DITCHLING PARISH COUNCIL
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Minutes of the Ditchling Parish Council Meeting held at Ditchling Village Hall, on Tuesday 22nd September 2026

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

Tracey Euesden (Clerk)

Public Participation:

There were 3 members of the public present

56.	**Public Participation.** The Chair of the Monday Group (Steve Brewis) spoke in favour of Item 9 (Footpath project). Representatives of the Cricket Club (Matthew Searle) and TheTurner Dumbrell Foundation (Max Bolton) spoke in favour of item 12.1
57.	**Apologies of absence** – Apologies were received from Cllr Stapleton.
58.	**Declarations of Interest.** Cllr Ingham declared an interest in item 19.
59.	**To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 28th July 2026**. The minutes of the meeting were **APPROVED** and duly signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting. **To approve the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 9th September 2026.** The minutes of the meeting were **APPROVED** and durly signed by the Chair as an accuragte record of the meeting.
60.	**Actions from previous minutes** • Mins 12.1 &12.2 - Use of Recreation Ground –Recreation and Burial Grounds Working Party to action. *Ongoing* • Min 171.2 - Access onto Recreation Ground from private properties. (Cllr Stapleton and the Clerk to review individual cases). *Ongoing* • Min 26.4 Burial Ground research to be reviewed (Clerk) *Underway.* • Min 27.1 Village Maintenance - Agenda for SLR Meeting to be drawn up (Cllr Stapleton and Clerk) *Ongoing* • Min 31.1 All Working Groups to meet (all Groups) *Completed* • Min 43.4. SDNP/26/02840/CND The Macs Farm. Comments to the Clerk by 15th August (Planning WG) *Completed*

	• Min 46.1. Crossing Points. Report to be produced (Cllr Stapleton) *Completed* • Min 48.1. Footpath Tender process to commence (Clerk) *Completed* • Min 49.1. Bike Ride – Letter to be sent (Clerk) *Completed* • Min 51.2. Staffing. Appointment to be made (Clerk) *Completed*
61.	**Clerk's report & Correspondence received.** The Clerk's report had been circulated with the agenda papers.
62.	**Local Government Reorganisation.** District Councillor Mellor had submitted a report describing Lewes District Council's dissatisfaction with the Government's decision to allow Brighton & Hove to annex East Saltdean, Telscombe and Peacehaven. Since the decision to pause LGR for Sussex, there has been very little advice about District Councillors and Officers should proceed. The hope is that the review will be rapid and decisive and will meet the proposed time line of 4th November.
63.	**Planning** The following Applications were discussed. 63.1 **SDNP/26/03125/FUL.** Lime Tree House. Two storey side extension with pitched roof, continuous eaves and raised ridge heights. It was **RESOLVED** to submit a comment of **NO COMMENT.** 63.2 **SDNP/26/03365/HOUS.** 30 Shirleys. Removal of existing rear conservatory. Proposed two storey extension to rear and proposed single storey extension to rear. It was noted that this application would result in the existing 3 bedroom property becoming a 5 bedroom with several additional rooms. As this is against policies in the South Downs Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan which favours homes of up to 3 beds it was **RESOLVED** to submit a comment of **OBJECTION.** 63.3 **SDNP/26/03447/HOUS.** Old Farm, Farm Lane. Proposed single storey side extension and front porch. It was **RESOLVED** to submit a comment of **NO COMMENT.** 63.4 **LW/26/0410.** Upper Furzefield. Fragbarrw Lane. Removal of condition 1 in relation to approval LW/77/1767 as it is deemed to be no longer necessary, relevant or reasonable. The condition limits the occupation of the dwelling to persons solely or mainly employed in agriculture and without this, the application might not have otherwise been approved. Members considered that the argument for its removal has not been justified and it was therefore **RESOLVED** to submit a comment of **OBJECTION.** 63.5 **LW/26/0412.** 5 Pepper Close. Rear dormer extension and roof lights to existing front roof slope. It was noted that the full-width rear dormer raises the eaves to the same height as the ridge, increasing the bulk of the dwelling. Introducing bedroom windows at second floor level will result in additional overlooking. Both can be expected to adversely affect the amenity of the neighbouring garden. It was **RESOLVED** to submit a comment of **OBJECTION.**

64.	**Footpaths Project – To receive tender submissions and recommendations for appointment of contractor and to award contract.** Three quotations for the works cto resurface the public footpath DIT 47/2 in accordance with WSCC Option A standard construction detail, have been received: Contractor 1 - £52,763.74 Plus Vat Contractor 2 - £47,650.00 Plus Vat Contractor 3 - £18,924.00 Plus Vat Members noted that while two of the quotations provided detailed and comprehensive descriptions of the proposed methodology, they were significantly higher in cost. The third quotation was substantially lower than the others. The contractor has demonstrated its capability to undertake the works, having recently completed similar resurfacing in a neighbouring parish to a satisfactory standard. Members were satisfied that the specification provided met the Council's requirements and that the contractor had evidenced relevant experience. In considering best value, the Council found no justification for selecting either of the higher-cost quotations, as the additional detail provided did not represent a material enhancement of the works required. On this basis, the Council agreed that the lowest quotation offered an appropriate and cost-effective solution. Cllr Orme Proposed, Seconded Cllr Rowling and Unanimously **AGREED**. It was therefore **RESOLVED** to proceed with Contractor No. 3. Councillors expressed thanks to the Monday Group for their involvement with the project and for their fundraising activity.
	With the agreement of the meeting, the Chair brought agenda item 12 forward.
65.	**Recreation Ground and Burial Ground.** 65.1 **Pavilion Lease – update and to approve draft Heads of Terms.** Members heard that the Cricket Club will be renaming the hall "Ditchling Community Sports Pavilion" and had decided at this stage not to proceed with the CASC, instead it was proposed that the lease be with Ditchling Cricket Club. It was also reported that the donations committed by the Turner Dumbrell Foundation were subject to the lease being progressed swiftly and Cllr Roberts agreed that time is off the essence given the current condition of the facility. Councillors were also reminded that the Club can only seek further funding from grant providers with the security of a long lease. Cllr Stapleton had circulated his comments in respect of the proposed Heads of Terms and these were discussed. Members were advised that whilst the Cricket Club is seeking to ensure that 'Cricket Week' can continue, there is no intention to restrict other groups from using the halls. Cllr Seddon observed that agreement of Heads of Terms is the first stage and would be followed by a formal agreement and finally the lease. He suggested that suitable wording protecting other users could form part of the lease, along with details of mediation arrangements should any disagreements arise. He further suggested that other comments made by Cllr Stapleton could be addressed as part of the formal agreement and final lease. The matter of the Tractor Shed was raised and it was agreed that this could be dealt with separately. Cllr Rowling Proposed ***That the Heads of Terms be approved and the working group arranges a meeting with the Cricket Club to discuss the terms of the formal agreement.*** Seconded Cllr Ingham and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.** Conscious of cost for legal services, and recognising the experience of some members of the council, Mr Searle had offered to draft a formal agreement and lease for consideration. The Council could then obtain independent legal advice as to the details

	of the draft documents. Cllr Orme Proposed, ***That the council accepts the offer from Mr Searle to draft a formal agreement and lease and that the Council sets a budget of £3,000 for the provision of legal advice.*** Seconded Cllr Rowling and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.** 65.2 **Burial Ground – Update on project to allocate additional plots.** Councillors have received the Project Officer's report on progress made and Cllr Rowling summarises the content and reported that proposals will be drawn up and submitted to the Council for consideration at the October meeting.
66.	**Finance** 66.1 **To approve schedule of payments for September 2026.** The schedule of payments for September, including three additional invoices received since the publication of the agenda, was **APPROVED.** 66.2 **To ratify payments for August 2026 Paid under delegated powers.** The payments were ratified. 66.3 **To Receive Bank Reconciliations for July 2026.** The bank reconciliations have been circulated and were duly **NOTED.** Bank reconciliations for August 2026 will be presented at the next meeting. 66.4. **Notice of Conclusion of Audit. To receive External Auditor's Report and to consider any necessary actions.** The External Auditor's report was received and Members **NOTED** the error in the previous year's figures for Box 3 of the Statements of Account. This has been corrected and revised documents published on the website and notice board along with the Notice of Conclusion of Audit. 66.5 **2026 2027 NJC National Salary Award.** The new pay scales were **NOTED.**
67.	**Strategic Planning – To Consider the following motions.** 67.1 **Ditchling Parish Council Business Plan 2027-2029.** It was noted that councillors had only recently received a copy of the Draft Business Plan and a number of grammatical, typographical, and factual amendments have been identified. Cllr Rowling Proposed ***That the council resolves to adopt the Parish Council Business Plan 2027 2029 subject to these errors being rectified.*** Seconded Cllr Ingham. For 9 Against 0 **MOTION CARRIED** 67.2 **Public Exhibition on Business Plan Projects.** Cllr Orme Proposed that ***The Council resolves, in advance of any decision on the 2027-2028 Precept, to hold a public exhibition to publicise the projects listed in the Business Plan and how the priority projects will be funded.*** Seconded Cllr Rowling. For 9 Against 0 **MOTION CARRIED** 67.3 **Resourcing for Business Plan Delivery.** Cllr Rowling questioned the need for this motion, pointing out that the Clerk is employed to carry out the functions of the council. it was **RESOLVED** that the **MOTION BE WITHDRAWN.**
68.	**Administration / Operational** 68.1 **To Consider budget for provision of Laptop for Projects Officer duties.** The Clerk described various issues with the desktop PC used by the project officer and the need for her to be able to work remotely. However, members also heard that the Clerk's PC had also begun to fail and had become unreliable. It was noted that both PCs were old and were not suitably equipped to deal with all the tools supported by Windows. Cllr Rowling Proposed ***That a budget of £3,000 be set to replace the office computers with laptops.*** Seconded Cllr Ingham and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.**

69.	**Traffic** 69.1 **To Consider Purchase and installation of Mobile Speed Indicator Devices on Lewes Road and Common Lane.** Following the Ditchling Village Association's unsuccessful application for funding from the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, The Council is asked to consider purchase of 2 x Mobile Speed Indicator Devices for Lewes Road and Common Lane. Prices were obtained in the last 13 months and with comparative quotes obtained from other local Clerks the following information is presented. Quote No. 1 – 2 x Mobile Speed indicator Devices = £4,678.98 plus Vat. Quote No. 2 – 2 x Mobile Speed Indicator Devices = £7,878. Plus Vat Quote No. 3 – 2 x Mobile Speed Indicator Devices - £6,146 Plus Vat. Cllr Rowling Proposed, ***That Quotation number 1 be accepted and that the Clerk arranges for the existing maintenance provider to liaise with ESCC for the licences to install them.*** Seconded Cllr Sansom and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.**
70.	**Membership of Committees and Working Groups** 70.1 **To consider appointment of Cllr Roberts to the Traffic Committee, Traffic Working Group and the Village Hall Car Park Working Group.** The appointments were confirmed.
71.	**DPC Climate and Nature Strategy – To Consider draft paper by Cllr Barna.** The draft paper had been circulated and Cllr Barna summarised the document. It was noted that there is no statutory duty for the parish council to have a climate plan and whilst this council does have a biodiversity policy and plan, little action has been taken so far. There is limited scope for significant activity as the most of the council's property is green space, but consideration of climate and biodiversity should be considered when arranging contracts for maintenance etc. Cllr Barna suggested that the council should also make more effort to promote the work of and collaborate with other local groups and organisations where possible.
72.	**Consultations** 72.1 **Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) review of governance, accountability and accounting framework for smaller (category 2) authorities.** It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Orme and the Clerk would respond to this consultation before the closing date of 31st October
73.	**Events** 73.1 Next meeting date – 27th October 2026 73.2 Public Exhibition 31st October – To Approve budget for publicity material. Cllr Orme Proposed the sum of £1,500, Seconded Cllr Ingham and **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.**
74.	***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.* 74.1 Ditchling Gardens – Cllr Orme and the Clerk had attended a site meeting with the South Downs National Park's Planning Officer who is carrying out the pre-application assessment. His written report is expected in the next couple of weeks. In the meantime an asbestos survey is to be arranged.
	Actions taken forward. From previous meetings;

	• Mins 12.1 &12.2 - Use of Recreation Ground –Recreation and Burial Grounds Working Party to action. *Ongoing* • Min 171.2 - Access onto Recreation Ground from private properties. (Cllr Stapleton and the Clerk to review individual cases). *Ongoing* • Min 26.4 Burial Ground research to be reviewed (Clerk) *Underway.* • Min 27.1 Village Maintenance - Agenda for SLR Meeting to be drawn up (Cllr Stapleton and Clerk) *Ongoing* From this meeting • Min. 64 - Footpath Project. Appoint Contractor (Clerk) • Min 65.1 - Pavilion Lease. Arrang meeting (working group) • Min 69.1 - Speed Indicator Devices. Arrange purchase and installation. (Clerk) • MIn 72 - Consultation. Respond on behalf of the Council (Cllr Orme and Clerk) • MIn 74 – Ditchling Gardens. Arrange asbestos survey (Clerk)

The meeting closed at 8.45pm