

## The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held in the Library on Tuesday January 11th 2022

**Present:**

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

5 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

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**Minute 132 (2021/22) Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were accepted from Councillor Mike Small, Councillor Maureen Holloway has resigned and her resignation has been accepted.

**Minute 133 (2021/22) Public Participation**

Lighting of the Village Green

A resident asked whether, given the current levels of anti-social behaviour in the village, additional lighting could be considered – on the side of the Village Hall overlooking the Village Green. Councillor Trevor Eames replied that the Parish Council have considered this before, but didn't want to encourage late night use of the playground. The Parish Council will look at this again with the use of sensor activated lighting on the side of the Village Hall.

Goal Post on the Village Green

A resident thanked the Parish Council for the improvements to the Village Green, and asked if there were any plans to reinstate the goal post which has been removed – as it was very popular. Councillor Eames replied that a lot of the grass around the goal post had been damaged, which has resulted in complaints. And that side of the Village Green does have a drainage problem, which is why the benches have been relocated. The Parish Council did look at putting in a harder surface around the goal post, but this was discounted on safety grounds, and also that it would cause a problem for mowers. Footballs are still being kicked around on the Green. The resident added that the goal post was very popular with small groups of children, and there were often children waiting to use it. He has canvassed views on the village Facebook group, and no one was against reinstating the goal post. Councillor Eames said that the goal post was removed following problems and complaints about the area surrounding it, the area has been reseeded but it has still not yet recovered. The resident suggested that the goal post could possibly be removed for the Winter months then reinstated for the Spring and Summer. Another resident commented that it is a facility for teenagers, particularly in the light of recent anti-social behaviour. Councillor Eames replied that the old goal post has been cut up and disposed of, but the Parish Council will reconsider the issue at a future meeting.

Streetwatch

A resident gave an update on Streetwatch – they have now received Police accreditation and are insured. 3 of their members are certified, and they have a walk around with the PCSO soon to certify additional members. They currently carry out hour long walkabouts twice a week.

**Minute 134 (2021/22) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations**

None.

**Minute 135 (2021/22) Report from the Borough Councillors**

Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins has reported that double yellow lines for Dickens Heath Rd alongside the Village Green is on the SMBC priority list in 2022/23.

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Signature.....

Date.....

### **Minute 136 (2021/22) Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday November 9<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 137 (2021/22) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meeting**

#### Solihull Climate Action

Solihull Climate Action are a group of Solihull residents who have a passion to address climate change in their local community, aim to run local campaigns, and convince their council to adopt Climate Change Action Plans. They have declined the invitation to attend a Parish Council meeting due to Covid, but have sent an update. They have responded to Solihull MBC's Net Zero Action Plan and have asked if the Parish Council can publicize the group and their aims. It was agreed that SMBC's Net Zero Action Plan should be looked at further.

#### Unadopted Islands

A query about progressing adoption has been forwarded to the relevant department at SMBC.

#### Broken Trip Rails on Dickens Heath Rd

This has been forwarded to Matt at SMBC.

#### Leaning Bollard at Calcutt Way/Dickens Heath Rd

This has been reported to the SMBC Neighbourhood team.

#### Replacement Trees on Meadow Pleck Lane

These have now been planted. A resident has reported that the verge with the lamp post has been missed out despite previously having a tree. Members of the Parish Council have taken a look – SMBC have planted reasonably sized trees and they look fine.

### **Minute 138 (2021/22) Report from Councillors who have attended Outside Groups, Events or Courses**

The Chair gave a summary of his report – including attendance at the WALC Chairs meeting and Solihull Community Champions. Councillor Nargis Rashid attended an SMBC Arts and Culture Funding Meeting.

### **Minute 139 (2021/22) Planning Applications**

No comments.

### **Minute 140 (2021/22) Anti-Social Behaviour in Village Centre and Underground Car Parks**

There has been concern from residents about increased anti-social behaviour in the village centre and underground car parks. Eggs have been thrown at properties, a car and bike damaged, broken tables and glass left in the playground, and 2 bins set alight. Councillor Trevor Eames has met with Phil of Dickens Heath Management Co, neither the PC nor DHMC have any enforcement powers. DHMC has a security/monitoring role, with CCTV and 3 patrols of just over an hour each night over all of its areas. There is only one security officer at night and any incidents will be reported to the Police as necessary. Security will move youths on from the underground car parks, trespass is not a criminal offence unless they cause damage. Two of the underground car park gates have been damaged recently by cars, which has made the car parks more vulnerable. The repairs are taking time as insurance claims are involved. DHMC are doing their best to tighten up on security, they need to ensure that private areas can't be accessed by those who shouldn't be there.

### **Minute 141 (2021/22) Central Car Parks**

There are concerns about inconsiderate parking in the central car parks. Although the Tesco car park is owned by the Parish Council and the Mortons car park is owned by DHMC, neither organisation currently has any enforcement powers. There is a proposal to cover both of these car parks, plus other parking in the privately owned central area, with a managed scheme. This cannot be taken forward before the end of March 2022. The Receivers, who currently control DHMC, will be handing over to an elected board of resident directors (there is currently a shadow board) at the end of March. Once this has happened the proposals for a managed scheme can hopefully be progressed.

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Signature.....

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**Minute 142 (2021/22) Playground Tender**

The draft document is close to completion. Residents in attendance at the meeting suggested that information from the consultation at the school regarding play equipment should be publicized so that residents are aware of the choices made by the children.

**Minute 143 (2021/22) Christmas Tree and Solar Lamp Post Trees**

All has been well with the Christmas tree lights this year. The tree on the Village Green is being left up for a little while before being collected. The solar lamp post trees are due to be collected the next night.

**Minute 144 (2021/22) Request for Memorial for Arthur Labinjo-Hughes**

A resident has asked whether there can be a memorial for Arthur somewhere in Dickens Heath as he attended the village school. Councillor Trevor Eames reported that there is a memorial area close to where he lived, and trees are being planted there. Dickens Heath Community Primary School are also looking at a memorial for him within the school grounds.

**Minute 145 (2021/22) Solihull Local Plan – Examination in Public**

Councillor Trevor Eames reported that he attended the Examination in Public and did a detailed presentation.

**Minute 146 (2021/22) Financial Matters**

Proposed by Councillor Rashid, seconded by Councillor Potter, the payments in Appendix I of the January 11<sup>th</sup> 2022 Agenda were approved – 18 payments for January 2022 totalling £9,703.53 including an additional payment of £694.36 to Zurich for the annual insurance, and excluding a payment of £420.00 to Fairways for an additional dog bin as a credit note has been issued for this. Plus 17 payments totalling £6,537.62 for December 2021.

Report on the Finances of the Council

There is currently a surplus of £122,000 with a projected end of year surplus of £113,000. Councillor Di Potter verified the bank reconciliation as at December 31<sup>st</sup> 2021 to the bank statements.

In Bloom Bank Account

HSBC have started to charge monthly for all community accounts. The In Bloom account only has a small balance in it, and HSBC will be charging £5 per month. It was agreed that the In Bloom account should be closed and the balance transferred into the main PC account.

Annual Insurance

This was agreed, the PC is in a long term agreement with Zurich until 2024.

Budget and Precept for 2022/23

The Parish Council considered the draft budget for 2022/23. If the Parish Council keeps the precept charge to residents the same as for 2021/22, then the budget will have a deficit of £15,202 which will have to be met from reserves.

Proposed by Councillor Potter, seconded by Councillor Rashid, **Resolved** that the proposed budget and precept for 2022/23 be approved, with no change from last year in the precept charge to residents. This will give an overall precept for 2022/23 of £81,488. The Clerk to complete the required forms for SMBC.

**Minute 147 (2021/22) Co-Option to Vacancy on the Parish Council**

With the resignation of Councillor Maureen Holloway, there are now 2 vacancies on the Parish Council. The second vacancy will need to be advertised and notified to Deborah Merry at SMBC to allow electors the opportunity to call for an election for this vacancy. The Clerk to progress this.

**Minute 148 (2021/22) Correspondence**

Festival on the Green

There has been an approach from the organisers of Festival on the Green about an event for Summer 2022. This could be linked with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. It was agreed that the organisers can use the Library 1<sup>st</sup> floor for meetings if they wish.

Tesco Car Park Landscaping

A resident has complained about the overgrown area at the edge of the Tesco car park. The former owner of this car park has agreed to pay for tidying up the planted areas and there is a meeting soon with Fairways to finalise this work.

Dickens Heath Large Nature Reserve

A resident has reported a tree that is making access to the SMBC nature reserve difficult – SMBC Forestry have taken a look and will remove the tree in the next few weeks. Also the bridge over the pond needs repairing – this has been reported to SMBC Parks.

**Minute 149 (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 150 (2021/22) Interim Office Working Arrangements**

It was agreed that Councillors Trevor Eames and Nargis Rashid should review the hours, workload and working arrangement of both the Clerk and Admin Assistant. The Clerk's temporary hours working to be continued.

**Meeting ended 9pm**

**Next Meeting : Tuesday February 15<sup>th</sup> 2022: 10.30am in Dickens Heath Library**