

Edition 15 • Quarterly



Autumn/Winter 2021

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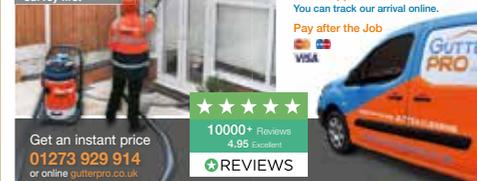
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# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT NOVEMBER 2021

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



Hello, my name is Don McBeth and I am at the moment the Chairman of Ditchling Parish Council.

On Monday the 27th of September we had our monthly parish council meeting. On one matter concerning the Parish magazine, I mentioned that I was not sure what I could write that would be of interest, and that would reflect what had happened in the past three months. As a result, I thought I would try something different. As I say I usually report on what has happened, but in this edition, I thought I would report on the problems we encounter when trying to represent the parish as councillors.

Parish councillors are unpaid; we give our time, our expertise and our loyalty to the parish free of charge. I am always reminded of a prayer of Saint Ignatius Loyola we used to recite at school, "To labour and not seek for any reward". In the pursuit of my labours, may I mention four things that have occurred in the last eighteen months?

- 1 We were called to meet with a parishioner to look into a boundary dispute, regarding the position of a replacement fence on a piece of land leased by the council. The council was reported to the Information Commissioners Office for alleged malpractice. I will add that the complaint was summarily dismissed.
- 2 In a larger parish there are usually two officers. The Clerk and the RFO, the "responsible finance officer". In Ditchling these roles are combined into one, the Clerk. Earlier this year the Clerk gave us some financial advice that I said that I agreed with. For my troubles in saying that I said that I agreed, I was referred to the Monitoring Office at Lewes District council, for multiple breaches of the Nolan principles. These govern the conduct of

those in elected office. I may add that this was also summarily dismissed.

- 3 At our September 2021 meeting, item 8 on the agenda was the progress of the "new car park". Just to remind you of this, we bought a field near the war memorial, and about three years ago the South Downs National Park granted us planning permission; subject to complying with planning conditions set down in the decision notice. Since then, we have had endless discussions and amendments on what it should look like. There are no buildings involved; it is just a field with a surface which will support motor vehicles. It became apparent at the meeting that the SDNP had raised new issues in respect of the surface material and how to mark out the parking bays. In other words, they now propose a new car park where parking is totally chaotic. This whole saga is now my idea of how to turn vacillation into an art form. Another month passes with no progress, and the village echoes with the old mantra "why haven't you done something about the new car park"?

- 4 As part of the neighbourhood plan, it was intended that the chairmen of adjoining parishes should confer on matters of mutual interest.

I was contacted by the Chairman of Hassocks regarding the footpath that links the villages, starting at the Thatched Cottage in Keymer and running along to the bottom of Lodge Hill.

The result of this was that with the help of "The Monday Group" we managed to get Balfour Beatty to do some social value work free of charge, a collaboration which has greatly improved a small section of the route. It was then suggested that we look at how we as councils could improve the top footpath that runs from Oldlands Mill to the top of Lodge Hill. ▶

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◀ This footpath is a quagmire, even in the height of summer. In doing this I prepared a letter to be sent to our County Council asking for assistance in obtaining the necessary funding from ESCC. During the September 2021 meeting, I was pulled up for this, because I had not asked ESCC to fund repair work for "all" of Ditchling's footpaths. At this point I lost the will to live, my patience finally being exhausted. Bismarck once described politics as "the art of the possible", but at the meeting it seemed more like the art of managing the absurd.

Sometimes it seems that the only time people want to talk to us as a council, is when they want something or they want to complain. I have been a councillor for sixteen years and Chairman for about eight and I have long given up any starry notion that anyone will ever actually say thank you. Perhaps it is now time to pass the mantle of Chairmanship to someone else. Let them stand and have the metaphorical bricks thrown at them, and for why? Because they have committed the unforgivable sin, of daring to show that they care.



**Don McBeth**  
Chair of Ditchling Parish Council

*Please note the above article are my personal views and are not necessarily the corporate view of Ditchling Parish Council.*

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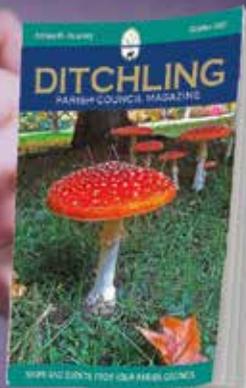
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## Parish Council Update

Well as always it is a busy time at the Parish Council and lots of activity at the Recreation Ground made me consider updating residents in my article this month of what is going on now and in the next few months. The running of the recreation ground and burial ground does take a lot of work and we are always grateful to our contractors for making a great job of keeping the place maintained to a high standard, together with the War Memorial area.

Some of the works that have been done recently or are scheduled in for the next few months are as follows:

- Hedge cutting;
- Tree work to fell ash trees that are suffering from ash die back, it is noted that some of these ash trees have been found to have bat roost potential or activity so we are currently looking at ways to manage this;
- Maintenance works to fences and posts;
- Repairs to the entrance of the recreation car park;
- Updating playground signage (following the theft of most of our COVID signage several months ago);
- Maintenance works to the eastern boundary ditch where the sandbag wall has collapsed;
- The Council have secured approximately 200 hedging plants from the South Downs National Park which will arrive in the late winter for planting;
- Re-gravelling of the burial ground turning circle.

It continues to be a problem trying to get quotations for work in the current climate and of course costs for materials continue to increase unfortunately; so, this makes things a bit more difficult to manage.

The football pitch requires some work to the secondary drainage which could cost in the region of £25,000 to £30,000 and therefore

this needs to be considered as a long-term maintenance plan which we are currently looking into. Ditchling Football Club are not using the facilities this year but we are working on looking at ways to get the pitch up and running for the 2022/23 season depending of course on funding sources available.

Ditchling Cricket Club have recently put forward a proposal to lease the groundsman's hut in return for them refurbishing the building. The Council agreed at their September meeting that the proposal was a great idea as the building is currently not used much and it would be lovely to see the building refurbished rather than watching it deteriorate and for it to serve a purpose.

We have some new users of the Recreation Ground being personal trainers and the food truck that is on site currently one day and one evening. The Council are receiving an income stream from these businesses and the Council hope that they support activities and usage of the pavilion and the Recreation Ground in general. We understand that stoolball will possibly be returning to Ditchling next season and of course the Archery Club continue to use the facilities and are getting back to normal after all the COVID restrictions.

Other activities at the Recreation Ground recently have been a meeting point for the



'Pass Slow and Wide' campaign to make motorists more aware of horses on the roads and a cycle event in early October, where the pavilion was used as the headquarters for the event. We hope that residents continue to enjoy using the Recreation Ground facilities in the village and just on a final note, please do remember to pick up after your dog if you use the recreation ground for dog walking; it is much appreciated not only by other users but grounds contractors who have to mow/trim the facilities. Thank you.

**Sarah Mamoany**  
Clerk to Ditchling Parish Council



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# Remembrance Sunday 14th November 2021

## THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION - DITCHLING & DISTRICT BRANCH:

**This year is the 100th centenary for the RBL**

**100 hundred years of helping our Veterans and their Families  
Something to be very proud of.**

Although as a Branch we have been unable to hold any events due to Covid restrictions the Committee have been meeting every month and we are delighted to say that we have increased our Branch membership to 56 Members. Please let me know if you would like to become a member.

All the arrangements are now in place for this year's Poppy Appeal. Our local shops and businesses will be asked once again if they are willing to have a Poppy Box. The Poppy Boxes will contain the usual paper poppies as well as the small metal poppy pins with the year 2021 on.

The Royal British Legion is committed to reducing the amount of single use plastic associated with Poppy Appeal products. Already changes have been implemented that will remove over 8 million items of single use plastic. Your paper Poppy can be recycled at your local Sainsbury's store or the paper and plastic components can be pulled apart so the paper can be recycled in your recycle bin at home.

There will be a brief Armistice Day service at the War Memorial on 11th November, 2021, at 11.00 am and a Wreath will be laid to honour the fallen of WW1 and crosses placed on the War Graves in St Margaret's Churchyard.

We are looking forward to holding our Parade this year after not being able to do so last year. Mr Colin Marshall, Branch Standard Bearer, will lead the Parade, with the Burgess Hill Marching Youth band playing for us. As usual we will gather at the Scout Hut in East End Lane to march off at approximately 10.40 am to gather at the War Memorial for the Act of Remembrance at 11.00 am. In addition to the Brownies, Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts, we are so pleased that Ditchling Girl Guides have reformed and will be marching with us.

Nearer to the time I will make sure that there is a Poster in the Post Office window with all the information relating to Remembrance Sunday.

If you require a Wreath, extra Poppies or Remembrance Crosses please let me know.

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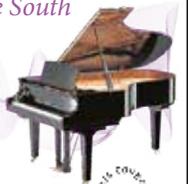
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# The Monday Group

## Repairs to the "Roman Road" Ditchling to Keymer

Back in November 2020 Ian Weir of Hassocks PC and Don McBeth of Ditchling PC contacted the Monday Group to discuss the possibility of improving the surface of the public footpath that links the two parishes between Lodge Hill Lane and Ockley Road. After a site visit it was agreed that improvement of the footpath surface, particularly on the eastern side of the parish border would be very beneficial. However, bad weather and the difficulty of getting materials to the site put a hold on the project.



Before

In February 2021 the Monday Group received an offer from Shuna Baggaley of Balfour Beatty for a group of their volunteers to take part in some work of social value. When a Balfour Beatty project manager visited the site it became apparent that, due to the further deterioration of the path, the scope and technical nature of the work was probably beyond the ability of volunteers. Balfour Beatty then involved Hobart Paving (part of The Thorne Group) who had been carrying out very similar work for Burgess Hill Town Council. Balfour Beatty and Hobart Paving very generously agreed to carry out the improvement work free of charge – Balfour Beatty providing the plant and materials and Hobart Paving the manpower and expertise. The work entailed removing a redundant stile and two sections of wooden causeway (which



have been re-used by the Monday Group elsewhere), inserting a new culvert, shoring up the sides of the footpath and laying down an all-weather surface.

Access to the site was kindly granted by the owner of the land opposite the Thatched Inn pub with a small detour to avoid an existing kissing gate. Work commenced in July 2021 and, blessed with good weather, the work was completed very efficiently within three days. Both East and West Sussex Highways



After

facilitated the closure of the footpath for the duration of the work.

This was an excellent project, addressing a pretty intractable problem on a well-used local footpath. It involved two parishes, two highway authorities, two landowners, a national construction company and a local civil engineering company, all brought together and co-ordinated by the Monday Group, your local rights of way volunteers. Many thanks are due to all involved, but particularly to Balfour Beatty and Hobart Paving who are owed a huge debt of gratitude for their generosity. We hope that everyone using the footpath now will greatly appreciate the improvement.

**Jim Edwards**  
Monday Group  
October 2021



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# ESCC reaffirms commitment to climate pledge

**Council leaders have affirmed the importance of ecological planning and protecting natural diversity as the authority continues its efforts to tackle climate change.**

At a meeting of the council on October 12th councillors reiterated their commitment to becoming a carbon-neutral authority and called on central Government for support to reach their ambitious target.

The council agreed to set aside an extra £8.85 million to be spent on reducing climate change and in improving the county's highways for walkers, cyclists and motorists.

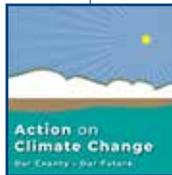
"There is no question that significant action is needed to tackle the climate emergency," said Cllr Nick Bennett, lead member for Resources and Climate Change. "But we have to be absolutely sure that everything we do supports our continuing efforts to become a carbon-neutral authority by 2050 at the latest.

"Becoming carbon neutral is not something that can happen overnight but we have made huge strides in recent years. Significant changes to our buildings and the way we work have helped us more than halve our carbon emissions since 2008 – equivalent to the annual energy use of more than 7,000 residents."

The authority has already switched to a 100 per cent renewable electricity tariff for streetlights and council buildings, has invested £1 million from a recycling fund into improving energy efficiency and secured a further £480,000 of funding from the Government for the current financial year that, among other measures, is being used to install photovoltaic panels on council properties.

Cllr Bennett added: "We know that there is a long way to go to reach our ultimate target, but the results so far show our commitment to getting there. We will continue to work with all areas of our business and with partners to identify projects and funding that will support our efforts."

Following debate, the council has agreed to write to the county's MPs asking them to press ministers for greater direction, detail and support to assist the council in delivering on its net-zero target.



# 1st Ditchling Scout Group

**Here we are about to start the Autumn term and we are hoping against hope it will be a more "normal" one.**

All three sections have fantastic fun filled programmes planned for this term and we are ever hopeful we will be able to Parade for Remembrance Day this year. Unfortunately, the Group camp in the summer had to be cancelled at the very last-minute owing to a positive Covid test at school causing two-year groups to isolate. This was such a heart wrenching thing to happen after so much hard work adhering to Covid guidelines in the planning, even the John Broomfields van was already packed!

I have to say I was so proud of our leaders and young people who bounced back from a major disappointment and before the end of the day alternative plans were in action. Beavers, Cubs and Scouts alike camped in their own back gardens and achieved many challenges the Leaders set so they would still achieve their badges. What resilience!!!



The Beavers did however manage to go to their Activity Day at Blacklands Farm and had a fabulous time.



Now onto a heartfelt plea to a community minded individual who is willing and able to help support a local group.

I am stepping down from my role as Group Scout Leader (GSL) next Summer and as many of you probably know I do not live in the village anymore so it makes this particular part

of my role much more challenging.

The role is to co-ordinate Scout HQ maintenance which involves doing a monthly safety check, gathering quotes for any work that needs doing on the Scout HQ, which is sporadic in its intensity and recruiting a cleaner and grass cutter if the previous one leaves etc. We have a list of tried and tested tradesman and a handyman and we have the added assistance of Patterson Portfolio who arrange any recurring certification the Scout Hut requires.



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<p><b>Keep your dog on a lead, and stick to the path</b></p>	<p><b>Avoid popular hotspots</b></p>	<p><b>Do not park on verges</b></p>
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## Bevern View News



### Our Kitchen is at the Heart of Bevern View

There is a lot of communication around eating so our cooks, Janet & Anna, work alongside the communications team making sure that we have considered the obvious things such as likes and dislikes but also what the environment is like i.e., too noisy, too bright, too many distractions or not enough distractions! All these considerations are managed by our tireless shift managers and carried out by our support workers.

The clinical team, community speech and language therapists and dieticians are also very involved as there are issues related to body weight (both overweight and underweight), swallowing difficulties, gastro-oesophageal reflux disorder, diabetes, bowel disorders and oral health.

Some of our residents can clearly communicate their likes and dislikes so Janet works hard at her menus always making sure she has a choice of freshly made meals.

Last summer, we fundraised to enable us to purchase a portable oven which means our residents are able to enjoy cooking for themselves during an activity.



The residents love being involved in our mealtimes as we often find that's the best time for chatting and laughing together and getting to share the gossip from the week before!



Bevern View is a purpose built residential home in Barcombe providing life-long care for 11 young adults with profound disabilities.



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# Parish Council Vacancy



## PARISH COUNCIL VACANCIES

### DITCHLING PARISH COUNCIL ARE LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS 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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WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU

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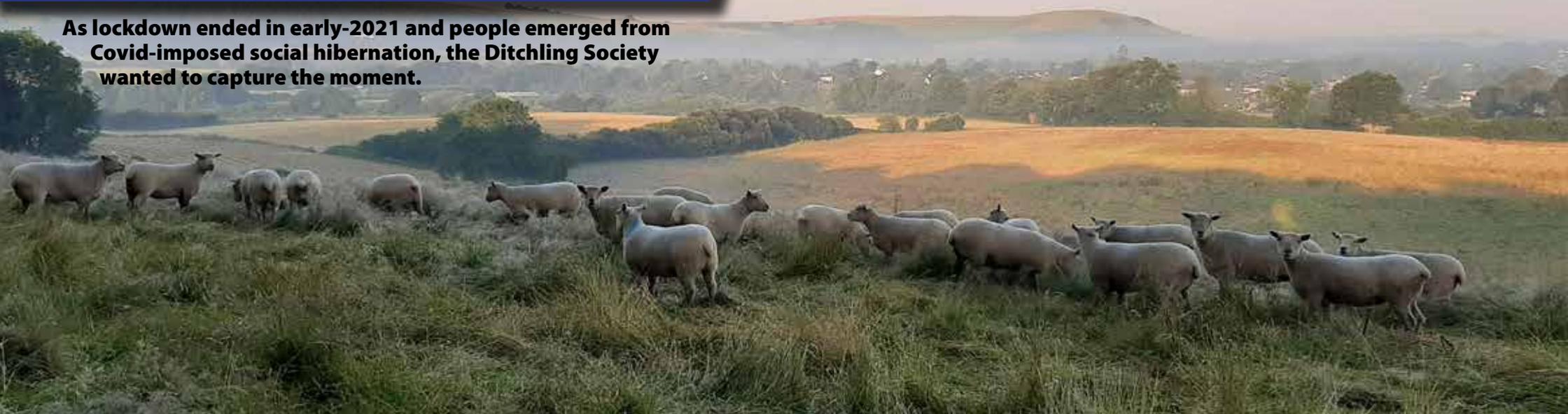
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Parish Clerk - 01273 844733

## Ditchling in Focus

**As lockdown ended in early-2021 and people emerged from Covid-imposed social hibernation, the Ditchling Society wanted to capture the moment.**



We asked villagers to photograph what they loved about living in and around Ditchling and how the world now looked to them as Spring turned in to Summer. All the photos were taken between May and July 2021.

There was a competitive element. Prizes were awarded for the winners in three age categories and the winning images, along with those 'highly commended' by the judges, were displayed in a month-long exhibition at The White Horse.

Submissions were invited under five categories – Community, looking at the village at home, at work and at play; the Natural World, featuring the flora and fauna around us; Landscape, vistas from the Downs and the Weald; Close-up, 'small details that catch the eye'; and Joy, capturing anything that makes you happy!

Three professional and independent judges reviewed all the entries. Karen Norquay, who was Head of School for arts and photography at the University of Brighton, was joined by Lisa Devlin, who runs Photography Farm, a school for wedding photography, and Lillian Spibey, who established Sharp Shots Photo Club for children and teenagers.



The winner in the under 10 age section was Iris, whose photo showed a common cockchafer, also known as a May bug, chomping on a wilting tulip flower. Audrey was the winner in the 10-16 age category with her arresting close-up photo titled 'Dew Drop Moth'. In the adult section, the individual winners in each of the five topic categories were finally narrowed down to one unanimous winner – Sophie Brady with her early morning shot looking from Lodge Hill towards the Downs, named 'Sheep at 5am'.



Three professional photographers working in Ditchling provided the prizes. Iris' prize is a family portrait session with Jen Smith; Rob Sanderson will provide Audrey with a tailored workshop to help improve her camera skills; and Kris Powlowski will organise a studio session for Sophie. All the category winners and highly commended entrants will receive framed copies of their photographs when the exhibition in the White Horse ends.

The Ditchling Society would like to thank everyone who made this such a worthwhile and successful event, particularly Jen Smith, Rob Sanderson, and Kris Powlowski for donating the prizes and Karen, Lisa and Lillian for fitting the judging into their busy schedules. But most importantly, we would like to thank all those entrants who have shown us what makes Ditchling so special for them and for providing us with a record of life in the village in the Spring of 2021.

# The Turner-Dumbrell Foundation's estate

**Many Ditchling residents will be familiar with the natural beauty of Lodge Hill, but this summer it had a rival in another part of the Turner-Dumbrell Foundation's estate, which had a fantastic display of rare wild flowers.**

The charity has been managing the plot of land alongside its workshops in North End to encourage wildlife and plants and has been rewarded each year by an increasing number of orchids flowering there.

In the summer of 2019 there were 33 in flower, last year that number increased to 44, and this June the total almost doubled to 75 and included two rare Bee Orchids. We look forward to what 2022 may bring.



Meanwhile Lodge Hill provided a haven for many residents and the workshops have swung back into full action as the Covid-19 restrictions have been eased, with the artists and makers hosting extra visitors during the Artwave festival during September.

The Foundation's revenue was much reduced last year as it introduced significant reductions in the rents at the workshops during the Covid-19 crisis, but it was still able to award grants totalling £10,000 to local charities and good causes at its June AGM.

Recipients were 2nd Ditchling Guides, Ditchling Orchard Group, Ditchling Pavilion Club, The Monday Group, Oldland Mill and St Margaret's Church.

With an improving financial performance it is hoped the foundation will have an increased fund for next year's round of grants.





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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](http://www.ditchlinghistoryproject.org).

### Project News

We continue to research George Thomas's WW2 diary entries. They are wonderfully vivid with frequent references to important international, national and local incidents. It has led us to research the WW2 airfield at Chailey, the defence of which may have been the reason that the Ditchling Patrol of the Auxiliary Unit was set up so late in the war. There are also frequent references to his friends and colleagues and we have set about finding their descendants. Indeed, the daughter of one of them visited Ditchling in October following the information we gave her.

One of the more unusual email enquiries we received was from someone researching the graves of veterans of the American Civil War in the UK. One of these, he told us, was Edward Junoux, who served in the Union army in the 94th New York Volunteers and subsequently lived, with his wife Caroline, at

the Little Jointure in Ditchling where he died in 1903. Did we have any record of his grave in Ditchling? Our research confirmed their residency at the Little Jointure, but we were unable to find any record of a Ditchling burial. If a reader knows of one please let us know. One of our publications 'In Memoriam' is currently out of print and in need of updating when members' time permits. Meanwhile Google has announced that it is planning to digitise the records of all the graveyards in the UK. Google should take the work we did on 'In Memoriam' as its model because in 2010 we listed, photographed, researched and digitised all the Ditchling graves before publishing it!

### THEN

If you are a resident of St George's Park or a visitor you may have wondered at the architecture of the original buildings which seems a little out of place for the English countryside and more akin to chateaus you might find in Belgium or France. Well that is not surprising because to quote the architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner what you see is "...plain Gothic of continental character." So how did this come about?

In 1866 the Revd. Canon Peter John Maes (1806 – 1877), a Belgian, was invited by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Southwark to visit England. Canon Maes had devoted his life to the mentally ill in his home country. In 1842 he had been appointed Director of St Julian's home for the mentally sick in Bruges and had founded the congregation of the "Sisters of St Augustine Mercy of Jesus" to care for the patients using their spiritual influence, loving care and reformed care methods. He called it

and others subsequently set up "God's hotels".

At that time Ditchling was in the Catholic diocese of Southwark. St Francis Hospital had been opened in 1853 in what is now Haywards Heath to provide care for mentally sick poor people, but there was no home for the comparatively well-to-do mentally sick. It was to set up a care establishment for them, modelled on his experience in Belgium, that Canon Maes had been invited to England.

Maes brought three Augustinian Sisters with him and together they set about recreating St Julian's home in the English countryside. The Augustinian Order purchased the 251 acres of Purchase Manor Estate, north of Ditchling Common. The owners, Major & Mrs Gordon, agreed to sell it well below market value for £12,500. Canon Maes and the three nuns occupied the old Manor House, renaming it St Mary's.

The Care Home they commissioned was of Belgium design; of materials from Belgium brought up the River Ouse; and built by Belgian craftsmen and labourers. Not a thing was contributed locally and this led to some

friction with the local populace. The following account appeared in the Sussex Express, 17th August 1869: "Report of a serious affray at the King's Head (Burgess Hill) when a number of Belgian 'mechanics' employed in building the nunnery at the Purchase, near Ditchling Common, clashed with the locals who 'armed with sticks and staves' drove them off....and the local constable was commended for his courage in 'laying out six or seven Belgian'".

**It's not surprising therefore that the buildings look distinctly 'continental'!** (see photos).

St George's Retreat was formally opened on 'The Feast of the Solemnity of St Joseph' on the 19th March 1868. It was designed originally to accommodate 150 residents of all denominations and in 1869 the first patients were admitted. Public perception of its purpose and associations was clearly influenced for some time to come by its origins. An entry in Clarke's Local Year Book for 1888 said "...Hard by is the St George's Retreat for insane Catholics...locally termed 'the Belgians'...!"





The Sisters of St Augustine was re-formed in 1866 “to offer care and support for the sick and to serve God and our vacation as Religious Sisters”. In 1887, the nuns separated from the Belgian congregation and St George’s Retreat became the “mother” house and Novitiate of the English Order.

The Retreat’s chapel, St George the Martyr, was for many years the only Catholic church permitted to celebrate communion in the vicinity of Ditchling. It was in effect the parish church for Catholics. Although the arts and crafts Guild of St Joseph & St Dominic on Ditchling Common had a chapel it was not permitted to celebrate communion so the artists and their families would go to the Retreat on Sundays and Saints days. Margaret Lingard, daughter of the sculptor Joseph Cribb recalled: “[At]Christmas - quite often because of the bad weather I remember quite often walking with socks over my shoes to St George’s Retreat on the Common because of the ice on the roads and not being able to ride our bikes”.

During WW2 the children of the Brighton School for the Deaf were evacuated to a house in Wivelsfield Green, but because of a lack of space the younger ones were housed in a building in the Retreat called ‘The Rosary’. Catherine Hensman a former pupil recalled “It was quite a halcyon period...except for the v-bombs which went over towards the end of the war. I even saw them...”

Joyce Newnham, daughter of the Retreat’s Foreman, tells us that “I remember my father going to meetings in Ditchling for the Civil Defence... Directly a siren went, he went to the Retreat and stood up on the roof there and did his duty there. Just watching for incendiaries and if anything dropped”.

Our diarist George Thomas on the other hand tells us that during the war he “Went up to St George’s Retreat and pulled 1600 narrow stem kale plants and then I came home...”

## NOW

By 2002 the buildings of St George’s Retreat were no longer meeting the UK’s standards of care. Upgrading them to meet the standards would have been prohibitively expensive and ultimately unsatisfactory. The decision was taken to redevelop the buildings into a retirement village, St George’s Park, and with the proceeds to build new state-of-the-art care homes elsewhere in the grounds – the new St George’s Retreat. Only the chapel and convent, where the Augustinian sisters continue to live, remain.

The freeholder is ‘Augustinian Care’ and the Sisters of the Order are its trustees. ‘St George’s Park Ltd’ is a subsidiary Trading Company. The grounds on which both entities stand comprises c 250 acres. 200 acres is a recreational farm, comprising rare species and a herd of beef cattle, sales of which help to finance the Retreat.

Completion and sale of the first, fully serviced, apartments was in 2006. Fifteen years later St. George’s Park retirement village comprises 240 apartments with a further 27 ‘Assisted Living’ planned. They are available for purchase on 125 year leases by people over sixty. The village possesses numerous recreational facilities, a library, restaurants and a convenience store. Pre pandemic there were 330 residents, 70% of whom previously lived within twenty miles of the site.

The new St George’s Retreat comprises two 60-bed purpose-built Care Homes, St. Clare’s and St. Rita’s. The whole complex is run on the concept of ‘continuing care’ with Park residents being able to move into the Retreat when medical circumstances require it although both are run entirely independently. Pre pandemic it employed c 350 people, and is now the largest employer in Ditchling Parish, of whom 90% were employed in the care homes. Around 70% of the village residents previously lived within 20 miles of the site.



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# Healthy Rhubarb Crumble Recipe

**This accidentally vegan crumble is packed with healthy fats. It's dairy-free, egg-free, and can be made sugar-free for a healthy breakfast or left indulgent and served with custard or cream for a cosy pudding.**

(serves two)

## Ingredients for the topping:

- 1 cup oats
- ¼ cup wheatgerm
- ½ cup sunflower seeds
- ¼ cup pumpkin seeds
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- Pinch of salt
- Dash of vanilla essence
- 4 tbsp of dairy-free spread
- Either 2 tbsp xylitol or 1 tbsp dark brown sugar and 1 tbsp caster sugar

## Ingredients for the filling:

- Handful of dried juniper berries
- 1-2 tbsp rosewater
- 3 sticks of rhubarb
- Handful of frozen raspberries
- 1 tsp ginger
- 1 tsp xylitol or 1 tsp caster sugar

## Method:

Melt the spread in a saucepan over a low heat.

Remove from heat, add the rest of the topping ingredients, and stir until well-combined.

Roughly chop the rhubarb into small pieces and place in a small ovenproof dish. Add the juniper berries, rosewater, frozen raspberries, ginger, sweetener, and stir everything together.

Spoon the topping on top of the fruit and press down until all the filling is covered.

Bake for twenty minutes at 180 C or until the top is dark brown.

Serve and enjoy!

# Sussex wins university of the year for student retention

**The University of Sussex has won University of the Year for Student Retention award. Sussex has more than 14,000 full-time undergraduates, and in the latest figures the dropout rate is less than half the expected level, 5% against a benchmark of 10.1%.**

Alastair McCall, said:

"A supportive student environment keeps the dropout rate at Sussex at around half of its expected level, saving hundreds of student careers and millions of pounds. The university has a targeted support package for students identified as being most at risk of dropping out or repeating a year, recognising that encouraging young people to aspire and apply to university is just the beginning.

"Sector-leading support for students during the pandemic also stood out in making Sussex our University of the Year for Student Retention. Good levels of academic and financial support help form a safety net of support through which it is hard for students to fall, more than living up to the university's stated values of collaboration, courage, kindness, inclusion and integrity."

The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2022 provides the definitive

rankings for UK universities and the most comprehensive overview of higher education in Britain. It includes profiles on 132 universities, making use of the latest data published in the past two months.

After a year of closed campuses and a move to online learning, the new edition of the Good University Guide reveals most universities have seen a dramatic drop in student satisfaction and teaching quality scores in the latest National Student Survey.

A fully searchable website with 70 subject tables, full interactive tables and additional features went online on The Times and The Sunday Times on Friday 17th September:

[www.thetimes.co.uk/article/good-university-guide-in-full-tp6dzs7wn](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/good-university-guide-in-full-tp6dzs7wn)

**Article** - *The Times & The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2022*

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## Pass Wide & Slow Outcome

The **PWAS** ride on 18th September went ahead through the roads of Ditchling.

We had a fantastic turnout of riders and walkers. The Police Crime Commissioner, Katy Bourne, was in attendance, as were representatives from Sussex police, rural crime team.

The event achieved the stated aim of raising awareness on the safe passing of horses (and other vulnerable road users) in and around the Ditchling area.

If you are interested in further details please contact:  
[rachelwilliams712@yahoo.com](mailto:rachelwilliams712@yahoo.com).



## Can you celebrate **BONFIRE** Night without the bang?

**'Remember, remember the 5th November, Gunpowder Treason and plot, We see no reason, Why gunpowder treason, Should ever be forgot!'**

And alas, the foiled plan by Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot has never been forgotten.

Bonfire Night, or Guy Fawkes Night, is a tradition held on 5th November, synonymous with fireworks, loud bangs and of course; bonfires.

Some children are scared of fireworks, let alone the safety issue, and we know it can be devastating for wildlife and even our own pets at home, so can you still celebrate without the crackle and thunderous bang of modern fireworks?



The answer is a pleasing yes; there a few steps you can take to make your evening as family-friendly as possible.

**Low noise fireworks:** You might have heard these being described as 'silent' fireworks, but they are actually 'low noise fireworks', and they work wonderfully for families who still want to enjoy the spectacle of a firework display but don't want to disrupt the wildlife and their own loved ones.

**Sparklers:** We've all held a sparkler and witnessed the joy such a small object can bring. It lights up the face of both adults and children alike, quite literally and metaphorically. They are always easy to obtain, cheap and carry little danger; but of course supervision is always required.

**Build a Guy Fawkes Scarecrow:** Keeping the tradition alive is always important, and what better way to keep it exciting than building your very own mini Guy Fawkes scarecrow. Stuff some old tights with newspaper, get some raggedy old clothes and straw, use a pillow case or football for the head and you're good to go. You could even turn your Guy Fawkes scarecrow into a pinata if you had the extra time and know-how.

**Confetti poppers:** For those wanting a more timid and tame bang for their celebration, why not invest in some confetti poppers, you can get some extremely large and joyful party poppers that cost the same or even less than many of the fireworks on sale, plus who doesn't love the mess left after a confetti cannon?

These are just some very simple ideas you can incorporate into your celebrations if you are concerned about the noise levels from modern fireworks. If you feel like we've left out some obvious ideas, get in touch and let us know how you will be celebrating this November.

# The (tur)Key to a wonderful Christmas

**I need not remind you readers about the woe and gross disappointments of last year, not only were we in a state of lockdown we were also deprived of Christmas.**

Yes, it was the 19th of December last year when we got our orders to 'stay home'. For millions of us Brits this meant we were, in the words of the English glam rock band of the late 60s and 70s Mud, "lonely this Christmas, lonely and cold". 2020 Christmas was not a classic, if it had to be embodied in a gift... well that gift would probably have to be a Christingle (for non-religious readers a Christingle is an orange wrapped in ribbon...most disappointing especially when you're hoping for a PS5).

A gross sadness and disappointment cloaked the country as we all felt we'd been robbed of our festive family time, and the traditions that make Christmas what it is. Most of us still had presents and good food, excessive amounts of alcohol but we didn't have the friends and family to share it with. There lies the raw truth behind what makes this the so-called 'most magical time of the year' it's not the gifts nor the indulgences it's the love of friends and family. This is hardly a whistleblowing claim, nor even really an original thought as I've witnessed Sir Michael Caine learn this very lesson every single year since I was a child.

The benefactor of Caine's lesson in The Muppets Christmas Carol is Kermit the Frog, the benefactor of me relaying this lesson is you and your 2021 Christmas plans.

So, with that "chipper up and at 'em" British spirit that we consider ourselves famous for I'd like to pitch the idea in a charming rhyme reader that 'a simple Christmas together, could be the best ever'. Let's embrace all that we went without last year, the cliché Christmas activities, the family stroll perhaps? The Christmas Day excursion to the pub, the knocking on the neighbour's doors to annoy them with carol singing. So many things we simply couldn't do last year that we should celebrate, be thankful for and revel in this Christmas time that we're blessed to celebrate together. From simply cooking together or miserably washing up together. Shouting together at a game of after dinner charades, competing over the last strawberry crème in a box of chocolates or toffee depending on your preference. This year when Christmas Day is done and you sit with your loved ones all stuffed to the brim with food and fuelled with copious amounts of booze



and the inevitable family feud takes place over a game of Monopoly, don't get too irate at the cruel nature of the capitalist board game. Instead, be thankful that you wasted an hour or three playing it with loved ones even if they have driven you to board game bankruptcy.

So, the key to Christmas we can conclude is who you spend it with and not about the luxuries, which is probably just as well as the news of a severe turkey shortage is making headlines. Despite the lack of the festive bird, we know there'll be no shortage of Christmas cheer this year and here at **CommunityAd** we've got you covered. With these alternatives to a turkey dinner, your day is sure to overflow with festive spirit.

## Mushroom Wellington

A spin on a classic, the mushroom wellington is the perfect solution to accommodating everyone's eating habits. Stuff this bad boy with herbs, mushrooms, and chestnuts, and keep your vegetarian and vegan relatives satiated and content.

## Boeuf Bourguignon

If you want a dish that cooks slowly throughout the day and makes the whole house smell amazing, you cannot beat boeuf bourguignon. Make sure you cook with red Burgundy wine for that traditional rich flavour.

## Oyster Stew

This may be a controversial inclusion, but in the southern states of America there is a tradition of serving oyster stew at Christmas, so if you're looking to make your Christmas Day a little bit unconventional, this could be the dish for you.

## Roast Chicken

If you're still craving poultry, then roast chicken is a staple. Less dry than turkey and infinitely versatile, roast chicken can be paired with all the turkey trimmings of stuffing and roasties – and goes just as well with cranberry sauce. We hope these alternatives take your fancy, but if you're still mourning your traditional turkey dinner, then we suggest making up for it in other ways. Maybe treat yourself to that boozy plum pudding you've been eyeing up, or splash out on some upmarket crackers rather than the same paper-hat-and-plastic-whistle ones you get every year.

No matter what food is on the table or what presents are under the tree, Christmas is about family and friends coming together. A turkey dinner is great, of course, but we remember these days for the people that we spent them with, and that's the real (tur)key to a wonderful Christmas.



# Archery Club

**“Good to see you again, glad you’re back” called the dog-walker as he raised his hat and waved at us, “we’ve missed you.”**

Well, we’ve missed you, but after more than a year of Covid-imposed exile, Ditchling Archery Club, are back on the Recreation Ground every Sunday morning doing what we love best, shooting arrows. Sometimes we hit the target, sometimes we don’t!

The last few months have been difficult for everyone, and DAC is no exception. Because of the necessary Covid safety restrictions, we missed both a winter and a summer season of shooting, but that is now (hopefully) behind us, and we are looking to the future and looking to welcome new members.

The best way to join us is by coming to one of our beginners’ courses which we plan to start again in the New Year. We will provide the equipment and the coaching expertise; all you have to do is turn up and enjoy yourselves. You can get in touch via our website: [www.ditchlingac.org.uk/contact-us/contact-the-beginners-course-organiser](http://www.ditchlingac.org.uk/contact-us/contact-the-beginners-course-organiser)

**So why take up archery?** Archery is fun. What better way to spend a Sunday morning (or a winter’s evening) than by challenging yourself to hit a target which may be anything from 20 to 100 yards away. The satisfaction of your arrow finding its way to the gold (the bit in the middle) is second-to-none.

Archery keeps you fit. Pulling back a 30-pound bow up to a hundred times a morning is a pretty good upper-body workout and you could walk anything up to a mile

collecting your arrows.

**So why join Ditchling Archery Club?** Well, we are a friendly bunch. We guarantee you the warmest of welcomes and as much help and advice as you want; we have committed coaches who can help you hone your skills; our membership numbers one of the UK’s leading student archers, several archers who compete for the county, and archers who do it just for fun.

Young or old (or in between) you are welcome.

**We hope to see you soon.**



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## Ditchling Tennis Club Report

**As a result of the re-surfacing of the Court in time for the 2020 season and our ability to offer the use of the Court in a limited way during the lockdowns, the membership of the Club has grown to its recommended maximum of 120.**

With this in mind, it was decided that we should offer more for our Family and Junior members in the 2021 season. Therefore an L.T.A. accredited coach was appointed; his name is Keith Brown and he has a special interest in coaching for juniors.

During this summer a series of junior coaching sessions free of charge was offered as an introduction to see how much of a demand there was. This proved successful and as a result a six-week coaching programme for juniors was put in place running after school on Thursday afternoons from early September until the beginning of the Autumn half-term holidays in late October. It will not be possible to offer any more until the Spring as at present there is no lighting at the court.

Besides the junior coaching, Keith has introduced Cardio Tennis sessions on a Monday morning followed by Doubles Tactical Coaching.

One other significant development this year was our step into the 'online' world. A booking system is now in operation which allows members to

book and cancel courts online up to two weeks in advance. This system will be expanded to allow us to communicate with members as we plan to introduce more programmes.



## The return of Stoolball

**When Stoolball first started in Ditchling over 100 years ago, many of the players lived in the village, it played alongside the cricket and football clubs.**

Varying social differences from what was then a class related community, meant that a female sport existed locally for all, regardless of your social standing

Sadly, the Ditchling stoolball club folded in 2020 after suffering, like many other sports for the lack of players, however all is not lost with the formation of a new club: Stoolball Ditchling, A combination of a handful of experienced players plus some enthusiastic newbies means the return to the village, with a sport that dates back to Medieval times (believed to be the forerunner of cricket).

If you wish to get involved as a player or supporter to this beautiful game, please contact: Michael Stratford **01273 844231** or [stratfordm69@gmail.com](mailto:stratfordm69@gmail.com)



## Private Lives by Noël Coward

**Tuesday 23rd - Sat 27th November, 7:30pm at Ditchling Village Hall**

They can't live with each other - but can they live apart?

With its stinging barbs and clever wit, Private Lives is Noël Coward's finest and funniest comedy.

Elyot and Amanda divorced five years ago. Glamorous Amanda and her prosaic new husband are honeymooning on the French Riviera, when she finds that, quite by chance, the hotel room next to theirs is occupied by her ex-husband, the rich and reckless Elyot, and his new wife!

Old passions begin to bubble between Elyot and Amanda and, with no regard for propriety, they

soon forget the numerous good reasons why they broke up in the first place and impulsively escape to Paris pursued by their respective spouses.

Can it last? Or will they find that their passion, which alternates between love and anger, drives them apart yet again?

Forget those grey days of winter and come with us to a sophisticated world of cocktails, elegant glamour and sparkling repartee.

**For tickets, visit**

[www.ditchlingplayers.org.uk/wordpressnew](http://www.ditchlingplayers.org.uk/wordpressnew)



# Mid Sussex Healthy Walks



## Walk Levels:

**Level 1:** 30 minutes on paved paths. No stiles.

**Level 2:** 30 minutes - 1 hr (1.5 - 2.5 miles) some un-surfaced paths. No stiles, hills will be encountered.

**Level 3:** 1 - 1.5hrs (max. 3.5 miles) on un-surfaced paths. Some stiles and hills.

**Level 4:** 1.5 - 2hrs (max. 5 miles). Stiles and hills.

**Level 5:** 2 - 3hrs (max. 7 miles). Stiles, steep hills, faster pace.

### Please note:

- Walkers walk at their own risk, if you have any health concerns please seek medical advice prior to walking with us.
- Walkers please register before your first walk, via the MSDC website.
- The start times are the time the walk departs; please arrive 10 minutes prior to the start time.
- Extra walks may be added to the programme - please check the website regularly for updates.
- Walk cancellations can also be found on the website.
- Please read the guidelines in place carefully, overleaf, before attending a walk.

For more information please contact the Rangers by email [rangers@midsussex.gov.uk](mailto:rangers@midsussex.gov.uk) or on **01444 477561**

### Important Information:

- All walkers must register, via the MSDC website, before attending their first walk with us. This only needs to be done once. [www.midsussex.gov.uk/healthywalks](http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/healthywalks) If you have already registered since June 2021 that is fine.
- A register will be taken on the day by your walk leader (register to be taken by walk leader only, not to be passed around).
- Spaces are limited to 30 people, on a first come first serve basis.
- Please do NOT attend the walk if you have COVID or any COVID-19 symptoms (typical symptoms include: high temperature, new

continuous cough, loss of taste and smell). If a walk leader suspects you are showing signs of COVID-19 you may be asked to leave.

- During the walk please follow the current government guidelines on social distancing. We recommend that you bring your own alcohol-based hand sanitiser and face covering. Avoid touching gates and stiles where possible. Do not share food & drink, or equipment such as walking poles.
- The information above is based on government guidelines issued at the time this programme was produced. The guidelines to protect the public are under constant review. We will make changes/cancellations, without notice, to our programme to comply with the guidelines the government announce to combat the pandemic.

**17th November, Wednesday, 10am, Burgess Hill**

**Level 2** Meet outside the entrance to the Tesco Superstore (by the cash machines), Hammonds Farm, RH15 9QT. Free parking is available, by kind permission of the Manager, but please do not park in the area immediately in front of the store entrance.

**25th November, Thursday, 10am, Hassocks**

**Level 3** Meet at London Road Recreation Ground, Belmont Close, Hassocks, BN6 9DW.

**8th December, Wednesday, 10am, Burgess Hill**

**Level 2** Meet at Leylands Park car park, Maple Drive, Burgess Hill, RH15 8DL. Grid reference: TQ 317 202.

**9th December, Thursday, 10am, Burgess Hill**

**Level 5** Meet at Leylands Park car park, Maple Drive, Burgess Hill, RH15 8DL. Grid reference: TQ 317 202

The next Ditchling Common walk is scheduled for March:

**16th March, Wednesday, 10am, Ditchling Common, Level 2** Meet in the car park of Ditchling Common Country Park, Folders Lane East. Grid Ref: TQ 337 180

[www.midsussex.gov.uk/healthywalks](http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/healthywalks)



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