

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday June 21st 2022

Present:

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

8 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 46 (2022/23) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were accepted from Councillors Mark Connolly-Dowson and Nargis Rashid.

Minute 47 (2022/23) Public Participation

Inconsiderate Parking on Main Street

A resident asked whether, to alleviate parking problems, SMBC Parking Services could ticket vehicles on Main St. Councillor Trevor Eames replied that the ticket warden can't do this as Main St is a private road. The resident said that, as Main St is a through road, could SMBC be asked to extend their parking services to cover Main St and the disabled bays? Councillor Trevor Eames responded that SMBC have no enforcement powers on private roads but that the PC will ask the question.

Inconsiderate Parking on Willowherb Way

A number of residents of Willowherb Way expressed their frustration at the several large commercial vehicles that are persistently parked at the entrance to Willowherb Way. They cause a dangerous blind spot and cause difficulties for residents trying to access their driveways. The vehicle owners live in the apartments. Solihull MBC have said that they will be looking at cul-de-sacs later in the year. The residents added that their house leases do not allow them to park commercial vehicles on the road. Councillor Trevor Eames replied that unless there is a Traffic Regulation Order for the road, SMBC have no powers. And that restrictive covenants on properties are a civil matter, and the property owners would have to take action – SMBC will not get involved. One of the residents suggested that those living in the apartments could be reminded that they should park in the car parks rather than in Willowherb Way.

Councillor Trevor Eames also added that Centrick are looking at a managed parking scheme for the underground car parks as residents' use of private parking spaces can't currently be enforced if others decide to park in them.

Minute 48 (2022/23) Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday June 7th 2022

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

Minute 49 (2022/23) Clerk's Update on Actions

GP Surgery

Attempts have been made to contact a manager at SHP and Borough Councillor Karen Grinsell to follow up on concerns about the local GP surgery. Four weeks later there has been no reply from either. It was agreed that this should be followed up with SMBC Officers.

Village Clock

The clock is still not working. SMBC have given an update that Smiths of Derby, who are due to carry out the repair, had a 2 week shutdown for the Jubilee and the repair should be carried out in the next 2 to 3 weeks.

External Audit

All of the paperwork has been forwarded to the external auditors.

Minute 50 (2022/23) Planning Applications

It was agreed that both planning applications, which involve treeworks, could be left in the hands of the SMBC Tree Officer, but that the works should be carried out professionally.

Minute 51 (2022/23) In Bloom 2022

- The In Bloom judging will be taking place on the afternoon of July 12th 2022 – several Councillors to join the judges.
- The Best Front Garden Competition has been publicized and the portfolio is being drafted. It was agreed that some flyers about the competition should be printed for Councillors to put through doors.
- Councillor Mike Small and Simon have painted the planters and the school planters have been planted up.
- It was agreed that the Parish Council should have a page in the School PTFA Summer Fete pamphlet, at a cost of £50, to publicize latest news including the Garden Competition and the Queen's Baton Relay.
- There are a lot of weeds around lamp posts and the edge of apartment blocks – an appeal to be put out to ask residents if they could help by doing a little weeding.

Minute 52 (2022/23) Playground and Village Green

- The playground is on track for completion in September.
- A quote from Fairways for £4,995 plus VAT to supply and install 2 replacement benches, which are metal and vandal proof, plus a replacement goal post was considered. An alternative option for the benches has been provided by Kompan. By 4 votes to 1 it was agreed that the quote from Fairways should be accepted. Councillor Trevor Eames said that the site of the goal post would be moved slightly, but would still back on to the hedge.
- It was noted that a large group of 30 to 40 children have been having football training on the Village Green on the past 2 Saturdays. This to be monitored – if it continues in the Winter then the ground will get really churned up.

Minute 53 (2022/23) Queen's Baton Relay

The Queen's Baton Relay is passing through Dickens Heath on Tuesday July 26th 2022. Councillor Mark Connolly-Dowson and a small committee have put together a plan of activities for the afternoon, and they are requesting funding of £500 for the event which will cover the hire of a helter skelter, face painter, music, bunting and prizes. This was agreed, all in favour.

Minute 54 (2022/23) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Mike Small, seconded by Councillor Di Potter, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the June 21st 2022 Agenda be approved – 4 payments totalling £613.73 including an additional payment of £200.25 to T Griffiths for plants.

Routine Monthly Payments for July and August

These were approved.

Finance Report

The Parish Council currently has a surplus of £145,000, however the projected end of year surplus has now reduced to £35,000 as the playground has been ordered. There will be some other adjustments that will alter the end of year figure - this will include the reclaim of VAT on the playground expenditure plus the cost of the recent PC election.

Minute 55 (2022/23) Communication and Engagement

A date for the communications workshop is to be agreed for July.

Streetwatch have asked if they can contribute to the Parish Council page in the Dickens Heath Directory – this was agreed.

Minute 56 (2022/23) CorrespondenceGraffiti on Bridges over the Canal

If graffiti is on SMBC land – it can be reported to the SMBC Graffiti Team – this to be publicized.

Tesco Car Park Boundary Fence

Councillor Mike Small took no part in this discussion as his property is near to the boundary fence.

A resident has asked if the Parish Council owns the Tesco car park boundary fence. This is a grey area. When the PC acquired the car park, our solicitor stated in a report that it was her view that the PC would own the boundary fence as well as the parking spaces. Chair Richard Small stated that the PC could either accept the view in our solicitor's report, or it could be challenged by seeking additional evidence. Councillor Trevor Eames said that the physical evidence is that the boundary fence is the responsibility of the houses backing on to it. There is no actual documentary evidence regarding the ownership. It was agreed that Councillor Trevor Eames should submit the additional information to the solicitor for further clarification. Following this, the Parish Council will make a decision on the boundary fence.

SMBC Pilot of a Business Hub on the Library First Floor

A resident has questioned the proposal for SMBC to use a large portion of the Library first floor to pilot a Business Hub. The Library first floor is barely used by the community, and if SMBC use it instead for this pilot it will significantly reduce the amount of rent that the PC will pay.

The resident has asked if the PC should relocate its office to the Village Hall – Councillor Trevor Eames, who is a Village Hall Director, replied that it may not be feasible to locate a PC office in the foyer due to limited space. However, they are looking at splitting the large hall into 2 smaller areas, and so there could be potential to incorporate an office into that. This will not be a short term solution, but the cost of a space in the Village Hall should be less than the reduced rent at the Library.

Minute 57 (2022/23) 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 58 (2022/23) How We Operate and Conduct Ourselves as a Parish Council

This was discussed – focussing on the Parish Councillors working together to achieve the Parish Council priorities.

Minute 59 (2022/23) Staff Hours & Holidays

The Clerk left, and this was discussed.

Meeting ended 9.30pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday September 13th 2022: 6.30pm in Dickens Heath Library