



DITCHLING PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Ditchling Parish Council Meeting held at Ditchling Village Hall, Ditchling on Tuesday 28th October 2025

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

Tracey Euesden (Clerk)

Also Present:

District Councillor Paul Mellor

Public Participation:

3 Members of the public were present.

68.	Apologies of absence – Apologies were received from Cllrs Godley, Orme and Sansom.
69.	Declarations of Interest. There were no declarations of interest.
70.	To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 23rd September 2025. The minutes of the meeting were APPROVED and duly signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.
71.	Actions from previous minutes • Min 41.3 To chase ESCC for supply of posters. (Clerk). ESCC has advised that the posters are now out of stock and further supplies are awaited. • Min 56.7 To review fees with food truck and Stoolball Club (Clerk) Ongoing. • Min 58.1 Traffic Working Group Meeting to be arranged (Cllr. Stapleton) Completed.
72.	Clerk's report. The Clerk's report had been circulated with the agenda papers.
73.	Local Governance Review. (LGR) District Cllr Mellor gave a brief background on plans for devolution, explaining that whilst parish and town councils may not be directly affected by LGR, there would be significant changes to the delivery of services currently provided by Lewes District Council (LDC) East and West Sussex and Brighton & Hove are among the 6 authorities to be included in the first tranche of devolution with Mayoral elections taking place next year. Lewes is part of proposals submitted under "One East Sussex" and consultations will commence in November until Spring 2026 with legislation being passed by Government to establish new unitary authorities in Autumn 2026. Transitional authorities will be formed until the unitary authority elections in May 2027. District Cllr. Mellor reported that Brighton & Hove had submitted its own case for consideration which would see East Sussex split into two which, in his opinion was less favourable to the "One East Sussex" proposals.

	Referring to the transfer of assets, Cllr Stapleton commented that LDC had been in contact with the parish council regarding the potential transfer of the car park and public toilets and reminded the Clerk that information regarding costs and maintenance of these assets should be sought to inform the council's discussions. District Cllr Mellor had no information about East Sussex County Council's intentions regarding its assets. Cllr Ingham asked what would happen to LDC's assets if the parish councils declined to take them on and District Cllr Mellor suggested that local voluntary groups and organisations would be approached. District Cllr Mellor agreed to provide further updates as things progress and was thanked for his report.
74.	Planning The following Applications were discussed. 74.1 SDNP/25/03782/FUL: Garden Pride Garden Centre. Installation of solar panels to the roofs of Garden Centre. It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT. 74.2 SDNP/25/03454/HOUS: 18 South Street. Erection of attached double garage to replace existing double car port. It was RESOLVED to submit COMMENTS OBJECTING to this application, citing previous history of refused applications and the adverse impact of the proposals on the street scene. 74.3 SDNP/25/03929/APNW: Beacon Farm, Field east of Lodge Lane. Raising of land between 0.72m and 1.85m using sub soil, chalk and brick rubble to create a level area for the erection of an agricultural storage barn. It was noted that Permitted Development had been granted for this application prior to the deadline for comments to be received and the Clerk was asked to investigate the reason for this with the Planning Officer. She was also asked to comment upon the unacceptable number of large vehicle movements in the village which will result from the permitted application. 74.4 SDNP/25/03882/TCA: 28 West Street. T1 Persian Iron Wood – Prune back to reduce height by 4m and width by 2m. T2 Sycamore – fell and replace. It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT. 74.5 SDNP/25/03954/HOUS: 13 South View. Single Storey front extension It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT. 74.6 SDNP/25/04050/TPO: 8 Common Lane. T1 Ash – Raise crown over road ensuring height clearance of 6m. Raise crown over driveway by 3m to reduce potential hazards. It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT.
75.	Finance 75.1 To approve schedule of payments for October 2025 The schedule of payments for October were APPROVED. 75.2 To Receive Bank Reconciliations for September 2025. Cllr. Orme had reviewed

	the reconciliations which were NOTED. 75.3 Budget Review September 2025. The Clerk had circulated the current position and projected year-end figures for the budget for 2025 / 2026 which was NOTED.
76.	Recreation Ground & Burial Ground 76.1 Update on Playground Equipment Installation. The Clerk has placed the orders with Kompan and JB Corrie and a timescale for installation is expected within the next two weeks. 76.2 Pavilion and Tractor Shed Leases. A meeting has been arranged with the Pavilion Trustees and the Recreation, Burial Ground and Playground Working Group. Cllr Stapleton advised caution that the meeting should be without prejudice and subject to contract. Cllr Madden explained that it was intended to be more of a listening exercise to establish the group's plans to form a constituted body. The Clerk was asked to seek legal advice regarding the matter of ownership of the building.
77.	Traffic 77.1 Update on Priority Projects and to consider recommendations from Traffic Working Group. Cllr Stapleton presented the proposals developed by the Traffic Working Group, which had been circulated to all councillors. He reiterated that the remit of both the Working Group and the Traffic Committee is to advance traffic calming measures within the parish. Following the commissioning of the Motion Report in 2023 and subsequent public consultations in 2024, four priority projects had been identified. In his view, the Parish Council should now actively pursue these projects. Cllr Stapleton noted that while the County Council retains responsibility for highways-related matters, it has indicated no intention to fund the proposed schemes. Consequently, if the projects are to proceed, the Parish Council must identify alternative funding sources. A discussion ensued. Members broadly agreed on the importance of the initiatives but some expressed reservations regarding the level of increase to the precept and the accumulation of funds for projects not yet approved by the County Council. Cllr Orme had previously communicated with the Chair and had suggested that he might support a more modest precept increase specifically to support traffic calming efforts. He proposed that the Parish Council allocate funds for design and consultancy work on the 20 mph zone and pedestrian crossing points, as outlined in Wilbar Associates' email dated 1st October. The quoted costs were £1,040 and £1,050 respectively, and included preliminary engagement with East Sussex County Council (ESCC), offering some assurance of potential approval. The Clerk confirmed that sufficient Earmarked Reserves were available to cover these costs within the current financial year. Cllr Ingham Proposed, Seconded Cllr Rowling: <i>To Accept the quotations for the design and consultancy work on the 20 mph zone changes at £1,040 plus VAT and for the design and consultancy work for the pedestrian crossing points at £1,050 plus VAT.</i> All in Favour. The Proposal was APPROVED.

	Cllr Stapleton Proposed, Seconded Cllr Farrands: <i>To Accept Proposals to increase precept @ £45,000 for 2026/2027 to fund traffic Calming measures to be implemented in 2026.</i> 3 In Favour, 3 Against, 1 Abstention. As the vote was tied, the Chair used her casting Vote and the PROPOSAL FAILED. Cllr Stapleton Proposed, Seconded Cllr Seddon: <i>To Approve proposals for public consultations regarding further increases to Precept as recommended by the Traffic Working Group following its meeting on 17th October.</i> 6 In Favour, 1 Against. The Proposal was APPROVED. It was reported that licences for the Mobile Speed Indicator Devices had now been approved by ESCC and installation would take place on Beacon Road and Clayton Road in November.
78.	Streetlights 78.1 Update on Lantern Replacement Schedule. The Clerk had requested the results of the latest night inspection to identify which lights are not working and will obtain quotations for these to be replaced. 78.2 Invoice from Balfour Beatty. An invoice for the sum of £864.85 from Balfour Beatty for works described as emergency works to disconnect UKPN Service to a wall light. As pointed out by Cllr. Sansom previously, these works appear to have been requested by a resident and carried out without reference to the Parish Council. Cllr. Sansom is also unclear as to why the works were considered necessary and has suggested that he and the Clerk arrange a further meeting Balfour Beatty's Streetlight Manager to discuss this further. This course of action was AGREED.
79.	St George's Park Bus Shelters – To consider request from ESCC for a donation towards repairs. The Clerk had received a telephone call from ESCC's Senior Transport Officer to request a donation of £378 towards the cost of the repairs to the bus shelters that are being planned and he had agreed to submit the request formally by email. However, since then, a letter has been received from the ESCC Assistant Director (Operations) advising that the shelters will be removed unless the parish council agrees to fully fund their maintenance or provide new shelters. The Clerk has attempted to obtain clarification of what the true position is and the MP's office has also been making enquiries but no response has been received as yet. Referring to comments made in the public participation period before the meeting, Cllrs agreed that ESCC's position is unacceptable and further dialogue should be encouraged. In order to facilitate a resolution suitable to all parties, it was AGREED <i>That the Parish Council will donate the sum of £378 to East Sussex County Council towards the repairs to the bus shelters but will not accept responsibility for ownership or ongoing maintenance.</i>
80.	To Consider Documents for Approval 80.1 DPC Communications Strategy. This Document was APPROVED. 80.2 DPC Grants and Donations Policy This Document was APPROVED. 80.3 DPC ICT Policy. This Document was APPROVED.

81.	To Consider Documents for Annual Review 81.1 DPC Non-Financial Risk Assessment. The document was REVIEWED with no required changes. 81.2 DPC Financial Risk Assessment. The document was REVIEWED with no required changes.
82.	Parish Council Website 82.1 To Approve quotation from VisionICT for website MOT at £145.00 plus VAT. The quotation was APPROVED.
83.	Public Participation in Meetings. 83.1 To review process for public participation in meetings. The following process was AGREED. <i>Members of the public will be asked if they would like to be named in the minutes or referred to as a member of the public. The agenda item they refer to in their comments will be noted in the minutes.</i>
84.	Consultations 84.1 East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy. 6 week consultation ends 26th November. The Clerk will publish this consultation on social media. 84.2 SDNPA Draft Active Travel Network Plan and Vision Map. Comments invited until 14th November. Cllr Barna commented that Keymer Road is included in the Vision Map based on WSCC's existing Active Travel aspirations. It is also part of ESCC's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) with published timetable now showing consultation in early 2026
85.	Events 85.1 Remembrance Day Parade. Sunday 9th November 10.30 am.
86.	Future meeting dates 86.1 Parish Council Meeting – Tuesday, 2nd December 2025 86.2 Finance Committee Meeting – To be arranged
87.	CONFIDENTIAL SESSION - 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. 87.2 Ditchling Gardens – an update was provided. Members were updated.
	Actions taken forward. • Min 56.7 To review fees with Food Truck and Stoolball Club (Clerk) • Min 76.2 To seek advice from Solicitor (Clerk) • Min 77.1 To accept Quotations (Clerk) • Min 78.2 To arrange meeting with Streetlight Manager (Clerk / R Sansom) • Min 79 To offer donation to ESCC (Clerk) • Min 82 To accept quotation. (Clerk)

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.