

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday November 29th 2022

Present:

Dickens Heath Parish Councillors; Mark Connolly-Dowson, Trevor Eames, Diane Potter, Nargis Rashid (from 7.30pm), Mike Small, Richard Small (Chair), Doreen Wright.

Mrs J. Nicholls – Head Teacher of Dickens Heath Community Primary School

7 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Helen Marczak

Minute 113 (2022/23) Apologies for Absence

None.

Minute 114 (2022/23) Mrs J. Nicholls – Opportunity for Youth Club at the Hub at the School

The Chair welcomed Mrs J. Nicholls to the meeting. Mrs Nicholls outlined some of the history of the School, which is now 20 years old, and how the Hub came to be built there. The School already has relationships with organisations in the community, and they would like to extend the facilities of the school to the community outside of school hours. They have been able to support various groups who use the Hub, including the Scouts. They are also partnering with Solihull MBC to look at other opportunities, focussing on well being. The Hub is self contained and they would like to see it being used 7 days a week. The Chair added that there has been investment in the village for children up to the age of 12, but there is very little for teenagers. Historically there was a youth club in the Parish Council Rooms, now a youth club should be considered for the Hub. Mrs Nicholls replied that the Hub would be ideal as it has been set up with young people in mind, she can't provide a budget for a youth leader but she is prepared to support and oversee a youth club. It was also suggested that joint funding could be looked at from SMBC or the Community Police, and it would be ideal if a Parish Council representative could be part of the discussions to take the youth club forward.

The Chair thanked Mrs Nicholls for coming along to the meeting.

Minute 115 (2022/23) Public Participation

Defibrillator for the Village Centre

A resident asked if there had been any progress in looking at this. Councillor Mike Small confirmed that he had looked at some costings, and he will liaise with Darren of the Scouts with regard to fundraising.

Proposed Additional Double Yellow Lines

A resident asked about the proposal for additional double yellow lines in Willowherb Way. Solihull MBC will be going out to consultation in the New Year regarding proposed additional double yellow lines along Dickens Heath Rd alongside the Village Green, partly down Willowherb Way, along Tythe Barn Lane west of the canal bridge, in Wadbarn and on Rumbush Lane at the junction of Elvaston Way. The Parish Council agreed that they were fully in support of these additional double yellow lines.

Minute 116 (2022/23) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

Councillor Mike Small declared an interest during the discussion about the Tesco car park fence, as he lives nearby, and took no part in the vote.

Minute 117 (2022/23) Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday October 18th 2022

Proposed by Councillor Mark Connolly-Dowson, seconded by Councillor Doreen Wright, it was **Resolved** that the minutes be approved as a true and accurate record.

Minute 118 (2022/23) Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday October 20th 2022

Proposed by Councillor Mark Connolly-Dowson, seconded by Councillor Doreen Wright, it was **Resolved** that the minutes be approved as a true and accurate record subject to the change of one word.

Minute 119 (2022/23) Amendment to Schedule of PC Meetings

It was agreed that additional Parish Council meetings should be held on Thursday February 16th 2023 and Thursday April 13th 2023.

Minute 120 (2022/23) Clerk's Update on Actions

Lease of Library 1st Floor

£1,800 of PC funds that was being held by solicitors in relation to the potential lease of the Library 1st floor has now been returned to the PC bank account.

Library Warm Space

The games, puzzles and newspaper subscription have been purchased, and presented by Councillor Mike Small to the Library Warm Space initiative.

Solar Lamp Post Christmas Trees

These have been installed, including the additional tree for The Paddocks. A request has been received from a resident for more solar trees – it was agreed that this should be considered for Christmas 2023.

Planters

Two residents have planted up a large number of the planters in the Village Centre and at Waterside.

Query Regarding Home Extension Works without Planning Approval

As there is no permitted development in Dickens Heath, Councillor Trevor Eames has sought the advice of SMBC Planning as to whether home extension works are taking place without planning approval. SMBC Planning do not think that it is a particular problem in Dickens Heath, internal works do not generally require planning consent, but Planning Enforcement will follow up any suspected breaches.

Village Green Trees

The trees growing over the lamp posts at the edge of the Village Green have been cut back.

Playground

Following concerns, the height of the toddler swings has been raised slightly.

A quote has been received from Kompan for playground inspection and support packages – it was agreed that RoSPA Play Safety should continue to carry out the playground inspections.

Village Issues Reported to Solihull MBC

- Damaged island by Copperfield Court
- Slippery block paving/leaves
- Broken trip rails on Dickens Heath Rd – these have been inspected and repairs ordered

Minute 121 (2022/23) Planning Applications

One additional planning application was considered:

137 Rumbush Lane - 2022/02445 - treeworks including felling a decaying oak tree

It was agreed that this should be left with the SMBC Tree Officer with a request that they consider replacing the felled oak tree.

No comments on the other planning applications.

Minute 122 (2022/23) Proposed Car Parking Scheme in the Village Centre

There is no further update on this, the Chair has contacted Centrick who have confirmed they are still looking at terms and conditions for the supplier of the scheme. A representative of Centrick to be invited to a Parish Council meeting once the details have been confirmed.

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 29th November 2022

Signature.....

Date.....

Minute 123 (2022/23) RoSPA Safety Inspection of New Playground Flooring

Several concerns have been raised by residents about the safety of the raised edges of the new wetpour flooring – there is concern that it is a trip hazard. A post installation inspection was arranged by Kompan, however the inspection report does not mention the flooring. A quote for a full inspection has been received from the Parish Council’s usual inspector RoSPA Play Safety for £294 plus VAT, which includes an appointment for Councillors to meet with the Inspector on the day. Councillor Trevor Eames said that he was not happy with this, as it is a duplication of expenditure. It was agreed, by a majority of Councillors, that the inspection should go ahead – with Councillors Trevor Eames and Doreen Wright voting against it.

Minute 124 (2022/23) Remembrance Sunday Service

The Remembrance Sunday Service again went really well this year. It was agreed that additional volunteers would be needed for next year, it would be nice to find another bugler and a singer to lead the singing, with refreshments afterwards also to be considered.

Minute 125 (2022/23) Nature Reserve at Waterside

Precise information regarding the cost of works needed in the Nature Reserve has still not been received from Dickens Heath Management Co. Councillor Trevor Eames commented that these costs can’t be sustained by DHMC, it’s likely that they will need to go back to SMBC.

Minute 126 (2022/23) Traffic Islands and Planting

Councillor Doreen Wright said that the island at Brixfield Way needs to be tidied up, it has looked scruffy for a long time. It was agreed that the PC should look at some options for this, Councillor Trevor Eames to contact Fairways.

Councillor Wright added that the small piece of land at the end of Copperfield Court, between Rumbush Lane and Dickens Heath Rd, used to be planted with wild flowers but is now full of thistles and brambles – it needs completely digging out. This piece of land is owned by Copperfield Court – Councillor Trevor Eames to find out which management co. is responsible for it.

The 2 large planters at Waterside and near the GP need new soil before being planted up. Councillors Doreen Wright and Nargis Rashid to look at this.

Minute 127 (2022/23) Christmas Tree Lighting Event

The village Christmas tree has been put up today, and plans are in place for the Christmas Tree Lighting Service on Saturday.

Minute 128 (2022/23) Request for a Bleed Kit for the Village

It was suggested that this could be looked at as part of the proposal for an external defibrillator – Councillor Mike Small to follow up on this.

Minute 129 (2022/23) Communications StrategyCommunications & Events Committee Terms of Reference

Following some discussion, it was agreed that Councillors Richard Small, Nargis Rashid and Trevor Eames would look again at some of the detail, with the aim that this Terms of Reference can then be used as a template for the other committees.

Communications Strategy Initial Recommendations

Recommendation 2 was approved by a majority of Councillors.

Recommendations 1 and 3 to be looked at again by Councillors Richard Small and Nargis Rashid.

Communications Strategy Full Recommendations

Recommendations 1 to 6 were approved.

Recommendation 7 to be looked at again.

eNewsletter

The first eNewsletter has been successfully produced and sent out.

Councillor Mark Connolly-Dowson left the meeting.

Minute 130 (2022/23) Recruitment of Parish Clerk

Hannah Raithby-Allin will be starting as Parish Clerk on January 4th 2023. It was agreed that the members of the Staffing Committee should discuss the handover period and transition of Helen Marczak to the RFO role.

Minute 131 (2022/23) WorkHub and PC Office

The WorkHub, which now operates on the Library first floor, is keen to be able to offer a meeting room to clients. They have suggested that the PC office could be turned into a meeting room, and the PC staff could be given their own pod to work in as an alternative, and they are drawing up a proposal. Councillors expressed concern that an office was required, and that security of data would be an issue without it. They agreed to wait for the proposals before making a decision.

Minute 132 (2022/23) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Di Potter, seconded by Councillor Trevor Eames, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the November 29th 2022 Agenda be approved – 25 payments totalling £9,118.83 including additional payments of £3,378.00 to Plantscape for the solar Christmas trees and £600.00 to Wilkes LLP for legal advice regarding the Tesco car park fence.

Finance Report

The Parish Council has a current surplus of £69,000, and a projected end of year surplus of £30,000.

Staff Pay Award 2022/23

The staff pay award for 2022/23 has been finalised, it gives all pay grades an additional £1 per hour backdated to April 1st 2022 and an additional day of annual leave as of April 1st 2023 – all agreed that this should be paid to the Parish Council staff.

December Payments

The payment of routine payments for December 2022 was agreed.

Minute 133 (2022/23) Tesco Car Park Boundary Fence

A resident has complained that a section of the Tesco Car Park boundary fence is unstable and requires repair. The ownership of this section of fence is not clear cut and so the Parish Council has sought legal advice. The legal advice is that, although the section of fence is generally in good condition, 3 of the wooden posts are loose and should be secured with concrete to prevent further disrepair, and that the PC should arrange for this repair. All agreed that this should be communicated to the complainant and, if accepted, that the repairs be carried out.

Minute 134 (2022/23) Correspondence

ARTconnects Workshops

A resident has approached the Parish Council with regard to running some workshops for young people with the aim of improving mental health through learning creative skills. It was agreed that this could be considered again when the youth club is up and running.

External Auditors 2022/23 to 2027/28

The contract has been awarded to Moore UK.

Minute 135 (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 136 (2022/23) How We Improve our Effectiveness as a Parish Council
Regular team meetings to be set up.

Meeting ended 8.50pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday January 10th 2023: 6.30pm in the Library