



DITCHLING PARISH COUNCIL

Ditchling Village Hall 18 Lewes Road Ditchling East Sussex BN6
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Minutes of the Ditchling Parish Council Meeting held at Ditchling Village Hall, Ditchling on Tuesday 31 July 2023 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Madden (Chair), Sansom (Vice Chair), Farrands, Rowling, Barna, Stapleton and Ingham.

Sarah Mamoany (Clerk)

Public Participation:

5 members of the public were present at the meeting.

1.	Apologies of absence – Apologies were received from Cllr. Orme and Cllr. Jones.	
2.	Declarations of Interest No declarations of interest were made.	
3.	To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 27 June 2023 The minutes of the meeting held on the 27 June 2023 were resolved and duly signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.	
4.	Actions from previous minutes The Monday Group have removed the bench on the corner of East End Lane to make repairs and the Council will pay for the materials required. Ditchling Gardens – The Council have been informed that Tom Warder (Sussex Community Housing Hub/Action in Rural Sussex) will not be in a position to issue the feasibility study until early September. Notice Board – The Village Hall Committee have confirmed they have no objection to a noticeboard on the outside of the Parish Office and have requested an image of the proposed board is sent to them prior to it being installed for their approval.	Clerk
5.	Clerks Report The Clerk's report was circulated and noted.	
6.	Planning - for full details of planning applications listed below please go to https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning-applications/ or https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control The Council resolved the following comments: 6.1. SDNP/23/03011/TCA - 26 High Street Ditchling Hassocks BN6 8TA - T1 - Yew - Fell to ground level – No comment 6.2 SDNP/23/02753/CND - Downlands House Underhill Lane Westmeston BN6 8XE - Variation of Condition 2 (Plans) related to Planning Approval SDNP/19/02125/FUL to include addition of a mezzanine level to create a third bedroom, along with 2no windows to rear elevation - The Council noted that they have no objection to the	

	<p>application but due to the increase in the size of the accommodation, would like to highlight sustainability and the appropriate SDNP policy would be used to comment.</p> <p>6.3 SDNP/23/02634/FUL - Land West of The Drove Ditchling - Use of land as a Camp Site at weekends between May and August Inclusive to include bank holidays, with set-up Friday and take-down Monday and an area retained for horse keeping. The Council object to the application and the detailed draft comments would be circulated to Councillors prior to submitting to the local authority.</p> <p>6.4 Notification of appeal – SDNP/22/00365/COU (Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/Y9507/C/23/3323818) – Land West of The Drove Ditchling – Appeal against enforcement notice for change of use of the land for more than 28 days for the use of camping. It was unclear from the information provided as to the reasons for the appeal being submitted by the applicant and the Clerk had sent an email to the local authority to ask for further information as the letter provided was missing the detail. This will be chased by the Clerk and the Council will draft an objection once this information is received and submit prior to the deadline for comments on the 16 August 2023.</p> <p>6.5 Any other applications received since publication of the agenda. None noted.</p> <p>6.6 To agree delegated powers in respect of comments on planning applications that need a response prior to the September Council meeting Due to the Council not holding a meeting in August it was resolved that any comments on applications received with a deadline before the September meeting would be agreed via email. The Clerk would circulate the application details and request Councillors to comment by a specific date and then a draft of the comments would be circulated prior to submission to the local planning authority.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>7. Car Park Project</p> <p>7.1 Update on car park and associated costs</p>	<p>It was reported that a site meeting had been held with the soft landscaping contractors, Gould Baxter and the Clerk on the 5 July where various issues were raised in respect of the soft landscaping works. This has been fed back to the contractors and Gould Baxter are awaiting a response. It was noted that the solar light is not working. The Clerk has also contacted a qualified arboriculturist in respect of the damage that has occurred to the trees and reported back their advice to Gould Baxter. The Clerk will be producing a claim in respect of costs for additional administration time and attending site inspections due to these additional issues with the soft landscaping works and will submit this to Gould Baxter. The site visit by the soft landscaping contractors will also be charged to the contractor.</p> <p>The Clerk noted the external directional signage was chased but no further update has been received from ESCC Road Safety Scheme.</p> <p>7.2 To consider quotes for additional channel drainage A quote had been received for the sum of £1,846.76 plus VAT and the Council resolved to proceed with this work. It was requested the Clerk confirm with Gould Baxter that having an outside contractor do the works would not impact on the contractual obligations of the construction company.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>8. Recreation Ground & Burial Ground</p> <p>8.1 To note emergency tree works and associated costs</p> <p>8.2 To receive report from playground working party meeting held on the 31 July 2023</p>	<p>Following recent high winds on the weekend of the 15 July damage occurred to a beech tree and the large ash tree in the recreation ground. Due to this being a safety issue the Clerk instructed work to be completed to make the trees safe and the cost of this was £480 plus VAT, which will come from the tree work budget.</p> <p>Cllr. Farrands reported that the results of the survey were discussed and that they felt they were a good representation of residents' views. The group recommended to the Council that a feasibility study was carried out which would assist the project to move forwards.</p>	

	<p>8.3 To receive results of playground initial survey The survey results and summary report were circulated and noted.</p> <p>8.4 To consider playground feasibility study and associated costs The Council resolved to proceed with a feasibility study which would outline recommendations, provide advice and considerations for the play area, including materials, surfacing and what objectives would be in line with the potential budget. The cost of this would be £950. It was noted that resources would be required in respect of the oversight of contractors and the Council needs to consider this.</p> <p>8.5 Update on funding for playground project The Clerk noted that CIL funding opportunities with the SDNP and LDC would not be available until autumn 2023 with decisions on any applications being made in late 2024. Currently the Council has £33,918 available including a recent donation from the Ditchling Charity Ball of £1,500.</p> <p>8.6 To receive update on football club use required for 2023/24 season A meeting was held with Ditchling Football Club to discuss changes within the club as they now only have one team which will reduce the use of the pitch this season. The Council noted that they are keen to see both Plumpton Athletics and Ditchling using the facilities this year and Plumpton Athletics will continue to use the pitch for training on Saturday mornings. It was noted that Ditchling Football Club have been asked to put the goal posts up for the season which will start on the 9 September. Pitch fees will remain the same for this year and the Council will look to review these for the 2023/24 season, together with the use of the pitch.</p>	Clerk
9.	<p>Traffic & Highways</p> <p>9.1 To note minutes of Traffic Committee meeting held on the 17 July 2023 The minutes were circulated and noted.</p> <p>9.2 To consider approval of Phase 2 traffic report The Phase 2 report with suggested schemes was discussed at the Traffic Committee meeting and had been circulated to the Council. The Council accepted the report it was agreed it did not need to be approved by the Council. It was noted that Westmeston and Streat would also be looking to get approval from their Council's as they would need to take the report back to the full Council, rather than just the individual representative attending the meeting. It was noted that Jon Wheeler (ESCC Highways) had commented on the report, but concerns were raised about the acceptance of all the schemes by ESCC in respect of design/engineering. The Clerk advised of previous experience with Highways later rejecting schemes put forward by a traffic consultant and that the Parish Council has no power in respect of Highways matters, they make the final decision as it has to meet Highway's regulations. The Clerk was requested to write to Jon Wheeler to clarify this information.</p> <p>9.3 To consider public consultation, timings and associated costs on traffic consultancy report Cllr. Stapleton advised that the Traffic Committee had discussed implementing a public consultation in October/November and that it was important that residents of the village were aware of where the Council are with the report. It was unclear how this consultation would be presented; would it include all the schemes as it was a lot of information to take in and could be overwhelming. It was suggested, that perhaps some schemes were picked out and a summary report could be produced to make it easier to engage with residents. However, it was also felt that all the schemes should be available for comment. It is important to manage expectations and it must be made clear that the Council has no powers over the implementation of Highway schemes due to design and cost implications. It was agreed that the Traffic Committee would discuss the matter further in respect of how the consultation could be presented and come back to the next Council meeting with some suggestions. It was noted that it would be difficult to get an understanding of which schemes would have more impact and be the most cost effective. It was suggested by Cllr. Stapleton that they could require up to £3,000 for the consultation. The Clerk had asked Jon Wheeler if the remaining S106 funds could be used towards this. It was noted it would be important to involve the MP, County and District Councils. The SDNP</p>	

	Conservation Officers have been asked for input but nothing has been received from them to date.	
10. Finance	<p>10.1 To approve schedule of payments for July 2023 The schedule of payments for the sum of £18,998.47 was resolved by the Council. This included the salaries for August due to their being no meeting until September.</p> <p>10.2 To approve bank reconciliations The bank reconciliations had been circulated to all Councillors, Cllr. Orme had confirmed in a report via email that he had signed off the bank reconciliations and seen all the invoices for payment. The Council resolved the bank reconciliations for the 30.06.2023.</p> <p>10.3 To review staff membership to the Local Government Pension Scheme The Council resolved that in addition to the Parish Clerk, the role of Administrative Officer will be able to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) with effect from the 1st September 2023.</p> <p>10.4 To consider internal audit arrangements for 2023/24 and associated costs The current auditors Mulberry and Co are offering a three-year reduced rate agreement. Cllr. Orme had suggested that other quotes should be obtained to review the services. The Council resolved as the auditors had a good reputation and the reports provided were thorough that they would continue this year with Mulberry and Co and review the position for next year.</p>	
11. Ditchling Gardens/Scout Hut	<p>11.1 To consider request from Scouts in respect of storage options following vacation of the building The Scouts have requested if it would be possible for the following options to be considered as they advised the storage available at the pavilion is not enough to accommodate all their camping equipment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To continue to use the Ditchling Gardens building or shed for storage once they have vacated. - To put a container on the recreation ground for storage <p>It was noted that using the building for storage could be an insurance issue which is currently being looked into. If a storage container was considered a suitable location would need to be found and no dimensions have been provided by the Scouts. It was noted that the Council would like to accommodate the Scouts if a viable option was found and it was resolved to delegate the matter to the working party for further discussion with the Scouts. Any options would have to be subject to insurance being approved or in place for either option and would be for a 6-month period only.</p> <p>11.2 To confirm vacation date of building by the Scouts The Clerk reported that the Scouts wished to vacate the premises on the 22 August which was slightly earlier than the notice period, the Council resolved that this was acceptable. The Clerk will meet with representatives of the Scouts to carry out a hand over of the building, which will include reading the meters.</p> <p>11.3 To consider insurance quotes and any potential additional measures in respect of the building being vacant and associated costs The Council were advised that the insurance company had supplied an estimated cost of £2,200 for the annual premium but the confirmed cost was not available and additional information had been requested on any additional security that might be required once the building was empty. It was resolved that the matter of insurance and any additional measures that were required to cover any insurance requirements would be delegated to the Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair as this would have to be put in place before the next meeting to be held in September.</p>	
12. Parish Priority Statement	<p>12.1 To review draft Ditchling Parish Council Parish Priority Statement The document was discussed and it was noted that the document should be in line with the Beacon Parish Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr. Rowling and Orme would check the affordable housing policy was in line with the statement and the document would be recirculated for approval for the consultation process.</p>	

	<p>12.2 To consider public consultation, timings and associated costs It was noted that a survey would be produced and promoted in the Ditchling Community Magazine and on social media. The PPS needs to be submitted to the South Downs National Park by the 30 November 2023 as an extension has been agreed for submission.</p>	
13.	<p>Street Lighting 13.1 To review request from resident to remove street light in Long Park Corner The Council discussed the request and resolved that they did not wish to remove the street light and the new upgrade of lighting should address some of the issues raised. 13.2 To receive update on street lighting repairs/procedures following implementation of new contract The Clerk had a meeting with Eric Ware in respect of the new contract with Balfour Beatty and it was agreed that Cllr. Sansom would liaise directly with Eric in respect of putting a statement together of what the Council's requirements were for lighting which would avoid the issue of having to undertake a lighting design statement for all work in the future, which had been brought to the Council's attention last year. The four new style lanterns have been purchased and paid for and the Council received a quote for the labour, which amounted to the sum of £6,191.92 plus VAT.</p>	
14.	<p>Climate Change 14.1 Report from meeting with Ditchling Climate Change Action Network – 26 July 2023 The Clerk, Cllr. Rowling and Barna met with the Ditchling Climate Change Action Network and discussed the ways the both parties could work together in the future in respect of climate change and biodiversity matters. It was noted a 'bike swarm' was being held on Keymer Road on the 23 September at 10.30am to highlight the need for safe and active travel from Ditchling to Keymer and further details will be available soon. Councillors were invited to attend and support this event. It was noted that the Council intend to produce a Climate Change Action Plan in the future.</p>	
15.	<p>Correspondence and consultations 15.1 Report from MP This was circulated and noted. 15.2 Correspondence in relation to Underhill Lane car park from Ditchling Beacon and Commons Following further communications, it was resolved that the Council would not support the renovation of the car park in Underhill Lane.</p>	
16.	<p>Reports from representatives on outside bodies, events and training 16.1 To review training courses available for Councillors and staff It was noted Cllr. Stapleton and Rowling were attending the planning training ran by ESALC. Cllr. Barna had attended several Climate Change courses which she had paid for and the costs will be reimbursed from the training budget.</p> <p>It was noted the Administrative Officer will attend a SLCC Cemetery Matters: Looking to the Future course, as this would be beneficial for the work required for the burial ground extension.</p> <p>Cllr. Ingham noted that the builders will be carrying out work to the south facing wall outside the Parish Council office and she is liaising with the Clerk in respect of dates.</p> <p>Cllr. Ingham noted that the Village Hall Committee will be writing to the Council in respect of electricity charges.</p>	
17.	<p>Future meeting dates Parish Council Meeting – No meeting in August Parish Council Meeting - Monday 25 September 2023 at 7pm</p>	

The meeting closed at 21:19 hrs.

Schedule of payments for July/August 2023

Date Paid	Payee Name	Amount Paid	Transaction Detail
JULY			
02/07/2023	Ditchling Village Hall	£15.00	hall hire
03/07/2023	Ditchling Village Hall	£213.54	Parish office rent
05/07/2023	Lewes District Council	£38.40	bin emptying
09/07/2023	BT	£177.19	phone/broadband
10/07/2023	Dropbox	£95.88	dropbox service 12 months
19/07/2023	ESALC	£48.00	Councillor training finance
19/07/2023	Bonnys Wood	£576.00	emergency tree work
19/07/2023	ESALC	£96.00	Councillor planning training
21/07/2023	Motion Consultants Ltd	£6,069.00	traffic consultancy phase 2
21/07/2023	CPRE	£60.00	subscription membership fees
28/07/2023	Staff salaries	£2,011.59	July staff salaries
28/07/2023	HMRC	£583.43	PAYE July
28/07/2023	East Sussex Pension Fund	£543.50	Staff pensions
25/07/2023	Kitman	£468.00	Replacement PC for office/software and set up
25/07/2023	Cllr. Jenny Barna	£201.22	Reimbursement for Climate Change training
25/07/2023	Simon Woodley	£476.40	Repairs to playground fencing/car park pot holes/roundabout
25/07/2023	Post Office	£3.10	postage
28/07/2023	Adobe	£13.14	software (awaiting invoice)
30/07/2023	In Reach Print	£45.60	photocopier (awaiting invoice)
26/07/2023	Barcombe Landscapes Ltd	£3,948.00	recreation ground grass cutting May-July
26/07/2023	Falon Nameplates Ltd	£112.08	memorial plaque
31/07/2023	Fitzhugh Gates Solicitors	£60.00	fees for retrieving deeds relating to 1-3 Ditchling Gardens
31/07/2023	ESALC	£4.88	NALC publication
AUGUST			
29/08/2023	Staff salaries	£2,011.59	August staff salaries
29/08/2023	HMRC	£583.43	PAYE August
29/08/2023	East Sussex Pension Fund	£543.50	Staff pensions
Total payments		£18,998.47	