

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday November 19th 2024

Present:

Dickens Heath Parish Councillors; Adam Weber, Mike Small, Stewart Halford, Liz Woodus, Richard Small (Chair) and Maureen Holloway arrived during the meeting

Borough Councillors Richard Holt and Keith Green

7 members of the public, 1 representative from Centrick, Jean Walters - Planning Advisor.

Clerk: Ms H Raithby

Minute 85 (2024/25) Apologies for Absence

none

Minute 86 (2024/25) Public Participation

Planning Advisory Group

Jean Walters gives an update on the Planning Advisory Group; they have been analysing and have drafted a letter for the Parish Councillors to approve. The objection will mainly be about the effect on the highway and the greater effect of this, we don't know what the full effect of this will be yet. The proposed footpath will go on the north side of the development, so will not link to the railway station. If they are minded to approve it, they would expect some benefit to the residents, possibly a contribution towards the CIL money will be £70-£80 per dwelling. The Parish Council have budgeted to get a highways expert to produce a report. Councillor Richard Small joined the meeting.

A resident asked if there is a reason why the Council are so against the possibility of new housing. Jean advised that site BL1 south is unsustainable. The resident feels that there is a chance that the highway and flooding issues could possibly be sorted, would the Parish Council not consider supporting the development? Jean Walters advised that there are not so many issues with the smaller, Persimmon homes proposal but that there are many reasons why BL1 South, the larger development, should not go ahead. The resident feels that the Parish Council could be accused of Nimbyism, considering the dramatic need for housing. Councillor Weber advised that we are trying to make sure the developments are sustainable. Councillor R Small advised that we have the Planning Advisory Group which has subject matter experts who are working to make sure that all areas of the application are considered and that we have managed to work with Persimmon to make sure that their proposal is more in keeping with the village. Our focus is BL1 South, looking at the gaps in sustainability of the plan. We have made several objections already. The Borough Councillors have written a letter asking for BL1 south to be withdrawn. One of the priorities is to make sure that Dickens Heath remains as a separate village with a green buffer zone. There is a discussion about planning site BL2. This is not within Dickens Heath Parish but there needs to be some consideration about making sure that there is a buffer zone to make sure Dickens Heath retains it's identity as a village.

Streetwatch

They have been active for five years now, they are always grateful for new volunteers to get involved, they go out 3-4 times a week. They have been out with our local PCSO, there was one theft of a car over the weekend but other than that they haven't had too much. Halloween was interesting, there were quite a few children from outside the village who caused some trouble/made a bit of a mess, they were only young so Streetwatch have a duty of care for them.

Minute 87 (2024/25) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 19th November 2024

Signature.....

Date.....

None

Minute 88 (2024/25) Update from Borough Councillors

None in attendance, the Clerk relays a message from Borough Councillor Ken Hawkins:

- I expect the planning application for Dog Kennel Lane soon.
- You should be aware of the application by Persimmon for 90 houses on Tythe Barn Lane. This is a bit of a win as numbers are reduced and the layout set further back from houses and the canal. I do appreciate some will still object and people should do so.
- You should be aware of our letter asking for the Richborough part of that site be withdrawn.
- I believe the council will announce a 'call for sites' next month and expect a deluge of submissions in the ward.

Councillor Holloway joined the meeting

Minute 89 (2024/25) To Receive an update from the Planning Advisory Group about Site BL1

Councillor Holloway gives an update, they have a new member of the Planning Advisory Group, Dan, he is a masters student at Birmingham University studying urban and regional planning. He has agreed to help as and when.

- Airport objection re night flights as worded by Councillor Holloway – Agreed by Councillors Holloway, R Small and Weber.
- Objection letter to BL1 application – All Councillors agree.

Minute 90 (2024/25) Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on October 8th 2024

Councillors Mike Small proposed, and Maureen Holloway seconded, all in favour, the minutes are approved.

Minute 91 (2024/25) Parish Council Decisions

Canal Towpath Works/potential tree felling and vegetation clearing

This was discussed as proposed by Councillor Weber and The Canal and Rivers Trust, this proposal doesn't include any work to the tow path, just clearing. We are waiting to hear from C&RT as we have asked some questions about the proposed works. The Parish Council would be prepared to commit approximately £6000 on certain conditions;

1. CRT would address concerns about the total number of trees being felled. Is it necessary to fell so many? Can the felling of any large Ash or Oak trees be limited to those which are diseased, and raise or reduce the crowns on those which are healthy?
2. The CRT would attend either the next Parish Council meeting in early January, or meet with the Parish Council on a different date, to discuss the vegetation works and answer any additional questions.

All Councillors agree to this subject to the conditions as listed here.

Pay Award

All agree to the staff pay award as advised which gives all staff an extra £1290 p.a. to their full time pay level.

Playground Repairs

All Councillors agree to replace the spinner that has been damaged and the missing bolts from the playhouse.

Minute 92 (2024/25) Finance and Risk Committee

Budget

The budget meeting is agreed for the 5th of December.

Minute 93 (2024/25) Communications and Events Committee

Councillor Richard Small gave his thanks to all involved in the organisation of the Remembrance event, he felt it was a great success. The new gazebo was really good as well.

Councillor Mike Small updated that the Remembrance event went to plan, he has had some Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 19th November 2024

Signature.....

Date.....

good feedback. We have done the newsletter for The Dickens Heath Directory. We have done some social media posts and plan to do more to showcase the work we have done over the last year. We have some more events coming up, including the First Aid training which has around 20 attendees. The Christmas tree will be going up at the end of the month and we're having an event on the 1st with Pop Voices Choir and lights switch on.

Minute 94 (2024/25) Councillors' Action Log and Clerk's Update

Issue with the car park behind Tesco – inconsiderate parking

We have had a report about inconsiderate parking behind Tesco in the car park that the Parish Council own. Subsequently the Clerk has put letters on to some of the cars to ask people to park more considerately. The Councillors need to take it in turns to inspect the car park and the Clerk can then leaflet the cars. We would like to have a parking system there but unfortunately it isn't simple to organise this.

Minute 95 (2024/25) To Consider Village Areas of Interest

Leaffield Ladies FC

Opportunities to utilise the Clubhouse etc. at the football club

Youth Club at Community Hub

38 children are attending the younger age group and they have some on the waiting list. The older age group is not yet full. Councillor R Small will invite the organisers to attend a Parish Council meeting to update us on this. Also will check if it runs just in term time.

Library

The budget has been spent on the Library. Cathy has now left and there is a noticeable difference in the Library. The Library has been closed some Saturdays due to staffing issues as they have not replaced Cathy. Councillor R Small is going to follow up on this with Solihull Council, Councillor Mike Small will forward the information that he has so far. Kate Bunting was positive about us using the upstairs space for events.

Service Charges in the Village

No Update

Lamp Posts/Christmas Lights

Councillor R Small to contact Dean Ward at Solihull Council about this to see if there has been any progress.

Parish Council Strategy

Noticeboards

Councillors Holloway and Woodus have agreed to maintain any additional noticeboards that are placed around the village. We need to speak to Centrick to find out if we can have a board at Waterside and maybe somewhere near the bus stop.

CCTV

There is a discussion around the benefit of having CCTV in the village, particularly the Village Green, Councillor M Small to contact Streetwatch and PCSO Roland Tabb to ask for some advice.

IT Platform Update

Councillors Weber and R Small to meet in December to discuss this.

Village Hall

Councillor Woodus updates that the Village Hall have some major issues at the moment, a leak, heating problems and the flooring. Borough Councillor Keith Green is liaising with Solihull Council about it all. Councillor Woodus believes it would be good for the Parish Council to liaise with the Village Hall in the new year and try to do more things together. There are ongoing problems with the noise levels.

Minute 96 (2024/25) To Consider Planning Applications

Wythall Neighbourhood Plan – The Councillors felt that this plan had a lot of really interesting information but no real plan going forward.

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

Minute 97 (2024/25) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Maureen Holloway, seconded by Councillor Richard Small, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the November 19th agenda for be approved - 19 payments totalling £7013.99 plus additional payments of £48.79 to H. Raithby for admin expenses,

£40.00 to Dressing up box for Xmas lights mascot hire, £95.48 to Mike Small for the Library toys/pens/equipment and £105.49 to M Small for additional newspaper subscription costs. Proposed by Councillor Maureen Holloway, seconded by Councillor Richard Small, **Resolved** that the regular payments for December be approved as there is no meeting in December.

Minute 98 (2024/25) Correspondence

Nothing to update at the moment.

Minute 99 (2024/25) Discuss Co-Option Applications

There is a discussion about the Co-Option, the Councillors decided to Co-Opt Vicky Taylor. This was a split decision.

Minute 100 (2024/25) Simon Litter Picker Hours/Holiday

All agree to give Simon a two spinal point increase if it falls within the current band, the clerk will check for the next meeting.

Meeting ended 9.36pm

Next Meeting : Tuesday 14th January 2024: 6.30pm in the Library