

## The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

### Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday September 6<sup>th</sup> 2022

**Present:**

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

4 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

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**Minute 60 (2022/23) Apologies for Absence**

None.

**Minute 61 (2022/23) Recruitment of New Parish Clerk**

A working group has had discussions about the recruitment process. It was agreed that the post should be 18 hours a week, with an additional 2 hours a week if the successful candidate needs to study for the CILCA qualification. The salary range will be LC2 point 24 to 28, with the NEST pension. The job has been advertised over the bank holiday week, and there have been expressions of interest, but it was agreed that it should be advertised for a further two and a half weeks with a closing date of Friday September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2022. It was also agreed that the interviews will be held in the week commencing October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2022, details of applicants to be circulated to all Councillors with Councillors Richard Small, Nargis Rashid and Mike Small shortlisting and on the interview panel.

**Minute 62 (2022/23) Proposal for a New Way of Working with Delegation of Responsibilities to Committees**

The Chair introduced this proposal – the Parish Council needs to run as efficiently and effectively as possible to serve the community as best they can. He proposed the establishment of committees which will empower Councillors to make decisions, without duplicating work, and will conform to WALC’s guidelines. Committee meetings will have to be publicized to residents, open to the public unless confidential (eg. staffing committee) and minutes published. It is not necessary for the Clerk to attend to take the minutes, notes can be taken by a Councillor with decisions made being published. The Chair suggested that there should be the following committees:

- Communications and Events (the Communications Strategy will be a lot of work)
- Staffing and New Ways of Working
- Finance and Risk (to support the RFO, though all finance decisions will be made at full council)

Councillors expressed various views:

- Decisions should be made by all Councillors.
- There may not be efficiencies if proposals have to be prepared for committee meetings and notes typed up afterwards.
- Other small councils don’t have committees other than a planning committee to meet short deadlines.
- This Parish Council did try a planning sub-committee but it wasn’t effective.
- Committees may actually take up more time.

The Chair replied that the Communications Strategy is going to take up a huge amount of time, and committees will empower a smaller number of Councillors to make decisions, with all significant decisions brought to full council. WALS are supportive of this proposal. Councillor Nargis Rashid said that it is good to try a different way of working, the Chair added that a review date could be included and if it doesn't work then the Parish Council can think again.

A vote was taken and, by 4 votes to 3, it was agreed that the Parish Council should progress the proposal to establish committees.

**Meeting ended 8.35pm**

**Next Meeting : Thursday September 29<sup>th</sup> 2022: 6.30pm in Dickens Heath Village Hall**