

## The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held in the Library on Tuesday November 9th 2021

**Present:**

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

2 members of the public

Sustrans: Lucy McDermott

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

---

**Minute 111 (2021/22) Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were accepted from Councillors Maureen Holloway and Mike Small.

**Minute 112 (2021/22) Sustrans Walking and Cycling Project in Solihull**

The Chair welcomed Lucy McDermott of Sustrans, a walking and cycling charity, to the meeting. The West Midlands Combined Authority is funding a project to promote walking and cycling through the 7 West Midlands Authorities, and Lucy is focussing on the Solihull area. The idea is to look at what is already happening and trying to get the word out, signposting people to activities. Solihull already has quite a good network, which includes Cycle Solihull, various groups, clubs and trails. Striders and Strollers are groups for older walkers – many of the group leaders are older, and there is a shortage of leaders, so Sustrans can offer relevant training. There are also plans for Learn to Ride cycle opportunities in Shirley and Tudor Grange parks. Solihull does have lots of cycle routes, but they are not that well used – this needs to be encouraged. Lucy to provide the Clerk with some material to publicize.

**Minute 113 (2021/22) Public Participation**

In Bloom Best Front Garden Competition

Chair Trevor Eames congratulated Tony and awarded his runner's up prize for his display of floral boxes.

**Minute 114 (2021/22) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations**

None.

**Minute 115 (2021/22) Report from the Borough Councillors**

None present.

**Minute 116 (2021/22) Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday October 12<sup>th</sup> 2021**

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

**Minute 117 (2021/22) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meeting**

Replacement Trees on Meadow Pleck Lane

They have still not been replaced, this to be chased up.

Oak Tree near Copperfield Court

This tree is privately owned, the SMBC Tree Officer looked at it a year ago, and was not concerned that the dead wood posed a risk.

### **Minute 118 (2021/22) Report from Councillors who have attended Outside Groups, Events or Courses**

Councillors Trevor Eames and Nargis Rashid attended the Village Hall AGM. Both have been appointed as Directors – Councillor Eames as the Parish Council Representative and Councillor Rashid as a resident.

### **Minute 119 (2021/22) Planning Applications**

It was agreed that the Parish Council should make a representation on the proposed tree works at 15A Whitchurch Lane – this is a prominent mature oak in a rear garden, it has a high visual impact on the street scene. The work is due to be done by a professional tree surgeon, but a 30% crown reduction is very significant. It was agreed that the Parish Council should request that the SMBC Tree Officer look at this – they would prefer to see a smaller percentage crown reduction.

No comments on the other planning applications.

### **Minute 120 (2021/22) Village Green Improvements**

- All of the new benches are now in place, as are the picnic tables which are being used quite a bit. One original red dog bin was going to be kept, but it now needs replacing – all other bins are in place.
- A post that was due to be relocated to replace the one that was knocked out by a car - has had to be replaced as it disintegrated when moved.
- On Sunday afternoon, one of the new bins was set alight, the outer casing has been damaged and will need replacing. The Clerk asked whether the new equipment should be insured – it was agreed that this should be treated as a one off incident and replaced, and insurance should be reassessed once the new playground equipment has been installed.
- A disease is going round the horse chestnut trees on the Village Green – 2 have been removed already, and 2 more are looking diseased. A tree check is required on all of the trees on the Village Green with a view to removing and replacing those that are diseased.
- Councillor Di Potter reported that she has had several complaints about the removal of the goal post, but no complaints have been received by the Clerk.
- Village Green Lease – the Parish Council's solicitors have sent through the final documents for the lease on the Village Green.

### **Minute 121 (2021/22) Replacement Playground**

Work has commenced on putting the tender together, and a meeting has been set to finalise the documents.

### **Minute 122 (2021/22) Playground and Village Green Annual Inspection**

Contractor Fairways have flagged up a potential trip hazard in the playground where one of the small rockers has been removed. The RoSPA annual inspection has not highlighted this. It is a very low risk, it is in an area of soft flooring. As the playground is going to be replaced, it was agreed that it was reasonable to leave this as it is for the moment.

### **Minute 123 (2021/22) Maintenance of Traffic Islands**

The Parish Council will be looking at dealing with all of these.

### **Minute 124 (2021/22) Tesco Car Park**

The existing arrangements, where DHMC litter pick the car park regularly, will continue. Plus Councillor Trevor Eames is checking the car park a couple of times each week, pending the proposal for discussion regarding new arrangements which could potentially cover both car parks in the future.

**Minute 125 (2021/22) Remembrance Sunday**

All the arrangements are in hand. The date has been removed from the service sheet, and 600 copies have been printed which should give a supply for 2/3 years. Masks and gloves for the volunteers and organisers are being obtained.

**Minute 126 (2021/22) Christmas Tree and Solar Trees**

The solar lamp post trees have been ordered. The Village Green Christmas tree will be delivered on November 29<sup>th</sup> and put directly into position – it will then just need decorating. The School is arranging for the children to make decorations to be added to the tree. The Christmas tree lights will be switched on after the short carol service in the Village Hall on Saturday December 4<sup>th</sup>. The choir from the School will be attending and Tesco have agreed to provide refreshments.

**Minute 127 (2021/22) Solihull Local Plan – Examination in Public**

Blythe ward is area 6 in the Examination Process, with Dickens Heath being area 6E – the hearing date is November 16<sup>th</sup> when site BL1 will be dealt with. The Parish Council has received a representation from a resident who asked the Parish Council to object to site BL1. Procedures for representations have now closed, the deadline was October 15<sup>th</sup>, and the Parish Council's updated statement was submitted by this date.

**Minute 128 (2021/22) Financial Matters**

Proposed by Councillor Rashid, seconded by Councillor Potter, the payments in Appendix I of the November 9<sup>th</sup> 2021 Agenda were approved – 21 payments totalling £21,900.06 including an additional payment of £109.02 to BT for the phone and broadband.

Routine Payments for December 2021

As there is no Parish Council meeting during December, the payment of December's routine monthly payments was agreed.

Report on the Finances of the Council

The VAT reclaim for 2020/21 of £3,965.04 has been received.

There is currently a surplus of £138,000 with a projected end of year surplus of £115,000.

**Minute 129 (2021/22) Correspondence**Tesco Car Park

A resident has raised concerns about glass and debris on the Tesco car park. Councillor Trevor Eames has checked this and removed some fairly small pieces of glass. DHMC would clear any large or hazardous items. The resident suggests that the car park should be regularly swept and jet washed to remove materials that harm tyres. It was agreed that it was not realistic to meet this request – motorists use the car park at their own risk.

Trip Rails on Dickens Heath Rd

A resident has reported that some of the ditches along Dickens Heath Rd towards Miller and Carter have been cleared, and in the process a number of trip rails and posts have been damaged and broken. This has been reported to SMBC.

Leaning Bollard at Calcutt Way/Dickens Heath Rd

This leaning bollard also needs to be reported to SMBC.

Solihull Climate Action

A member of Solihull Climate Action (SCA) has contacted the Parish Council – they are a group that have been formed this year, with Friends of the Earth, and they aim to raise awareness of climate change and to encourage residents to get involved and make small behaviour changes. They are engaging with Solihull's Net Zero Action Plan. She is asking if the Parish Council would raise awareness of their group within the community. It was agreed that she should be invited along to a future PC meeting.

**Minute 130 (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 131 (2021/22) Interim Working Arrangements**

Recruitment of a new Clerk has been suspended for the moment while the PC look at whether it would be possible for Helen and Hannah to continue to share the workload with new job specifications.

The servicing of Parish Council meetings is the largest element of the administration work, and so it is proposed that the number of meetings should be reduced for the rest of the year. It was agreed that the starting time of meetings should revert back to 7pm as of January 2022, with a 2 hour meeting length limit. The 7.15pm start has not increased the numbers of residents in attendance.

The Parish Council thanked the Clerk for the additional work carried out over the last 2 weeks, in dealing with both preparing for the meeting and the Remembrance Sunday Service while the Assistant Clerk was off sick.

**Meeting ended 9.10pm**

**Next Meeting : Tuesday January 11<sup>th</sup> 2022: 7pm in Dickens Heath Library**