



DITCHLING PARISH COUNCIL

Ditchling Village Hall 18 Lewes Road Ditchling East Sussex
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Minutes of the Ditchling Parish Council Meeting held at Ditchling Village Hall, Ditchling on Tuesday 24th March 2026

Present: Cllrs Sansom (Chair), Barna, Farrands, Godley, Ingham, Orme, Rowling and Seddon

Tracey Euesden (Clerk)

Also Present

District Councillor Paul Mellor.

Trevor Leggo (CEO, East Sussex Association of Local Councils)

No Members of the public were present.

143.	Public Participation. There were no members of the public present.
144.	Apologies of absence – Apologies were received from Cllrs Madden and Stapleton
145.	Declarations of Interest. Cllr Ingham declared an interest in agenda items 8.1 and 18.1
146.	To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 24th February 2026. The minutes of the meeting were APPROVED and duly signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.
147.	Local Government Re-organisation – Presentation from Trevor Leggo CEO, ESALC. Mr Leggo introduced himself and provided an overview of the evolution of local government since the establishment of parish councils under the Local Government Act 1894. He suggested that it would be premature to adopt a positive stance regarding the current proposals for local government reorganisation, as no decision has yet been made on which unitary authority proposals will proceed. Members were reminded that East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council have each submitted proposals to the Government; however, the anticipated announcement has been delayed. Should a decision not be issued by 30 March, it is likely to be postponed further due to the pre-election period of six weeks preceding the elections scheduled for 7 May. Mr Leggo further explained that, under the proposed timeline, elections would take place in 2027 to appoint a shadow cabinet, followed by mayoral elections in 2028 to determine the leadership of the new unitary authority. In considering the potential impact of these proposals on parish and town councils, Mr

	<p>Leggo advised Members to continue with business as usual. He noted that parliamentary time is limited and was rightly being used for more pressing international and domestic issues, and this along with a perceived public ambivalence to local government reform, may result in delays to the proposed devolution programme in his opinion.</p> <p>Cllr Sansom thanked Mr Leggo for his attendance at the meeting.</p>
148.	<p>Actions from previous minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Min. 110 - Contact owners of properties with streetlight attached to advise of process if a problem occurs. (Clerk) Completed. • Min 118 – Pavilion Lease – draw up list of conditions for lease (All). Ongoing. It was agreed that Cllr Sansom would produce a draft for consideration. • Min 131.2 - LDC Asset Transfer – To arrange meeting (Clerk) - See Item 8.1 • Min 133.1 - Streetlight on Farm Lane – Contact BT (Clerk) Completed • Min 137.1 - Monday Group. To arrange meeting (MM and Clerk) Meeting arranged. • Min 138.1 - Presentations for Annual Parish Meeting (MM, PF, R Stapleton) See item 15 • Min 139.1 - Contact ESCC Road Safety Team re SID Locations. Meeting arranged.
149..	<p>Clerk’s report and correspondence received. The Clerk’s report had been circulated with the agenda papers. Correspondence regarding access gates onto Parish Council land had been received and will be discussed at the next meeting.</p>
150.	<p>150.1 Lewes District Council Asset Devolution.- Latest information and to consider forming a Working Party to deal with potential transfer of the car park at the Village Hall.</p> <p>The Cabinet of Lewes District Council considered the Parish Council’s expression of interest in the potential transfer of the village hall car park. The Cabinet requested an assurance that the Parish Council would assume full responsibility for the operation and ongoing maintenance of the facility, without any increase to the precept to meet associated costs.</p> <p>Mr Leggo reported that it is common practice across East Sussex and West Sussex for district councils to retain assets that generate income for transfer to a future unitary authority, while offering non-income-generating assets to town and parish councils, thereby placing a potential financial liability upon them.</p> <p>The Clerk has requested a meeting with officers from Lewes District Council to discuss the Parish Council’s concerns regarding the proposal. It was suggested that a schedule of questions be prepared and submitted in advance to enable officers to provide informed responses at the meeting.</p> <p>Members also discussed the composition of a Working Group. It was acknowledged that Cllr Ingham would bring valuable insight as both a Trustee and representative of the Village Hall; however, it was agreed that, should any conflict of interest arise during the process, she would withdraw from the group</p> <p>It was AGREED: <i>That a Working Party consisting of Cllrs. Madden, Stapleton, Ingham and Seddon be formed to draw up a list of questions and attend a meeting with LDC Officers, reporting back to the council for further discussion.</i></p>
	<p>Mr Leggo and Dist. Cllr Mellor Left the meeting.</p>

151.	<p>Planning</p> <p>The following Applications were discussed.</p> <p>151.1 SDNP/26/00837/HOUS – The Nye, 2A Nye Lane. Erection of single storey, flat roofed, rear extension and a hip to gable extension to front. It was noted that the amount of new space in these proposals represents almost a 50% increase on the existing area and potentially conflicts with policy SD31 of the South Downs National Park Local Plan regarding appropriate use of land and size of homes, and the Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston Neighbourhood Plan Policy HSG1 which supports the delivery of smaller homes of three bedrooms or fewer. Cllrs were reminded of a similar conversation at the meeting in January and Cllr Godley expressed the opinion that there is no shortage of homes with 3 bedrooms or less in the area. Whilst it was recognised that the policies mentioned are in place, some Members suggested that they should be flexible to accommodate the needs of a changing community. Cllr Sansom called for a vote:</p> <p>Vote to Submit an Objection to the proposals – 3 Vote to Submit a No Comment to the proposals - 5</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT</p> <p>151.2 SDNP/26/00730/FUL– 26 Nevill Cottages. Retrospective external front parking with a crossover.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT</p> <p>151.3 SDNP/26/01030/FUL - 80 East End Lane. Retrospective change of use from ancillary residential accommodation to self contained dwelling.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT</p>
152.	<p>Streetlights</p> <p>152.1 Damaged Column on Farm Lane. Update and to consider insurance claim for replacement column and lantern. Following the last meeting, the Clerk has been in contact with BT to request permission to fit a lantern onto the existing wooden pole but this request has been declined. Cllr Sansom's concerns regarding the light spillage have been addressed by Balfour Beatty, removing the requirement for a different style of light to be considered. Cllr Godley enquired about the potential increase to the insurance premium due to the claim but it was considered necessary to continue with the claim due to the quotation cost of £3,187.30. It was therefore RESOLVED:</p> <p><i>To submit an insurance claim for replacement column and lantern.</i></p>
153.	<p>Finance</p> <p>153.1 To approve schedule of payments for March 2026. The schedule of payments for March was APPROVED with 3 payments given advance approval for payment in April.</p> <p>153.2 To Receive Bank Reconciliations for February 2026. Cllr Orme had reviewed the reconciliations which were NOTED.</p> <p>153.3 DPC Budget 2025/2026 and to approve revised budget 2026/2027. Members have been provided with the budget to 1st March 2026 which is duly NOTED, and with a revised budget for 2026/2027 which includes the payment for the delayed playground project.</p>

154.	<p>Dog Waste</p> <p>154.1 To Consider responses to issues raised by residents regarding the disposal of dog waste. Councillors have been provided with a presentation created on behalf of a number of residents regarding unacceptable levels of dog waste being left undisposed around the village. Suggestions for new dog bin locations have been made along with a request for the council to purchase 5 new bins which range from £150 to £350 each plus installation costs.. The Clerk has been in contact with Lewes District Council who have stated that there is no capacity to include additional collections so any new installations would need to be serviced by an external contractor. It was noted that as dog waste can be placed in any bins, there are in practice, numerous suitable disposal points available to dog owners so increasing the number of dog waste bins is unlikely to change behaviour. It was therefore concluded that the costs of introducing new bins cannot be justified at this time.</p> <p>However, Councillors expressed recognition of the concerns raised and it was suggested that posters and social media content should be created to highlight this inconsiderate behaviour and to encourage responsible dog ownership should the issues escalate again in the future and this was AGREED.</p>
155.	<p>Recreation and Burial Ground</p> <p>155.1 Update on Playground Equipment Installation. Cllr Farrands was delighted to report that work on the project has commenced with a scheduled completion date of 27th April for all elements except the line marking of the ball court which would take place during May.</p>
156.	<p>Grant Application</p> <p>156.1 To Consider Application from East Sussex Vision Support. ESVS has applied for a grant of £500 towards the running costs of its telephone helpline, a frontline service supporting blind and partially sighted people across East Sussex, including 18 residents of Ditchling. Cllr Ingham Proposed a donation of £500, Seconded Cllr Farrands, 5 in favour and so RESOLVED</p> <p><i>To award the sum of £500.</i></p>
157.	<p>Annual Meeting of the Parish</p> <p>157.1 To discuss content and preparation for meeting. As agreed at the last meeting, presentations would be made by Ditchling Cricket Club, Cllr Farrands (playground) and Cllr Stapleton (Traffic related projects). The meeting will begin with a welcome from the Chair and will end with an open forum for questions from the public. Posters advertising the meeting would be displayed and flyers will be placed in prominent places around the village.</p>
158.	<p>Documents for Review</p> <p>158.1 DPC Financial Regulations. The document was APPROVED.</p>
159.	<p>Events</p> <p>159.1 Next meeting date – 28th April 2026</p> <p>159.2 Ditchling Village Association Newcomers’ Party – Saturday 18th April. Cllr Barna will represent the Parish Council.</p>
160.	<p>CONFIDENTIAL SESSION. <i>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 142 below would be prejudicial in the public interest.</i></p> <p>160.1 Ditchling Gardens – To consider next steps following removal of the property from the market and agree new Terms of Reference for Ditchling Gardens Working Party. A discussion took place and a budget was set for consultation work.</p>

	<p>Actions taken forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Min 118. Pavilion Lease – Cllr Sansom to draft list of conditions for lease.• Min 150.1 Asset Devolution Working Group – Meeting to be arranged (Clerk)• Min 152.1 Streetlight – Insurance claim to be submitted (Clerk)• Min 154.1 Dog Waste – Content to be created for posters / social media posts (Clerk)• Min 157.1 Annual Parish Meeting – Presentations to be drafted in time for April Meeting (MM, PF, RStapleton)• Min 159.2 Newcomers' Party – Cllr Barna to attend

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.