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Parish Council Tree Planting in Recreation Ground/Burial Ground

As we reported back in the last issue of our magazine, the Parish Council has a duty of care in relation to the management of trees in its ownership.

As well as making sure that the trees are surveyed and any appropriate work carried out, we have also been looking at how we can replant to mitigate the loss of trees. Trees provide many benefits including giving us clean air to breathe, enhancement of natural beauty, supporting wildlife and are vital for tackling climate change.

Obviously, it is important when planting trees to give them the best opportunity of surviving by putting them in the ground at the appropriate time of year, which is late winter/early spring. We contacted the South Downs National Park Authority to see if they could assist us with advice on what to plant and the best locations in our grounds for certain species. Bob Epsom, the Woodland Officer visited the site in February and gave us some great advice on what we could do and we were fortunate enough to secure 50 small sapling trees through the South Downs Trust – Trees for the South Downs, together with stakes and tree guards to protect them from rabbits/deer. Planting the right tree in the right place is vital. By planting native trees in the right locations, we can make areas that are more genetically diverse and therefore more resilient against pests, diseases and the effects of climate change.

The saplings were planted on the 15 February and included a mixture of species including Beech, Pedunculate Oak, Hornbeam, Wild Cherry, Field maple, Small-Leaved Lime, Whitebeam, Ulmus Fiorente & Ulmus New Horizon (Elm resistant to Dutch Elm Disease).

In addition to this we have also dug up a reasonably sized self-seeded oak tree on recommendation of the Woodland Officer and transplanted it to an area where we lost a tree last winter in the hope that it will survive the move.

The Parish Council will continue its programme of tree planting next winter to possibly include a new hedge to the rear of the burial ground which will encourage wildlife habitat. The Woodland Trust run a scheme, which supplies trees/hedging packs for schools and communities and applications open later in the spring. In addition, the South Downs Trust will be opening up for applications again under its Trees for the Downs scheme in April/May 2021 and further information can be found on their website www.southdownstrust.org.uk/trees-for-the-downs

If you want to get involved in planting one tree or a whole wood, the Woodland Trust has lots of advice and support which you can find on their website - www.woodlandtrust.org.uk



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Oldland Windmill



Pray look better sir, that thing yonder is no giant but Oldland Windmill. - With apologies to Miguel de Cervantes and Don Quixote.

As the newly appointed Ditchling representative, I am delighted to have this opportunity to bring you news from the Mill. Despite lock down, work has continued apace in both milling flour and regular maintenance following COVID-19 rules.

However, social distancing restrictions prevented us from completing the refurbishment of our historic winnower and we therefore had to resort to hand cleaning the grain. Flour packing by hand is inevitably a much slower process than milling but we have succeeded in keeping up with demand. I do hope all you home bakers have been able to source a regular supply of our mill flour. As a late comer to the joys of home bread baking, I honestly believe Oldland flour is the best you can buy so keep supporting us by buying from your local stockists.

Sadly, we were unable to open to the public in 2020. However, we are very hopeful and are planning to hold open afternoons in 2021 on the first Sundays of August and October and a special Events day on Sunday 5th September, which will incorporate both Music and Heritage themes.

Keep an eye on our Website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram feeds for more up to date information as the year progresses.

Inevitably, the pandemic has taken a huge toll on our our fund raising capabilities but maintenance and insurance costs continue. If you are willing and able to make a donation to our costs, we shall be most grateful. Please send a cheque payable to Oldland Mill Trust to The Treasurer, Mr Geoffrey Miller, 4, Charlton Gardens, Ditchling, Sussex BN6 8WA.
geoffreymiller@gmail.com

Why not become a member?

Please visit: www.oldlandwindmill.co.uk

AGM 2021

To existing members, the 2021 AGM will be held at The Adastra Hall, Hassocks (main hall) on Monday 7th June commencing at 7.30pm. If socially distancing regulations are still in operation, the room will readily accommodate the usual number of attendees. If you wish to attend, please phone our Secretary, Geoff Miller on **01273 846939** or email Geoff at geoffreymiller@gmail.com

Andrew Mackay

Trustee & Ditchling Representative



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Digital Online

Working on a digital inclusion project across Sussex we wanted to let you know about a new free Helpline launched to help people who need assistance with digital skills.

We all recognise how isolating the pandemic has been for many within our society. Accessing our basic needs from ordering groceries, making doctors' appointments and claiming benefits has all moved online. Being online can also mean chatting with your loved ones and being lifted by the smile of familiar faces. Once online you can also explore your hobbies and open up a whole new world in a safe environment.

During the first lockdown, John was isolating in his warden-managed accommodation. Whilst he was happy there for many months, he hadn't been able to see his family including grandchildren and great grandchildren, some of whom he had never seen before. With the help of his family and organisations such as Citizens Online, John can now talk to his family through a simple device, and is enjoying a new lease of life as he stays connected despite what is happening around us all. His brother said, "Seeing John's face light up when communicating with his family was very emotional".

If you know of anyone in your community who needs help with basic digital skills, gaining confidence online or support getting online they can all our FREE helpline on **0808 196 5883**. One of our team of trained digital champions will offer friendly, patient support over the phone.

It would be great if you could circulate this number within your community so it reaches as many people as possible. If you have a covid support group, social media accounts, noticeboard, newsletter, local Facebook group then please share there too. I have attached a poster you can use wherever you want to promote the helpline.

Citizens Online is a UK charity helping ensure the switch to online doesn't exclude people. Visit www.citizensonline.org.uk for more information or give me a call on **07917 446082** or email sarah.collyer@citizensonline.org.uk with any questions.

Kind regards

Sarah Collyer

Digital Champion Coordinator – Sussex

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PARISH COUNCIL VACANCY

DITCHLING PARISH COUNCIL ARE LOOKING FOR A NEW MEMBER TO JOIN THE PARISH COUNCIL

To be eligible you must qualify under one of the provisions of Section 79 of the Local Government Act 1972, i.e.

- be on the electoral register for the Parish;
- have owned or rented land in the Parish for 12 months;
- have worked in the Parish for 12 months;
- have lived in the Parish or within 3 miles of the Parish boundary for 12 months;
- must be 18 years of age or over.

Please note members are bound by the Local Government Code of Conduct.

The Parish Council are responsible for managing the Parish precept, considering local planning applications, maintaining the Recreation Ground, Burial Ground and its amenities and representing residents' views and interests locally and nationally. Meetings are held once a month on Monday evenings; with other Committee meetings occasionally throughout the year. The Council has lots of interesting projects in the pipeline and your help could assist with moving these projects forward in the future. We would very much like to hear from you if this sounds of interest to you.

If you would like further information please contact the Parish Clerk.

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Introducing PCSO Nick Cox

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As a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) I will deal with all sorts of incidents, from dealing with anti-social behaviour and taking statements from victims of crime, to providing reassurance and helping resolve community challenges.



PCSOs play a critical and visible role in helping keep our communities safe, identifying and protecting the most vulnerable, and preventing harm.

While PCSOs do not have powers of arrest, they do have powers covering a wide range of situations including issuing fixed penalty notices, requiring contact details, seizing drugs and providing crime prevention advice.

We will soon have a new rural engagement van up and running. We are currently looking for accessible locations within



the villages where people can come meet us and for us to provide a greater presence within the rural and hard to reach areas of our district. We will advertise the dates / times and locations once they have been confirmed.





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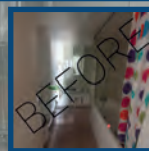
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Rugby piglets running wild in Ditchling

Ditchling RFC has been a proud village rugby club since 1963 and has in recent years relocated to arguably the county's most picturesque ground, only a stroll from the centre whilst taking in uninterrupted views along the South Downs.

The club is steeped in tradition but for the first time in its history, has established a minis section suitably named the Wild Piglets. Club Chairman Malcolm Pedder, provided his thoughts:

This is a hugely exciting time for the club and building out a minis section is something we've always wanted to do. This is after all the future of our club and something we're absolutely committed to. It's fantastic to see an ever-growing litter of Wild Piglets running around every week!

Training is every Sunday from 10 til 11.30ish and we cater for all age groups from 4yrs upwards. The absolute emphasis is fun and inclusion, we have 3 experienced coaches who carefully design the training sessions to balance learning with the sheer enjoyment of running around with an egg-shaped ball. We also make sure to introduce the traditional values that serve to differentiate rugby from other sports.

We are trying to build Ditchling RFC for the future and we welcome all potential players and ask for your support. It's all too easy to join larger clubs and overlook the village clubs, we offer grass roots rugby in its truest form and remember, all our future stars started somewhere!

So, turn your child into a Wild Piglet every Sunday and we promise to wear them out with rugby fun and games. For more details visit our website: www.ditchlingrugby.co.uk or contact any of the 3 village-based gurus direct: Barnaby Robinson **07789 990180**, Jack Daniels **07767 625333** or Hugh Felton **07985 594192**.



1st Ditchling Scout Group

I am happy to say Beavers, Cubs and Scouts did get back to some socially distanced Scouting back in October.

All of the sessions were outside and I am sure our young people loved even though we had to split up both the Cub and Scout sections to comply with government/ National Youth Agency guidelines.

I managed to get to see all the sections invest new members and award some Bronze, Silver and Gold Challenge badges. Well done all on this wonderful achievement especially finishing them in lockdown!

I was also very pleased and proud to invest 2 young ladies into the Scout section. Our first ever to my knowledge.

I was also very proud that we managed to "Remember" on Remembrance Sunday. Although we could not Parade many of us donned our uniforms and stood on our doorsteps for the 2 minutes silence to show our respects to those that lost their lives. I asked for everyone to have a photo taken just afterwards. Soon after the pictures came flooding into my inbox.

I thought it would be lovely to have a lasting memory of this very unusual Remembrance Sunday so I had a photo collage made... its very useful having a brother who is a professional photographer and very clever at these things.

I have displayed it in the front window of HQ if you would like to see it.

When the second lockdown happened, we collectively took the decision not to restart until after Feb half term as the HQ is too small to run socially distanced meetings and there's only so much you can do outside on cold, dark evenings whilst keeping it fun. I am writing this in the middle of lockdown 3 so I am sadly unsure there will even be any meetings this side of Easter. Stay safe.



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Art in Ditchling

Joseph Cribb 1892-1967



(Herbert) Joseph Cribb was born in Hammersmith in 1892, and became Eric Gill's assistant at the age of 14. The following year he started an official five year apprenticeship with Gill. When Eric Gill moved to Ditchling in 1907, Joseph went with him as his apprentice.

Later they worked together at The Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic on Ditchling Common. Cribb lived for some time in "The Hovel", a small cottage that was part of Pollards Farm on Ditchling Common.

He became a well-known sculptor, in his own right, after Gill left Ditchling for Wales in 1924, and took over the stone carver's workshop continuing to working there until his death.

Cribb was a sculptor of Commonwealth war graves, which Gill's brother (Max Gill) had designed, prior to their being copied using machines to make over 50 originals of the many regimental badges represented.

Joseph Cribb (right) with apprentice Noel Tabbernor, in the Ditchling common studio.

Gill used Cribb to carve the lettering on many of his sculptures and monuments. In February 1912, Jacob Epstein was commissioned to design a memorial for the Oscar Wilde's tomb in Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris. Joseph Cribb was commissioned to provide the inscription

Some of Cribb's work is still on display locally, an example being the carvings on the Herald Office building in Palace Place Brighton.

Cribb's sculpture of St Dominic in the Brighton Museum and Art gallery (Ora Pro Nobis, Pray For Us). The statue was made for fellow guild member Hillary Peplar, as a birthday present in 1925

More locally Joseph Cribb was also responsible for carving Gills design of the Ditchling War Memorial

Don McBeth





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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT MAY 2020

Hello again and welcome to our May edition of the Ditchling magazine.



My name is Don McBeth, and I am still the Chairman of the Parish Council. I have headed this Chairman's report because by law I am required to report once a year to you our electorate, to give people

the opportunity to question the council directly. Having said this you may be aware that the first 15 minutes of all our meetings are given over to members of the public raising matters of local interest and concern, and we welcome any of you to join our meetings and speak, whether the meetings are face to face, or on Zoom as they are at the present time.

You may have noticed that there has been a long gap between this edition and the last one in November 2020. The reason for this was due to the restrictions caused by COVID-19 which affected the publisher and the quantity of articles available. However, with some fortitude, delegated powers and the use of remote Council meetings, life has still progressed for us as a council. There have been some downsides such as playground closures, lack of funds from rental income of the recreation ground, but that aside we struggle on.

Recreation Ground/Burial Ground – works carried out this year have included clearing of compost heap/sand/leveling out and reseeded to improve areas, tree planting, felling ash trees due to die back and other trees due to poor health and the burial ground driveway should be resurfaced by end of the financial year. The Recreation Ground has been a well-used area during the lockdown periods when walking is one of the only activities we can do and the contractors managed to maintain it so it was usable throughout the year. Repairs have been carried out to some items of play equipment, including new bearings on the roundabout and new swing seats/chains.

Web Site – The council now has a new look web site www.ditchling-pc.gov.uk which we believe is a great improvement on the old site.

War Memorial – This was cleaned again last year and now looks more like it did when it was first erected. We have some metal cut outs of the three armed services which were purchased for the 2018 armistice memorial. As you may have noticed we display these now at the appropriate times.

Car Park – Good progress has been made this year with a large amount of CIL funding being granted to us by the SDNPA and LDC. Hopefully planning conditions are nearly discharged, and the tender document in preparation, For more information about this please see this edition of the Clerks Corner.

Street Lights - We as a parish own our own street lights. These are old style, and mainly painted white, which we consider to be in keeping with general image of the village. We continue to repair these I may add, at great expense.

Bins – Some replacement bins have been recently been installed with assistance of Lewes District Council.

Budget for 2021/22, the Precept - We publish our parish financial records on our web site (please see above). The amount requested for this parish precept was £98,905. There was no increase to the current precept this year but please note that the Council has budgeted for the possibility of taking out a public works loan for the Car Park project, but consultation will need to take place if it is required.

Grants - The Council received two applications this year in relation to grants. The budget available for the year being £3,000 and it was resolved to award The Monday Group the sum of £500 for repairs and improvements to rights of way, and the sum of £250 for maintenance, in relation to the village clock.

Traffic - This is still problem for the village but I can report that we have been successful in obtaining the Section 106 funding, (money for local infrastructure projects), towards a consultancy stage.

Dame Vera Lynn - The Council are still looking towards some sort of permanent memorial in memory of Dame Vera Lynn, who as much as anyone has helped put our village on the map.

Parish Magazine - You may have noticed that the Parish Magazine has missed some input this past year, this is of course due to production and content problems associated with the pandemic. Please note that public contributions are always welcome!

Projects for the future - Once the car park is completed other projects for the council's consideration are the burial ground extension, access pathways, and the playground refurbishment.

May I lastly add that we have a new councilor in Delia Forester, and that we still have a vacancy if anyone is interested in joining us.

May I thank Gordon Bain for his photographs for the new website and magazine, as he does a great job supporting the Council with this.

Don McBeth

Chair Ditchling Parish Council

Be Deer Aware

Traffic collisions with deer can result in injury or death for animals and drivers and damage to vehicles.

There are a significant number of collisions with deer in East Sussex, particularly in the Ashdown Forest area. Drivers need to be aware and take extra care, particularly during spring and autumn.

What to do if you hit a deer

Remain calm and keep yourself and anyone with you as safe as you can.

Park your car in a safe place with your hazard lights on.

Don't touch the deer. It could cause further distress or cause it to run back into the road.

An injured deer will not benefit from efforts to sit with it or keep it warm.

Call the emergency services on 999:

- If anyone is injured,
- Or there is a danger to others e.g. a deer (alive or dead) is on the road or is a danger to traffic.

Call the non-emergency line on 101:

- If the deer is injured and on the side of the road, not causing a danger to others.



The police will deal with any traffic issues and have access to specialist Deer Wardens who will know the best course of action to take if the deer is still alive.

If you want to enquire about the deer warden scheme, please contact our Highways team on **0345 608 0193**. To find out more visit:

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/roads/roadsafety/deer/.

Fund launched to repair the village clock an outstanding success!

Great news – the village clock at St Margaret's church has now been repaired and after nearly a year it's now almost back at work.

The clock mechanism has had a major overhaul and been completely dismantled, cleaned, oiled and greased. New automatic winding mechanisms have been installed for the hourly and quarterly chimes along with the clock mechanism itself. Horologists from The Cumbria Clock Company carried out the work which was funded by donations to the Village Clock fund and for which we are very thankful. Some final works and adjustments are needed on the weights for the chimes of the hour and quarter hour before we can restart the clock. These will be completed shortly.

Reverend David Wallis said that he would like to thank everyone who donated to the Village

Clock fund. We can now look forward to seeing and hearing the Village Clock working again for many years into the future.

(You can view a tour of St Margaret's bell tower on YouTube <https://youtu.be/zgUE6HFHRUQ> and also see the horologists at work <https://youtu.be/psr8ff60E5E>



Ditchling Village Hall

We are very pleased that Ditchling Village Hall will soon be able to re-open for activities.

We plan to do this from Monday 17 May 2021 for all hirers, although will be open on polling day on 6th May.

Re-opening is subject to government regulations and assumes the roadmap runs as currently proposed. At all times DVH will act in accordance with the latest government COVID-19 guidance. 17th May 2021 is the date when indoor sports classes can restart, two families can mix indoors and hotels will reopen.

Two metre social distancing will still apply and therefore restrictions on hall capacity will remain. You will still be required to wear face coverings whilst in the building.

Both the lower and upper halls will be available for hire. If you are thinking of holding an event, please consider using the hall.

Our booking diary for later in 2021 and into 2022 is already filling up and availability can be checked on our website. We look forward to welcoming you back to an event soon!

Find out more or book your event:

www.ditchlingvillagehall.uk

[@ditchlingvillagehall](https://twitter.com/ditchlingvillagehall)

Email: bookings@ditchlingvillagehall.uk

A message from our MP -Maria Caulfield



Enjoy the countryside, but enjoy it Safely.

As we are facing Covid restrictions in the short term, many of us will continue to take the opportunity to stay local and go for walks in our beautiful rural spots. We are spoilt in Sussex with

some of the most picturesque countryside in England. While of course we should enjoy our local spaces by taking the dog for a walk or going for a walk or a run, we need to remember our countryside, in most cases, are working farms.

With a huge rise in people out and about in our fields and green spaces, our farmers are finding that a significant amount of damage is being done to crops, animals and the local environment as a result of people not taking care when they are out and about.

Sheep worrying is probably the most significant issue, with dog walkers not putting their dogs on leads, who then go and chase sheep and sometimes even attack them. Since lockdown we have seen an 80% increase in the reports of dog attacks on sheep which often result in the farmer having to shoot their injured animal which is hugely distressing.

Even if a sheep is not attacked, been chased by a dog can still result in death and aborted lambs. Within the law a farmer has a right to shoot a dog which is attacking their flock and there have been sadly a small number of cases where this has happened.

Crop walking is also an issue. It is important that those out walking don't walk across fields which are planted with crops. The untold damage of people just wandering through fields has left many farmers having to re plough and drill. It costs a huge amount of money to farmers but also does untold damage to the local environment. Finally, if you do have rubbish with you please take it home. Volunteers who are normally out doing litter picks in our villages are not able to at the moment, with lockdown and any plastic bags, bottles or other rubbish will just accumulate in our beauty spots. This not only looks unsightly but causes huge damage to local wildlife.

Our farmers do a wonderful job keeping our countryside looking so well but we all have a part to play in looking after the animals and environment that we are lucky enough to share in Sussex.

Maria Caulfield



Ditchling Parish Council launches new website

Ditchling Parish Council has launched an exciting new website at www.ditchling-pc.gov.uk.

The site will keep residents up to date with latest news and information on council projects such as the new car park and extension to the burial ground.

It also lists all the councillors and how to contact them, along with meeting dates, agendas and minutes of meetings. There's information on the areas of village life the council manages such as the recreation ground and play area, as well as news that affects us all including the latest on coronavirus vaccinations and help and support for residents during the pandemic.

The site also has links to other useful local government sites and village organisations

and societies through the Ditchling Village Association.

'The parish council works for and on behalf of all residents and communication is key to this' says chair Don McBeth. 'We encourage everyone to get involved and let us know if there are any issues that need addressing. All meetings set aside time for members of the public to speak about what concerns them, even now when we are meeting online.'

So keep up with all the latest news and developments, and get in touch, through www.ditchling-pc.gov.uk

Sarah Mamoany
Ditchling parish clerk

Ditchling street lighting

An important feature of Ditchling's is its Victorian street lighting. It adds character to our village with which we are proud.

Unfortunately, in terms of quality and effectiveness it is below modern standards. Hence it is important they are maintained to high standard and any failures are attended to promptly to ensure the safety of residents and pedestrians. With the dreadful murder of Sarah Everard the dangers to women, in particular, can be exacerbated if the streets are poorly lit.

East Sussex Highways (ESH) looks after our street lighting on behalf of DPC and has an excellent website where faults can be easily reported. Street surveys are carried out by ESH to identify problems but these are only done every month and so residents are encouraged to report any problems to ensure these are resolved as soon as possible.

In addition, vegetation can adversely impact the streetlight. ESH will remove vegetation but where it originates from a private property it

is the responsibility of the owner of the property to remove the vegetation.

You can report lighting problems here www.eastsussexhighways.com/report-a-problem/street-lighting/lights-not-working.

The streetlight can be identified very easily from a map and the problem described along with photos if helpful. You can also email or contact the Parish Clerk.

Please have the details of the streetlight with the street name and the streetlight number.



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CLERK'S CORNER



Ditchling Car Park Project Update

It has been sometime since a full update has been provided to residents on the progress of the Car Park in Keymer Road and the Council are delighted that throughout the past 12 months work has continued behind the scenes to move this forward to completion; which we very much hope will be by the end of 2021.

We have been wishing to share the news of our funding success for a few months now, but sadly the magazine was delayed due to the COVID situation. However, we can now report that thanks to the South Downs National Park Authority and Lewes District Council who have both provided generous grant funding to support the project, the Council really are in a strong position with funding to complete the project.

The information below sets out the work that has been completed and the work in progress which continues behind the scenes to move the project forwards:

- The Working Party has continued to drive the project forwards meeting on regular occasions to discuss progress and provide recommendations to the Council.
- Funding applications to the South Downs National Park Authority for £70,000 and Lewes District Council for £100,000 were successful and confirmed in 2020. This funding has come from Community Infrastructure Levy.
- The construction costs of the project will not be known until we have gone out to tender; budget costings have been estimated in the region of £200,000. The costs for the project to date which includes the purchase of the site, planning applications, S106 contribution relating to the TRO, consultant fees and surveys are in the region of £67,000. We are hopeful that due to the CIL funding contributions from LDC and SDNPA the Council will have the funding to complete the project without having to apply for a Public Works Loan; however, this is something that may have to be considered

dependant on the final agreed costings. A consultation with residents would have to take place if the Council need to make an application for a loan; this could potentially cause delays due to the application process currently taking much longer.

- The application to discharge the planning conditions DNP/20/05753/DCOND | Discharge of conditions 3 (Design Details), 4 (Drainage), 6 (Archaeological WSI), 7 (Archaeology Method Statement), 10 (Construction Management Plan), 12 (Surface Water Public Highway), 13 (Closure of Existing Access) and 15 (Highways Survey) on SDNP/17/01358/FUL was submitted to the SDNPA in December 2020 and we are hopeful that this should be determined within the next few weeks.
- TRO – Traffic Regulation Order. This has been held up due to COVID restrictions and ESCC Highways have currently been unable to process this request for a reduced speed limit along a small section of the Keymer Road. However, we have been advised by ESCC Highways that this will not have to be in place during the construction stages, but will need to be in place prior to the opening of the Car Park. The Council are therefore now having to consider submitting an application for a temporary TRO so that we can ensure the car park can open for use when the construction is completed.
- A draft specification document is nearing completion which will be used in the tender process and we are hopeful that we will be in a position to go out to tender within the next few weeks.

We hope that the above information reassures residents that the Car Park project is now really underway, although of course the current situation with COVID could cause further delays in some areas, but we are very hopeful that construction will start in the late summer.

We would like to mention that the Council have considered the installation of electrical car charging points and were encouraged by the Local Planning Authorities to look at this for the future. Therefore, the layout of the car park has been designed to accommodate cabling down the grass verge at a later date.

The site has no mains electricity supply and therefore due to the costs of getting this connected, the Council will be looking at this as a second phase to the project once the car park is up and running and we believe it will also be possible to seek further grant funding for this work.

Sarah Mamoany

Clerk to Ditchling Parish Council

Railway Update

The Lewes to Uckfield line has been closed for decades and there have been many attempts to re-open it.

We have made what many now consider a final bid to get it open. I have been working with local MPs and councillors from across the South East submitting a bid as part of the Restoring Your Railway (RYR) Programme. This programme funds 75% of costs, up to £50,000, of successful bids to help fund transport and economic studies and create a business case to reinstate 7 miles of former railway line between Lewes and Uckfield, as part of a Brighton Mainline 2 project.

Brighton Mainline 2 would transform the movement of people and freight across Sussex and Kent, covering a population of approximately 705,626 people. The area is currently poorly served by rail mainline access with either single track branch lines or lines in need of third rail electrification. As a result, many residents in Lewes are dependent on car usage to travel. With no motorway and little dual carriageway in the area, congestion, emissions, air pollution and delays are high. This project would significantly reduce car and HGV usage as part of the Governments' net zero carbon emissions target.

The scheme aims to firstly reopen the Lewes to Uckfield line (closed in 1969) and the Tunbridge Wells Central and Eridge (closed in 1985) and Ashurst Triangle (closed in 1969), thereby linking Kent and Sussex as two

strategic parts of the South East by rail.

The Lewes to Uckfield line, as a seven-mile missing link, would provide new direct routes from Eastbourne, Seaford & Newhaven, putting some towns on a mainline for the first time since these lines were closed decades ago.

The transport problems this scheme would work to solve are to increase rail capacity across Sussex and Kent in an area that has, according to current train operators reached capacity, as well as provide an alternative rail main line option for residents on the current Brighton Main Line so that if the current line fails, needs repair or experiences an incident that rail services can continue for passengers.

It would expand public transport options for residents across Sussex and Kent where the lack of a commercially viable bus service means rail is the only solution, meet the net zero carbon targets by taking cars off the road, and boost tourism to seaside resorts and the South Downs National Park by improving connectivity.

We will find out this Summer if our bid has been successful.

Maria Caulfield

Spatham Lane Reduction in Speed Limit

Report from Ditchling Parish Council's meeting held on the 29 March 2021



Ditchling Parish Council wish to update residents on the current situation regarding the proposed reduction in speed limit to 40mph in Spatham Lane.

The reason for this is that some misinformation has been circulated with regard to the Council's financial support for this project. This was discussed at the Parish Council meeting and it was felt that it would be a good opportunity to publish the factual information and the outcome of the decision at the meeting so residents understand the position of the Council on this issue and are in possession of the facts.

Therefore, we have detailed below the minutes from the meeting relating to this matter, which are also available to view on our website

The Chairman welcomed members of the public and prior to the meeting opening read out a statement regarding item 11.2 on the agenda as noted below:

The Parish Council are aware of correspondence that has been circulated regarding the reduction of the speed limit in Spatham Lane involving potential funding and in view of this I would like

to provide some clarity on the current situation before inviting members of the public to speak.

- *A feasibility study was completed by ESCC Highways in February 2019 for the Beacon Parish Traffic Group. This group is made up of members of Ditchling, Westmeston and Streat Parish Councillors together with other representatives. It has no authorised powers to allocate funds from Ditchling Parish Council and reports back to the full Council.*

- *The conclusion of this report stated 'A scheme of measures to introduce a 40mph speed limit is therefore recommended, including new '40' terminal signs, '40' roundels, repeater signs and possible coloured surfacing. Further consultation shall be carried out by BPTG to ensure that the community are fully supportive of this scheme and that key stakeholder groups are accepting of the proposals prior to making a formal Community Match application.*

- *The estimated costs for the scheme are £35,000.*
- *An application for match funding to ESCC Highways was submitted in February 2019 by Westmeston Parish Council. No decision has been made on this application and we understand that this will not be considered until later this year, possibly December due to the impacts of COVID.*
- *Ditchling Parish Council agreed at its full Council meeting on the 29 April 2019 to 'support the reduction in speed limit scheme in principle subject to funding being available'*
- *Ditchling Parish Council have never agreed to any financial figure despite being quoted by Westmeston Parish Council as agreeing to support the project with £8,750 in February 2019.*
- *No money has been allocated in the Council's budget and therefore would have to come from Ditchling Parish Councils general reserves or earmarked CIL funding.*
- *The Council today will therefore consider the best way they can support this project moving forwards and understand and acknowledge the concerns of residents in Spatham Lane about the speed of traffic along this road and the issues of safety to walkers, horse riders and cyclists.*
- *To put this in perspective, we as a Council also have traffic problems on the Bostal, in Beacon Road, through the entire Ditchling village centre and the whole length of the B2112 as far as Wivelsfield; all of which require specialist consideration, time, communications and funding.*
- *Recommendations were made in a Local Area Transport Scheme Report by East Sussex County Council Transport Strategy Team bank in 2006, updated in 2010 and 2017. As far as I am aware none of the recommendations contained in that report have been implemented. It is stated in LATS 2010 'introduce measures to slow traffic in Spatham Lane, such as traffic calming, priority working, narrow the lane, introduce more warning signage, and reduce the speed limit to 40mph.'*

Rob Mills Chairman of Westmeston Parish Council noted his concerns about the danger on Spatham Lane to walkers, cyclists and horse riders and residents. Following the feasibility study no discussions should be required that Ditchling PC put in the share of £8750 as Westmeston PC have raised the sum of £8750 thinking that DPC was doing the same. He advised that they needed to be in a position to advise ESCC that they have the funds so that they can move forward with the project which was started over 10 years ago and hoped for a positive outcome

A resident of Spatham Lane spoke about the incidents with horse riders and how a horse had been killed and raised concerns of possible further fatalities if the speeds were not reduced on the road.

A resident noted that there are traffic problems throughout the Parish and other areas have needs as well and there is only a limited amount of money available.

A representative from the Ditchling Village Society noted that the Beacon Parish Traffic Group had been working towards moving forwards with the traffic issues as a complete picture by engaging a Traffic Consultant and working with ESCC Highways.

11. Beacon Parish Traffic Group

11.1 Update on funding and traffic consultancy study.

Cllr. Orme confirmed that he had received an email from Jon Wheeler (ESCC) confirming that S106 funds of £18,129 are in the process of being transferred to Ditchling Parish Council. LDC hold some of the S106 funds so this will need to be transferred to ESCC first. The Clerk noted she would speak to Emma Kemp at LDC to see if she could get an idea of timescales. Cllr. Orme felt that by the April meeting we should be in a position to appoint the traffic consultants and obtain the feasibility report in report in late summer/early autumn, once we had control of the S106 funds which would be put together with the £5,000 from Ditchling Parish Council 2020/21 budget allocated for this purpose. It was noted that this would fit into the timelines regarding the match funding application that would be discussed in item 11.2.

Continued ➤

It was noted that prior to the April meeting the Beacon Parish Traffic Group need to meet and perhaps should be made into a more formal group in order to provide further input for the consultant's brief. The previous 2006/2010/2017 LATS reports were discussed and it was noted that these appeared to be a statement of intent, rather than proposals that were shown to be actually viable measures.]

11.2 To discuss support for the Spatham lane 40mph speed limit restriction and associated costs.

It was noted by Cllr. McBeth at the start of the meeting that Ditchling Parish Council have never agreed to any financial figure despite being quoted by Westmeston Parish Council as agreeing to support the project with £8,750 in February 2019. Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a report, which included 3 emails and 5 letters from residents of Spatham Lane and the Chairman of Westmeston PC supporting the project for the speed restriction.

The Council discussed the issue and the following was noted:

- that the whole village had traffic issues and it was difficult to argue as to which areas were more important;
- the whole problem should be looked at together as the B2112 also has major issues;
- a concise report that looks at the whole of the village should assist with the Council making informed decisions on what the best way forward would be;
- if no decisions are made at the moment on the funding, it has little implication on the Spatham Lane project moving forwards as the match funding application will not be decided until later in the year, possibly December;
- the wording in ESCC feasibility study raised concerns of the Council committing funds of £8,750 as it stated 'It is their view that the impact of a 40mph speed limit in terms of speed and casualty reduction would be minimal and would therefore not be considered a priority to fund from the County Council Road Safety Budget. With this said they have however confirmed that they would not object to the introduction of the lower speed limit along Spatham Lane.'

The Council resolved to defer making a decision on the funding for this project which has been requested by Westmeston Parish Council in the sum of £8,750 and to proceed with obtaining the traffic consultant's report. Once the consultant's report has been received, they will be in a position to make an informed decision on the funding request prior to the deadline for the match funding application.

It was noted that information circulated by Westmeston Parish Council was incorrect in relation to the facts of the situation with funding and the Clerk was asked to write formally to request that information was corrected. An article would also be published in the Parish Magazine to inform residents of the current situation.

The full minutes of the meeting are available on the Parish Council website www.ditchling-pc.gov.uk/Full_Council_34344.aspx

ADDITIONAL NEWS

Since the meeting held on the 29 March 2021, it has been confirmed that Section 106 funds will be available for the consultancy stage of the Beacon Parishes Traffic Project. This will cover Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston and will include proposals for mitigating traffic impacts with sketch plans and approximate costings. The report should be available in late summer/early autumn 2021 and will be used for consultation with residents, ESCC Highways, South Downs National Park and Lewes District Council.

Sarah Mamoany

Clerk to Ditchling Parish Council

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St Peter & St James Hospice Clothing Bank

Ditchling Parish Council were recently approached by St Peter and St James Hospice regarding the installation of a clothing bank in the village.

The hospice cares for people from Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath, Lewes, Uckfield and the surrounding villages. They offer compassion, hope, and quality care, helping their patients live well until the end of life, and supporting their loved ones through the difficulties of bereavement and grief. All the hospice services are free of charge and they rely heavily on the generosity of the local community.

The Council considered the request and agreed to install a clothing bank in the Recreation Ground car park which will help the hospice raise funds and also assist with reducing waste by the recycling of clothing. Every year an estimated 300,000 tonnes (£140 million) of used clothing goes into landfill in the UK. With donations of pre-loved, clean clothing into the clothing bank, these clothes can be given a new lease of life and reduce waste.

The bank was installed at the end of March and any donations of washed, pre-loved clothing will be greatly appreciated. The unit will be emptied 3 times a week and we are hopeful that we will not have any issues with regards to people leaving bags next to the bank – please if you find it full return on



another day and we would kindly ask that you do not leave donations next to the bank.

With the current COVID situation many charities have found fund raising opportunities limited and the Parish Council are pleased to support a local charity and in turn are helping the environment with encouraging people to recycling clothing items.

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Ditchling History Project is your local history society. We research all aspects of the parish's history: its families; its buildings; its industries; its arts & crafts; its church & chapels; its clubs and societies. We maintain an extensive and growing database which we aim to make available online.

We are 'project' based because we never cease investigating the history of this amazing parish. Historical records, tythe maps, census returns, trade directories, house deeds and word of mouth are some of our many sources. We are always ready to learn from those who know something of Ditchling's history both past and recent. We welcome anyone who would like to join us. Our website is www.ditchlinghistoryproject.org and complete the questionnaire you'll find there.

Project News

COVID-19 curtailed our meetings last year and constrained our activities, but the spirit of creativity was not quelled. Our seasonal poster trail around the village entitled 'A Winter Wander into Christmas Past' was enormously successful and prompted many favourable comments. Conceived by Janet and worked on as a team effort with Judith, Roma and Penny, with the support of others to mount the posters, it comprised extracts from our database of residents' diaries and letters of their experiences of Christmas and winters past.

We continued throughout the pandemic to receive and respond to online and email enquiries. Often these are for help with tracing ancestors but sometimes it can be for help with research into topics with a view to publication. One of the latter has been from someone writing a biography of the artist Arthur Henry Knighton-Hammond (1875 - 1970) who lived in Ditchling. The biographer

needed our help to identify the characters portrayed in some of the portraits he painted while in Ditchling. This portrait (see photo) is of Alfred E. Sinden who ran a pharmacy from The Limes in the High St and was the local Mid Sussex Times correspondent. He was the father of Donald, Leon and Joy.

THEN

We are now nearly six months into 2021 but as this is the first issue of the magazine since the 'pandemic Christmas' it is interesting to look back and compare our experience of that festive period with those of the residents during a previous national emergency – WW2.



With respect to wartime food, residents of rural communities such as Ditchling were often better off than the country's urban populations because they had access to allotments, gardens and fields in which to grow vegetables and raise animals to supplement their rations.

A primary source we have as to what life was like here are the diaries of George Thomas (see photo: back row 4th from right). George was a member of the Home Guard and Auxiliary Unit. He was a farmer and lived in Spatham Lane so was in a good position to supplement his diet. His diaries tell us:

G.T. December 20th 1940 Two geese flew over low this afternoon but I couldn't get the gun quick enough to get a cheap Christmas dinner. I caught one rabbit in the wires yesterday."

G.T. December 27th 1940 I had shots at two pigeons but missed them both. That after Xmas feeling, must blame it on something anyway."

G.T. Dec. 22. 1941 Glorious day. Guy killed the pig for us today and is going to cut it all up for us and would prefer a piece of it instead of being paid for doing it as he says he almost forgot what English pork tastes like. He wants Frank to call for it before the shop opens as if people see it, he says they will all expect a piece of it for Xmas dinner.

Another source of supplementary food were the Canadian and American soldiers billeted in villages like Ditchling along the south coast. The convoys supplying them brought in 'luxury' items, particularly sweets, that they were happy to share with the civilian population.

H.M. Buckwell: At Christmas the Canadians were very good to the schoolchildren and gave them a great party with a stocking for all including staff! **Barry Cox** ... and chocolates I can remember they used to bring. But they were not the only source of sweets!

School Minutes: 'Surprisingly, though, the children were all given sweets by the Managers at Christmas; they must have saved their rations'.

Entertainments and social intercourse helped sustain the community's spirit.

Doreen Mayston: One lady I can't remember her name, we used to call her Muffin, she used to dress up, because every New Year's Eve the village had a fancy-dress dance, that was the known thing for New Year's Eve and she nearly always came, and this was when the soldiers were here too, she was a caterpillar, and she was a sort of rounded robust sort of lady, very much made up but we always called her Muffin....

Josephine Ferguson: During World War II, I was a pupil at North End House School. Every minute was organised, and, in no time, we had

reached the end of term with the usual carol-singing and nativity play with the small boys playing the parts of shepherds and, our suitcase full of ghastly home-made presents, we returned home to the welcome of roaring fires and Christmas festivities.....

Mid-Sussex Times Dec 3rd 1940: "Billeting Aid Fund – the Accounts of the BAF, which was inaugurated in September 1939, have just been issued..... They show that £93 has been collected and used for the benefit of evacuees billeted in the village. The sum has been raised mainly by the generous donations of residents, one of whom gave a party last Christmas,

G.T. Dec 21st 1940 We played the R.E.s from Plumpton and although we played with only nine men the first half and ten the second, we beat them 3 – 1.

G.T. Dec 24th: 1940 As we were to be on our own for Christmas Frank was going to call at the Canadian headquarters to arrange for two Canadians to spend it with us...

G.T. Dec 25th 1940 'It was a nice green Christmas in fact quite mild today. Mum got all her vegetables ready last night but with two family's dinners to cook she was still pretty busy this morning... menu: home-made cider, Turkey with sprouts, swede, bread sauce and broth. Christmas pudding with white sauce, mince pies, coffee... we had a fire in the upstairs sitting room and spent the evening up there playing Pit till the small hours of the morning with the usual Xmas sweetmeats and a bottle of Ruby wine as stop gaps, having supper of mince pies and jellies at 1.30am followed by coffee...

G.T. Dec 26th 1940 We went to the pictures tonight to see George Formby in 'Leave it to George' and my was it crowded.

G.T. Dec 27th 1940: Ruby and Frank have gone to a dance at the Village hall. It is a farewell dance for this lot of Canadians who are being moved on before the New Year.....

G.T. Dec 29th 1940 We went to the pictures and saw 'Ebb Tide' and 'Premiere' which was a grand dancing plus crime film with some very lavish shots

Continued >

G.T. Dec 31st 1940 I took scouts on my own tonight as Peter Cribb was at a New Year's Eve party and Bob Web went on his warden's duty earlier than usual also for Party reasons I suspect. Afterwards I went to a dance at the Hassocks Assembly Rooms but it only went on till 11.0pm so I did not dance the Old Year out but saw it by our fire-side. The place was packed out but much to my surprise I got on fine dancing seeming to find the clearest passages on the floor.

G.T." Dec. 23rd 1941: Frank collected up the pork early this morning and Aunt Sally came along on the ten bus for a piece and Les also came down for some and as he brought along Mac his brother-in-law as well as Anna, we had quite a large party sit down to dinner.

G.T. Dec. 25th 1941 A quiet Christmas. The two Canadians couldn't come so we only had Cary who came to stay yesterday and Frank and Joyce extra to dinner. Lil and Dick came over with the family in the morning and as they have only Tom staying with them over Xmas, they invited us all over to tea. So, Dick called with the truck after dinner and took Granny and Cary over while Ruby & Joyce walked and after we had finished milking Frank took Dad and Mum over in the car while I stopped at home to feed the calves and wash up as I had to get into Home Guard by 8-30 p.m.

I dug out some five-year-old cyder that sparkled like champagne as my contribution towards a party spread and also took along some apples... A table laden with good things covered by a table cloth graced the middle of the room and gave proof that Stan Fields had already come along and Lt. Prodger said that he had gone out with Sam Wellar to collect some glasses from the pub.

Everyone turned up punctual and just before nine we sat down to the spread. We started off with sandwiches and cheese biscuits followed up by mince pies and jam tarts, then came some tinned oranges and jellies by which time we were pretty well full. For drinks we started off with cider before dinner and did it go down warm. It went straight to my feet so that I wasn't certain that I could walk straight when Major Wigney

and Lt. Button looked in to see that we were well provided for, but a biscuit on top of it put that right. We finished up with port, and there was plenty of beer available for the rest of the evening made most call on that.

We played cards till 1-00 a.m. when we all turned in as we were extra tired, before doing this however we proved to ourselves that we could walk a straight line.

When I was getting the hay in, I noticed a lot of pigeons in Guy's 'three trees' so just before dinner I stalked them along the hedge which is so crooked that I had to crawl through it three times on my tummy to keep under cover but I was rewarded by getting one.

G.T. December 26th 1945 I looked in at the Sandrock after taking Frank and family home and it was very full and several had had enough to make them merry.

NOW

Locked down, behind closed doors, we celebrated Christmas in our pandemic 'bubbles' or solitarily. We gorged on rich, diverse, and ethnic foods scarcely imaginable to the urban populations in ration-restricted WW2 – chicken, turkey, goose, guinea fowl, copious dairy products, mince pies and non-seasonal fruit – accompanied by a glass or more of local or foreign wine or bubbly. Many of us pre-ordered too much in the expectation that we would be joined by family and friends, precluded from joining us at the last minute by the pending imposition of Tier 4 restrictions. Externally the visible sign that it was Christmas were the fairy lights hanging from trees, hedges and buildings, unthinkable in black-out WW2. But what was missing were the community entertainments and social mixing that did so much to sustain civilian morale in WW2.

Theirs's was a tangible, external enemy, bringing them together; ours's was an invisible enemy separating us from each other. "In come I!" did not ring out from the Mummies in The Bull car park, nor did the Morris Dancers'



leg bells jingle and their sticks clash; the church bells didn't call us to carol services; the carollers didn't walk our streets; the poets, musicians and storytellers did not entertain us in the OMH; the pubs and village hall were strangely quiet; and even Good King Wenceslas didn't venture out!



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Preston Nomads CC v Ditchling CC

Sussex Junior Cricket Festival Under 13 Final 2020

There was a hint of rain in the Fulking air as Preston Nomads won the toss and elected to bat in the final of the Sussex Junior Cricket Festival U13 competition.

The decision was likely prompted by the prolificacy of the Nomads opening pair who established hundred run partnerships in each of their previous rounds. Ditchling's route to the final was through team performances away from home.

Finlay Coburn and Felix Taylor took the new ball and Felix conceded two runs from three overs. This restricted the openers including Felix Venter who amassed 260 runs in the qualifying rounds.

When Finlay tested Venter with a short ball the big South African pulled to midwicket. The chance was spilled. The next ball yielded the same outcome, two chances gone. But Venter, seeking a single, was brilliantly run out by Matt Hayden.

Harvey Nolan dismissed Nomads skipper Jack Bunday before Ziggy Anderson-Ager and Rupert Morris rebuilt. Ziggy played well until he hoisted one into the Sussex sky that seemed to reach the summit of Devil's Dyke. Harvey positioned himself beneath the rising ball. He waited, we all waited, and Harvey held a memorable catch.

Rudy Coburn bowled the dependable Morris, while Finlay and Harry Eastman accounted for the Nomads middle order. Arthur Hill bowled with control and kept his composure when repeatedly no-balled.

In the match build-up Ditchling were told of the importance of fielding as a team. Back each other up, make the batsmen uncomfortable, let your opponent come to the crease in silence.

The Nomads were reeling and when Matt

held a gully catch Ditchling had bundled out their hosts for 108 runs in 28.1 overs - a stunning performance.

Ditchling set about chasing the total in the allotted 35 overs. Edward Nolan and Max Webb played straight, Edward pressing forward and Max unfurling a cover drive before the intimidating Venter made the breakthrough.

Harry batted languidly but was run out and following Edward's dismissal 108 runs seemed a long way off.

Finlay sought to reconstruct before holing out to mid-on. Theo Collins and Harvey fell to the leg spin of Alex Kusel who took three for 23 as a procession of distraught batsmen returned across the boundary rope.

Matt batted Ditchling back into the hunt until a cluster of wickets drained Ditchling hearts and Preston Nomads smelled blood in the watery air. But Ditchling are enriched by fraternal bonds and when Louis joined Arthur the twins displayed considerable composure in chipping away at the total.

Louis departed with the score on 88 and Ditchling's last man Felix arrived with a bruised knee and a runner. The final pair survived a run out appeal before Arthur released the pressure with a boundary and Felix struck the winning runs. Arthur faced 36 balls for his 15*, Felix 26 balls for his 13*.

The SJCF trophy was presented to winning captain Edward Nolan by Colin Oliver-Redgate. This was a great game, a deserved win for a group of talented players and the entire club is proud of their achievement.

Johnny Coburn



We don't like cricket - we love it !

Established in 1818 Ditchling Cricket Club continues to thrive and offers cricket to all ages and experience.

Our 1st and 2nd X1's play in the Sussex League, the Sunday X1 presents another opportunity to don the whites and some midweek T20s give everyone a chance to be Ben Stokes.

Our Junior section is amongst the most successful in the county with the U13's winning the 2020 Sussex festival, emulating similar achievements of previous years. We offer coaching, nets and matches from under-8s right through to under-14s.

DCC is a very social Club where you can enjoy cricket at all levels in beautiful surroundings so please do get in touch if you would like to know more.

Spectators are also always very welcome.

There is cricket played at the Recreation Ground every Saturday and Sunday afternoon. Teas are available and the bar is open from 5pm. Bring a deck-chair or sit on the veranda and join the fun!

Contact Patrick Nolan on
patch@jpnfilms.co.uk

Ditchling Parish Council Meeting Dates 2021

Please note that until the 7 May 2021 Parish Council Meetings are being held remotely and members of the public are welcome to attend.

However, Government legislation currently in place for councils to hold meetings remotely will expire on the 7 May 2021 and face to face meetings will return. However, the Council will be reviewing if this is possible due to the COVID-19 restrictions that are still in place until 21 June 2021 and assuming the Government lockdown roadmap remains unchanged.

Up to date information will be available on the website www.ditchling-pc.gov.uk as to the location, dates and times of meetings together with the agendas.

26 April 2021

Parish Council Meeting at 6.30pm

5 May 2021

Parish Council Meeting at 6.30pm

28 June 2021

Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm

26 July 2021

Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm

August

No meeting scheduled for August

27 September 2021

Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm

25 October 2021

Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm

29 November 2021

Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm

13 December 2021

Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm

The Ditchling Society

Dear Ditchling,

I write this in early Spring. Our children have just returned to school. The days are lengthening and the daffodils and crocuses are in bloom. By the time you read this, the joys of summer will be around the corner and I hope that our spirits will have risen after a long and hard COVID year.

Throughout the parish people rallied to help neighbours and friends during the difficult times, and Ditchling's generosity of spirit will continue. It is one of the reasons that people love living here. It is also a beautiful place to live, with attractive buildings, ancient lanes and tracks, and the Downs on our doorstep. In short, Ditchling is a place we are proud to call home.

Before we emerged from our imposed social isolation, The Ditchling Society was thinking about the future and where the village needed a little TLC as it reawakened. Our annual "Spring Clean" of the village is already organised, and we send a big 'thank-you' to all those volunteers prepared to freshen up the streets, verges and signs in the lead up to Easter. Taking my dogs for walks in these late-March days I find myself looking at the beauty of the village through new eyes.

From this grew the idea of a photographic competition to capture the time when the world looked the same but felt subtly different – "Ditchling in Focus". Photographs that record the sights and views of the village we love as we again have the freedom to venture out more. It will be open to all Ditchling residents, young and old, from mid-May and would culminate in an exhibition in the summer. Details are still in the planning at the time of writing, but I hope when you read this, we will have launched the competition and you will have decided to contribute one or more images of the Ditchling you love.

Think back again to how the Spring flowers raised our spirits. Some of the swathes of bloom have occurred naturally, some have been planted or added to recently by considerate villagers. Thinking of future years, we decided in committee that we would try and add to this Spring cheer by organising a bulb-planting programme in the autumn which we hope will be a community activity and that residents of all ages might like to be involved.

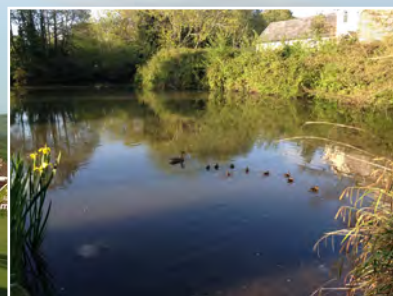
Sadly we had to cancel our Summer Event last year at which Margaret Paren OBE was to speak. Margaret recently retired as chair of the South Downs National Park Authority and, between 2016 and 2019, she also chaired National Parks England that is the umbrella organisation for the nine English National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority. We very much hope to be able to reorganise this occasion for September.

We will be advertising all these events closer to the time with posters, on our website and Facebook page as well as directly to members.

The Ditchling Society is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the beauty of this very special place. You may already be a member, active in our projects and participating in our talks and discussions. If not, why not join? Your voice and support can make a difference. You can use the postcard that has come with this magazine or contact me at info@ditchlingsociety.org.uk or by phone on **01273 841244**.

Shirley Crowther

Chair of the Ditchling Society.



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