



## 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 29<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Present: Cllrs Madden (Chair), Barna, Godley, Ingham, Orme, Rowling, Sansom, Seddon and Stapleton.

Tracey Euesden (Clerk)

James MacCleary MP  
District Councillor Paul Mellor  
PCSO Richard Amos  
PCSO Tom Payne

#### Public Participation:

No members of the public were present.

32.	<b>Apologies of absence</b> – Apologies were received from Cllr Farrands
33.	<b>To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025.</b> The minutes of the meeting were <b>APPROVED</b> and duly signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.
34.	<b>Actions from previous minutes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Min 101.1 To commence drafting a Communications Strategy (All) Ongoing.</li><li>• Min 129.1 To draw up paper containing budget projections (R Sansom / Clerk) Ongoing.</li><li>• Min 166.2 To carry out inspection of burial ground (ER / Clerk) Completed.</li><li>• Min 169.1 Make contact with ESCC regarding footpath improvements (Clerk) Engaged with Monday Group who will be liaising with ESCC and Hassocks Parish Council.</li></ul>
	<i>Cllr Ingham arrived at the meeting.</i>
35.	<b>Clerk's report.</b> The Clerk's report had been circulated with the agenda papers.
36.	<b>Sussex Police – Meet and Greet the PCSOs.</b> PCSO Richard Amos introduced himself and his colleague and explained that his role of PCSO was primarily to be part of the community covering Ditchling, Plumpton and Lewes. Whilst PCSOs offer support to the police, they do not have powers of arrest. Weekly patrols are carried out in Ditchling and a "Meet your Officer" event is being scheduled for 25 <sup>th</sup> September 2025 from 10.30 at The Bull car park. PCSO Amos also described how he had recently attended the local primary school to engage with the pupils and has presented public talks on how to prevent becoming a victim of fraud and scams. Whilst he had joined local social media groups to keep abreast of any incidents, PCSO Amos emphasised the importance of making formal reports to Sussex Police.  Cllr Stapleton enquired about the PCSO's role in dealing with parking on pavements and PCSO Amos replied that there were notices that could be issued but as the officers are not always present, the correct channel would be to report the offending vehicles via "Operation Crackdown".

	<p>Cllr Madden enquired about references made during the public participation sessions of parish council meetings, of anti-social activity at the recreation ground, but PCSO Amos advised that whilst there have been reports of anti-social driving at the car park, no reports have been made to the police about incidents at the playground.</p> <p>As there were no further questions, Cllr Madden thanked the PCSOs for the work that they do and they left the meeting.</p>
37.	<p><b>James MacCleary MP – Meet and Greet.</b> James MacCleary MP introduced himself and described the Community Engagement session that he had hosted prior to the meeting where members of the public had raised various issues. Mr MacCleary acknowledged the importance of keeping in touch with the more rural villages of his constituency as well as the larger more urban towns.</p> <p>Cllr Stapleton referred to the apparent reluctance of Local Planning Authorities to enforce breaches of planning conditions and whilst Mr MacCleary was sympathetic, he expressed his reluctance to interfere with the planning process. It was noted that the SDNPA representative is scheduled to attend a future parish council meeting and this issue could be raised then. Mr MacCleary did however, refer to the emerging Planning and Infrastructure bill and described his efforts to highlight the issue of unsustainable development taking place in areas neighbouring smaller villages such as Ditchling where infrastructure is already stretched.</p> <p>Referring to Devolution and the transfer of assets, Mr MacCleary commented that the district councils were pushing forward with drafting policies but reminded councillors that any assets transferred to the towns and parishes would automatically become a liability.</p> <p>There being no further questions, Cllr Madden thanked Mr MacCleary and he and District Cllr Mellor left the meeting.</p>
38.	<p><b>Planning</b> The following Applications were discussed.</p> <p><b>38.1 <u>SDNP/25/02660/HOUS: The Moot House, Lodge Hill Lane.</u></b> Erection of single storey rear extension, conversion of existing garage into habitable accommodation and erection of detached timber framed garage.</p> <p>It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to submit a comment of <b>NO COMMENT</b></p> <p><b>38.2 <u>SDNP/25/02699/HOUS: 14 South Street.</u></b> Retrospective application for amendments to Planning Permission SDNP/21/05960/HOUS (single storey side extension to replace existing conservatory) to address previous refusal.</p> <p>It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to submit a comment of <b>NO COMMENT</b></p> <p><b>38.3 <u>SDNP/25/02681/HOUS: Lodge Hill House.</u></b> Conversion of tennis court to padel court. Members noted that padel is significantly noisier than tennis and as the court was close to neighbouring homes this proposal could impact adversely upon their quiet enjoyment of their properties.</p> <p>For this reason, it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to submit a comment of <b>OBJECTION</b></p> <p>It was also noted that the tennis court is being promoted for commercial use along with the adjoining summer house as a holiday let and the Clerk was asked to enquire whether a change of use is required.</p> <p><b>38.4 <u>SDNP/25/02920/TCA: 2 North End.</u></b> T1 Sycamore – Fell to ground.</p>

	<p>The lack of information to support the felling of this tree was noted and it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to submit a comment to this effect.</p> <p>38.5 <b><u>SDNP/25/02924/TCA: 24 West Street.</u></b> T1 Weeping Ash – Fell The lack of information to support the felling of this tree was noted and it was <b>RESOLVED</b> to submit a comment to this effect</p> <p>38.6 <b><u>SDNP/25/02635/HOUS: 2 Mulberry Lane.</u></b> Erection of single storey side extension. It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to submit a comment of <b>NO COMMENT</b>.</p> <p><b>Appeals</b></p> <p>38.7 <b><u>SDNP/24/00082/REF: 2A Beacon Road.</u></b> Appeal against refusal <b>Dismissed</b>. Cllr Stapleton was pleased to note the Inspector's comments of support for Policy SD31 of the SDNP Local Plan.</p>
39.	<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p>39.1 <b>To approve schedule of payments for July 2025.</b> The schedule of payments for July were <b>APPROVED</b>.</p> <p>39.2 <b>To Receive Bank Reconciliations for May 2025.</b> Cllr. Orme had reviewed the reconciliations which were <b>NOTED</b>.</p> <p>39.3 <b>To Appoint an Internal Auditor for the current financial year 2025 / 2026.</b> It was <b>RESOLVED:</b> <i>To Appoint Mr K Robertson to carry out internal audit services for the financial year 2025 / 2026.</i></p>
40.	<p><b>Recreation Ground &amp; Burial Ground</b></p> <p>40.1 <b>To consider request for a memorial plaque to be placed at Ditchling Recreation Ground.</b> Councillors have been asked to authorise a memorial plaque to be placed on a tree in the Recreation Ground. Whilst the general consensus was positive, It was noted that the council does not currently have a policy for such requests and it was <b>RESOLVED:</b> <i>That the Recreation and Burial Ground Working Group draft a policy for consideration at a future meeting to ensure consistency when considering requests of this nature</i></p> <p>40.2 <b>To consider quotations for hedge cutting at Recreation Ground.</b> So far, the Clerk had received one quotation for the hedge cutting at the recreation ground. Two further quotes were being sought and it was suggested that a contract be agreed to carry out the services for the next three years. As the nesting season will be coming to an end, it was hoped that the works could be scheduled for September in an attempt to avoid it being done in bad weather. It was <b>RESOLVED:</b> <i>That once the estimates had been received, the Clerk would seek advice from the council's contractor and after consultation with Cllr Farrands and Cllr Rowling, will award the contract.</i></p>
41.	<p><b>Traffic Committee</b></p> <p>41.1 <b>To receive approved minutes of the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025.</b> The minutes were received.</p> <p>41.2 <b>Update following meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025 and draft minutes.</b> Cllr Stapleton had circulated a report following the meeting. He particularly highlighted the issues facing horse</p>

riders using the roads to access the bridlepaths. He drew councillors' attention to a public meeting being held on 11<sup>th</sup> September to raise awareness and to see what can be done. Whilst Cllr Stapleton would be unable to attend this meeting, he suggested that the Parish Council should be represented.

**41.3 To consider invitation from ESCC Traffic Safety Team regarding Temporary Road Safety Posters.** ESCC has advised that it is no longer able to install temporary posters and has offered to supply Town and Parish Councils with a supply for their own use. A discussion took place and it was **RESOLVED:**

***To Accept the invitation and request a supply of posters.***

At Cllr Stapleton's request, and with the agreement of the meeting, agenda items 11.4 and 11.5 were discussed jointly.

**41.4 To consider quotations for purchase of Mobile Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) for locations at Beacon Road and Clayton Road and to consider quotations for supply and installation (and associated works) of posts for SIDs.**

Cllr Stapleton had circulated a paper laying out the Traffic Committee's work on this project and reminded Members that the sum of £10,000 had been set aside in the 2025 / 2026 budget to introduce the SIDs.

- 1) Supply of 2 x Radar Speed Signs (solar version), 2 x solar panels and mounting kits, 4 x battery £5,179.98 plus VAT
- 2) Supply of 2 x Portable Speed Indicator Devices, solar powered, with spare lead acid battery, intelligent charger, weatherproof cover and brackets. £7,878 plus VAT
- 3) Supply of 2 x Vas300SD, Solar assembly, Battery and Box and Brackets £8,636 plus VAT.

Quotations had also been sought for the installation (and associated works) of the posts and SIDs.

- 1) Installation of posts (not supplied) £1,000
- 2) Supply and Installation of posts £1,280

The Clerk had been unable to obtain a 3<sup>rd</sup> quote however, research amongst other councils had shown that the average cost to install the posts was £500 each with the councils sourcing the posts. (These prices are based on the understanding that the posts are permanent fixtures and do not require ground sockets.)

Cllr Stapleton reported that Wilbar and Associates would be applying for the licences to install the SIDs on behalf of the parish council and as this relationship has already been established, he recommended that they be used to supply and install the devices.

Cllr Stapleton Proposed, Seconded Cllr Orme and **RESOLVED**

***That the council accepts quotation number 1 for the supply of the SIDs and quotation number 2 for the installation works***

**41.5 To consider methods of resident engagement regarding potential step increases to precept for the purpose of funding priority projects.** As reported at the Traffic Committee meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> July, Cllr Stapleton described his intention to propose that the Parish Council raises funds to finance the other priority projects by making incremental increases to the precept over the next 4 years. Given that these increases will likely be significant and in addition to other budget related increases, Councillors are asked to consider whether consultation with the community should be undertaken prior to making this type of

	<p>decision.</p> <p>A lengthy discussion ensued and whilst it was generally agreed that public consultation would need to be carried out, the following matters were also raised;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Parish Council would need to have a clear understanding of what can be achieved to improve the village crossroads and to introduce a 20 mph extension, and at what cost.</li> <li>• The projects should have support and approval from the Highways Department.</li> <li>• All other potential funding sources should be exhausted before resorting to precept increases.</li> <li>• Any consultation must be thorough and involve all demographics, taking into account the impact of a significant increase in precept upon their individual circumstances.</li> <li>• Consideration must be given to the implications of Devolution upon the parish council's finances.</li> <li>• The cost of other planned projects must be considered</li> <li>• Consideration must be given to how the proceeds from the sale of Ditchling Gardens should be utilised.</li> </ul> <p>Members agreed that this matter would require further discussion and consideration and Cllr Sansom suggested that the planned budget projection paper should be produced prior to any further debate. it was <b>RESOLVED</b>;</p> <p><b><i>That Cllr Sansom and the Clerk would produce the budget projection paper and a Councillor Planning Event would be arranged to address the matters raised and consider what form of consultation should take place.</i></b></p> <p>In the meantime, the Clerk will obtain details of the various bands of council tax and deadlines by which precept for 2026 /2027 will need to be set.</p>
	<p><b>Streetlights</b></p> <p><b>42.1 Update on Lantern Replacement Schedule.</b></p> <p>Cllr Sansom updated members on the matter of the streetlight that was attached to 1-3 South Street prior to the recent building works. The parish council has received an invoice from Balfour Beatty to disconnect the power to the light however, there is some discrepancy about the work that took place and the Clerk is in dialogue with the Streetlight Manager regarding this. The matter of whether to reinstate the lantern will be addressed later in the year.</p> <p>Cllr Barna reported that the streetlight at The Dymocks (P1) is still constantly on despite several reports being made and the Clerk will address this with the Streetlight Manager along with the matter above.</p> <p><b>42.2 To consider next steps for column refurbishment project.</b></p> <p>This matter was deferred.</p>
43.	<p><b>Action in rural Sussex – Housing Needs Survey.</b></p> <p><b>43.1 To receive report from AirS.</b></p> <p>Members have been provided with a copy of the analysis of responses to the survey. It is noted that 16 households are identified as needing affordable housing with most requiring to move within the next two years into a one-bedroom property and renting from a local community organisation or buying on the open market.</p>
44.	<p><b>Bus Shelters on Lewes Road</b></p> <p><b>44.1</b> The Parish Council has been contacted by several residents of St Georges Park regarding the very poor condition of the bus shelters on Lewes Road. These have been reported to ESCC who have suggested that the repairs can be carried out on the condition that the Parish Council takes ownership and responsibility for their ongoing maintenance and</p>

	<p>repair. Members referred to earlier discussions regarding the potential financial impact of devolution and it was <b>RESOLVED</b>.</p> <p><b><i>Not to accept ownership and responsibility for these bus shelters.</i></b></p> <p>It was noted that this matter had been raised during James MacCleary MP's Public Engagement session earlier in the evening and he had agreed to support the residents of St Georges Park in their request for ESCC to carry out the repairs.</p>
45.	<p><b>Devolution</b></p> <p><b>45.1 Lewes District Council – To consider transfer of assets from Lewes District Council.</b></p> <p>In response to the Government's White Paper on Devolution in England published in December 2024, Lewes District Council has drawn up a corporate property and assets strategy and has approached parish and town councils about the possibility of transferring key assets in their parishes. Questions were raised about the financial and administrative implications and as mentioned by James MacCleary MP earlier in the meeting, the fact that the assets would become the Parish Council's liabilities was noted. It was <b>RESOLVED</b>.</p> <p><b><i>To defer the decision pending further discussions with Lewes District Council.</i></b></p>
46.	<p><b>Dame Isabella Sprotts Eleemosynary Charity.</b></p> <p><b>46.1 To Approve the Appointment of a Trustee.</b></p> <p>It was <b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p><b><i>To Approve the appointment of Becca Rivers Moore as a Trustee.</i></b></p>
47.	<p><b>Events</b></p> <p>47.1 VJ Day Service 15<sup>th</sup> August.</p> <p>47.2 Remembrance Day Parade – To authorise payment of £150 for marching band</p> <p>It was <b>RESOLVED</b>.</p> <p><b><i>To Approve the sum of £150.00</i></b></p>
48.	<p><b>Future meeting dates</b></p> <p>Parish Council Meeting – Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025 no meeting in August.</p>
49	<p><b>CONFIDENTIAL SESSION</b> - Under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public will be excluded from the following items on the grounds that the confidential matters to be discussed under item 140.1 below would be prejudicial in the public interest.</p> <p>Members were updated.</p>
	<p><b>Actions taken forward.</b></p> <p>From previous meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Min 101.1 To commence drafting a Communications Strategy (All) Ongoing.</li> </ul> <p>From this meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Min 39.3 To appoint Internal Auditor (Clerk)</li> <li>Min 40.2 To award hedge cutting contract on receipt of quotations (PF, ER Clerk)</li> <li>Min 41.3 To accept ESCC's offer and to request supply of posters. (Clerk)</li> <li>Min 41.4 To accept quotations for SiDs and Installation. (Clerk)</li> <li>Min 41.5 To produce budget projection paper (R Sansom and Clerk).</li> </ul>

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.