



**DITCHLING PARISH
COUNCIL**

**BUSINESS PLAN
2024–2027**

***MAKING DITCHLING A BETTER PLACE
TO LIVE AND WORK***

WHAT THE PARISH COUNCIL DOES

The council's regular responsibilities include managing and maintaining:

- the recreation ground
- the burial ground
- the car park in Keymer Road
- Ditchling Gardens (formerly the scout hut)
- land at The Drove electricity substation off Keymer Road
- the War Memorial

The council also considers and comments on planning applications. Keeping the council running and responding to the needs of residents involves a wide range of administrative duties.

The council has limited financial and administrative resources, managed day-to-day by the clerk (25 hours a week). The precept (money raised from residents) was £110,893 in 2023–2024.

WHY A BUSINESS PLAN?

This business plan covers council projects for 2024–2027 to provide new facilities, upgrade existing facilities and extend current initiatives. These are in addition to its regular day-to-day responsibilities. We have divided our plan into 'priority' and 'other' projects.

Although we are a small cog in the local government machine, we must use our resources wisely in the light of the climate emergency and our actions must take into account climate change, sustainability and biodiversity. We therefore intend to develop a climate action plan that will underpin our decision-making. The council will work to protect and enhance the environment within the parish and to raise awareness among residents of the need for further action, increasingly working with local groups who lead in this field.

This business plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects progress and available administrative and financial resources and to incorporate any new council priorities.

PRIORITY PROJECTS

Project timescales will depend on securing consents and funds.

1. Recreation Ground: play area upgrade
2. Ditchling Gardens (former Scout Hut): future use of site
3. *Safer Roads for Ditchling*: public consultation on traffic calming proposals for Ditchling
4. Keymer Road car park: work remaining to be completed
5. Burial Ground: plot mapping
6. Ditchling Parish Climate Action Plan: consultation and delivery
7. Ditchling Parish Resilience (Emergency) Plan

OTHER PROJECTS

These projects are less urgent, or their timescales are outside council control.

1. Burial Ground: access improvements and possible future extension
2. Traffic calming: phase 1 implementation
3. Traffic: making other roads safer for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians
4. Electric vehicle charging points: various locations
5. Parish Council: improved communications
6. Recreation Ground: other issues
7. Planning: parish design statement; conservation area appraisal; promoting social housing
8. Improving the parish environment

PRIORITY PROJECTS

Timescale

RECREATION GROUND

Feasibility studies/masterplanning	2024
(i) Update Recreation Ground masterplan	Winter/Spring 2024
(ii) Engage with Pavilion trustees and clubs using Recreation Ground	2024
(iii) Review use and cost of recreation ground and charges to users	2024
(iv) Consider demand for and viability of a new sports-orientated community building	2024
(v) Decide scope of play area upgrade and phasing options	Spring/Summer 2024
(vi) Identify funding sources, e.g. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), grant bodies, public donations, and submit applications for additional funding required	Summer/Autumn 2024
Play area upgrade	2024–2026
<i>This is the council's major new project. Generous donations have been received from the Turner Dumbrell Foundation (£22,000) and Ditchling Charity Ball (£1,500). Further funds will be needed as the project is expected to cost well over £100,000.</i>	
(i) Complete further feasibility and funding studies required	Winter/Spring 2024
(ii) Apply for CIL funding from South Downs National Park and from Lewes District Council	January 2024 onwards
(iii) Council to confirm scope of play area upgrade	Summer 2024

	<u>Timescale</u>
(iv) Complete detailed design and seek tenders	Autumn/Winter 2024
(v) Construction	2025–2026
DITCHLING GARDENS (former Scout Hut)	
<i>The council is at an early stage of investigating options. Timescales are therefore dependent on further investigations required.</i>	
Engage with planning authority, investigate potential partners for future uses and commission further options research if required	Winter/Spring 2024
Public consultation	Spring/Summer 2024
Council to decide preferred option	Summer/Autumn 2024
SAFER ROADS FOR DITCHLING	
<i>Implementation phases are included in ‘Other Projects’ below.</i>	
Public exhibition and consultation	February 2024
Traffic Committee to propose Phase 1 implementation plan including funding strategy	Spring 2024
Council to consider Phase 1 implementation plan	Spring/Summer 2024
Campaign for additional developer contributions for traffic calming (in cooperation with other parish councils)	2024–2025

Timescale

**KEYMER ROAD CAR PARK – WORK
REMAINING TO BE COMPLETED**

2024

Chase incomplete/outstanding work by contractor

Winter/Spring
2024

End of contractor’s 12-month defects period and final account

Summer/Autumn
2024

Interpretation board (in conjunction with South Downs National Park Authority)

Winter/Spring
2024

Set up future maintenance programme for soft and hard landscaping

Spring/Summer
2024

BURIAL GROUND

Complete plot and space mapping exercise

Winter/Spring
2024

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

2024

Develop Climate Action Plan, in cooperation with Ditchling Climate Action Network (DCAN) and others, to promote awareness locally and to underpin council decisions

Winter/Summer
2024

RESILIENCE PLAN

2024-2025

Develop Ditchling Resilience Plan in cooperation with local volunteer groups and others

2024-2025

The resilience plan will describe what we will do as a community during emergencies.

It will identify the risks we may have to deal with, for example adverse weather, major accidents, and the probable impact of climate change

OTHER PROJECTS

Timescale

Timescales will depend on availability of funds and administrative resources

BURIAL GROUND

Access improvements to existing Burial Ground

2024-2025

(including better access for mobility-impaired)

Burial Ground extension

(if required to ensure future supply of burial plots)

- (i) Investigate potential partners to project manage extension and manage when complete
- (ii) Develop brief for extension
- (iii) Apply for funding required
- (iv) Implementation

SAFER ROADS FOR DITCHLING

Traffic calming: Phase 1 implementation

- (i) Seek East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Highways approval and additional funding required

2024-2025

- (ii) Detailed design and construction

Timescales dependent on ESCC approval and on funding

Make other roads safer for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians

Review other local initiatives for council to support, e.g. Hassocks-Keymer-Ditchling cycle route

2024-2025

ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) CHARGING POINTS

2024-2025

Village Hall car park: liaise with Lewes District Council on installation of EV charging points

Keymer Road car park: investigate planning issues and, if resolved, apply for funding

PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

2024-2027

Develop communications strategy including raising council profile on social media

Fill councillor vacancies and increase councillor diversity

RECREATION GROUND (OTHER ISSUES)

2024-2027

Car park improvements, including disabled spaces and bicycle stands

PLANNING

2024-2027

Parish design statement: for guidance of applicants for planning consent

Conservation area appraisal: review with South Downs National Park and update

Social housing: review how to support new social housing in the village

IMPROVING THE PARISH ENVIRONMENT

2024-2026

Ditchling Society Village audit: council to arrange selected work (e.g. fingerposts)

2024

Develop biodiversity scheme with UK Power Networks for leased land in The Drove

2024-2025

Street lighting upgrade programme:

2024-2026

- (i) Prepare multi-year repairs programme
- (ii) Seek funding for implementation