

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday September 9th 2025

Present:

Dickens Heath Parish Councillors; Maureen Holloway, Liz Woodus, Vicky Taylor (chair) and Adam Weber.

Planning Advisor; Jean Walters
Borough Councillor; Keith Green

1 member of the public.

Clerk: Ms H Raithby

Minute 57 (2025/26) Apologies for Absence

Councillor Stewart Halford

Minute 58 (2025/26) Public Participation

None

Minute 59 (2025/26) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None

Minute 60 (2025/26) To Receive a Report from the Borough Councillors

Councillor Keith Green updated that the Parish Council and Borough Council are working together to try to stop some of the planning in the area. It seems to be going well, he hasn't had much feedback yet. They are relying on central government so they don't know how long the wait will be. Borough Councillor Andy Mackiewicz has been trying to gain support, he has done a petition as a Councillor which has 600 signatures.

A member of the public commented that people need to live somewhere and it seems a waste of resources to keep trying to stop development, he feels it would be better to work with the planners to make the sites as good as they can be and try to encourage them to support the infrastructure. Councillor Weber advised that we will be working with the planners on some sites but some are unsustainable so we will be objecting to those.

Minute 61 (2025/26) To Receive an update from the Planning Advisory Group about Site BL1

Councillor Holloway updated that the Planning Group had a table at the Fun Day in Dickens Heath and there was a lot of interest in the exhibition about the strategic green gap. The Library exhibition was well attended and all residents agreed with the Green Gap. It was good to have the opportunity to explain to residents what we have been working on. We are now waiting for the Highways report.

Jean Walters advised that we have to assume the site will be grey belt unless we're classified as a town for planning purposes and then it will be protected Greenbelt. Jean spoke about Washed over and Inset village. Dickens Heath currently hasn't been classed as an Inset which she feels it should be.

Councillor Mark Reohorn (Tidbury Green Parish Council) joins the meeting

All Councillors agree to draft a letter regarding becoming an Inset village for it to be agreed via email.

Councillor Holloway had a meeting with Andy Mackiewicz, he is in support of us being treated as a town for planning purposes only (no other implications) as this would give the Village some protection from becoming part of Shirley. There is a discussion about whether we should carry on with the Neighbourhood Plan which was started a number of years ago. The Clerk will find any paperwork we have on this and it can be decided at the next meeting.

Minute 62 (2025/26) Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on July 8th 2025

Councillor Adam Weber proposed, and Liz Woodus seconded, all in favour, the minutes are approved.

Minute 63 (2025/26) Parish Council Decisions

Youth Club Liaison – It is decided that Councillor Taylor will liaise with the Youth Club. The Monday evening youth club was very successful but the Friday evening club struggled for numbers. There was a discussion about the money the Parish Council provide which is used for room hire for the Youth Club. It is decided that the money can be used for a different venue if that is what is needed. There is some concern about the way the Youth Hub is being used. The Scouts are only able to use the venue for one hour a week. Councillor Taylor is going to look into this. Jean Walters suggested that it may be a good idea to ask the developers who may build in the area for a community space.

Allotment Association

One pitch holder has repeatedly broken the rules and has become aggressive when asked to leave the site. They have asked the Parish Council if they are willing to support. It is decided that the Parish Council will try to support them by finding out who at Solihull Council is responsible for the Allotments.

Approval of Staff Pay Award 2025/26, increase of 3.2% backdated to April 1st 2025

Councillor Weber abstained, all other Councillors agreed, the pay award was agreed.

Minute 64 (2025/26) Finance and Risk Committee

The date of the next meeting is the 23rd September. The Clerk will check if the 'Green Book' is mentioned in the staff contracts. Everyone is using the new .Gov email addresses now so we will switch over completely from now on.

Minute 65 (2025/26) Communications and Events Committee

Councillor Woodus updates, the Fun Day on the Village Green was a success despite the weather not being very good. It was well attended and we have had some good feedback from people to say they enjoyed it. The next event is Remembrance Sunday so we need to start thinking about that. After that it will be Christmas. We need to prepare the enewsletter and the Dickens Heath directory publication. It is agreed to do the Newsletter early with the survey attached to try to reach more people. So far the spend on events is: £4439 but we had some donations come in for £1500 so the cost to the Parish Council is £2939 so far this year on events which is within the budget of £5500.

Minute 66 (2025/26) Councillors' Action Log and Clerk's UpdateChristmas Lights

Dean Ward at Solihull Council has advised that we are not allowed to use the Lamp Posts unless it is through their supplier. All Councillors agree that we will not use Solihull Council to supply the Christmas lights and will look into alternative options.

Halloween

All agreed to invite the police to the village for Halloween as there has been trouble in the past.

Co-Options

All Councillors agreed to the co-option vacancies to be advertised.

Minute 67 (2025/26) To Consider Village Areas of InterestLibrary

Sadly Amy the Librarian has left, Solihull Council are recruiting for a new member of staff.

CCTV

The Clerk will chase this up as nothing has been received.

IT Platform

Sharepoint and Teams are the next thing to happen, we will need to use Teams instead of Whatsapp. Councillor Weber will be providing some training for this in due course.

Village Hall

Unfortunately the administrator has resigned after only a short period of time in post.

Minute 68 (2025/26) To Consider Planning Applications

No action required for any planning applications.

Minute 69 (2025/26) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Maureen Holloway, seconded by Councillor Vicky Taylor, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the September 9th agenda be approved - 19 payments totalling £7453.95.

Minute 70 (2025/26) Correspondence

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Signature.....

Date.....

Watering of flowers, by Plantscape, to clarify this is done usually late in the evening which is what was agreed following a complaint that they were done at 3am. This only happened as Plantscape were trying to get all the displays out.

Beech Lane, query about hedge obscuring view. Councillors don't think this is a major issue, Solihull Council can decide what to do if they report it to them which is the advice the Clerk gave to the resident.

Minute 71 (2025/26) Annual Increment Pay Award For Clerk

The Clerk hasn't had her PDR yet so this cannot be decided. To be discussed at the next meeting.

Meeting ended 8.15pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday 14th October 2025: 6.30pm in the Library