

The Parish Council of Dickens Heath

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday September 8th 2026

Present:

Dickens Heath Parish Councillors; Liz Woodus (chair), Jim Harte, Maureen Holloway, Stewart Halford, Adam Weber

Borough Councillor Keith Green

Clerk: Ms H Raithby

One member of the public

Minute 57 (2026/27) Apologies for Absence

Councillors Vicky Taylor and Andy Cardoza

Minute 58 (2026/27) Public Participation

A resident asked if there was an update on the site which was previously Akamba, there have been previous concerns about the site possibly being used for illegal activity. Borough Councillor Keith Green updated that the inspector from Solihull Council has visited the site in the last few weeks and since then there haven't been any more reports of issues at the site. The resident also spoke about the tanning shop which is now in the village and how there are often people standing outside making the shop appear unfriendly and generally lowering the tone of the village.

Minute 59 (2026/27) Declarations of Interest/Requests for Dispensations

None

Minute 60 (2026/27) To Receive a Report from the Borough Councillors

Borough Councillor Green spoke about the council officers from Solihull Council being willing to meet with the Borough Councillors about the various planning issues in the village and surrounding areas. He would like the Parish Council to provide him with some questions to bring to that meeting.

Minute 61 (2026/27) To Receive an update from the Planning Advisory Group about Site BL1

Councillor Harte updated, they met with Emma Tinsley from Solihull Council Planning which was very constructive, they will help to construct and contextualise the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Harte has been working on the Transport section of the Neighbourhood Plan which he has sent in to be checked, no response has been received yet. They need to agree dates for the Planning Advisory Group meetings to structure and prompt further work. We have now written to the Local Authority following the suggestion from our MP. They have been keeping an eye on the planning in the surrounding areas and Solihull Council have done a lot of work regarding the 900 houses planned for Balsall Common. They have looked at the transport impacts this number of houses will have. We would like to send a letter to ask why this isn't the case in our area. Business case for Whitlocks End station, the Parish Council haven't been notified of this consultation happening, they will arrange a meeting to discuss this and other matters. The Parish Council need to respond to the Government Mayoral consultation which has a deadline of 5th October.

The Meeting with MP Neil Shastri-Hurst went very well, the Ward Councillors are trying to get a partnership established and wrote an email to the local authority on our behalf to get a meeting in the diary.

Minute 62 (2026/27) To Consider Planning Applications

None

Minute 63 (2026/27) Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on July 14th 2026

Councillor Maureen Holloway proposed, and Councillor Jim Harte seconded, all in favour, the minutes are approved.

Minute 64 (2026/27) Parish Council Decisions

CCTV – Council are almost decided on which supplier they prefer for this but Councillor Halford is going to speak to them to discuss the technical aspects of the quote to gain better understanding. This will be decided at the October meeting once all information is available.

Car Park Clearance and Dead Tree Felling on Village Green – All agreed to the quotes of £816 for the car park and £432 for the tree.

Outstanding Balance for Summer Flower Displays

All Councillors agreed to pay half of the balance for now, £3870.45. The Clerk will discuss the remaining balance when meeting with them on the 15th September.

Phone for RFO

All agreed to this with a budget up to £170 and a monthly amount up to £10 which is the same as the Clerk's.

Playground Repairs

Spinner and gate top bolt £797.47 – all agree to this.

Terms of Reference Planning Advisory Group

It is agreed that these need to be reviewed as they are out of date. Councillor Harte and the Clerk will look at doing this.

Benches and Maintenance Quotes

There is a discussion and comparison of the quotes and Solihull Landscaping Services were cheaper on all of the quoted jobs apart from one. All agreed to go ahead with them subject to relevant permissions from Solihull Council.

Planning Advisory Group Letters

Combined Authority Letter was agreed including the detailed additions regarding accessibility to the station.

Letter to Perry Wardle was agreed including the detailed additions regarding travel patterns. Letter to Ken Hawkins regarding the structural integrity of the bridge at Whitlocks End Station and safe pedestrian access, is it fit for purpose for future developments? All agreed to send this letter.

Minute 65 (2026/27) Finance and Risk Working Group

Staff pay award of 3.3% was discussed, this will be backdated to 1st April 2026. No other updates.

Minute 66 (2026/27) Communications and Events Working Group

Village Fun Day – Unfortunately there wasn't good weather on the day but it was still a success and they raised a decent amount of money (around £1700) for the Acorn's charity which will be matched by the organisers firm.

Christmas Lights Switch on – This will be on the 4th of December this year, the school choir are booked already.

Minute 67 (2026/27) Councillors' Action Log and Clerk's Update

Christmas Lights – We have agreed that we will have solar trees this year on the islands, the Clerk is meeting with the contractor next week to discuss the locations which have been planned by a group consisting of Councillors Weber and Cardoza and the Clerk and RFO. They will then provide a quote.

Planning Application Response Wizard – Councillor Weber will look into this.

Market House Residents – there was a problem with water supply over the weekend. It is agreed to approach Centrick and ask them for details of their emergency procedures and how they communicate this with their residents. We'd like to invite them to the next meeting.

Minute 68 (2026/27) To Consider Village Areas of Interest

Youth Club – This is going ahead as far as we know but we haven't had the definite details yet.

Main Street – Borough Councillor Richard Holt has written a letter to ask the local authority about Main Street.

Christmas Lights – We need a new set of lights for the large Christmas tree as one set was broken last year. The Comms and Events group will sort this out as well as arranging a large tree from Woods Farm

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Signature.....

Date.....

Small Nature Reserve – There is a very preliminary discussion about the idea of the Parish Council taking on responsibility for the nature reserve if this is still a possibility and if it was what the residents wanted. Nothing is decided, just a discussion.

Minute 69 (2026/27) Financial Matters

Proposed by Councillor Maureen Holloway, seconded by Councillor Liz Woodus, **Resolved** that the payments in Appendix I of the September 8th agenda be approved - 13 payments totalling £6606.49 including extra payments of £150 to Lucia Owen-Small for singing at the fun day and £56.65 to Andy Cardoza for bereavement flowers. .

August payments – 18 payments totalling £7233.79. as well as an extra payment of £3870.45 for half of the Plantscape outstanding balance due to the poor condition of the summer flower displays.

The report for the finances of the Parish Council was received and approved by all Councillors.

Minute 70 (2026/27) Correspondence

Already discussed.

Minute 71 (2026/27) Items For Next Agenda

None.

Meeting ended 8.40pm

Next Meeting: October 13th 2026: 6.30pm in the Library