



DITCHLING PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Annual Ditchling Parish Council Meeting held at Ditchling Village Hall, Ditchling on Tuesday 30th June 2026

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

Tracey Euesden (Clerk)

Also Present: District Councillor Paul Mellor

Public Participation:

There were 4 members of the public present

16.	Public Participation. A representative of Plumpton Junior Athletic Football Club spoke about agenda item 11.1. A member of the public who lives alongside the recreation ground expressed his interest in the council's plans for its future use. He also commented on traffic related matters and the need for traffic calming measures.
17.	Apologies of absence – Apologies were received from Cllr Madden
18.	Declarations of Interest. Cllr Ingham declared an interest in agenda item 19.
19.	To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on the 26th May 2026. The minutes of the meeting were APPROVED and duly signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.
20.	Actions from previous minutes From previous minutes: • Min 118. Pavilion Lease – Cllr Sansom to draft list of conditions for lease. (R Sansom). <i>Completed. Recreation and Burial Grounds Working Group Meeting to be arranged.</i> • Min 154.1 Dog Waste – Content to be created for posters / social media posts (Clerk & Cllr Barna). <i>Completed</i> • Min 171.2 - Access onto Recreation Ground from private properties. Cllr Stapleton and the Clerk to review individual cases. <i>Ongoing.</i> • Min 171.3 - Research documents and seek advice on extension of burial ground (Clerk and Recreation and Burial Ground Working Party). <i>See agenda item.</i> From this meeting: • Min 11.8 Clerk's Salary – Standing Order to be set up. (Clerk and authorised signatory) <i>Ongoing.</i>

	Mins 12.1 & 12.2 - Use of Recreation Ground – Recreation and Burial Grounds Working Party to action. <i>Ongoing</i>.
21.	Clerk's report. The Clerk's report had been circulated with the agenda papers.
22.	Devolution 22.1 Lewes District Council – Asset Devolution – Update. The Working Group has yet to meet to discuss LDC's responses to questions raised and it was AGREED: That this meeting should be arranged as soon as possible. Dist. Cllr Mellor commented that LDC's assets devolution process has thrown up a number of legal issues to be addressed and offered his assistance to the Parish Council should it be required.
23.	Planning The following Applications were discussed. 23.1 SDNP/26/02192/LIS. 80 East End Lane. Retrospective internal works to include the creation of 2 no doorways to one side only. It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT. 23.2 SDNP/26/02337/TCA. 45 East End Lane. Beech (T!) reduce crown by up to 2m, thin crown density by approx. 20%. It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT. 23.3 SDNP/26/02339/LIS. 50 East End Lane. Conversion of existing rear outrigger roof space to provide an additional bedroom with associated internal alterations including the insertion of a rear facing window. It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT. Plus any applications received since publication of the agenda which will be circulated by email and added to the Clerk's report. 23.4 SDNP/26/02345/HOUS & SDNP/26/02346/LIS. 56 North End. Structural remedial works, internal alterations and services systems update. It was RESOLVED to submit a comment of NO COMMENT. Enforcement. 23.5 SDNP/24/02629/HOUS & SDNP/24/04574/DCOND. Request for planting to mitigate the visual impact of the boundary wall. The Enforcement Team has declined to put forward this request and Councillors expressed disappointment about the way in which this particular application has been dealt with and it was AGREED <i>that the Clerk escalates the case to the Leader of the Enforcement Team</i>. 23.6 SDNP/26/00238/MINWAS - Temporary Stop Notice issued. The Stop Notice was NOTED.

	Appeals 23.7 LW/24/0820. Land south of Green Road, Wivelsfield. Outline application for the erection of p to 150 dwellings. Appeal Enquiry opens on 30th June to 3rd July and 7th July to 10th July. The Appeal was NOTED.
24.	Streetlights 24.1 Replacement Column and Lantern Farm Lane. It was reported that the works are scheduled for the week commencing 6th July. 24.2 To consider response to comments received regarding light at East Gardens. A complaint has been received that the light is shining into a residential property. Cllr Ingham had visited the area and pointed out that as the lantern in question is opposite the property, any attempt to block the light would reduce the illumination of the road. Cllr Ingham did note however that this particular light is very bright, and she agreed to visit again during the nighttime and report back. If the light is considered obtrusive then consideration will be given to its early replacement with Valentino lanterns.
25.	Finance 25.1 To approve schedule of payments for June 2026. The schedule of payments for June, including two additional invoices received since the publication of the agenda, was APPROVED. 25.2 To Receive Bank Reconciliations for May 2026. As the bank reconciliations for May have yet to be provided for review, these will be added to the July Agenda. 25.3 2026 2027 Budget to 31st May and revision of Earmarked reserves. The budget and Earmarked reserves were NOTED. 25.4 To Approve list of payments made by Direct Debit. The list was APPROVED. 25.5 To Review and Approve Subscriptions to other bodies. The list was reviewed and APPROVED.
26.	Recreation Ground & Burial Ground 26.1 To Consider Football Club's requirements for use of the pitch for the 2026/2027 season and to decide upon match fees. The Club has requested use of the recreation ground for matches from September 2026. They have requested that the parish council arranges pitch lining and recharges the cost back to the club however, the groundsman has indicated that he does not have availability in his schedule for this so the club would need to make its own arrangements. Concerns have been raised by other ground users that an independent inspection should be carried out during inclement weather to assess whether matches can go ahead and the practicalities of this were discussed. Cllrs reaffirmed the importance of the grounds being shared by all users without priority and reiterated their intentions that the council's finances should not be adversely affected by any club's usage. It was AGREED that a meeting of the Recreation and Burial Ground Working Group be expedited as soon as possible to address these matters and advise the Football Club so that it has time to prepare for the upcoming season. 26.2 Recreation Ground – To consider vehicle access arrangements and new signage for car park. Following a recent unauthorised encampment at a nearby recreation ground, Councillors have asked for a review of the access and parking rules. The pros and cons of various measures such as metal fencing and height barriers were discussed and It was AGREED: that the Recreation and Burial Ground Working Group should look into this, seek advice from the council's insurers, and draw up proposals for consideration at a future meeting. 26.3 Memorial Benches. 2 applications for memorial benches have been received, both of

	which will be tested against the council's terms and conditions. 26.4 Burial Ground Extension – To Consider report from Cllrs Barna and Rowling regarding extension and allocation of additional plots. Members have been provided with the report outlining the results of Cllrs Barna's and Rowling's research into the existing permissions. Whilst it seems from this research that the whole area was designated for burial in 1946 and this is merely a case of allocating new plots, caution was expressed that further investigation is required to address any potential legislation changes since that time. It was AGREED: <i>That the Clerk would be provided with all of the information obtained by Cllrs Barna and Rowling and shall seek advice from any relevant bodies on how to bring the land into use as soon as possible.</i>
27.	Village Maintenance 27.1 To consider agenda items for "Strengthening Local Relationships" (SLR) meeting with ESCC Highways and Road Safety Teams. Councillors have been provided with a copy of ESCC's response to the council's complaint regarding various maintenance issues within the village. Each of the matters raised have now been inspected and commented on by the Highways Stewards and the council has been asked to put together an agenda for an SLR Meeting. As Cllr Stapleton had not seen this latest response, he asked that he be given time to review it and liaise with the Clerk to draw up the agenda.
28.	Footpaths 28.1 To Consider support for joint project with the Monday Group for surface upgrade at DIT/47/2 (Roman Road). Following the successful upgrade of the footpath on the Hassocks side, the Monday Group has asked DPC to support a joint project to upgrade the Ditchling side at an estimated cost of £20,000 (based on a desktop quotation and subject to site inspection). The Monday Group is in early discussions with landowners and has secured a significant amount of funding towards the works. Cllr Stapleton expressed concern that this proposal should not be prioritised over the Traffic Working (TW) Group's projects nor should funds be diverted towards it which could otherwise be used for the TW Group's planned schemes. Other Councillors considered that the upgraded footpath would in fact be of great benefit to the whole community and as funds have already been pledged, (with more avenues for grants to be applied for), that this would be a positive project to be involved with. It was RESOLVED: <i>That the Council works jointly with the Monday Group to deliver this project on the assumption that sufficient administrative resources are available and that these resources are the only investment required from the Council.</i>
29.	Traffic – Report from Traffic Working Group. 29.1 Speed Indicator Devices – Review of data received. Cllr Stapleton reported that the installation of the devices on Clayton Road and Beacon Road has had a positive influence on the speeds being recorded by the SIDs and by the Community Speedwatch Team. 29.2 Speed Indicator Devices –Update on additional devices and funding options. Members heard that agreement to the proposed locations of new devices in Lewes Road and

	Common Lane has been received from ESCC's Road Safety Team and the Ditchling Village Association has submitted an application for a grant from the Sussex PCC's Community Fund. It is expected that the outcome of this application will be known before the next PC meeting and Cllr Stapleton observed that if it is unsuccessful, the Council will be asked to consider whether to proceed at its own expense. 29.3 Crossing Points – Update following response from ESCC regarding Wilbar's initial designs. ESCC's Road Safety Team has indicated its approval of the designs submitted by Wilbar for crossing points at Beacon Road, Keymer Road and Lewes Road (x2). Cllr Sansom has shared some research into the safety and effectiveness of these crossing points, particularly in areas where traffic speeds are high, and raised concerns about the suitability of the Beacon Road design. Cllr Stapleton referred to the designs included in the 2024 Motion Report and commented that whilst these were more detailed proposals including buildouts, infrastructure works, and other calming measures, these more elaborate crossings would prove cost prohibitive. It was also noted that ESCC would not approve any specification presented if it were not confident of the safety aspects of the design. Cllr Stapleton reported that a meeting has been scheduled with Wilbar to discuss the next steps including costs, consent, timescale and information required for a tender process for each crossing. He also noted that each project would need to be presented to the council for consideration and approval prior to any tender process taking place. 29.4 To receive response from ESCC Highways to the DPC's letter regarding various maintenance issues within Ditchling. This item was addressed under minute no. 27.1 29.5 To Consider proposal from Cllr Madden that the council formally adopts and publicises a reporting procedure for instances of inappropriate or unauthorised heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and other large commercial vehicles travelling through the village. Cllrs were reminded that former MP Maria Caulfield has previously agreed to receive reports of offending vehicles and her office would contact the companies involved. Cllr Madden's proposal is that permission be obtained with James Macleary MP for his office to carry out a similar procedure with reporting instructions being publicised amongst the community. This Proposal was APPROVED subject to James MacCleary's agreement and that there are no data protection issues in sharing this information.
30.	External Auditors 30.1 To consider proposal from Cllr Orme to provide feedback, via ESALC, to the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments Ltd regarding review of contracts and appointment of Auditors. Cllr Orme explained the SAA's role in reviewing contracts and appointing external auditors. As the SAAA panel is due to review the contracts in 2027, Cllr Orme would like to provide some feedback, via ESALC, for consideration by the panel. This was APPROVED.
31.	2027 2028 Precept Setting. 31.1 To Consider arrangements for consultation with the electorate regarding funding for traffic and other projects. It was noted that the Council is keen to progress a variety of initiatives over the next few years and in order to do so, extra funds would need to be found. In the absence of significant developer funding being identified and the observation that capital from the sale of Ditchling Gardens might not be realised for 2-3 years, Cllrs have been considering the possibility of a significant increase to the precept from 2027 and have recognised the need to consult with the electorate before taking that decision. Cllr Sansom suggested that a strategic review of the Council's activities should take place and a lengthy discussion ensued resulting in the following process and timescale being

	AGREED: July - Aug 2026 – Working Groups to meet to draw up proposals, costings and timescales for desired projects. Late Aug – Sep 2026 – Parish Council Strategic Review to take place to assess WGs' Proposals and prioritise projects. Sep – Oct 2026 – Finance Committee to meet to review priority projects and assess the impact upon the 2027/2028 Budget and Precept. 31st Oct 2026 – Public Meeting to present the Council's Plans and obtain feedback. Nov- Dec 2026 - Finance Committee to present final proposals for 2027/2028 Budget and Precept to Council for consideration.
32.	Events 32.1 Parish Council Meeting – Tuesday, 28th July 2026 – 7pm. Ditchling Village Hall 32.2 MP Summer Visits – Thursday 30th July 2026 – 7.30pm. Ditchling Village Hall
33.	Consultations 33.1 ESCC Lewes Parking review. The Consultation was NOTED.
34.	<i>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.</i> 34.1 Ditchling Gardens – Update on Sales Process. A meeting to discuss the Pre-Application process has been arranged.
	Actions taken forward. From previous meetings: • Min 11.8 Clerk's Salary – Standing Order to be set up. (Clerk and authorised signatory) • Mins 12.1 & 12.2 - Use of Recreation Ground –Recreation and Burial Grounds Working Party to action. <i>Ongoing</i>. • Min 171.2 - Access onto Recreation Ground from private properties. (Cllr Stapleton and the Clerk to review individual cases). From this meeting: • Min 25.2 Bank Reconciliations for May to be presented at July meeting. (Clerk) • Min 26.1 & 26.2 Recreation and Burial Grounds Working Group to arrange meeting. (RBGWG) • Min 26.4 Burial Ground research to be reviewed (Clerk) • Min 27.1 Village Maintenance - Agenda for SLR Meeting to be drawn up (Cllr Stapleton and Clerk) • Min 28.1 Footpaths – Monday Group to be contacted (Clerk) • Min 29.5 HGVs reporting process. MP's Office to be contacted. (Clerk) • Min 30.1 External Auditor Feedback to ESALC (RO) • Min 31.1 Itinerary to be put in place (Clerk) and Working Groups to meet (all Groups)

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.