

Edition 1 • Quarterly



November 2017

DITCHLING

PARISH COUNCIL MAGAZINE



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WELCOME TO THE

DITCHLING

PARISH COUNCIL
MAGAZINE



Welcome to the new Ditchling Parish Council Community Magazine!

My name is Don McBeth and I am the current Chair of Ditchling Parish Council. May I welcome you to the first edition of the Ditchling Parish Council Community Magazine. We hope that you find something of interest in the following pages and may even be motivated to submit an article of your own for the next edition. This will be a quarterly magazine delivered to all residents and businesses of the parish, and at no cost to the Parish Council. All costs of production and delivery are met by the income generated from the advertisements included within these pages.

One of the main reasons why the Council decided to publish a magazine was to enable us to better engage with the local community and to encourage people to take an active part in the Council's meetings and other

CONTENTS

Chairman's report	3
Meetings	10
Group Photograph	10
Horticulture article and picture	14
Tell your community	14
Village Hall article	16
Pavilion Article and picture	18
Ditchling pests	20
Dog walking code	22
Neighbourhood Plan	24
Grants	25
Planning article	28

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activities. One of our Parish Councillors will be responsible for editing the magazine each quarter. For this first edition, Councillor Phil Smith is in the editor's chair.

I was asked recently 'What does the Parish Council actually do? I thought for a moment about giving the stock answer of it being the first tier of elected local government but this sounds a bit pompous and remote from our day-to-day lives, so perhaps I may begin by listing some of the things that the council have worked on recently:-

Submitting the Ditchling, Streat & Westmeston Neighbourhood Plan to the South Downs National Park. More details of this can be found in this magazine or at our website:
www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk

A new community car park, which means agreeing terms to lease a small agricultural field off of the Keymer Road for and applying for planning permission; installing guttering and drainage on the Ditchling Recreation Ground Sports Pavilion; agreeing new five year

lease with Ditchling Scouts for the Scout HQ in East End Lane; renovating the deteriorating benches at the recreation ground; replacing low level fencing around the recreation ground car park; installing new litter/dog waste bins on the recreation ground and a dog waste bag dispenser; consulting with local parents regarding the Children's Playground, and arranging for Broadband to be delivered to the village centre. Many of the issues that I have listed are dealt with in more detail in this magazine.

There is always some confusion I know as to who does what in the provision of local services, so I have attached a basic list at the end of this introduction, which may help with any future deliberations that you may have, when trying to find out who to contact.

The range of activities in which the Parish Council is involved is large and to some extent is only limited by two factors — money and time. As far as money is concerned, the Parish Council receives from Lewes District




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Council a sum known as the Precept. This is a financial grant which allow us to run the services of the parish council. This financial year it was £82,639, and a breakdown of how this was spent can be found on the Parish Council web site: www.ditchlingpc.org.uk

We all pay for this as part of our general Council Tax, and your bill from Lewes District Council will show annually how much of your Council Tax comes here to the Parish Council.

Time is the other constraint. We have two paid part-time professional clerks who do most of the work. Then we rely on parish councillors for some of their time, thoughts, ideas, common sense, humble opinions and general sense of community, and a desire to put something back into the beautiful area in which we live.

We currently have 10 councillors out of a possible 11, so we could do with some fresh blood. If you are interested this is your chance to make your opinions heard and to join in discussions concerning local issues in Ditchling. You may have lived here all your life or be a new resident—gender, race, religious beliefs, age, etc are all irrelevant. If you are interested give me or any fellow councillor, or one of the Clerks a call or an email—all our contact details are on page 10, and we'll be happy to chat about what is involved in more detail.

Another thought for you is communication. This is always a major issue in local government. This magazine is a first step in improving that process, but do you perhaps think that a Parish Council Facebook or Twitter account would help, so that you can contact us, or we can contact you?

On a recent survey Ditchling was voted 15th in the 50 best rural places to live in Britain. Our aim is to make it No.1. Remember this is your magazine, please give all of this some thought, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Finally, the council have agreed that the Ditchling Parish Council Community Magazine is rather long winded, and a snappier title would be welcomed. Residents are invited to submit ideas for a new title by 31 December, ready for our second edition.

Don McBeth, Chairman

Who does what?

East Sussex County Council

Responsible for big issues including:-

Blue Badge
Childcare
Council tax
Highways including speed limits, traffic management street furniture, verge cutting
Libraries
Planning
Register of Births Deaths and marriages
Roads and road works
Schools and Education
Some health and social service provision
Strategic planning including refuse disposal and land fill, recycling, and mineral
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Lewes District Council

Almost everything else including:-

Business & Tourism
Collection of Council Tax on behalf of the District, Parish and Police Authority
Housing
Local Planning
Public Elections
Refuse Collection, street cleaning and environmental health
Some health and social service provision
Tel: 01273 471600
lewesdc@lewes.gov.uk

Ditchling Parish Council

Responsible for Parish issues:-

All parish council property, including allotments, playgrounds, burial grounds,
Playing fields, and street lighting
Finance and precept
Local consultation and Neighbourhood Planning
Planning (Advisory only), DPC and SDNP are the decision making authorities
Liaison with local groups, including church, burial grounds and village societies
Liaison with local sports groups
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South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA)

Planning including the Sough Downs Local Plan and SDNP/LDC Joint Core Strategy and decisions on all planning applications within the National Park (some of which are delegated to Lewes District Council)
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CLERK'S CORNER

My name is Michelle Warner and I am the Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for the Parish of Ditchling.

I can be contacted at ditchlingpc@btinternet.com or by calling the Parish Office on **01273 844733**.

My usual working days are Mondays and Tuesdays and I am usually found in the Parish Office at the Village Hall on those days. The office is open to members of the public from 10am to 11.30am on a Tuesday morning.

Derek Blackhall is the Deputy Parish Clerk and is involved in all aspects of the work of the Parish Council, he can be contacted at clerk@ditchling-pc.gov.uk.

We welcome comments and questions from the community and will always do our best to answer them. Many queries received from the community relate to highways issues, such as potholes, parking and signage. A Parish Council has very limited powers in relation to highways and in fact can do little beyond maintain bus shelters and seats, light roads, provide roadside bins and provide parking. All other issues are referred to ESCC Highways Department or Lewes District Council.

When a highways issue is reported, for example there was a dip in the middle of the road at the High Street end of East End Lane reported recently. The clerk will report the problem to ESCC using the online 'report a problem' service. This service is open to all residents, it works very well and you locate the problem

area using an interactive map. I find it helps to take a photograph of the offending pothole/broken post/damaged verge/abandoned vehicle and these are easily uploaded.

The next step will be for the local highways steward to inspect the area and decide whether any action should be taken. The result of the steward's inspection will be emailed to the person reporting the problem. I have to say that four out of five times problems reported issues will not be deemed severe enough to warrant any action being taken.

If the highway steward decides that remedial work is required this should take place within a few weeks, but it can be several months if the work will involve a closure or partial closure of the highway. The dip in East End Lane was inspected the very next day and repaired within two weeks, but I have to say this was something of a record.

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Ditchling Parish Council

Meetings 2017/2018

Meetings start at 7.30pm, and are held in Ditchling Village Hall, unless stated otherwise.

There is a period of fifteen minutes set aside at the beginning of the meeting for the public to ask questions or make comments on items on the agenda. Comments on items not appearing on the agenda can be made at the chairman's discretion. Once the Meeting is in session there can be no further public participation. The Annual Parish Meeting is not a council meeting. It is a meeting of the people or electors and usually takes the form of a review of the year and a question and answer session. The Annual Council Meeting takes place in May and at this meeting the chairman is elected for the year and other appointments are made to committees and for other posts, such a vice-chairman.

Grounds and Burial Committee

The Council owns and manages the Recreation Ground in Lewes Road. The War Memorial and Scout HQ which belong to the Parish Council; and the Droveaway Shaw, which is owned by SEEBord, also come under the umbrella of this Committee. The Council owns and manages the Recreation Ground including the Burial Ground and the field to the east, which is designated as a future Burial Ground extension.

Chairman of Grounds Committee – Phillip Smith.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee recommends the annual budget and parish precept to Ditchling Parish Council for agreement.

Chairman of Finance Committee – TBA



DATE	TYPE OF MEETING
2017	
13th November	Planning
27th November	Statutory Council
18th December	Statutory Council
2018	
8th January	Planning
29th January	Statutory Council
12th February	Planning
26th February	Statutory Council
12th March	Planning
26th March	Statutory Council
9th April	Annual Parish Meeting
30th April	Statutory Council
21st May	Annual Council Meeting

There are currently 10 Councillors meeting twice a month. There is also 1 Councillor vacancy; applications to the Parish Clerk would be most welcome.

Parish Councillors

Don McBeth – Chair

Robin Orme – Vice Chair

Tom Jones, Catherine Robinson

Phil Smith, Dr Victoria Ingham

John Leaver, Mercedes Madden

Peggy Guggenheim, Sam Keeley

(one current vacancy)



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Ditchling Horticultural Society

If you've lived in Ditchling any length of time, you will have noticed that the Horticultural Society holds three shows each year. Have you ever popped into the Village Hall on show day to see what's happening?

The Hall is filled with home-grown fruit and vegetables, seasonal flowers and home-made goodies. You can admire the exhibits, then stay for tea and home-made cake, and before you go, buy a ticket for 'Muriel's Raffle' – a village institution in itself.

Ditchling has the oldest village horticultural society in the country – there are records of these fruit, flower and vegetable shows here as long ago as 1822. In those days, poor cottagers competed to win valuable prizes – a pig or a copper kettle – donated by the local gentry. It was a way of encouraging the poor in good thrifty habits: the judges had the right to inspect not only the cottage garden but the cottage itself, passing judgment on the housewife's cleanliness and hard work, as well as on the garden produce! 'Red Rough' gooseberries were always a feature of these shows. A pint mug was filled with berries, which were then weighed; and the heaviest pint won. (Find out more about the history of the Horticultural Society in Dick Morley's fascinating book *Red Roughts and Copper Kettles*, back in print and available at Ditchling Post Office.) These days, things are less feudal; the only criteria for entering produce in a Ditchling show are that you should have grown or made the produce yourself, and that you should be a member of the Society. Membership is not expensive: at the time of writing it is only £3.00 a year (£5 joint membership) and members enjoy benefits such as discounts at local garden centres and the chance of a free trip to RHS Wisley each year.

Ninety years ago, the Society acquired the field just south of Dumbrell's Court which is still the location of Ditchling allotments. They're not quite your average allotments – over the years they have become somewhat varied in size and shape, and we still raise our water by hand at the pump – but that's all part of their



charm. The allotments form a green oasis (and something of a bird sanctuary) in the heart of the village, where there is a thriving community of both novice and experienced growers ready to share their knowledge with newcomers.

But these long-standing traditions don't keep going on their own. Organising the shows and outings, and running the allotments, keep our hard-working Committee busy. Could you help us? Would you like to join the Society, or perhaps even the Committee? Are you interested in working an allotment?

Contact us for more information on any of these things, via our website www.ditchlinghortsoc.weebly.com or by emailing ditchlinghortsoc@outlook.com.

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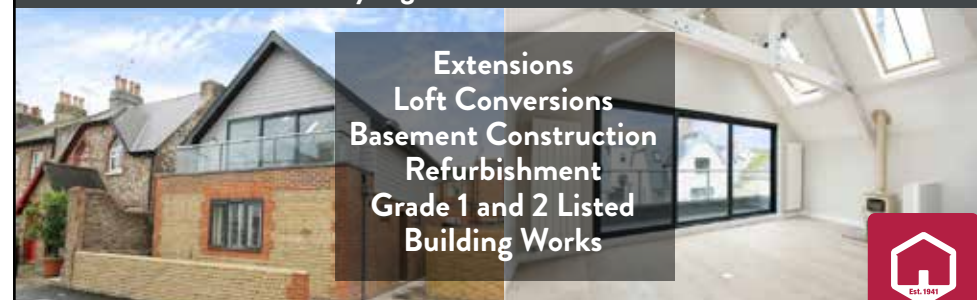
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Ditchling Village Hall in 2017

During the past year the Village Hall has been going under extensive refurbishment, we have taken this invitation from the Parish Council to write about the village hall in their new Parish Council Magazine as we have seen an opportunity to communicate and inform you “the residents” of what we do and are doing presently to maintain our wonderful Village Hall so that the Villagers and their families alike can enjoy.

The external fabric is being upgraded as I write with new windows, doors and security systems which are the latest additions while we continue to upgrade of internal facilities as well.

Other news, the Trustees have engaged with “Action in Rural Sussex” to bring our Constitution for the Village hall (circa 1929) into the twenty first century and change to a constitutional model as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation instead. This has more advantages for the Trustees and the work they do as well as the general running of the hall.

When the transfer process is complete and at the next AGM of Ditchling Village Hall March of 2018 there will be an opportunity for the village to vote this change of constitution. (Should you wish to read the full document please feel free to contact the Committee or a Trustee).

The committee of whom we are eight in number presently take a hands on and proactive approach in as much as time allows us as volunteers. As many of us work and have other commitments, we would welcome having more trustees on board, so if you would like to join us please get in touch.

We plan after the transfer to CIO status, and completion of the upgrade of facilities within the hall to meet three times a year to include the AGM.

All of upgrading and refurbishment work is being done so we can ensure that all villagers both young and older generations know that their village hall is safe, modern and can accommodate the wishes of its villagers.

So, this is the place to come to: if you are planning a function or a Conference as we now have both

the upper and lower halls available with terrific kitchen facilities should you need them.

We are in the process of having a Wedding Pergola built outside on the grounds for outdoor weddings ceremonies and photo opportunities. We plan to plant a yew hedge around the land on which the hall stands, that in time block out the car park view from the hall. So, you may consider family Barbecue parties or other outdoor functions that can take place.

This is the work that has been completed so far:

- New Security Systems installed, replaced the windows in the upper and lower halls
- Replaced the concrete floor in the lower hall with wood laminate
- Taken down the old curtains in the lower and put up Roman blinds
- Replacing the florescent lighting with dimmable lights in the lower hall and installing a conference white board
- Mirrors have been installed in the lower hall and toilets
- Updated the heating system
- Installed a hot water heater
- Installed a filtered cold-water chiller
- The downstairs toilet has been damp proofed
- The disabled toilet has been redecorated
- Put up hanging baskets and tidied up the trees and hedges.

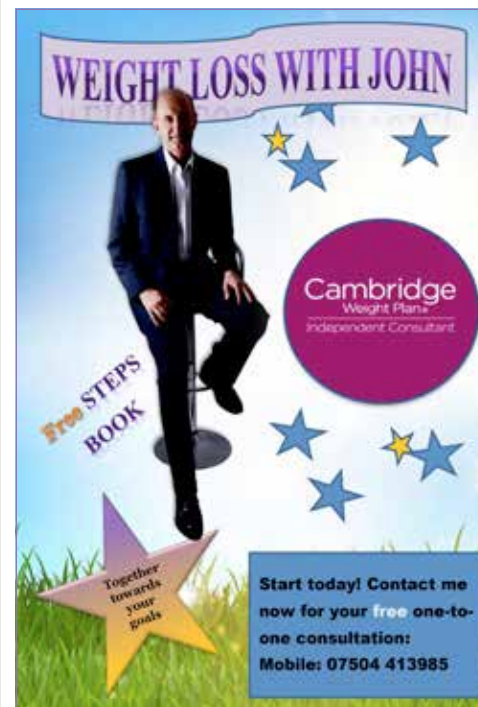
Some work to be done:

- Replaced the main hall floor, we plan to do this sometime in 2018.
- Felt roof to be renewed
- New Ladies and Gentlemen’s toilets downstairs

The Trustees are also in the process of appointing a part-time caretaker to make sure any building problems are dealt with as quickly as possible.

On a final note, I would like to thank our many Hirers for helping us in the ways that they do, also grateful thanks to the all Trustees for their enthusiasm and hard work on behalf of the Village in keeping this wonderful Village Hall up and functioning.

**Mercedes Madden ,
Chairman of Ditchling Village hall**



**DITPC01-042
Clark’s Meat & Poultry
1/4 Page**

Ditchling Pavilion Club

Ditchling Rec, Lewes Road, Ditchling, East Sussex BN6 8TY

Situated in the picturesque recreation ground on Lewes Road, the Pavilion hosts a variety of sports clubs from the local community, including Cricket, Football, Stoolball, Archery, Tennis and Table Tennis. In addition, the hall is regularly used for Pilates classes, a Children's music group, Children's parties and plays host to the annual Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston sports day.

The Pavilion club committee are working in conjunction with the Parish Council to develop a coordinated plan for the development of youth sport. Currently, the Cricket Club run an excellent Junior section and it is the aim of this plan to try and develop similar junior sections within the other sports clubs. The Pavilion club committee passionately believe the recreation ground and the Pavilion should be used by all

the community. A number of new initiatives are being developed to further this aim. Anyone wishing to contribute to these projects should e-mail Sean Guirey at ditchlingpav@gmail.com.

Over the last few years the Pavilion has been continuously improved and re-decorated. There are further plans to upgrade the facilities as funds become available. There is a large hall for hire and is the ideal venue for children's parties, particularly in the warmer months when children can play on the recreation ground. The hall is centrally heated and makes an ideal venue for events, meetings and classes. The Pavilion is available for hire at £10 per hour. For more information or to make a booking, contact Sean Guirey on **07976 381165** or e-mail ditchlingpav@gmail.com.



A MESSAGE FROM Maria Caulfield MP

It was with great sadness that I heard of the recent accident on Spatham Lane involving an equestrian and a car.

Luckily the rider was not more seriously injured, but unfortunately the horse had to be destroyed due to its severe injuries.

Road safety is an important issue on these country lanes and I am grateful to Cllr Tom Jones for organising a recent meeting between various Councillors and other concerned stakeholders. The whole group was united in the need for something to be done to improve safety on the roads in and around Ditchling. We are hoping to meet again later in the year to see how we can start to implement many of the excellent traffic proposals put together in the neighbourhood plan and previous transport plans and will be discussing this with East Sussex County Council and residents shortly.

I am sure that residents will really appreciate that local councillors are all pulling together to ensure the most appropriate outcome for local people and I will be fully supporting their efforts.

On the theme of road safety, the Government has recently announced that they will be introducing maximum life sentences for drivers who kill while drunk, high on drugs, street racing, or speeding. A new crime of causing serious injury through dangerous driving will also be introduced. The current situation where someone can drink drive, speed, or be on their phone and kill, then only get a few years in prison is terribly unfair. It is only right that those taking a life while driving dangerously should be given a life sentence.

Residents can always contact me on maria.caulfield.mp@parliament.uk or **House of Commons, London, SW1 0AA**

Call times slashed by award-winning highways team

A customer service team has clinched a national award for a pioneering approach allowing problems with East Sussex roads to be dealt with more quickly and efficiently.



The switch by East Sussex Highways to a new, more 'personalised' way of working and a high-tech software system has seen average call response times slashed from 90 seconds to just nine seconds.

The new approach, which has seen customer satisfaction levels increase from 50 to 75 per cent, earned silver in the small contact centre category at the UK Customer Experience Awards.

Customer service staff are now allocated their own geographical area, allowing customers to deal with the same adviser throughout the life of their enquiry.

Meanwhile, the public, customer service advisers and highways stewards all use the same software system – allowing a more 'joined-up' approach – while customers can report and track incidents online.

Cllr Nick Bennett, East Sussex County Council lead member for transport and environment, said: "Highways staff are at the frontline when it comes to dealing with the public, and handle around 80,000 enquiries every year.

"It's vital that when people report an issue on our roads they are able to have their enquiry dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible

and to be kept updated throughout.

"The awards Judges recognised the positive impact the new way of working and the dedication and hard work of staff has had in providing a first class, efficient, personalised service to the people of East Sussex."

The changes mean 75 per cent of calls are now answered immediately, compared to 35 per cent previously.

People are now able to receive text message updates on their enquiry or chat to advisers online, while the team also deal with enquiries via social media.

East Sussex Highways is the first authority in Europe to use the specially tailored version of the Salesforce customer service software, which links in to a detailed mapping system.

The new approach was introduced in May last year, when the new Costain CH2m joint venture took over as the county council's highways contractor.

People can report and track incidents, find details of current and forthcoming roadworks and find more information about East Sussex Highways services at www.eastsussexhighways.com

Ditchling Pests

Regular users of the recreation ground will be familiar with the sight of molehills.



The moles seem particularly active in the former rugby field, now used extensively for archery and the burial ground. Mole activity is usually greatest in the late winter and early spring, and this is certainly when we saw an explosion of newly excavated molehills. Mole numbers must be kept under control, the molehills present a trip hazard to users of the recreation ground, they are unsightly and if left unchecked would cause havoc on the new football pitch and cricket pitch.

Professional trapping or fumigation are the only effective solutions to a serious mole problem. The Parish Council employed a local molecatcher who caught 16 moles in December and January. Unfortunately during this period equipment belonging to the mole-catcher was stolen, in total 20 traps and 11 markers were dug up and removed. The theft was reported to Sussex Police and signs were displayed in the recreation ground warning that thieves would be prosecuted and informing users that removing moletraps was an offence. A further spate of mole activity in the spring bought the mole-catcher back to the burial ground where 3 moles were caught and 11 traps stolen. The Parish Council will continue to monitor the situation and will employ pest control measures where appropriate, whilst endeavouring to identify the thief responsible for the loss of equipment.

Nuisance Flies

The fly nuisance problem in Ditchling can be traced back to 2012 when residents reported high numbers of the lesser house fly in and around homes. Those living in the north-east of the village have been most affected. The Environmental Health department of Lewes District Council employed an entomologist to investigate the source of the flies and identify breeding activity. Mild and wet weather benefits the ecology of the house fly as survival rates of larvae are higher during mild winters.

The entomologist found that Fourfields Farm was probably the most important source of the houseflies although he noted that other sources include compost heaps, waste bins, sewage works and animal farms. The full report is available on the Parish Council website. The summer of 2017 has again seen a high number of flies in Ditchling. Environmental Health Officers at Lewes District Council have a statutory duty to investigate and take action where there's a statutory nuisance. The Parish Council has no such powers and officers cannot enter and inspect properties, for example, whereas Environmental Health Officers can do so. On 20th July, all residents who contacted Steven Teale the Senior Environmental Health Technician at Lewes District Council received a letter with the results of their investigations into the unusually high numbers of flies. This letter stated that: 'we have found evidence that strongly suggests the flies are arising from the natural environment, and that the weather and other environmental conditions have been favourable to the early life stages of these insects.' They further found that Fourfields Farm had taken the best practicable means of managing flies and applied a consistent approach, and that the evidence did not support the claim that any nuisance can be attributed to the farm. The full text is available on the Parish Council website under **Latest News**. The Parish Council is aware that a group of local residents are considering employing their own entomologist to investigate further.

The Parish Council has free redtop fly traps available for all residents and these can be collected from the Parish Office, which is usually open on a Monday and Tuesday, or from Ditchling Post Office. The capacity of the fly traps is 20,000 flies, the bait is especially appealing to female flies, thereby reducing the next generation. The traps are effective for 12 weeks.

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Calling All Dog Walkers!

Many people enjoy the pleasures associated with having a dog, but unfortunately not all owners/dog walkers take this responsibility seriously when out and about.

The Parish Council has recently received complaints from walkers and landowners alike, concerned about dogs straying from public footpaths, not being properly controlled and owners not picking up after their dogs.

We've heard about dogs running boisterously up to other dogs or walkers with no owners in sight, complaints about some walking a number of dogs simultaneously and had concern expressed about the risks posed to children, other dogs, and sheep/cattle from discarded dog poo which can spread diseases such as Toxocariasis and Neospora.

Some people mistakenly think that it is ok to

leave dog poo to biodegrade in a field, as long as it is off the footpath. This is far from true. Not only should dogs, like people, be kept to the public right of way, but dog poo left in fields can be inadvertently fed to animals in hay harvested from those fields, and can result in the death of cattle.

Whilst we recognise that the majority of local dog owners do care about these things and are responsible when out and about, there is an unfortunate minority that are not.

Please, please, please pick up after your dog when out and about, observe the 'bag it, bin it' rule and follow the 'Dog Walking Code'.

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The Dog Walking Code

For safe and happy walks with your dog, and to avoid causing problems for others:

1 Ensure your dog is under effective control, which means:

- You have a short lead with you and use it when needed (e.g. around livestock, near cliff edges or where signs request it)
- You do not let your dog off the lead unless you keep it in sight and close enough to come back to you on command

2 Prevent you dog from approaching horse riders, cyclists, or other people and their dogs uninvited.

3 Keep your dog with you on paths or access land and don't let it stray into crops including fields of grass, fruit and vegetables.

4 Never let your dog worry or chase wildlife or livestock. Follow advice on local signs to reduce disturbance to plants and animals.

5 Stay SAFE around farm animals and horses:

- Stop, look and listen before entering a field; be aware of any animals present.
- Always keep your dog on a short lead
- Find the safest route around animals, giving them plenty of space and using paths or access land where possible
- Exit the area calmly and quickly if threatened, releasing your dog to make it easier for you both to reach safety.

6 Always bag and bin your dog's poo wherever you are. You can use any public waste bin or your bin at home.

7 Never leave bags of dog poo lying around, even if you intend to pick them up later. Containers and deodorised bags can make them easier to carry.

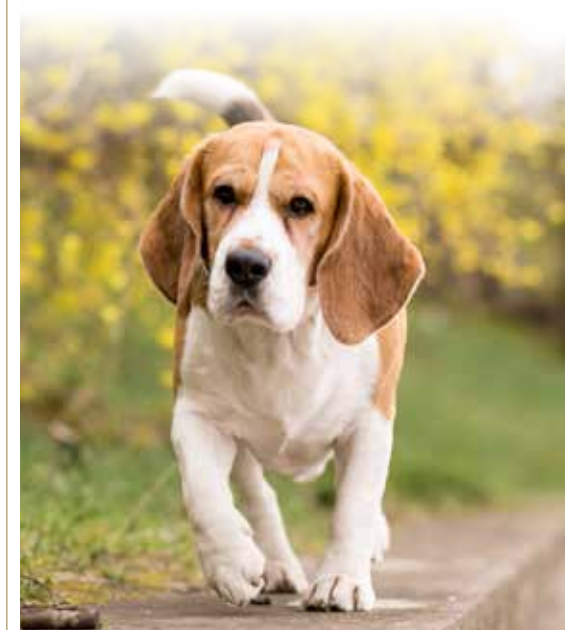
8 Ensure your details are on your dog's collar and it is microchipped, so you can be reunited quickly if it is lost.

9 Keep your dog's vaccinations and worming up to date. Ask your vet for more information.

10 Contact your local authority, or look out for signs, to get more information about what to do and where to go in your area.

We recognise you don't always find a dog bin where you want one, but over the years the Parish Council has worked to have several installed around the Parish. There are four bins at the recreation ground and a dog poo bag dispenser.

Where dog bins don't exist, it is normally ok however to double bag and put dog waste into standard litter bins. Failing that, please take it with you and dispose of it at home.



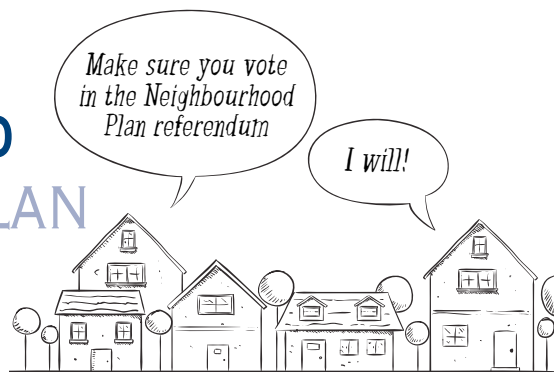
THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Our local Neighbourhood Plan – its full title is the **Ditchling Streat and Westmeston Neighbourhood Development Plan (DSWNDP)** – was submitted to the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) in May.

The Plan had to conform with a number of strategic Plans including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Lewes/SDNPA Joint Core Strategy 2016 and we are currently awaiting to hear whether the Independent Examiner considers the Plan to be in conformity with these strategic plans and to have ticked all the boxes in terms of the procedures followed and the public consultation carried out. Once approved, the Plan will go forward to a Local Referendum.

This means that all the residents of voting age in the 3 Parishes will have the opportunity to vote on the Plan when the referendum is held. Please do make a note of the date in your calendars! If a simple majority vote in favour of the Plan, it will be formally adopted by SDNPA and Lewes District Council who are the 2 planning authorities covering the 3 Parishes. This means that decisions on all future planning applications within the 3 Parishes must take account of the DSWNDP. It also means that the 3 Parishes can confidently push forward on a number of projects which have been proposed for some time.

Since 2012, a huge amount of effort has gone into the production of the Plan including major consultations with local residents, businesses and local organisations. Unlike many other Parish Council's, we decided not to employ planning consultants to prepare the Plan but instead we set up a project group of local residents who were able to bring their own considerable skills



and experience to the task. This meant of course that we did not need to burden local council tax payers with significant expenditure.

Many of you will recall the questionnaire sent to all residents in 2014 (from which we received the relatively high response rate of over 51%) and the public exhibition held at Ditchling Village Hall in November 2015. The feedback from these and other consultations has been invaluable and we can say with confidence that the Plan genuinely reflects the majority view of those who took the time and trouble to give their views including those residents who participated in the 5 Focus Groups on housing, traffic and transport, business and tourism, conservation and the environment and community infrastructure.

The Plan, which looks forward to the year 2032, seeks to conserve the essential character of Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston whilst accommodating a minimum of 15 new dwellings in Ditchling itself. Considerable emphasis is placed on preserving the countryside or strategic gaps between Ditchling and the other neighbouring settlements of Hassocks/Keymer to the west and Burgess Hill to the north and the special green spaces within the villages themselves. At the same time, the Plan's policies aim to mitigate the serious problem of through traffic and congestion in Ditchling village centre, to encourage the sustainable development of the local economy and to provide better community facilities – including sport and recreation improvements – for all ages.

The Parish Council firmly believes that the Plan will be essential in the next 15 years in

PARISH COUNCIL GRANTS AWARDED

Remembrance Day Parade.

It was agreed at the August 2017 meeting that the Parish Council would cover the cost of hiring the Burgess Hill Marching Band at the Remembrance Day service at a cost of £150.

Other grants made:

Ditchling, Streat, and Westmeston Sports £150

Ditchling, Streat, and Westmeston PCC £400

Kent, Surrey, Sussex Air Ambulance £250

Preschool £250

St Peter & St James Charitable Trust £375

Dame Vera Lynn Childrens Charity £200.

preserving all that is best in our 3 villages and communities whilst ensuring that where change is necessary it is implemented in the most sensitive and sustainable way possible. We therefore urge you to come to the Village Hall on referendum day and vote "yes" to your Neighbourhood Plan.

The Council has already started to gear up to implement a number of key policies in the Plan. We have set aside £12,000 each year for a number of projects which local residents and businesses supported during the public consultation and we will be looking to at least match this with grant funding from other sources. Recently, we submitted bids to SDNPA for infrastructure funding for the new car park, an extension to the burial ground, traffic studies to ease congestion in Ditchling and finally improvements to the Ditchling recreation ground of which more in the following section.

All neighbourhood plan documents and supporting material can be accessed on www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk.

Ditchling recreation ground and play area

During the extensive consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, a number of residents from the 3 Parishes told us that improvements to the Ditchling recreation ground were needed. Many of these were fed into the Community Infrastructure Focus group and they included providing hard surface footpaths for the disabled and parents with push chairs, outside fitness equipment, an upgrading of the Pavilion and an extension of the play area to include facilities for older children.

The Plan's vision is to enable such developments without harming the outstanding landscape, open spaces and wonderful views which make the grounds so special. To achieve this, the Parish Council intends to commission landscape architects to prepare a "master plan" to ensure the right balance is achieved.

The first phase of the master plan will be



the upgrading the equipment and extending southwards the children's play area but well away from the cricketers. Much of the play area's current equipment was installed in 1989 with some later additions in 1997 and 2001. Whilst the area is still very popular, some of the equipment is starting to wear out - which is not surprising as it was designed to last for 25 years! – or it has become largely unused. It was also designed for children aged between 3 and 11 and a number of parents have asked that we also provide equipment for older children up to the age of 16.

With the help of parents and an excellent report written by Louise Evatt – a local Mum - we have identified a number of potential new items including outdoor table tennis, more challenging climbing equipment, a zip wire, a double nest swing, a new single hoop basketball net and a bridge and tunnel. We are also proposing to provide a new pathway from the Farm Lane entrance to the enlarged play area which will make it a lot easier for parents (and grandparents!) rather than wading through

the often waterlogged approach during the Autumn and Winter months. An attractive metal boundary fence – rather than the existing wooden fencing is also being considered.

Our proposals are likely to cost in the region of £80,000. Whilst this compares favourably with other play areas, it is still a large sum and we are determined to get the best possible value for money. We have set aside £30,000 in our budget and we are planning to raise at least as much again from national and local organisations. We are currently preparing grant applications to South Downs National Park Authority and the national lottery and local charities.

We will be publicizing our proposals for both the recreation ground masterplan and play area for your comments in early 2018. The consultation will include 2 public exhibitions to be held in the Village Hall and The Pavilion where drawings and illustrations will be on display. We very much welcome your responses. We will be announcing the exhibition dates shortly.

With the benefit of your comments, we intend to finalise the master plan and invite specialist contractors to tender for the detailed design and works for the play area with the aim of completing these works during 2018.

There will inevitably be a period of inconvenience and some disruption while the works are going on but we believe that our new play area will be one of the most exciting and stimulating projects Ditchling has seen for quite a while. We hope you agree that the benefits it will bring local children across a broader age range will make it all worthwhile.

Louise's research report and some illustrations of potential play equipment are available on the Ditchling Parish Council's web site or can be made available at the Ditchling Parish Council office.

If you have any thought or ideas you would like to let us have at this early stage, then please do get in touch.

Phil Smith
Chair of Grounds committee



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LOCAL PLANNING HIGHLIGHTS...

Ditchling Parish Council does not have a separate planning committee, the full council considered 34 separate planning applications during the first six months of 2017. The Council meets twice a month on a Monday evening in the lower hall, Ditchling Village Hall. The agenda is posted on the Tuesday/Wednesday preceding the meeting on the village notice boards; outside the Village Hall and in the High Street. The final decision rests with Lewes District Council or the (SDNP) South Downs National Park, for applications within the Park. The Parish Council can choose to object to an application, recommend an application is approved or register no comment. The Parish Council will always be mindful of the policies in the draft neighbourhood plan in making its decision as well as the national and district policies.

Notable recent applications include:

Rugby Pitch, Keymer Road, SDNP/17/01358

A change of use application for an agricultural field at Keymer Road to be used as a rugby pitch by Ditchling Rugby Club. Application ref; SDNP/16/05154/FUL. There was considerable public interest in this application and the SDNP planning officer received 75 submissions of objection and 65 submissions of support. The Parish Council objected to the application which was outside any planning boundary, and was located in the strategic gap between Ditchling and Keymer.

The application was determined by the planning committee for the SDNP on 9 February 2017. The committee granted a temporary four-year permission with a number of conditions attached. The conditions include further reports on drainage both in the field and the car park at St James's Montefiore cricket club; restrictions on changes in ground levels during the pitch creation, restrictions in usage which will be between September and April each year, goal posts must be removed between April and September.

New Community Car Park, Keymer Road, SDNP/17/01358

A change of use application for an agricultural field to be used as a 40-space public car park, plus

cycle stands. Application ref; SDNP/17/01358/FUL. This application was made by the Parish Council. The public car park at the Village Hall is inadequate for residents and visitors to Ditchling. Overall 14 members of the public submitted comments to the planning officer. The Parish Council as you would expect supported the application on the grounds that this facility is much needed particularly in the east of the village where there is insufficient parking for both residents and visitors to the Ditchling Museum, the Church, The Village Barn & Green, The White Horse Pub and all other local businesses. The emerging Ditchling Street & Westmeston Neighbourhood Plan recognizes the importance of supporting the visitor economy and encouraging the provision and retention of local shops and community facilities; protecting and enhancing community infrastructure. Policy Trans 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan specifically supports the introduction of a car park in this location.

Extensive discussion with planning and landscape officers from the SDNP and officers from ESCC County highways has taken place in the last months to ensure that the proposed car park is acceptable to all statutory authorities. It was clear that the hedgerow along the Keymer Road would need to be cut back to allow for sufficient sight-lines for vehicles exiting the car park. ESCC highways raised concerns that this may lead to people travelling faster, they also raised concerns about the location of the proposed entrance/exit which was located at the existing gateway into the field, and questioned the provision of parking spaces for the disabled. The Parish Council has adopted all of the recommendations put forward by ESCC Highways department. We have agreed to relocate the entrance/exit further along the Keymer Road; we have agreed that no spaces will be designated for disabled drivers, who are able to park on yellow lines closer to the village centre; we have agreed that the pavement will be widened to two meters; we have agreed to fund an extension of the existing 30 mph zone, so that the new entrance/exit falls within the 30mph limit.

The planning officer and landscape officer for the SDNP in turn raised a number of issues or asked for clarification. The car park will have provision for cycles with several bike stands, the proposed steel stands have been discarded in favour of wooden stands in order that a rural feel is maintained. We have assured the SDNP that the post and rail fence will be cleft and made from locally sourced chestnut. Overall the

Council will be replanting and planting additional hedgerow and shrubs to enhance the site. The existing unmanaged hedgerow along the northern boundary will be managed and improved, with gaps filled with new planting. A new hedgerow will be planted along the western boundary. Scrub vegetation including brambles and nettles would be cleared.

There has been some discussion over the most appropriate material to use to mark parking bays. Raised wooden edges or stone insets were suggested, with the raised wooden edges rejected as this could provide a trip hazard at night in an unlit car park. The landscape officer in particular noted that the car park will be in poor condition if the grass did not grow through well through the proposed grid system. The Parish Council has provided revised plans for the SDNP showing two



alternative surfaces; a chip and tar surface as shown on the illustration below and a grass grid system. The planning application went before the planning committee on 14 September and was passed unanimously. The final choice of surface was left to the Parish Council.

HARD LANDSCAPE PALETTE



SOFT LANDSCAPE PALETTE



CHRISTMAS *Recipe*

Christmas Orange Rolls



Ingredients

- 1 tube Crescent Rolls (8 rolls)
- 1 tablespoon orange zest
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- Butter for spreading
- 1/4 cup mini chocolate chips
- 1 tablespoon melted butter
- 2/3 cup powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons fresh orange juice

Method

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.
Carefully unroll the crescent rolls, being sure to keep them in a rectangle. Do not separate them; press together the seams of all 8 rolls to form a large rectangle.
Spread with a small amount of butter (light butter spread is fine too). Mix granulated sugar, cinnamon and orange zest in a small bowl. Sprinkle evenly over the rectangle of dough, being sure to go right up to the edges. Sprinkle with the chocolate chips.
Starting at the short end, tightly roll the crescent rolls back into a roll, pressing together seams as needed. Slice into 8 equal sized pieces and place on prepared cookie sheet.
Bake for about 10 minutes, until browned. Prepare glaze while they are baking.
Whisk melted butter, powdered sugar and orange juice in a small bowl. Drizzle onto hot rolls when they come out of the oven. Rolls are best warm.

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