

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday May 14th 2024

Present:

Dickens Heath Parish Councillors; Richard Small(Chair), Mike Small, Liz Woodus, Adam Weber, Maureen Holloway.

11 members of the public

Clerk: Ms Hannah Raithby

Minute 1 (2024/25) Election of Chair

Councillor Mike Small nominated Councillor Richard Small, seconded by Councillor Liz Woodus, Councillor Weber agreed, Councillor Holloway abstained, Councillor Richard Small was voted chair.

Minute 2 (2024/25) To Receive the Chair’s Declaration of Acceptance of Office

This was signed.

Minute 3 (2024/25) Apologies for Absence

Councillor Dave Easterby

Minute 4 (2024/25) Public Participation

New Development

A resident raised the current planning applications for development in the area, it is almost directly opposite his bungalow and the houses in that part of the development are actually two and a half storey. The drawings show the bend/corner where the cycle path joins – they want to remove the speed bump and put in road narrowing. Also remove hedgerow which shields the bungalows. Councillor R Small advised that the Parish Council have set up a Planning Advisory Group (PAG) and they will be objecting to the development. Councillor Weber advised that the PAG have already drafted a placeholder objection letter to the planning application and will be adding to it using the expertise within the PAG. Another resident is concerned about the increase in number of cars this development will create on the country lanes. Councillor Holloway advised that we will be looking at Highways for both developments as a whole. Councillor R Small requested that residents forward queries to the clerk via email. Councillor Weber advised that the Parish Council are working on a wizard to help residents make objections. Councillor M Small responded to a question about Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins’ view on the planning that is happening in the village and explained that Councillor Hawkins has been involved in a petition to oppose the planning and that Councillor Hawkins has praised the Parish Councils Planning Advisory Group.

A highways specialist member of our PAG was present in the public area and spoke about the road network around Dickens Heath, that it is not able to cope with the with the proposed development and parking issues. It was agreed that Councillor M Small will make contact with Richard Parker to try to gather support for the objections.

Dickens Heath Football Club

Three members of the Dickens Heath Football Club joined us for the meeting, they used to play in Dickens Heath at Rumbush Lane, they now play at Moseley Cricket Club as they lost so many people. They would like to come back to Dickens Heath and were wondering if we have any contacts at Dickens Heath Sports Club. Councillor R Small advised that we would like to support them and continue the conversation...on of the Planning applications we are facing at the moment is to remove the sports pitches. The Parish Council would like to support the local football team. There is a massive need for football teams of kids of all ages in Dickens Heath. Councillor Woodus advises that there is a club starting in the Village Hall for younger children.

Fly Tipping

A resident advised that there has been some fly tipping but that Solihull Council have a very good service and it gets sorted quickly. Councillor M Small asked if it would be possible for the resident to send in some photographs next time so that we can feature it in one of our Communications.

Cleobury Lane Flooding

A resident raised this issue and advised it has been reported numerous times. The Parish Council will contact SMBC and ask what is happening with it.

Development on 6 Acres Drive

There was no planning permission for this development, Solihull Council granted retrospective planning permission but it has not been built properly or within guidelines. The Planning Advisory Group will write to development control and let them know that we are not happy with the building.

Minute 5 (2024/25) To Receive all Councillors' Declaration of Acceptance of Office, and to decide when any Declarations of Acceptance of Office which have not been received shall be received

All received.

Minute 6 (2024/25) To Receive all Councillors' Declaration of Pecuniary Interest form and Code of Conduct Agreement

All Received

Minute 7 (2024/25) To Consider Co-Option to the Parish Council Vacancies

One application received, one vacancy to fill. All councillors agree that they are happy with the application and wish to welcome the co-opted member to the Parish Council. Councillor Stewart Halford fills in his declaration of acceptance.

Minute 8 (2024/25) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None Declared.

Minute 9 (2024/25) Report from the Borough Councillors

None present.

Minute 10 (2024/25) To Decide Whether to Elect a Vice Chair

It was agreed that it would be helpful to Councillor R Small to have someone as vice chair because of his considerable work commitments. Councillor S Halford nominated Councillor M Small. Councillors R Small, L Woodus, S Halford and M Small vote in favour of Councillor Mike Small being vice chair.

Minute 11 (2024/25) To Agree Dates of Council Meetings for the Year

The proposed schedule of Parish Council meetings and working groups was agreed. Meetings will be held at 6.30pm in Dickens Heath Library, and there will be no set meetings in August or December. It was agreed that the meetings will be held on alternate Tuesdays and Wednesdays to accommodate those who can't attend on Tuesdays.

Minute 12 (2024/25) To Resolve Whether to Establish any Committees or Advisory Groups

It was agreed to continue with the current committees. Communications and Events, and Finance and Risk.

Planning advisory group

Councillor Weber suggested that the planning advisory group cover more than just the BL1 site. Councillor R Small advised that it needs to be a formal proposal to the Parish Council with Terms of Reference, it can then be considered officially.

Minute 13 (2024/25) To Appoint Representatives to Sit on Outside Bodies

Councillors Holloway, Weber and Woodus agree to attend the SAM meetings on a rota which they will agree.

Minute 14 (2024/25) Civility and Respect Pledge

All agree to this, Clerk to circulate it again for members to reply in agreement.

Minute 15 (2024/25) Minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday 9th April 2024

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

Minute 16 (2024/25) Parish Council Decisions

All agree to fund RFO to undertake Principles of Internal Auditing Course (£120 plus VAT)

Minute 17 (2024/25) Actions from the Minutes of the previous meeting – Clerk's update

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Annual Meeting held Tuesday 14th May 2024

Signature.....

Date.....

Councillors agree to look at the actions list and provide an update to the Parish Clerk.

Table Tennis Table

Councillor Halford is going to approach Solihull Council about this.

Clerk requested that all Councillors look at their actions on the spreadsheet and give an update as soon as possible.

Minute 18 (2024/25) Planning Applications

2024/00728 – Field North of Tythe Barn Lane - Residential development of up to 90 dwellings, associated development including site infrastructure, associated works, landscaping, public open space, sustainable drainage system and vehicular access off Tythe Barn Lane.

Persimmon Homes, all agree to send the holding letter and get proper complaint letter together.

2024/00503 - Priorsgate 100 Birchy Close Dickens Heath Solihull - Two storey side and rear extension – Planning advisory group would like to request wheel washing and restricted working hours for this. All agree to this apart from Councillor M Small.

2024/00385 - 237 Tythe Barn Lane to 91 Three Acres Lane - Crown Lift by 4.7m Oak tree. All agree to this.

2024/00413 – 40-50 Whitchurch Lane - Reduction of 2.5m in length of lateral limbs (South/South West) on 5 No. Ash trees. All agree to this.

- Councillor Holloway left the meeting

Minute 19 (2024/25) To Consider Village Areas of Interest

Speedvisor for the Village - Councillor Richard Small to circulate the email with the full information but the cost is going to be around £6600 for the first year and around £3300 for subsequent years.

Youth Club - £15 thousand has now been raised between the Parish Council and Solihull Council. They have gone to tender and have received some bids which are now under consideration.

Library - Councillor Mike Small updates on the Library. They have a budget of £500, they have spent £317. He has agreed with the Library to organise things in collaboration with them when we need to use the upstairs space outside the office.

Lamp Posts

Councillors R Small, L Woodus and M Holloway to organise this and let Dean at Solihull Council know before the end of May.

Dickens Heath Parish Council Strategy

We have been thinking about various different projects that we could get involved with:

- Canal Towpath improvements – a meeting has been arranged with Canals and Rivers trust
- Waterside area
- CCTV on the Village Green
- Football Team

Minute 20 (2024/25) Financial Matters

Extra payments received, needing approval:

1. Proposed by Councillor Mike Small, seconded by Councillor Liz Woodus, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the May 14th 2024 Agenda be approved – 20 payments totalling £5,894.36 (this included additional payments of £15.25 to H. Raithby for Annual Parish Meeting refreshments, £48.79 to H. Raithby for ink cartridges and £115.98 to T. Griffiths for plants and compost).
2. Report on the Finances of the Council
The first instalment of the precept has been received from Solihull Council, reserves of £62,093 were brought forward from 2023/24, and there is currently a surplus of £97,000.
3. Risk Assessment and Management Document 2024/25
This was received, it was agreed that the Finance and Risk Committee would look at the detail.
4. Internal Audit for 2023/24
This went well, the internal auditor signed the Internal Audit Report on the AGAR, full report will be received soon, the auditor is abnormally busy at the moment.

Minute 21 (2024/25) Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24

1. The Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 was approved, and signed by the Chair and Clerk.
2. The Annual Accounting Statements 2023/24 were approved, and signed by the Chair and RFO.

Minute 22 (2024/25) Correspondence

The Clerk gave an overview of correspondence received since the last meeting, including a big thank you from a resident who was desperate due to a broken manhole making noise effecting the resident's ability to get a good nights sleep. Despite numerous attempts the resident couldn't get a resolution. The Clerk managed to sort this. Also, a resident thanking us for arranging with Smart homes to have some old signage removed. There were a couple of queries around protected Oak trees that have been resolved as well. We have received quite a few emails about the new developments, some wondering if we are doing anything to try to stop the developments. All updated and advised on our actions and invited to meetings.

Minute 23 (2024/25) Items for next agenda

Annual Increment pay award for Clerk.

Meeting ended 9.05pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday June 11th 2024: 6.30pm in Dickens Heath Library