



DITCHLING PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Ditchling Parish Council Meeting held at Ditchling Village Hall, Ditchling on Tuesday 2nd December 2025

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

Tracey Euesden (Clerk)

Public Participation:

2 Members of the public were present.

88.	Public Participation. Mr Stephen Dempsey spoke regarding agenda items 7.1 & 16.1 in support of Brighton & Hove City Council's proposal. Mr Stephen Cole spoke in support of his request under agenda item 12.2.
89.	Apologies of absence – Apologies were received from Cllr Godley. District Councillor Mellor had also extended his apologies.
90.	Declarations of Interest. Cllr Ingham declared an interest in agenda item 19.1
91.	To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 28th October 2025. The minutes of the meeting were APPROVED and duly signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.
92.	Actions from previous minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Min 56.7 To review fees with Food Truck and Stoolball Club (Clerk) - Completed (20% and 10% increases agreed respectively) Min 76.2 To seek advice from Solicitor (Clerk) - Deferred pending agenda item in January 2026. Min 77.1 To accept Quotations (Clerk) - Completed Min 78.2 To arrange meeting with Streetlight Manager (Clerk / R Sansom) Completed (see item 9.1) Min 79 To offer donation to ESCC (Clerk) Completed. Bus shelters to remain without glass panes. Min 82 To accept quotation. (Clerk) Completed.
93.	Clerk's report. The Clerk's report had been circulated with the agenda papers.
94.	94.1 Local Governance Review. (LGR) District Councillor Mellor had extended his apologies for this meeting. 94.2 Lewes District Council Asset Devolution. LDC had been in contact with the parish council regarding the potential transfer of the car park and public toilets. (LDC has since advised that the public toilets are leased from the Village Hall Management Committee and therefore not available for transfer). The Clerk had requested information regarding maintenance costs incurred or planned for the car park and had been advised that no significant works had been undertaken in recent years and none were planned. LDC has also stated that there is no income from

	<p>the car park but some councillors believe that there are instances where residents have paid for overnight parking. Cllr Stapleton commented that the retention of the car park and toilets was of great importance to the community and it was agreed that this matter would be discussed further in early 2026. In the meantime, the Clerk will review and circulate LDC's Asset Transfer Strategy to assess whether the transfer of the car park site would meet the principles contained within that document.</p>
95.	<p>Planning The following Applications were discussed.</p> <p>95.1 <u>SDNP/25/04040/LIS. 28 High Street.</u> Internal alterations at first floor to bathroom and ensuite.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT.</p> <p>95.2 <u>SDNP/25/04304/FUL. 113 East End Lane.</u> Change of use of cottage from ancillary residential use to self contained separate dwelling unit. Removal of cottage south facing dormers and insertion of 2no small Velux windows. Repositioning of the round window and moving approved ground floor west window to first floor level.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT.</p> <p>95.3 <u>SDNP/25/04568/TCA: 24 West Street.</u> G1 – 2no Laurel – Reduce Crown by 304m. G2 – 2no Fig – Reduce Crown by 1-2m</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT</p> <p>95.4 <u>SDNP/25/04598/TCA: 43 East End Lane.</u> T1 – Box Elder –remove ivy covered limb on Eastern side growing towards property due to excessive shading. T2 – Mulberry – fell - the tree is in decline. T3 Crab Apple – fell - poor specimen. T4 - Sweet Chestnut – fell – growing too close to the property.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT.</p> <p>95.5. <u>SDNP/25/04602/TCA: 25 East End Lane.</u> T2 – Laurel Hedge – reduce in height by approximately 2.0-2.5 metres. T3 – Holly – prune into ball shape. T4 – Cypress - fell to ground – dead tree.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT.</p> <p>95.6 <u>SDNP/25/04616/TPO: 56 North End.</u> T1 – Yew- crown raide by approximately 1.0-1.5 metres – to give 2 metre clarence from ground.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT.</p> <p>95.7 <u>SDNP/25/04804/TCA: 56 North End.</u> T2 Scots Pine – reduce height by 3 metres and remove major deadwood – to keep at reasonable size for garden. T3 Scots Pine – reduce height by 3 metres and remove major deadwood – to keep at reasonable size for garden. T4&T5 2 No Elm saplings – fell to ground – small sapling trees. T6 Holly – fell to ground level – encroaching over driveway. T7 Holly – reshape by approximately 1.5 metres – to retain shape. T8 Fig – reduce and reshape by 2.5 metres – formative prune.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT.</p> <p>95.8 Planning Enforcement. Cllr Stapleton expressed concerns about the apparent lack of action by the Enforcement Team when breaches of conditions are reported. Cllr</p>

	<p>Rowling agreed that it would be useful to understand the process undertaken by the enforcement Team and suggested that a meeting be arranged with the Chair of the SDNPA and a member of the Enforcement Team. The Clerk was asked to arrange this and Cllr Orme suggested that a list of cases should be made to support the council's concerns.</p> <p>95.9 Planning Appeals. <u>SDNP/25/00014/REF: Ditchling Rugby Club.</u> Councillors expressed disappointment that this Appeal has been Allowed. However it is noted that a number of conditions are attached and the situation should be closely monitored to ensure that these are upheld.</p>
96.	<p>Streetlights</p> <p>96.1 Invoice from Balfour Beatty. Cllr Sansom reported that he had now met with the streetlights Manager to discuss the charges to disconnect the UKPN Service to a wall light attached to a property. Whilst he is satisfied that as the owner of the asset, the council should pay the invoice, It is clear that if the correct process had been followed, there would have been some costs to be incurred by the homeowner. A discussion took place and It was AGREED:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>To pay the invoice in the sum of £720.71 Plus VAT and the Clerk should make contact with the homeowners to discuss a contribution towards the bill.</i></p> <p>96.2 Damaged Column on Farm Lane. So far, the Clerk had been unable to ascertain how the collapsed column had occurred. Quotations for its replacement had been requested from Balfour Beatty and an enquiry regarding the attachment of a lantern to a wooden pole that is currently in situ, as a potentially less expensive alternative to the cast iron column, has been made.</p> <p>96.3 ESCC Memorandum of Agreement. This revised MoA had been distributed to councillors. Cllr Sansom has reviewed the document and is satisfied with the content. <i>The document was APPROVED for signature.</i></p>
97.	<p>Finance</p> <p>97.1 To approve schedule of payments for November 2025 The schedule of payments for November, including 2 invoices received since the production of the agenda, were APPROVED.</p> <p>97.2 To Receive Bank Reconciliations for October 2025. Cllr. Orme had reviewed the reconciliations which were NOTED.</p> <p>97.3 To receive Internal Auditor's Interim Report – October 2025. It was NOTED that the internal auditor made no recommendations for improvement.</p> <p>97.4 Budget 2026 2027 – To receive and consider recommendations from the Finance Committee and to Approve Budget 2026 2027. The Clerk had circulated the draft budget. Cllr Stapleton expressed disappointment that his proposals for Traffic Calming Measures and Professional fees had not been fully accepted and commented that the draft budget does not allow for contingencies. Cllr Orme pointed out that provision has been made for Traffic Calming and Professional Fees and whilst it is unusual for the Parish Council's budget to contain a line for contingencies, the Finance Committee had discussed the need for future maintenance and upkeep of assets and facilities to be considered in future budgets. Cllr Orme Proposed, Seconded Cllr Sansom and AGREED.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">To Approve the Budget for the 2026 / 2027 financial year.</p>

	<p>97.5 To Set Precept 2026 2027. Referring to Precept setting decisions over previous years, Cllr Stapleton enquired whether there was a strategy behind the Finance Committee's recommendation to increase precept by 9%. He commented that the proposed increase for 2026 / 2027 does not go far enough if the council wishes to undertake projects in the near future and more provision will need to be made. Cllr Orme responded that there is no set strategy and that the budget informs the decision regarding the level of Precept. He referred to the potential for community consultation to take place when more details and costs are obtained for the projects being pursued. Cllr Orme Proposed, Seconded Cllr Ingham and AGREED.</p> <p>That Precept be set at £141,620 for 2026 / 2027 Representing an increase of 9% (equivalent to a rise of £9.64 per annum per band D property).</p>
98.	<p>Recreation Ground & Burial Ground</p> <p>98.1 Update on Playground Equipment Installation.</p> <p>Cllr Farrands reported that a site meeting with the contractors had taken place earlier in the day and work is expected to commence at the end of January subject to weather conditions. In the meantime, the Clerk will be provided with all of the necessary documentation, insurances and risk assessments.</p>
99.	<p>Traffic</p> <p>99.1 Speed Indicator Devices (SIDS) – To Consider response to complaint regarding the device on Clayton Road. A member of the public has raised concerns regarding the newly installed Speed Indicator Device and these had been shared with councillors. The complainant refers to the location of the sign and the light pollution it causes to his property. It was noted that there are specific requirements and conditions that need to be considered when identifying suitable locations and these must be approved by ESCC's Traffic Safety team. Cllr Stapleton had been in contact with the manufacturer to see what could be done about the brightness of the display and It was suggested that the Clerk undertakes a visit to the property to assess the extent of the problem before deciding on a course of action. This was AGREED.</p> <p>99.2 To Consider response to resident regarding the introduction of a Speed Indicator Device on Lewes Road. A resident had written to the council welcoming the introduction of the SIDS and requesting that one be introduced on Lewes Road. It was noted that Clayton Road and Beacon Road were identified as having the greatest volume of traffic so these sites were chosen to assess the effectiveness of the signs but that Lewes Road is next on the list of priority locations and the necessary licences etc. will be pursued when funds become available. The Clerk was asked to explore the possibility of funding for a new unit via the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner's Office.</p> <p>99.3 To Consider quotation for periodic maintenance and rotation of devices. Councillors are asked to consider the quotation of £150 per visit to maintain, rotate and download data from the devices. Cllr Barna Proposed, Seconded Cllr Stapleton and AGREED</p> <p>To Accept the quotation for the rotation of the devices to be undertaken Every 8 weeks with a review after 3 cycles.</p>
100.	<p>To Consider Documents for Approval</p> <p>100.1 DPC Memorial Benches and Plaques Policy</p> <p>With one small amendment, this Document was APPROVED.</p>
101.	<p>To Consider Documents for Annual Review</p> <p>101.1 DPC Fixed Asset Register. It was suggested that the Pavilion should be added to the Asset Register at the nominal value of £1.00 and with this addition, the Asset Register was NOTED.</p>
102.	<p>South Downs National Park Authority – Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Call for projects. Applications are invited before 31st March and whilst Cllrs are welcome to submit ideas for projects, Cllr Rowling cautioned that these ideas should support the</p>

	Park's corporate plan priorities which are 'Nature Recovery', 'Climate Action' and 'A National Park for All'.
103.	<p>Consultations</p> <p>103.1 Local Government Review – Consultation on Proposals for East Sussex. The government has launched its consultation on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in East Sussex.</p> <p>The consultation is open to all residents, businesses, voluntary groups, and local organisations. This is the only opportunity for the public to comment on these proposals directly to government and every response counts.</p> <p>The government will be consulting on two options for East Sussex:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal by Lewes District Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, East Sussex County Council, Hastings Borough Council, and Rother District Council submitted a proposal for one unitary council for the current East Sussex County footprint. • Brighton and Hove City Council's proposal for five unitary councils on a pan-Sussex basis. <p>The consultation is available at: Proposals for local government reorganisation in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove, and West Sussex - GOV.UK and will be open for 7 weeks until 11 January 2026. Responses can also be made by email to LGRconsultationresponse@communities.gov.uk</p> <p>Cllrs are asked to view the proposals and submit their comments to the Clerk before 3rd January so that they can be collated and circulated for review prior to the submission deadline.</p> <p>103.2 South Downs National Park Authority – Technical advice note (TAN) on Retrofitting Historic Buildings for Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction. Comments are invited from 27th November until 18th December and can be sent to consultations@southdowns.gov.uk</p>
104.	<p>Events</p> <p>None.</p>
105.	<p>Future meeting dates</p> <p>105.1 Parish Council Meeting – Tuesday 27th January 2026</p>
87.	<p>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.</p> <p>87.2 Ditchling Gardens – an update was provided.</p>
	<p>Actions taken forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Min. 94.2 LDC Asset Transfer. To be added to agenda for Jan / Feb 2026. (Clerk) • Min. 95.8 Meeting to be arranged re. Planning Enforcement. (Clerk) • Min. 95.8 List of cases to be collated for meeting. (Planning Working Group) • Min. 99.1 SiDS visit to property to be arranged. (Clerk) • Min. 99.2 Explore funding for SIDS from Sussex PCC. (Clerk) • Min 103.1 Local Government Reorganisation – comments by 3rd Jan 26. (All)

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm.