



DITCHLING PARISH COUNCIL

BUSINESS PLAN 2026–2029

***MAKING DITCHLING A BETTER PLACE
TO LIVE AND WORK***



WHAT THE PARISH COUNCIL DOES

The council's regular responsibilities include managing and maintaining:

- the Recreation Ground
- the Burial Ground
- the car park in Keymer Road
- Ditchling Gardens (formerly the scout hut)
- land at The Drove electricity substation off Keymer Road
- the War Memorial

The council also considers and comments on planning applications. Keeping the council running and responding to residents' needs involves a wide range of administrative duties.

The council has limited financial and administrative resources, managed day-to-day by the clerk (25 hours a week). The precept (money raised from residents and paid as part of council tax) was £141,620 in 2026–2027.

WHY A BUSINESS PLAN?

This business plan covers council projects for 2026–2029. These are in addition to its regular day-to-day responsibilities. We have divided our plan into 'priority' and 'ongoing and longer-term' projects.

This business plan will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects progress and available administrative and financial resources and to incorporate any new council priorities.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION

The government has proposed re-organising local government in East Sussex (the county and district councils) into a single unitary authority. These plans are (October 2026) on hold, but they are expected to go ahead after a review. Decisions previously made by Lewes District Council will be made by a more distant authority. Because of this and because of continuing financial pressures, parish and town councils are likely to have to take on more responsibilities.

PRIORITY PROJECTS

Project timescales will depend on securing consents and funds.

Traffic projects (Safer Roads for Ditchling/Promoting active travel):

1. Keymer footpath (Roman Road) improvement (all-season surfacing)
2. Additional Speed Indicator Devices
3. Pedestrian crossings
4. Village-wide 20mph speed limit

Realising the traffic projects will be beyond the council's resources from the current level of precept. Public funding for this type of project has been reduced (e.g. ESCC has discontinued Community-Match funding). The council is therefore considering a significant increase in the precept, without which the traffic projects are very unlikely to go ahead.

Other projects:

1. Burial Ground: additional plots and access lane maintenance
2. Recreation Ground car park: maintenance and extension
3. Ditchling Gardens (former Scout Hut): marketing with view to sale

ONGOING AND LONGER-TERM PROJECTS

Timescales for these projects are largely outside council control

1. Assisting Ditchling Community Land Trust to develop affordable/social housing
2. Supporting Ditchling Cricket Club initiatives to improve the Recreation Ground pavilion
3. Recreation Ground: car park improvements and long-term masterplan
4. Supporting climate and nature projects; implementing biodiversity policy and plan
5. Planning: parish design statement; conservation area appraisal
6. Street lighting: continue upgrades, repairs and redecoration

PRIORITY PROJECTS

SAFER ROADS FOR DITCHLING/ PROMOTING ACTIVE TRAVEL

Timescale

Timescales depend on ESCC Highways approvals

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| (i) Keymer footpath (Roman Road) improvement (all-season surfacing) | Autumn 2026 |
| (ii) Install additional Speed Indicator Devices (Lewes Road and Common Lane) | Autumn 2026 |
| (iii) Pedestrian crossings (Lewes Road, Beacon Road, Keymer Road/The Drove) | Autumn 2026 – 2028 |
| (iv) Village-wide 20mph speed limit | TBC |

BURIAL GROUND

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| (i) Additional plots and access lane maintenance | Late 2026 – Summer 2027 |
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RECREATION GROUND

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| (i) Car Park: maintenance and extension | Late 2026 – Summer 2027 |
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DITCHLING GARDENS (Former Scout Hut)

Timescales are dependent on market conditions and on the purchaser securing planning consents

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|---|---------------------------|
| (i) Planning: pre-application advice from South Downs National Park Authority to clarify planning issues and priorities | Autumn 2026 |
| (ii) Marketing and identification of prospective purchaser | Autumn 2026 – Spring 2027 |
| (iii) Planning application by prospective purchaser | 2027 |
| (iv) Sale completed and proceeds received | TBC |

ONGOING AND LONGER-TERM PROJECTS

AFFORDABLE/SOCIAL HOUSING

Timescale

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| (i) | Assisting Ditchling Community Land Trust to develop affordable/ social housing | 2026–2029 |
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RECREATION GROUND

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| (i) | Supporting Ditchling Cricket Club initiatives to improve the pavilion for sports and community use | 2026–2027 |
| (ii) | Car park improvements, including disabled spaces and bicycle stands | 2027–2029 |
| (iii) | Develop long-term masterplan | 2027–2029 |

CLIMATE AND NATURE

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| (i) | Develop biodiversity schemes with others for council land including leased land in The Drove | 2027–2029 |
| (ii) | EV charging points (Keymer Road and Village Hall car parks): keep options under review | 2027–2029 |

PLANNING

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| (i) | Parish design statement: guidance for applicants for planning consent | 2027–2029 |
| (ii) | Updating conservation area appraisal | 2028–2029 |

STREET LIGHTING

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| (i) | Continue multi-year upgrade, repairs and re-decoration programme | 2026–2029 |
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