

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Wednesday July 10th 2024

Present:

Dickens Heath Parish Councillors; Mike Small (Vice Chair), Adam Weber and Stewart Halford

11 members of the public, Jean Walters (Planning Advisor), Kate Bunting (Solihull Council) and Borough Councillor Keith Green

Clerk: Ms H Raithby

Minute 37 (2024/25) Apologies for Absence

Councillors Richard Small (Chair), Maureen Holloway and Liz Woodus

Minute 38 (2024/25) Kate Bunting from Solihull Council

Kate is the lead of culture, libraries, parks, theatre and entertainment and she works closely with the library in Dickens Heath. 20% of the population are active with Dickens Heath library which is on par with others. In terms of the future, not as many people are using computers in the library although there is more Wi-Fi usage. There has been a massive growth of groups using the library as our library staff are very proactive. The summer reading challenge is very well advertised and used in Dickens Heath.

Councillor Mike Small advised that the Parish Council support the library with various activities throughout the year. It wasn't long ago that there were plans to possibly close the library. It is testament to the hard work of the wonderful librarians, Cathy and Amy, and the rest of the team that the library is now thriving. The Parish Council hopes to help the library increase membership particularly with the local schools.

A member of the public asked if there are plans to increase the hours.

Kate Bunting advised that they are in consultation with the public now to see what the public would like to have going forward. The work hub is mentioned, Kate feels that some possible reasons this failed are that there was no independent access and possibly down to cost to the user but can't be sure about this. Didn't seem to be long enough opening hours and the locks etc seemed very complicated for people to use which meant that the Parish Council groups didn't continue when we moved to the library.

Solihull Council's buildings are now maintained by a services team, so it means that there are experts looking after the buildings.

Councillor Mike Small asks about the possibility of the library hours increasing as Baillie Carlton agreed to this in theory, is this now going to consultation again? Kate advised that this process is now just starting, they should have some answers by 2025. Councillor Mike Small feels that there is a lot of loneliness in the village and would like to have a conversation with Kate to try to build the library up as it doesn't just serve as a library anymore it is a community hub. Kate agreed there is a conversation to be had around this or maybe a provider could offer services for this. A resident asked about budgets and who makes the decisions and who we talk to about ideas. Kate suggests that the Parish Council is a good place to start. Another resident asks how often the books are replaced and Kate replied that they try to encourage people to look after the books, the budget for new books has stayed the same, but it may be books are more expensive. Two residents complemented the library service and the digital services that it offers.

Minute 39 (2024/25) Public Participation

Table Tennis Table

The Parish Council weren't able to get funding from Solihull Council but have got some funding from Table Tennis England. It will be £355 for one of the tables to go on the village

green, it will go near the playground and be accessible for wheelchair users. Hopefully it will be installed within a couple of months

Flowers in the Village

A resident wanted to make a comment on the flowers in the village, they wanted to commend the Parish Council as they are the best they have ever been. Councillor Stewart Halford advised that the reason why we've gone for the floor standing flower displays is that we couldn't use the Solihull Council lamp posts any more.

Railings By Miller and Carter

Resident raises a concern with the railings being broken up to Miller and Carter and the hedgerows. The Parish Council agreed to report this to Solihull Council again.

Minutes

A resident raised an issue that he feels there's been a mistake in previous minutes where Ken Hawkins stated that Main Street is with The Crown, The resident feels this should be different, the Clerk will check this.

Minute 40 (2024/25) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None

Minute 41 (2024/25) Car Club Pilot

A representative from Future transport team explains the car club idea (see our website for full details and slide show) The pilot would see electric vehicles in the village for local people to use for short times. It would be like renting a car but is designed to be more convenient. It would be likely to start off with one car but if it was popular this could increase to two or more. It would be run on a first come first serve basis. The insurance is similar to private car insurance in the event of an accident, excess can be as much as £1000 but customers can pay more to reduce this. Some residents show an interest in the scheme and feel it may help people look forward when budgeting and maybe decide not to have the extra car in the household. This is just the first conversation around finding out about the scheme, there are a lot of things to be considered and work to do before a full proposal would be produced. If we are interested, then they will come to a future meeting with a more detailed proposal. All Councillors agree to going forward with the idea and getting more information on the scheme and how it would work in Dickens Heath.

Minute 42 (2024/25) Update from Borough Councillors

Borough Councillors not in attendance.

The Clerk gives an update that has been emailed through from Ken Hawkins:

1. New MP – Neil Shastri-Hurst
2. Planning and Development: now both local and general elections are over I expect an answer from the planning inspectorate regarding the draft local plan. I am also aware the new Chancellor will be making an announcement regarding housing targets for councils later today.

Minute 43 (2024/25) To Receive an update from the Planning Advisory Group about BL1

Jean Walters updates that we have requested a meeting with Planning Officer Becky Matravers to discuss BL1 north and south. Richborough are amending their application. There is going to be a public meeting for the applications to be discussed, as agreed at the previous meeting and try to get community support. She feels it is more crucial than ever to organise it. She feels it needs to be held in the Village Hall. All agreed to have the meeting on the 9th September and to put a flyer in the Dickens Heath Directory and posters for the noticeboard. A resident suggests that we knock on doors to make residents aware. Borough Councillor Keith Green is on board and is meeting with Jean Walters on Friday. There is a new MP as well who Jean advised is onboard. Jean is hopeful to have technical and legal side sorted by the meeting. Councillor Weber asked about traffic modelling which hasn't been done and they keep pushing it back. Councillors discussed the idea of having a tent at the event on the 31st August event where Councillors could attend and discuss with the residents.

Minute 44 (2024/25) Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on June 11th 2024

Councillors Mike Small proposed and Adam Weber seconded, all in favour, the minutes are approved.

Minute 45 (2024/25) Parish Council Decisions

Repair to Manhole Cover in Car Park £320+VAT

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Signature.....

Date.....

All agree to this

Planters on Waterside Island

All agree to ask Plantscape for a quote to fill existing troughs.

Remembrance Event

The Councillors who are present agreed that the Remembrance event is important for the Parish Council and want it to go ahead. They agreed to be involved in the planning and helping on the day apart from Councillor Mike Small who advised that he will not be able to help on the day of the event.

Water Bowser Loan

All agree to loan our water bowser to resident who takes care of the planters at Waterside on long term loan, with the agreement that if we need it back, we can just ask him for it.

Minute 46 (2024/25) Finance and Risk Committee

No Update

Minute 47 (2024/25) Communications and Events Committee

The Newsletter has been done, the poster for the event on the 31st of August is done. Councillor Mike Small is meeting with Gail Orton to discuss flyers and banners. The Village Hall will cost around £180, DJ £180. All agree to a budget of up to £1000 and agree to donate £100 to Acorns. All traders on the day will donate 10% of their takings to Acorns.

Minute 48 (2024/25) Councillors' Action Log and Clerk's Update

The Clerk requested that all Councillors go through the action log and let her know of any updates or corrections that need to be made.

Minute 49 (2024/25) To Consider Village Areas of Interest

Speed Reduction Proposals

Councillor Halford gave an update on alternative speed visor he has been researching. He has spoken to other Councils who are using the alternative visor that was mentioned at the last Parish Council meeting, they are happy with them and gave good feedback. Solihull Council seemed reluctant for us to use the other company. The Councillors agree to decide on this at the next meeting.

Youth Club at Community Hub

No Update

Service Charges in the Village

No Update

Table Tennis Table

Clerk to provide contact details for the contractor we have used previously to Councillor Halford to get a quote for installation.

Lamp Posts/Christmas Lights

It will be an extra £560 for fitting of the Solar Lights by Solihull Council. All agree to approach Plantscape for a quote for floor standing trees with a view to having them on the islands.

Parish Council Strategy

No Update

Minute 50 (2024/25) To Consider Planning Applications

Councillor Weber updates that the application for 250 Dickens Heath Road, the gate is too close to the bus stop so we will need to make a comment on this. Councillor Weber will forward the comment to the Clerk who will log it on the planning portal. All agree to this.

Minute 51 (2024/25) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Adam Weber, seconded by Councillor Mike Small, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the July 10th 2024 agenda be approved – 17 payments totalling £18,982.28 and additional payments of £62.80 for plants and £262.00 for the Village Hall booking.

Proposed by Councillor Adam Weber, seconded by Councillor Stewart Halford, Resolved that the regular payments for August also be approved.

Minute 52 (2024/25) Correspondence

Art in the office - We have been approached by a local artist to ask if we'd like to have some Art free of charge to display, all agree to this.

Garden Square East – Councillor Mike Small followed up on the issue they have been having with the broken paving slabs, The management company have confirmed that they have the funding for new bollards to protect the area and are just waiting for the final quotes to come in and they will be installed.

Meeting ended 9.10pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday 10th September 2024: 6.30pm in the Library