

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday October 17th 2023

Present:

Dickens Heath Parish Councillors; Richard Small (Chair), Mike Small, Sarah Barrett, David Easterby, Liz Woodus.

15 members of the public

Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins

Clerk: Ms H Raithby

Minute 222 (2023/24) Apologies for Absence

Councillor Mark Connolly-Dowson and Councillor Maureen Holloway

Minute 223 (2023/24) Public Participation

Hedging on the Village Green

A resident raised the issue of traffic around the village and drivers being dangerous. Suggested that we could have rope between the bollards and think about a Zebra crossing, feels this may address the safety issue. Councillor Richard Small advised that double yellow lines will be on that section of the road which will mean the traffic will be moving more quickly as the parked cars will not be slowing down the traffic. Also advised that we have plans to get speed measures in place. We are working with the Police and volunteers to organise this. The Parish Council wanted to think of an idea to prevent kids running into the road now that the traffic will be flowing faster and it's more dangerous. The hedge was an initial idea but will need to put more thought into this.

Double Yellow Lines

Councillor Sarah Barrett advised that the Double Yellow Lines came into force on the 12th of October, it may be that the weather prevented the lines being painted, Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins agreed that this was probably the case. They will be painted in the near future.

Christmas Lights on Lamp Posts

A resident asked if, when Solihull Council are saying that the lighting columns are not strong enough for us to have our usual lights, they are strong enough to have the Solihull Council lights. Suggested the idea of taking out indemnity insurance to cover us if anything went wrong and going ahead anyway. Councillor Richard Small updated that the lights will be allowed this year, with the agreement of Solihull Council. The plan going forward is for Solihull Council to start replacing the lighting columns, which are reaching end of life, in stages. From next year it is likely that we will start to buy some of the lights from Solihull Council which will then be ours (we rent the current lights) and over time build up a stock of our own and just pay for Solihull Council to install them each year. This is still to be agreed with the full Parish Council.

Maintenance of Different areas of the Village

A resident asked who is responsible for the rose bushes near Dickens Manor/trim trail and the leaves piling up on pavements in the same area. Councillor Richard Small asked the resident to email details of both issues, with photographs if possible, to the Clerk who will look into who is responsible.

Parking on pavements on Beech Lane

The parking in this area is getting dangerous with cars being forced into the path of oncoming traffic. There are also cars parking all over the pavements. Councillor Richard Small advises that hopefully Solihull Council will be adopting the roads which would make it easier to do something about this but asked that the resident email details to the Clerk who will look into it.

New Development Proposal

There are concerns over this and social facilities being replaced with housing.

Tythe barn lane is a main thoroughfare and with the extra volume of traffic will be a major problem. The developers have acknowledged noise on the road from the new development but nothing has been planned to protect existing residents from this noise. Residents advised that there is a plan to have a one way system on Birchy Leasowes Lane so all of the traffic will go down Tythe Barn Lane, it was discussed that the developers wanted to have another entrance but Solihull Council stopped this plan. Residents feel that this would have been better.

Offer of Help

A resident that undertakes work for CPRE to protect Green Belt, also worked on the 2016 representation and in 2021 worked with Dickens Heath Parish Council on the Local Plan. Tidbury Green have suggested working together which will bring further weight to the objections. We need to have really good technical objections for them to be taken seriously. This resident is offering her help with the objections. She advises that it is important to have liaison meetings with the developers to get the best for the community (s106 agreement).

Tree Preservation Orders

We need to gain some clarity on the number and locations of Tree Preservation Orders in the village. She has arranged to have Tree Preservation orders on the site in question. We need a professional planner to defeat this, can we ask Solihull Council for a plan of Tree Preservation Orders in the village. The Clerk to look into this. Councillor Richard Small will email Tidbury Green Parish Council to discuss collaboration.

Village Hall

A resident advises that the Village Hall is in a state, the number of directors and trustees have dwindled and is almost at the stage where it will not be able to run. Residents are not using the Village Hall, the resident was asking if we can generate events that the residents can take part in to encourage people to get involved.

Councillor Sarah Barrett updates that we will put out communications to ask for people to get involved. Events will be happening in the Village Hall. The craft fair is already happening and there are plans for a quiz night just after Christmas. Councillor Liz Woodus has been to a meeting recently and confirms the state of the Village Hall after years of neglect and only has two directors who are very new to it.

Councillor Sarah Barrett asks who, of the residents, are aware of the page the Parish Council has in the Dickens Heath directory. Around half of the residents are aware, Councillor Barrett asks if the residents will all join our mailing list so that we can send them the e-newsletter.

Minute 224 (2023/24) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None

Minute 225 (2023/24) Update from Borough Councillors

Boundary Changes

Councillor Hawkins updates on the likely changes, proposals will be in January.

Canal Bridge

Safety audit is being done.

Damaged Roundabout

Councillor Richard Small updates that we have an update from Dean Ward at Solihull Council that this will be repaired by the end of the month.

Sports Grounds

Councillor Hawkins speaks about the relocation of the sports grounds that is required for the development to take place and that it will be extremely expensive to achieve this.

- Councillor Hawkins and the majority of the public left the meeting.

Minute 226 (2023/24) Minutes of the meeting held 12th September 2023

Proposed by Councillor Dave Easterby, seconded by Councillor Mike Small, it was **Resolved** that the minutes be approved as a true and accurate record.

Minute 227 (2023/24) Parish Council Decisions

Hedging or Barrier for the Village Green

Councillor Barrett expresses concern around visibility. Councillor Easterby suggests that putting ropes between the bollards may be a solution. Councillor Richard Small suggests this may be better discussed offline between the Councillors and brought to a future meeting.

Library Budget

Councillor Mike Small advises that we gave £264 to the Library in the last financial year and would like to be able to do this again as we are trying to support the Library. Councillor Barrett questions whether the Library receive part of the Precept, the Clerk doesn't believe this is the case but will double check. The Library almost closed back in 2016 which is one of the reasons the Parish Council moved to the premises. The Librarian, Cathy Bryant has done a wonderful job of making the Library into a community hub and we would like to support her in this. The Clerk is to circulate a budget to support the request of £500 for the Library budget for this year.

Memorial Plaque for Bob Cudmore

Councillor Barrett suggests the idea of a memorial tree rather than a bench. A tree is agreed by all. There is a discussion around having individual names on the plaque or a plaque for all ex-councillors. It is also decided to have a memorial section on the website where details of ex-councillors can be added.

Rooted Christmas Tree

Some research has been done and the largest rooted tree that is economical and unlikely to die from the shock of being moved is 7 foot. It is decided that this is too small, Councillor Mike Small and the Clerk will visit Woods Farms to discuss options and ask about a memorial rooted tree. It is decided to ask A. Hudson, who did the work on the Village Green recently, to see if they are able to supply a tree.

A maximum budget of £300 for Christmas tree/s is agreed.

Request to use Village Green in May 2024

All agree to allow the Parkinsons charity event to go ahead on the Village Green on the 26th May 2024, as long as the relevant processes and procedures are followed. We will ask them if they would like us to help with advertising through our Communication channels.

Possibility of Getting More Mature Trees Planted on the Village Green

It is discussed that when saplings are planted, they often don't survive. Councillor Woodus will approach a company that she knows undertook some similar work in her area recently. Councillor Richard Small has a fairly large tree that he'd be happy to relocate to the green. Clerk to find out if this is possible.

Minute 228 (2023/24) Finance and Risk Committee

Councillor Richard Small will organise a training plan and dignity at work policy.

Minute 229 (2023/24) Communications and Events Committee

Meeting

The next meeting of the committee will be on the 30th October at 7pm.

Website

Councillor Barrett updates that the audit of the website is almost done and she should be able to give a full update at the next meeting.

D-Day

Full Council decision, all agree to hold an event to celebrate.

Minute 230 (2023/24) Tesco Car Park

Councillor Easterby needs to look at the documents relating to the purchase of this with a view to contacting the Land Registry, he will contact the Clerk to arrange this. Councillor Mike Small suggests considering setting up our own parking scheme. Councillor Richard Small questions how it would be managed, he feels that the car park is a burden.

Minute 231 (2023/24) Councillors' Action Log and Clerks Update

Lanyards and ID Cards

All agree to spend £60+VAT on these.

Car Park

Need to chase Centrick about Car Park inspections.

Minute 232 (2023/24) To Consider Village Areas of Interest

Persimmon Homes and Richborough Proposals

All agree to work with Tidbury Green Parish Council on the BL1 site

Offer of Help from Jean Walters

All agree to this kind offer of help, we will email her to ask for some clarification on what this will include.

Parking Scheme

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 17th October 2023

Signature.....

Date.....

No update on this, we continue to chase.

Traffic Islands

A PowerPoint presentation is given outlining the Islands we have and proposal for them, all agree to get a quote for the proposed work.

Youth Club

Councillor Richard Small has let them know that we have agreed to fund the room hire.

Fairways Contract

We would like to get some quotes to see if their pricing is competitive, Clerk to ask for contract of work from them as we don't have one on file.

Minute 233 (2023/24) To Consider Planning Applications

No planning applications.

Minute 234 (2022/23) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Dave Easterby, seconded by Councillor Liz Woodus, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the October 17th 2023 agenda be approved – 19 payments totalling £5538.66.

Meeting ended 9pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday November 14th 2023: 6.30pm in the Library