

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday January 14th 2025

Present:

Dickens Heath Parish Councillors; Richard Small (Chair), Adam Weber, Mike Small, Stewart Halford, Liz Woodus and Vicky Taylor.

Borough Councillors Ken Hawkins and Keith Green

17 members of the public, 1 representative from Centrick

Clerk: Ms H Raithby

Minute 101 (2024/25) Apologies for Absence

Maureen Holloway

Minute 102 (2024/25) Public Participation

Main Street

A resident asked what is happening with Main Street, there are a lot of cars coming down the road that obviously don't know it is closed. They would like to know if there's a reason why Solihull Council aren't adopting it. Councillor Woodus advised that there are other roads in the village that haven't been adopted by Solihull Council. Bob Wiggins who is a director of Dickens Heath Management Company advised that in 2010 the owner of Main Street, Dickens Heath went into liquidation and that Main Street's upkeep is down to 365 residents who are leaseholders, the costs are unsustainable for this number of residents. The management company are responsible for Waterside, the nature reserve, Mortons car park but not Main St because of the liquidation. Solihull Council felt they no longer had responsibility to adopt the street, and it will now go to the Crown. He believes that the Crown will then put pressure on Solihull Council to adopt it. They have set a time scale of the end of January for any interested party to come forward otherwise it is likely to be around February March time for the transfer to the Crown to happen. Main Street is closed to vehicles for health and safety reasons, the drains are collapsing, and the closure may need to be extended to Tesco's at some point. They are currently looking to make the barriers less unsightly. A business owner speaks about it being coincidence that they have now closed the road as it is the time when they will be looking at sending the road to the Crown. He also stated that he has been trying to get hold of the report that has been produced. Andy from Centrick advised that he has not seen a report on the state of Main Street yet but has had advice from a trusted source. He also advised that there wasn't time to consult with the businesses and residents. They had to act quickly to prevent an accident or an injury and had to decide. Residents expressed that they feel it hasn't been communicated effectively. Andy from Centrick will ask about getting a copy of the report. Councillor Halford asked if it would be possible to give a copy of the report to residents so they feel informed. Andy from Centrick advised that they were told it would be best to close the entire road, but they made a decision to close half rather than the whole road to try and minimise disruption to everyone. The most viable option at the moment is for it to go to the Crown. A resident suggested that we need to restrict what is allowed to come into Main Street to reduce further damage. Councillor Ken Hawkins has been dealing with this for over a year, it would be best for the land to go to the Crown, and he has confirmed this before, he also spoke about the moral issue regarding the small number of residents paying for everything. He knows that no formal request has been made to Solihull council. He has massive support and empathy for the residents involved. There has never been a formal quote confirming how much it would cost to repair the road. There is a discussion around whether the Parish Council could get an independent quote. Councillor Hawkins will look into

the report that was done by Solihull Council and see if it can be shared with the Parish Council and residents.

Minute 103 (2024/25) To Receive a Report from the Borough Councillors

Councillor Ken Hawkins updated that the Dog Kennel Lane agreement looks like it will be developed. They have asked for various pedestrian crossings including Tanworth Lane. £6 million was paid towards education with the Blythe site, the NHS have stated that they want £800,000. Ken feels that the Dog Kennel Lane site is the most sustainable of the proposed sites. BL1 south is difficult as they cannot relocate the sports pitches. Sometime next year there will be a call for sites. There will be at least two thousand homes in our ward, probably more.

Minute 104 (2024/25) To Receive an update from the Planning Advisory Group about Site BL1

Persimmon - developers have taken on board SOME of the PC's objections e.g. reduction in houses and an improved design, however they are yet to meet adoption standards, ecology observations and National River Authority observations - the PC are meeting Persimmon developers in early February to drive conformance of these key areas as per NPPF.

Richborough - DHPC remain hopeful that this development will be discarded from the latest local plan (yet to be disclosed), however if it is included, the PÁG have a significant and formidable technical evidence base to object based on a complete failure to comply to the new NPPF standards (flooding being a key issue) and falls severely short in meeting sustainability requirements

Dog Kennel Lane - Following the PC's vote in favour of Borough Councillor Richard Holt to pursue a 'Green Gap' between both settlements - this requirement has now been approved by SMBC - which is a really positive outcome in maintaining the individuality and localism of the Dickens Heath settlement

Flooding - BL1 site flooding is discussed, developers are reluctant to do a survey on this, it was decided to ask residents for evidence of the flooding via our comms.

Minute 105 (2024/25) Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on November 19th 2024

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

Minute 106 (2024/25) Parish Council Decisions

Remove Weeds and plant spring seeds outside Ice

All agree apart from councillor Weber who abstained.

Graffiti Removal Resident Moving Away

Gift for the resident who is moving away and has been responsible for removal of graffiti for a number of years - all agree.

Fairways - Problem with fulfilment of contract

Councillor Taylor will look into this.

Christmas Tree, possible transplant of mature tree

All agree to get a quote for this service.

Minute 107 (2024/25) Finance and Risk Committee

Councillor Taylor will be the new Chair of the Finance and Risk Committee.

Training and Dignity at Work policy

This will be reviewed at the March meeting.

Minute 108 (2024/25) Communications and Events Committee

The meeting is arranged for Friday the 17th of January where they will discuss current and potential new events. The newsletter will be going out on Monday. They will also be reviewing the communications and event strategy.

Minute 109 (2024/25) Councillors' Action Log and Clerk's Update

The Coppice, Rumbush Lane

Councillors agree to support Councillor Holloway in following up on this and requesting a replacement tree of a similar type.

Remote attendance at meetings

There is an update on this and its importance to Councillors that it is discussed.

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 14th January 2025

Signature.....

Date.....

Clerk Update

Playgroup – Councillor Taylor has offered to help with this, all Councillors agree to this.

Meetings with SMBC Quarterly about Highways

All agree this is a good idea, those who would like to be involved to email the Clerk

Slippery Block Paving

This is discussed and will be considered for discussion with SMBC at the highways meeting. Has been reported to SMBC already.

Minute 110 (2024/25) To Consider Village Areas of Interest

Main Street

Is there anything the Parish Council can do to help with this situation? Can we organise a meeting with Dean Ward at SMBC. Councillor Taylor will ask the MP if they're willing to get involved. Councillor Mike Small will speak to the business owners.

Library

There have been more closures in the library, they are not replacing Cathy at the moment. There is a discussion around this, Councillor M Small will discuss this with Amy the librarian.

Lamp Posts

Councillor R Small has contacted Dean Ward about this and is waiting to hear back.

Parish Council Strategy

Noticeboards

The Clerk asked Centrick about the possibility of having more notice boards in the village they said it was unlikely that we would get permission to put up notice boards but also they have spent a fair amount of money finding out the best ways to communicate with residents and notice boards is proven to be completely ineffective.

CCTV

Councillor M small has contacted Bruce Craig about this.

IT Platform Update

Councillors Weber, R Small and Taylor had a meeting to discuss the IT update. Councillor Weber suggests the Microsoft platform instead of what was originally agreed as it will be more familiar so it will be a lot easier for everybody. Councillor Taylor updated that there will be 5 phases to the IT update with phase one being the emails, Phase 2 will be Office 365, phase 3 will be the Teams introduction, phase 4 will be SharePoint introduction and phase 5 will be the website review and update content. All agree to use Microsoft. All agree to the estimated timeline of 6 to 8 months for the full introduction of the new IT system.

Canal Update

Sophie from Canals and Rivers Trust e-mailed to say they could not attend the meeting tonight and has asked for a Teams meeting. The deadline for this is the end of February

Minute 111 (2024/25) To Consider Planning Applications

No action to be taken on any of the planning applications.

Minute 112 (2024/25) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Vicky Taylor, seconded by Councillor Richard Small, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the January 14th agenda for be approved - 12 payments totalling £5160.90 (withhold Fairways payment until there is a resolution) and Proposed by Councillor Maureen Holloway, seconded by Councillor Richard Small, **Resolved** that the 14 payments totalling £11626.87 for December 2024 be approved

Budget and Precept for 2025/26

The Finance & Risk Committee are recommending a budget for 2025/26 that will keep the precept charge to residents the same as it is for the current year. The budget for 2025/26 does have a deficit, but we have not spent the full budget for this year, plus the Parish Council has reserves. All agreed the budget for 2025/26 and to keep the precept charge the same. The overall precept for 2025/26 will be £94,884.

Minute 113 (2024/25) Correspondence

Nothing to update at the moment.

Minute 114 (2024/25) Simon Litter Picker Hours/Holiday

All agree to give Simon a pay increase of two points, backdated to December 2024. We need to organise a handover to Simon of the graffiti work. All agree to a temporary increase of two hours for Simon if he can take on this extra work.

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 14th January 2025

Signature.....

Date.....

Meeting ended 9.23pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday 11th February 2024: 6.30pm in the Library