

Residents' Coffee Morning

The retired residents' coffee morning will be returning to the Library on Tuesday mornings, the Library manager has advised caution regarding refreshments and use of the kitchen.

PAT Testing

All of the Parish Council's electrical equipment was PAT tested earlier today.

Visibility Splay of Welcome Gates on Cleobury Lane

This has been assessed by SMBC and they will be moving one of the gates slightly further away from the road.

Grass Verge outside 22 Old Dickens Heath Rd

This grass verge is no longer being mown, it had been done by a previous resident. SMBC have confirmed that it does not own this piece of land, it belongs to Redrow.

Oak Tree Requiring Work

SMBC have confirmed that the oak tree on Old Dickens Heath Rd by Copperfield Court is privately owned.

Minute 97 (2021/22) Report from Councillors who have attended Outside Groups, Events or Courses

The Chair's circulated report included updates on Solihull Area Committee, the Village Hall AGM, and the Solihull Local Plan Examination in Public opening sessions.

Minute 98 (2021/22) Planning Applications

It was agreed that the Parish Council should make a representation on the proposed tree works at 3 Willowherb Way – that this should be left to the SMBC Tree Officer and that the work should be carried out professionally.

No comments on the other planning application.

Minute 99 (2021/22) Village Green Improvements

The improvement works started today, and will take a few days. They are one bench short, but the rest of the work will be completed. The goal posts have been removed, and the churned up ground is being made good. This will encourage more even use of the Village Green to avoid wear and tear. The lock on the barrier to the Village Green had seized up, it has now been replaced.

Minute 100 (2021/22) Replacement Playground

A meeting is being held tomorrow with a representative of ESPO to go through the tender process.

Minute 101 (2021/22) Remembrance Sunday

Rev Theresa Jones has agreed to lead the Remembrance Sunday Service once again, there is a meeting next week to discuss arrangements.

Minute 102 (2021/22) Christmas Tree and Solar Trees

The solar lamp post trees have been ordered, the Village Green Christmas tree to be ordered in the next few weeks.

Minute 103 (2021/22) Solihull Local Plan – Examination in Public

The Parish Council submitted its original statement in December 2020. Councillor Eames has drafted an additional statement, for submission to the Inspector regarding Site BL1 by Friday. This will include the Parish Council's views on the proposed new settlement at Fulford Green, which is not in the Plan but being brought forward as an alternative. All agreed the additional statement should be submitted to the Inspector.

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Signature.....

Date.....

Minute 104 (2021/22) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Rashid, seconded by Councillor Small, the payments in Appendix I of the October 12th 2021 Agenda were approved – 18 payments totalling £3,541.78

Report on the Finances of the Council

There is currently a surplus of £156,000 – the second instalment of the precept has been received, and the VAT Reclaim for 2020/21 has been submitted.

Completion of External Audit

This has been completed and advertised.

CIL Report to SMBC

It has been reported to SMBC that the Parish Council is currently undertaking improvements to the Village Green using its CIL funds, and the balance will be used towards funding the replacement playground.

Budget Meeting

The Parish Council will meet informally in December to discuss the budget and precept for 2022/23.

Minute 105 (2021/22) Library First Floor Booking Form

A request has been received to use the Library first floor for an art therapy group for mothers and toddlers. This was agreed subject to an update to the terms and conditions, to include a designated person to be responsible for the keys and for a £50 deposit in case of an alarm call out.

Minute 106 (2021/22) Standing Orders

Updated Standing Orders and a Delegation to the Clerk Procedure were approved, with Councillor Wright abstaining.

Minute 107 (2021/22) Correspondence

Dickens Heath Leaseholders Advisory Board

A resident has asked about the Dickens Heath LAB – Councillor Trevor Eames confirmed that this will allow the long term management of the estate covered by Dickens Heath Management Co. All property owners will be share holders and elect directors to oversee management of the estate, its spending and budget setting. They will instruct Centrick, who manage Dickens Heath Management Co, on behalf of the residents – so residents will now have a say. They have written to all leaseholders, and have received a handful of responses – and ‘shadow directors’ have been appointed to a ‘shadow board’. They are already making suggestions regarding the management of the estate – for example regarding how many tables are allowed on traders’ frontages.

Playground Gates

A resident has raised concern about the lack of gates on the playground, new gates are to be part of the specification for the playground refurbishment.

Minute 108 (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 109 (2021/22) Private Section of Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday September 14th 2021

It was **Resolved** that the private section of the Clerk's minutes should be approved as a true and accurate record by a majority of Councillors – Councillors Trevor Eames and Doreen Wright abstained from the vote.

Minute 110 (2021/22) Interim Working Arrangements

It was agreed that the workload of the PC should be looked at.

It was agreed that Councillor Mike Small should review the litter picking workload with Simon – with a view to more focus on the Village Green and central area, and less coverage of the outer areas, particularly those roads that SMBC are supposed to litter pick. He could do some weeding too, for example clock island. Resources could be moved to address residents' concerns.

The office workload could be reduced by looking at the frequency of meetings – the servicing of meetings is very time consuming. It was proposed that there should be a PC meeting in November, a budget meeting in December, a PC meeting in January 2022, no meeting in February, a PC meeting in March, no meeting in April, and then the AGM in May 2022.

Meeting ended 9.25pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday November 9th 2021: 7.15pm in Dickens Heath Library