

HOCKLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 21st November 2007 at Dickens Heath Community Hall

Present:-

Cllr R Holt
Cllr B Brown
Cllr V Arfan
Cllr P Kennard
Cllr B Lintern
Cllr M McCarthy
Cllr M Pettinger
Cllr A Thompson
Cllr P Seddon
Cllr D Skelding
Cllr Vine

Chairman
Vice Chairman

Mrs D Weir

Clerk

Members of the Public:-

M/s Vernon
Mr M Blamire Brown, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

The Chairman welcomed Mr Blamire Brown, Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer to the meeting. Mr Blamire Brown outlined to members the effects of the changes to the new Code of Conduct. He advised members that they will be able to access the Registrar of Interest form on line and could notify changes to the Registrar by email to him. Members noted that gifts and hospitality now have to be recorded as a gift. Mr Blamire Brown advised members of the changes to the Code of Conduct with regard to a prejudicial interest. In response to a question from the Chairman, he advised members that with regard to a prejudicial interest, members would need to weigh up in the context of each matter before them whether they have got an interest and then apply the prejudicial interest test.

Cllr Kennard queried the definition of respect. Mr Blamire Brown advised that whilst the Code does not define respect, members must treat others with respect and although the Code does not prevent robust debate taking place, members must not direct remarks on a personal basis, call people names or use swear words etc. Cllr Kennard advised that he was missing the point, that if a person did not respect a member, they could make life awkward for a member. Mr Blamire Brown clarified there was no definition of respect given in the Code.

Cllr McCarthy stated that it was down to the Chairman to control the meeting. The Chairman advised that if a member was disrespectful he would have no hesitation in raising this and asking the member to withdraw the remark immediately.

Mr Blamire Brown advised further and informed members that next year complaints made under the new Code of Conduct would go to a local Committee not the Board and the local Committee would decide what action to take.

Minute 140/2007 - Declarations of Interest

Cllr Thompson declared an interest under the Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item Review of bus service to Dickens Heath Village, Agenda Item Proposed junction at Haresfield/Brixfield Way, Dickens Heath, and Agenda items Old Dickens Heath Road and Request for Donation – Dickens Heath

Cllr Holt declared an interest under the Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item Review of bus service to Dickens Heath Village as a member of Dickens Heath Community Association

Cllr Brown declared an interest under the Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item Cheswick Green Village Hall – Flooding and Agenda Item Play areas – Safety Inspection as member of Cheswick Green Residents Association and Cheswick Green Village Hall Management Committee

Apologies:- received and accepted from Cllr Hodgson who was required to attend the Borough Council's Scrutiny Committee and Cllr C Robinson due to his mother in law undergoing an operation.

Public Forum M/s Maria Veron, Meadow Road, Hockley Heath, addressed members on behalf of Hockley Heath Under Fives Group about the partially fenced playarea at Hockley Heath Recreation Ground. The request was for the Play area to be fully fenced in.

The **Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 17th October 2007** had been circulated. Cllr Kennard advised that he had requested at the previous meeting under Any Other Business an additional donation be made to Tidbury Green Residents Association. The Clerk confirmed that she had not received any request in writing and that Any Other business was for exchanges of correspondence to be noted which required no action to be taken. Cllr Thompson stated that she had requested the item Old Dickens Heath Road be included on the Agenda and also a request for a Donation. The Clerk confirmed that Old Dickens Heath Road had been considered at a previous meeting and she had not received any request in writing for a donation. The Chairman added the 3 items to the Agenda.

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that the Minutes be approved.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

Minute 140/2007 - Parish Council's Planning Committee – Vacancy

Members noted that Cllr Hodgson had resigned from the Parish Council's Planning Committee.

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that membership of the Planning Committee be reviewed in a few months time.

Minute 141/2007 - WALC – A Model Protocol for Member-Employee Relations

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that this item be deferred to the December Meeting for consideration.

Minute 109/2007 - Appraisal Arrangements

Members noted the response received from the Borough Council's Human Resources Department and the information provided which had been copied to all members.

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that the Clerk contact WALC to see if it's Employment Specialist could advise and participate in the Appraisal.

Minute 142/2007 - ROSPA – Parish Playareas – Safety Inspection

Members considered the Playarea Safety Inspection Report received from ROSPA. Cllr Vine advised that a lot of the work required was minor such as loose screws to be tightened and a tie to be removed from the basket ball post. The Clerk confirmed that routine maintenance such as

this had previously been the responsibility of the Management Committee and any remedial work which was not minor should be undertaken by the installer of the equipment.

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that Cllr Vine raise this report with the Management Committee with regard to minor work required to be undertaken and to liaise with the Clerk. The Clerk to arrange for a quotation for other works from the installer of the equipment in accordance with the recommendation contained in the report.

Minute 143/2007 - Hockley Heath Under Fives Group – Request to fence off Recreation Ground Play area

Members considered the presentation by M/s Vernon in Public Forum regarding a request by Hockley Heath Under Fives Group for the Play Area at Hockley Heath Recreation Ground to be fenced off. Cllr Pettinger advised that the Parish Council had previously been requested to provide fencing to prevent children wandering off into the wooded area and this had been provided.

Members considered the possibility that some of the equipment may need to be removed if the play area was to be fenced in. Members commented that ROSPA had not identified the play area as requiring fencing.

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that this item be deferred in order that the Clerk could seek advice from ROSPA with regard to additional fencing being provided for the play area at Hockley Heath Recreation Ground.

Minute 120/2007 - Cheswick Green Village Hall – Flooding

The Clerk stated that she had spoken to the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency's Officer had advised that there are several ways of water getting into a building, including walls, air bricks and from underneath the floor, and in his view there was no point in providing barriers if the building was not built on a solid foundation. Water could come up through the floor if built without a concrete plinth or on suspended floor. The whole floor would have to be waterproofed, the Council could defend the Village Hall, but water could still come up from underneath. The Officer advised that it would be a lot of expense to provide barriers which would only protect the doors.

The Environment Agency's Officer advised that in his opinion the Council would have to come to a decision of judgement, was it worth while providing barriers taking into account the number of times flooding had occurred and if not to accept that flooding may occur in very severe events.

Cllr Brown advised members that the Management Committee had spoken with the Insurers and requested a copy of the Loss Adjusters' Report. He had been advised that this is confidential to the Loss Adjuster and the Insurance Company and consequently a copy will not be made available to the Parish Council.

The reinstatement of the flooring to the small hall, office, entrance hall, corridors, toilets and cupboards had been completed.

The Clerk had spoken to the Officer at Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council regarding the Borough Council's response to a letter dated 30th July 2007 from Mr Tonks, Cheswick Way, Cheswick Green and the Borough Council's Officer had advised that the Parish Council should take into account the likely risk of further flooding when considering provision of flood barriers for Cheswick Green Village Hall. He outlined the reasons for the flooding eg conditions of the ground and amount and type of rain and stated that the last time that flooding occurred had been 40 years ago. The Chairman suggested that advice be sought from the Borough Council's Emergency Planning Officer with regard to any policy for village halls.

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that the Clerk a) seek further advice from the Environment Agency and b) talk to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's Emergency Planning Officer to ask whether or not there are any policies with regard to flooding and how this would affect village halls.

Minute 144/2007 - Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council – Public Rights of Way – Practical Works

A copy of the summary of work recently undertaken within the parish by the Borough Council's Rural Footpaths Ranger had been circulated to members, together with photographs of the work undertaken.

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that the Report circulated be noted.

Minute 145/2007 Notice of Appeal – Planning Application re former Jaguar Site – Stratford Road, Hockley Heath

Members noted that the Clerk had been advised by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council that the appeal to the Planning Inspectorate for the planning application to develop the former Jaguar Site had been withdrawn

Minute 146/2007 - NALC - Chairmen's and Mayors' Lunch

Members considered the invitation from NALC for Chairmen of larger Councils to attend lunch at the City Inn, 1 Brunswick Square, Brindley Place, Birmingham, B1 2HW on Friday, 14 December, 2007 at a fee of £39.95 including VAT.

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that the Chairman be authorised to attend the event organised by NALC in Birmingham on 14th December 2007 at a fee of £39.95.

Minute 147/2007 - Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council – Request for for Recycling Facilities to be provided at Hockley Heath Recreation Ground

Members considered email correspondence between the Clerk and the Borough Council regarding recycling facilities being provided at Hockley Heath Recreation Ground.

Cllr Vine expressed concern at the damage that would be caused to the carpark surface if recycling facilities were provided at Hockley Heath Recreation Ground.

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that no further action be taken regarding the request by the Borough Council to install recycling facilities at Hockley Heath Recreation Ground car park.

Minute 77/2007 - Hockley Heath Gardening Club – Financial Statement of Expenditure

Members noted the copy of the financial statement provided by Hockley Heath Gardening Club following the recent donation.

Minute 148/2007 - Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council – Partners Briefing JAR and Enhanced Youth Service Inspection

Members noted receipt of a letter dated 9th November 2007 from Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council extending an invitation to the Chairman to attend a briefing session on the JAR and Enhanced Youth Service Inspection

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that the Chairman be authorised to attend the Briefing Session on behalf of the Parish Council on Thursday, 10th January 2008.

Minute 149/2007 - Review of bus service to Dickens Heath Village

Cllr Pettinger stated that she had raised the bus service to Dickens Heath Village previously and when the Parish Council raised this with Centro it had not considered there was a need to extend the service to Dickens Heath. She asked the Parish Council to request a review of the bus service to Dickens Heath Village. Cllr Arfan stated that he had lived in Dickens Heath for 4 years and there was no demand for an additional bus service. Following further debate:

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that no further action be taken.

Minute 2/2007 - Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council – Dickens Heath Youth Club

The Chairman declared a personal interest in this item as his daughter attended the Youth Club.

Cllr Brown reported on the meeting with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's Youth Services Manager which he had attended together with Cllr Robinson and the Clerk. The Youth Services Manager had updated them on staffing changes and the new timetable of activities for the club which was to be provided to the Clerk. The Chairman felt that activities should be more structured whereas Cllr Kennard felt that if the youth club was too organised, this would drive the youngsters away. Cllr Lintern spoke of her experience with running a youth club.

Members noted that Cllr Robinson, Dickens Heath Community Hall Management Committee, had advised the Clerk that a storage cupboard had been provided for the Youth Club.

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that the Clerk approach the Borough Council Youth Services Manager to see if the Youth Club wished to consider volunteers to help run the Youth Club and of the possibility of advertising locally for volunteers.

The Chairman adjourned the Meeting in order that members could look at the storage facilities at the rear of the hall.

The Chairman re-opened the meeting.

Minute 132/2006 - Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council - Proposed junction at Haresfield/Brixfield Way, Dickens Heath

Cllr Thompson gave a report to members on the meeting with Borough Council Officials which she had attended together with the Clerk at Dickens Heath on the 18th October 2007 when it was confirmed that the Borough Council have granted technical approval to the following road junction proposals:-

- * Brixfield Way/Haresfield junction to remain unchanged.
- * Squareabout No.2 (junction Haresfield/Rumbush Lane) to be set out generally as a shared area to accommodate all users with access to the raised area via a dropped kerb crossing. Through traffic to be restricted to a defined and kerbed segregated direct route across the squareabout junction.

A copy of the plan provided was circulated to members.

Minute 149/2007 - Solihull Crime and Disorder Reduction Team - Grafitti Summit

Cllr McCarthy reported to members on the recent Grafitti Summit he had attended which had been organised by Solihull Crime and Disorder Reduction Team. A presentation had been given by West Midlands Police, following which representatives had split into small discussion groups covering such issues as how to tackle prevention of grafitti and other issues. Cllr McCarthy's report was duly noted.

Minute 115/2007 - Hockley Heath Recreation Ground – Woodland Trust

Cllr Vine advised members that the Management Committee and the Gardening Club had considered locations for trees and shrubs to be planted at Hockley Heath Recreation Ground, but it had not been possible to identify suitable locations. Cllr Pettinger stated that trees could be considered for Cheswick Green under the scheme and Cllr Vine agreed to speak to Cllr Pettinger and the Clerk.

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that no further action be taken with regard to the Woodland Trust scheme for free trees and shrubs to be planted at Hockley Heath Recreation Ground.

Minute 150/2007 - Hockley Heath Gardening Club – Village Christmas Lights Celebrations

Members noted the invitation from Hockley Heath Gardening Club to attend the Village Christmas Lights switch on celebrations on 24th November at 3.45 pm

Minute 151/2007 - Zurich Municipal – LCAS Bulletin

A copy of the Autumn bulletin from the Local Council Advisory Service had been circulated to all members.

Minute 152/2007 - Precept Requirements 2008/2009

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that a Working Party Meeting comprising of all members be arranged to take place on 9th January at 7.00 pm at Cheswick Green Village Hall to consider the Parish Council's precept requirements for 2008/2009.

Minute 153/2007 - Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council – Standards Sub-Committee

Minutes of recent meetings of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's Standards Sub-Committee had been circulated to members.

Minute 154/2007 - Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council – Licensing Act 2003 – Revised Statement of Licensing Policy

The Chairman reported receipt of a letter from Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council dated 22nd October 2007 enclosing a copy of the Borough Council's draft 'Statement of Licensing Policy' and requesting the Parish Council's comments by 19th November 2007. The Clerk had requested an extension of time for the Parish Council to comment on the document, but this was not possible, and the document was therefore to note.

Minute 155/2007 - Representatives Reports

a) Solihull MBC - Dickens Heath Working Party Meeting
Cllr Thompson presented a report to members on the recent Dickens Heath Working Party Meeting she had attended on behalf of the Parish Council and kindly agreed to let the Clerk have a copy of her report which the Clerk would then circulate to members.

b) The Chairman and Cllr Vine confirmed that wreaths had been laid on behalf of the Parish Council at the ceremonies at Solihull and at Hockley Heath on Remembrance Day.

Minute 156/2007 - West Midlands Regional Assembly

Members noted receipt of a letter dated 22nd October 2007 from West Midlands Regional Assembly advising of a consultation meeting for the Draft Project Plan which would take place on 27th November 2007 9.30am – 1pm at the Burlington Hotel in Birmingham.

Minute 157/2007 - Any Other Business

The Clerk drew members' attention to the invitation received from Blythe Valley Park to the Christmas Carol Service on Thursday 13th December 2007 at 12.30 pm. Members able to attend were asked to reply by 6th December 2007 and to confirm if they proposed to stay for lunch.

Minute 158/2007 - Additional Donation for Tidbury Green Residents Association – Pensioners Christmas Lunch

Cllr Kennard requested members consider an additional donation for Tidbury Green Residents Association for the Old Age Pensioners Christmas Lunch that is organised each year. The Clerk drew members' attention to advice she had given at the beginning of the meeting. She also advised that she had not received any written request from Tidbury Green Residents Association for the donation.

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that the Parish Council make a further donation of £60 to Tidbury Green Residents Association for the Christmas dinner to be organised by Tidbury Green Residents Association.

Minute 159/2007 - Old Dickens Heath Road – Construction Traffic

Cllr Thompson stated that she had been asked to raise this issue by local residents. The Clerk advised that the matter had been considered previously by the Parish Council when it had been resolved that the advice of the Borough Council be noted and that there was no action which could be taken by the Parish Council..

Minute 160/2007 - Donation to Dickens Heath Church for Christmas events

Cllr Thompson made a request on behalf of Dickens Heath Church for support towards Christmas events which they organised.

The Clerk drew members' attention to advice she had given at the beginning of the meeting and previously with regard to S.137 expenditure.

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that the Parish Council make a donation of £100 to each Residents Association for Christmas festivities.

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that the following item be considered in private in accordance with the provisions of S.1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

The Chairman re-opened the meeting.

Minute 161/2007 - National Salary Award 2007

IT WAS RESOLVED:- that the Clerk receive payment of the Local Government Salary Award of 2.475% with effect from 1st April 2007 in accordance with the NJC Conditions of Service for Clerks of Local Councils.

Cllr Skelding gave apologies for the December Meeting.

The Chairman Closed the Meeting at 10.25 pm.