

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday March 12th 2024

Present:

Dickens Heath Parish Councillors; Richard Small (Chair), Adam Weber, Liz Woodus, Mike Small and Dave Easterby

7 members of the public

2 members of the local police team

Streetwatch representative Charley Vedmore

Planning Advisor to the Council, Jean Walters

Clerk: Ms H Raithby

Minute 277 (2023/24) Apologies for Absence

Councillors Mark Connolly-Dowson and Maureen Holloway

Minute 278 (2023/24) Public Participation

Adopted Roads Register

A resident requested a paper copy of the adopted roads map, the Clerk will arrange for this to be sorted.

Service Charges in the Village

We have been made aware of the rising costs to residents regarding service charges. We invited the resident to the meeting to speak about what has been happening. The resident, from Cornwood House, advised that her service charge has doubled to £3500 each year. She has set up a Whatsapp group to try to deal with the issues, they are looking at getting legal advice.

Councillor Weber asked what we can do to help/support them. They would like us to help with awareness of what they are going through, they are in touch with the Legal Council which is a government funded charity 'Leaseholders advisory service'. The development has been neglected for a considerable amount of time. Second resident has had an increase from £160 to £570 each month. This is down to work that should have happened in 2011. There is a report showing that there were problems with the car park. They have had their half an hour free consultation. Another resident offers his help with the situation, he is a retired chartered surveyor and has owned a property in the same building in the past. Councillor Richard Small wonders if it would be worth the Parish Council writing to the Management Company. MP Saqib Bhatti is aware of the situation and has written to the resident. Councillor R Small feels that we should air our concerns to the management company by letter and keep working together on the issue.

Resident advised that another building (Sissinghurst Court) is in the same predicament, they have a solicitor in their group which may help if they manage to join together. A lot of buildings have directorships, the responsibility for this hasn't been taken seriously in the past. Councillor Mike Small spoke about similar situations that have happened in the past and one instance where the residents overcame the problem. He also spoke about the developers who are currently planning to build in the Village that plan to build in exactly the same way regarding service charges which will inevitably lead to problems in the future.

Planning Matters

Jean Walters updated on site BL1 they have been analysing documents on the portal for the planning. They have been looking at flood reports. The report states that no flooding has been experienced, there are big flaws in the documents. Coventry and Bromsgrove have both complained about incorrect highways inspections planning policy and national policy. There is a big meeting on Thursday with Solihull Council to try to work out a way to move forward. Jean

updated that this will go on for many months and there is no plan at the moment. The parish council working group is working hard to put together a good argument

Minute 279 (2023/24) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None

Minute 280 (2023/24) Update from Borough Councillors

None present

Minute 281 (2023/24) Minutes of the meeting held 20th February 2023

Councillors Liz Woodus proposed and Dave Easterby seconded, all in favour, the minutes are approved.

All councillors agree minor update to November and January minutes

Minute 282 (2023/24) Update From Streetwatch and Local Police Team

Our local police team update that there have been no burglaries or vehicle crime in the last couple of weeks. There has been a weapons sweep of the local nature reserve with metal detectors. They have also visited the local school. Speed watch will be happening again at some point. They made us aware that there is a link to upload dash Cam footage on the police website which we will look to put on our website. Street watch are short of volunteers and would love some new members if anyone can give a little bit of time it is only a commitment of two hours a month.

Minute 283 (2023/24) Parish Council Decisions

IT Office Suite Software – All agree to purchase of Business Standard

Plantscape alternative plan to replace hanging baskets -

Councillor Easterby explains the idea for the planters and flower towers and the idea of be friendly flowers and asks for opinions on whether these would be OK by the school. All vote in favour of flower towers. All vote in favour of bee friendly flowers. All vote in favour of having 2 bee posts on the village green and all councillors are interested in seeing if the local school would like to be involved.

Annual Parish Meeting -

All agree to hold this before the meeting on the 14th May

Dickens Heath Strategy

Councillor Richard Small spoke about wanting to have a strategy for the parish council going forward and asked the other councillors to think of ideas for example CCTV, new posts on the village green.

Councillor Adam Webber suggested that the towpaths could be an option for this and he has already spoken to the Canals and Rivers Trust. He also feels that it would be good to have a visitor centre at the nature reserve with drinks and snacks etc which would give another reason for people to go through Waterside.

Councillor Woodus felt that more community events would be good, Christmas events for older people/afternoon tea/children's disco

Councillor Mike Small spoke about mental health first aid in the library after the success of first aid courses, this is something he's looking into doing.

Councillor Easterby wondered if we can do some smaller events such as a pride event or a Black History Month event etc. He also wonders if we could do more on the village green with regards to an outdoor gym etc Councillor Woodus suggests a trim trail.

Site BL1 Working Group

Councillor Weber feels there has been some confusion around what the working group for site BL1 is for is it only for the current application for site BL1 or is it other things such as residential planning applications as well. Councillor Richard Small replies that it was set up as a working group for BL1 and possibly in the future could be extended out to other things once it has finished this job. Most other planning applications that we receive do not require specialist planning knowledge but if we do receive them we should perhaps ask advice from Jean Walters. The possibility of a neighbourhood plan was discussed as a possibility for the working group once the planning application for BL1 is finished.

Minute 284 (2023/24) Finance and Risk Committee

Councillor Easterby gave an update on the Finance and Risk Committee, there was a meeting last week, the main action from this was that the policies and documents will need to be reviewed. Councillor Easterby will be doing this and will give feedback on these. This will be

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Signature.....

Date.....

rolled out over the next year. With regards to the financial strategy for the Parish Council this will become clearer once the overall strategy itself has been decided. Councillor Adam Weber advises that there will be some new policies from the working group for technology.

Staffing

Councillor Richard Small has agreed to do development reviews with all staff.

Minute 285 (2023/24) Communications and Events Committee

Update

There is no update at the moment. Councillor Richard Small is going to set up a meeting. There was a discussion around whether we should support the Parkinson's event on the Village Green.

Minute 286 (2023/24) Councillors' Action Log and Clerk's Update

Need to check on the frequency of inspections for the Tesco car park with the insurance company, Councillors agree that if it needs to be done weekly then we will need to ask Fairways for a quote to do this.

Minute 287 (2023/24) To Consider Village Areas of Interest

Speed Reduction Proposals

No update

Youth Club at Community Hub

Councillor Richard Small is involved with this and updates that it is in progress.

Library

Councillor Mike Small updated about the library to say that no more money has been spent. Another first aid training event is happening the following Saturday with 14 people potentially attending. Councillor Mike Small advises that it will probably be every six months for the first aid training after this one. He also updates that there will be a pottery class organised by himself. He would like to start a mental health first aid, hopefully on the 6th of June, and depending on the success of this would like to make a regular thing due to loneliness in the area. Baillie Carlton from Solihull Council will be attending the next Parish Council meeting, Councillor Small has been trying to get extra hours for the library from Baillie Carlton for quite some time.

Fairways Contract

Councillor Easterby agreed to help review the contracts and quotes that we've received regarding the maintenance of the village green. And report back to the full council.

Parking Scheme in Tesco Car Park

Once we've had confirmation from Centrick that we are not at risk with the pumping station etc this is something that we need to revisit.

Minute 288 (2023/24) To Consider Planning Applications

None

Minute 289 (2023/24) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Dave Easterby, seconded by Councillor Richard Small, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the March 2024 agenda be approved – 16 payments for February totalling £8074.79

Projector

Councillor Weber provided a projector for the council to try, it was decided that while it was reasonable quality, the Parish Council would like to hold movie nights and similar events, which would require a more sophisticated projector, therefore we would like to trial a more expensive one. This one will be returned. We will order a new one once we have looked at alternatives.

Meeting ended 8.55pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday April 9th 2023: 6.30pm in the Library