

## The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday January 13th 2026

**Present:**

**Dickens Heath Parish Councillors;** Liz Woodus, Stewart Halford, Vicky Taylor (chair), Andy Cardoza, Jim Harte and Adam Weber.

Borough Councillor Keith Green

2 members of the public.

Planning Advisor Jean Walters

Clerk: Ms H Raithby

RFO: Ms Helen Marczak

**Minute 91 (2025/26) Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Holloway is attending the Solihull Area Meeting as a representative of the Parish Council.

**Minute 92 (2025/26) Public Participation**

A member of the public raised the issue of the bridge at Waterside to the Nature Reserve being closed, denying public right of way, and wanted information on why this happened. Councillor Taylor advised that the bridge has been closed by Centrick who were acting on a decision made by Dickens Heath Management Company. The Parish Council are looking into the laws and regulations around this on behalf of the residents as a lot of people are upset. The Parish Council have concerns around accessibility and inclusion of those unable to access the Nature Reserve from a different way.

**Minute 93 (2025/26) Des from TDF The Lab Sports and Performance Gym Attending to Speak about Youth Work in the Village**

Des spoke about his business and his plans to work with the youth in the village. He is currently working with teenage girls to improve self-esteem and general mental health. They are a Community Interest Company. They recently held a knife crime awareness course which was successful. They would like to work with boys in the village again but need funding for this as some of the parents couldn't continue due to financial constraints. They are looking for sponsorship for 8 to 10 young people.... each 6 to 8 weeks block costs between £350 and £400. The Councillors were all very impressed by the work that Des and his team are doing and asked him to complete a grant application which the Parish Council can then consider.

**Minute 94 (2025/26) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations**

None

**Minute 95 (2025/26) To Receive a Report from the Borough Councillors**

Councillor Keith Green updated, there is a planning application for The Old Yardleians site which is part of a larger site, Jean offered to draft a letter regarding this application.

Councillor Green has met with Dean Ward from Solihull Council about the flooding, he has agreed to look at the drains. Dean Ward also confirmed that Solihull Council haven't heard anything from the Crown about Main Street yet.

**Minute 96 (2025/26) To Receive an update from the Planning Advisory Group about Site BL1**

Councillor Jim Harte is now the Chair of the Planning Advisory Group. The Planning Advisory Group met earlier in the day, there was a letter about Sport England no longer being a statutory consultee that had been circulated for agreement prior to the meeting. All Councillors agreed for this to be sent. Solihull Local Plan, the policy document probably won't include sites. The Planning Advisory Group will put together a letter to be agreed via email.

Minutes of Dickens Heath Parish Council Meeting held Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Signature.....

Date.....

Jean advised that the community need to be involved with this process to try to get as many residents as possible to engage with this. There was a discussion on which is the best way for us to involve residents.

Neighbourhood Plan for Dickens Heath, can we get community groups involved in this as well, if we have a plan it increases the amount of CIL money. Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath have a plan which we may use as a template. We'd like it to be a succinct Neighbourhood Plan. The Planning Advisory Group asked for a £1000 budget to allow for printing, all Councillors agree to this. Jean mentions that these may be some funding available from SMBC, we need to check if this is the case.

**Minute 97 (2025/26) Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on October 14<sup>th</sup> 2025**

Councillor Adam Weber proposed, and Councillor Stewart Halford seconded, all in favour, the minutes are approved.

**Minute 98 (2025/26) Parish Council Decisions**

Brixfield Way Councillor Halford has been looking into ways to make the roundabout look more presentable. He feels the best way to do this is to have a good weed cover and decorative stones which will cost around £400. All agree to this.

Tesco Car Park

All Councillors agree to get a quote to repaint the disabled spaces and reduce the number down to two. We will also get them to quote for repainting the spaces in the whole car park.

Clock Island Planters

All Councillors agree to have some new plants in these planters. There has been a lot of dog waste put into them. We will look in to getting the dog warden out if this doesn't improve, it is agreed to try making a poster first to try to deter people from leaving dog waste.

Committees

All Councillors agree to change the Committees to working groups. The committees create a lot of work and Councillors feel it is unnecessary as most decisions come to the main meeting anyway so it is better to have working groups.

Benches on the Village Green

It was agreed to get a quote for solid metal benches for the village green and having some slabs on the floor to prevent damage to the ground.

**Minute 99 (2025/26) Finance and Risk Committee**

Councillor Taylor updated, we are in a good financial position. Councillor Cardoza has now joined the group and there will be another meeting soon. Councillor Taylor will email the Training Plan and Dignity at work policy to the Clerk to be finalised.

Bramble Bees

Following on from the incident on the Village Green it is agreed that we will reply with an email to say we have noted her feedback and will keep a record that she will not be using us again in the future.

Water Bowzer

It is agreed to sell the Water Bowzer as it never gets used.

**Minute 100 (2025/26) Communications and Events Committee**

Councillor Woodus updates, we held a very successful Christmas lights switch on event with the choir from the school, we would like to do this again this year. Provisional dates and events are:

5<sup>th</sup> April for the Easter event

31<sup>st</sup> May possible Tea Dance

29<sup>th</sup> August Party in the Park

8<sup>th</sup> November Remembrance

4<sup>th</sup> December Christmas Lights switch on

There will possibly be an event on the Village Green for the year 6 children leaving school in the summer as well.

**Minute 101 (2025/26) Councillors' Action Log and Clerk's Update**

Tesco Car Park – The abandoned cars in the car park have now been removed.

Christmas Lights 2026 – We are trying to work out a plan for 2026 for lights in the village, Councillor Halford suggested an artificial Christmas tree for the Village Green as well.

Terms of Reference for Working Groups – These need to be put in place

Solihull Council – Quarterly meetings action list, we need to get this from Paul Tovey

Website – Councillor Weber is going to work with the Clerk to do some training on things leading to the website being updated.

#### CCTV

Three companies have looked at the Village Green to give us a quote for CCTV. Two quotes received, waiting for the last one.

#### **Minute 102 (2025/26) To Consider Village Areas of Interest**

Halloween – There was a lot of trouble in the village this year, we are going to try to engage the Police and see if they can attend on Halloween next year. We will also write to the Police Commissioner.

Youth Club – Councillors Taylor and Cardoza attended a meeting about the youth club which was interesting, it was attended by lots of different people including a lady who has been working with some of the young people in the village, she had a list of things they would be interested in attending.... 1. Repair workshop/bikes 2. Board Game Night 3. Quiz night 4. Outsmarted (remote game)

Library – A new Librarian has started recently, Zoe.

Village Hall – The meeting was cancelled but they held the AGM last week. James is covering the Admin at the moment.

Volunteering for the Parish Council – It is agreed to order 10 high vis jackets for volunteers that have the Parish Council logo on the back so people know they're working with us.

Nature Reserve – We will write to the Public Right of Way Officer at Solihull Council to try to get some clarification on the gate being closed to the Nature Reserve. We will also see if we can get hold of the asset map. The Clerk will send out a list of adopted roads to all Councillors.

Flooding – Councillors Halford and Harte will discuss flooding with Solihull Council at the meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January.

#### **Minute 103 (2025/26) To Consider Planning Applications**

No Comments

#### **Minute 104 (2025/26) Financial Matters**

Proposed by Councillor Andy Cardoza, seconded by Councillor Liz Woodus, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the January 13<sup>th</sup> agenda be approved - 12 payments totalling £5563.90 and Proposed by Councillor Andy Cardoza, seconded by Councillor Liz Woodus,

**Resolved** that the 19 payments totalling £9845.31 for December 2025 be approved

Pensions – The pension employer contribution rate is going down by around 7%

Precept – Proposal of a 5% increase to the Precept for inflation, this works out to around £3 per property over a year but if we don't increase it now that 5% is lost and will effect future Parish Councils. It will also mean we are able to offer more support such as with the Youth Work projects. If we avoid increases now, at some point in the future there will be a problem. All Councillors agree to a precept of £98,967 for 2026/27 which is a 5% increase.

#### **Minute 105 (2025/26) Correspondence**

We have been contacted by a resident about problems with people parking on the side of Tesco where the deliveries are meant to happen, it is agreed to approach Tesco to ask if they have considered putting in more permanent bollards.

#### **Minute 106 (2025/26) Items For Next Agenda**

Canal

**Meeting ended 8.57pm**

**Next Meeting: February 10<sup>th</sup> 2026: 6.30pm in the Library**

Addition to Minute 104 (2025/26):

The November 11<sup>th</sup> 2025 Parish Council meeting was cancelled, it would have been inquorate as only 2 parish councillors were able to attend. As this was extraordinary circumstances, the Clerk used her delegated powers (with the approval of a majority of Councillors) to proceed with the payment runs for both November and December 2025.

The Parish Council are asked to approve the addition to Minute 104, and to retrospectively formally approve the payments made in November 2025 (the payment schedule was approved by 5 Parish Councillors and signed on November 4<sup>th</sup> 2025).