

DITTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF DITTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AT DITTON COMMUNITY CENTRE ON MONDAY 3RD FEBRUARY 2025

PRESENT: CLLRS. N NEWMAN [CHAIRMAN], M J PORTER [VICE-CHAIR], MRS J DEARDEN, A LAIDOUCCI, A MULCUCK, MRS M NEWMAN, MRS A THROSSELL, MRS K NASH, MRS L COX, J COX & A WATERS
MRS N GREENAWAY [CLERK OF THE COUNCIL], TMBC CLLR R CANNON

372. OPENING OF MEETING

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30pm.

373. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs Adlington and White. The previously notified reasons for absence were **ACCEPTED** and **APPROVED** and recorded in the absence book Ref. 570.

374. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Cllr Mulcuck declared a personal interest in item 379(f) Charitable donations, as he is a member of Ditton Heritage Centre. Cllr Cox declared an interest in item 382(a) as one of the applications is on land adjacent to his mother's property.

375. CONFIRMATION & SIGNING OF MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 6TH JANUARY 2025

The minutes of the above meeting were **CONFIRMED** and **SIGNED** as a true record.

376. MATTERS ARISING

Meeting Timetable for 2025/26 [Page 148, Item 343]

It was **NOTED** that it had been necessary to adjust the meeting dates for September so that they all take place a week later than originally scheduled otherwise they would have all occurred too early for administrative purposes. An amended timetable was circulated to show that the Full Council would be on 8th September, Community Centre Committee on 15th September and Planning and Open Spaces on 22nd September.

377. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD DURING JANUARY 2025

(a) Community Centre Committee, 13th January 2025

The minutes of the above meeting were presented by Cllr Mrs Dearden and signed as a true record.

(b) Planning, Highways and Transportation Committee, 20th January 2025

The minutes of the above meeting were presented by Cllr Waters and signed as a true record.

(c) Open Spaces and Amenities Committee, 20th January 2025

The minutes of the above meeting were presented by Cllr Waters and signed as a true record.

378. **CORRESPONDENCE**(a) For Noting

The following items were **CIRCULATED, READ** and **NOTED**:

Ditton Twinning Association:	<u>Minutes of Meeting 7th January 2025</u>
KALC:	<u>Newsletter January 2025</u>
KCC/Making Space for Nature:	<u>Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy</u>
VE Day 80:	<u>National Events</u>

(b) For Decision

Public Services Student:	<u>Offer to undertake voluntary work</u> It was agreed that if the Clerk and other senior staff members could identify any suitable tasks, to offer the student the opportunity to undertake some voluntary work on behalf of the Council. It was noted that volunteers are covered by the Councils insurance.
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379. **FINANCE**(a) Accounts For Payment

RESOLVED the following payments be **APPROVED** and **RATIFIED**:-

January Payroll Summary

Monthly	Gross	£29,999.89
	Net	£22,485.82

Accounts (approved and paid 07.01.25)

Community Centre				
PPL PRS	Music Licence	VAT	2,032.22 406.45	£2,438.67
Chubb	Fire Service Contract	VAT	736.09 147.22	£883.31
AAA Triple Events	Music Festival Staging	VAT	1241.62 248.33	£1,489.95
Bar				
Kent & Sussex	Bar Stock	VAT	360.74 491.34 170.40	£1,022.48
Lansdell	Bar Stock	VAT	146.09 435.72 105.97	£687.78

Chubb	Carman Room Alarm	VAT	185.34 37.07	£222.41
JPS	Oaken Hall Bar – Doors	VAT	2250.00 20,769.00 2371.00 5,078.00	£30,468.00
F&A				
Atlas	Key Holder	VAT	464.43 92.89	£557.32
OSA				
Aquaid	Water Coolers	VAT	41.96 8.39	£50.35

Accounts (paid 21.01.25)

Community Centre				
Envirocure	Legionella Testing	VAT	48.75 9.75	£58.50
1 st A Pest Control	Quarterly pest control visit	VAT	60.00 12.00	£72.00
F&A				
Forvis Mazars	External Audit	VAT	1680.00 336.00	£2,016.00
Bar				
BSS Stocktaking	Stocktake		150.00	£150.00
Kent & Sussex	Bar Stock	VAT	1152.64 230.53	£1,383.17
OSA				
Tree Monkeys	Tree work	VAT	2,960.00 592.00	£3,552.00

Accounts (approved and paid 30.01.25)

Community Centre				
Capital	Cleaning Supplies	VAT	64.65 18.68 16.67	£100.00
KCS	Cleaning Supplies	VAT	5.95 217.53 25.98 49.90	£299.36
Chubb	Fire Alarm Service	VAT	213.07 42.61	£255.68
TH Electrical Services	Repairs/Replacements		751.00	£751.00
F&A				
KCC	Internal Audit	VAT	579.00 115.80	£694.80
Matt Stephens	Christmas Lights		144.00	£144.00
Bar				
All Chilled	Glasswasher Repairs	VAT	98.00 98.00 39.20	£235.20

KBC	Replacement Thermostat Valves	VAT	422.48 84.50	£506.98
Kent & Sussex	Bar Stock	VAT	769.67 705.65 169.20 328.92	£1,973.44
Lansdell	Bar Stock		136.87 109.17 173.63 71.59	£491.26
OSA				
Atlas	Keyholder service	VAT	524.49 104.90	£629.39

January Deposit Refunds

17.01.25	Oaken Hall - 12.01.25	£105.00
23.01.25	Oaken Hall – 30.11.24	£50.00

(b) Direct Debits - Paid During January 2025

RESOLVED the following direct debits be **ACCEPTED** and **APPROVED**:-

January Direct Debits

02.01.25	O2	Mobile phone	£13.20
02.01.25	TMBC	Business Rates	£349.00
03.01.25	Carlsberg	Equipment Rental	£187.20
08.01.25	SKY	Sky Sports	£433.86
09.01.25	Rentokil Initial	Washroom services	£182.77
10.01.25	Commercial Services	Gas Supply	£1,168.46
10.01.25	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£1,421.50
14.01.25	Siemens	Equipment Rental	£972.13
15.01.25	Bankline	Monthly Charges	£100.35
15.01.25	Safety Effect	H&S	£114.00
15.01.25	DHFE	Till Rental	£369.60
15.01.25	FDMS	Card Charges	£509.13
16.01.25	Sage	Monthly subscription	£255.60
17.01.25	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£1,136.41
20.01.25	Powys CC	DBS Check	£36.50
21.01.25	Hugo Fox	Website	£23.99
23.01.25	Host My Office	IT Support	£754.44
24.01.25	BOC	Bar Gas	£313.48
24.01.25	TNT	TNT Sports	£487.31
24.01.25	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£1,160.33
27.01.25	Everflow	Water	£514.49
27.01.25	WEX	Fuelcard	£3.60
27.01.25	NEST	Pension contributions	£857.30
28.01.25	Veolia	Refuse collection	£591.07
29.01.25	Focus	Telephone	£96.68
29.01.25	Focus	Telephone Lease	£165.00
29.01.25	O2	Mobile Phone	£13.20

(c) BACS - Paid During January 2025

RESOLVED the following BACs payments be **ACCEPTED** and **APPROVED**:-

January BACS Payments (not previously listed)

06.01.25	Mallion	Allotment Key Deposit	£50.00
10.01.25	NCS	Photocopy charges	£40.04
15.01.25	Sutton	Payroll	£100.00
24.01.25	Four Jays	Toilet Trailer Deposit	£197.00
24.01.25	Beautridge	Bar Services	£179.10
28.01.25	National Windscreens	Replacement rear windscreen	£110.19
30.01.25	A Waters	Travel Expenses	£19.60

(d) Debit Card Payments - Paid During January 2025

RESOLVED the following debit card payments be **ACCEPTED** and **APPROVED**:-

January Debit Card

03.01.25	Amazon	Replacement Urn Tap	£74.00
07.01.25	SLCC	Annual subscription	£300.00
08.01.25	Tesco	Refreshments	£53.83
09.01.25	Amazon	Prime membership	£8.99
09.01.25	Toolstation	Workwear/Pipe Insulation	£50.88
10.01.25	Amazon	Chipper Blade	£69.98
15.01.25	ATS	Truck Battery	£239.99
16.01.25	Amazon	Paper Shredder	£46.99
17.01.25	Amazon	Telescopic Lopers	£34.99
20.01.25	Tesco	Refreshments	£57.24
21.01.25	Feepayonline	Postage	£1.50
23.01.25	Amazon	Chainsaw Parts	£73.48
23.01.25	Chelford Farm Supplies	Chainsaw Chain	£29.38
24.01.25	Nisbets	Crockery	£191.90
24.01.25	Timpsons	Key Cutting	£58.00
24.01.25	Amazon	Stationary	£13.47
27.01.25	Tesco	Refreshments	£62.20

(e) S.137 [Local Government Act 1972] Expenditure Limit for 2025/26

It was **NOTED** that the figure that may be spent per elector under S.137 for the year 2025/26 will be £11.10.

(f) Annual Charitable Donations

Requests received for financial support were **READ** and **NOTED**. It was **NOTED** that no income had been raised for the charities account in recent year's as there had been no dances or events at which a raffle could be held. The Clerk advised there was currently £600.79 in the charities account plus there was £500.00 in the F&A Budget for S.137 payments. It was also **NOTED** that a sum of £500.00 had been raised from ticket sales for the 50th Anniversary Music event held last October and this was intended to be divided and paid to the Heart of Kent Hospice and Macmillan.

RESOLVED to make the following donations:-

Under Local Government Act 1972, Sec 142

£50 to Tonbridge & Malling Citizens Advice Bureau [from the Charities Account].

Under Local Government Act 1972, Sec 144

£100 to Ditton Heritage Centre [from the Charities Account].

RESOLVED to make the following donations from this Council's S.137 budget:-

Under Local Government Act 1972, Sec 137

£250 to Kent Air Ambulance plus £50 from the charities account – total of £300.

£250 to Heart of Kent Hospice from the 50th Music event proceeds plus £50 from the donations S.137 budget – total of £300.

£250 to Macmillan Cancer Care from the 50th Music event proceeds.

(g) Internal Audit Report

The report of the First Visit for 2024/25 which had been **CIRCULATED** was **READ**. It was **NOTED** that during the visit testing was focused on financial regulations, standing orders, expenditure controls, purchase cards, Risk Management and Budget Management/Monitoring, petty cash, salaries, publication of information on the website, public rights and publication requirements. It was noted that KCC Audit had advised that they wanted to increase the time spent on each visit by half a day. This would mean an increase in internal audit fees for the year of £579.00. The Clerk advised that she had asked for more information on why this would be necessary. It was agreed to wait for a response before a decision is made to accept the new fees for 2025/26.

(h) CCLA Property Fund Dividend

It was **NOTED** that the dividend payment for the period to 31st December 2024 of £5,526.98 had been received.

(i) Waste Collection Contract

It was **NOTED** that the Council could take out a “new” waste contract via Lumina [part of KCC that source the council's energy contracts] but with its existing supplier, Veolia and it would save over £1,000.00 per year. It was agreed to move the Veolia waste contract via Lumina.

380. **REPORTS FROM BOROUGH & COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

LOCAL DEMOCRACY

A decision expected last week as to whether Kent will be in the devolution priority programme was deferred to this week by the government but as of today there are no further developments to report. However there may be further news by the time of the Parish Partnership Panel meeting to be held in the Council Chamber this Thursday 6 February at 7.30pm. The leader of the Borough Council, Matt Boughton, and the Chief executive, Damien Roberts, will be addressing and updating the Panel on the subject. Also present will be Matthew Scott, the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner who will be providing an update on police initiatives.

EMPTY PROPERTIES

In other news Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council has seen more long term empty houses brought back into use than any other council in Kent. The council's focus on working closely with property owners is giving empty homes a new lease of life and providing a much needed boost for local communities.

At the end of 2024 there were 7500 properties in Kent that had lain vacant for six months or more. While some areas in Kent saw empty dwellings increase by as many as 350 I am pleased to report TMBC bucked the trend and last year saw 76 homes brought back into use with the number of empty houses falling from 489 to 413.

PLANNING MATTERS

On Wednesday 26 February all Area 3 and Area 2 members have been invited to a site visit and briefing with the developer of EMR's Bradbourne site in connection with land east of Kiln Barn Road and west of Hermitage Lane. This timing would suggest the application is likely to be considered at the Area 3 meeting either on 13 March or 10 April or possibly at a specially convened meeting of Area 2 and 3 combined on a date to be decided.

From March London City Lionesses will be commencing their wider consultation strategy for the K Sports site at Cobdown together with their wider masterplan which will include their intentions around the community provision, which is something they are committed to and they expect will be of interest and importance to the community.

381. **COMMUNITY POLICE/WARDEN REPORT**

The Clerk advised that no report had been submitted but that the local PC visited the parish officer regularly and has advised that there are no real issues in Ditton currently. The Clerk reported that there had been an issue with motorbikes on the recreation ground and she had reported this and been advised it was a common problem in the area and it was difficult for the police to catch the culprits.

382. **DATE SENSITIVE PLANNING MATTERS**

(a) Plans Received for Comment

25/00064/PA - Kiln Barn Farm, Kiln Barn Road, Ditton, Aylesford

Erection of a stable block, isolation stable block and horse walker

RESOLVED NO OBJECTION.

25/00081/PA - COBDOWN SPORTS GROUND, STATION ROAD, DITTON

Proposed re-laying of 1 no. grass pitch into a new hybrid football pitch with associated infrastructure, installation of internal and external boundary treatment, demolition of existing outbuildings, associated hard and soft landscaping, to enable improvements to the internal access road and car park and creation of a new footpath and retrospective installation of external signage.

RESOLVED overall, this Council has no material objections to the proposed plans. However, it would make the following comments:

The plans do not currently reflect any material transport issues to Cobdown Park residents or tenants such as the Kent FA. However, the development of the fencing could easily be changed that could make this an issue for residents in future. We would ask that there is a condition that the existing routes could not be blocked in future or cause any restrictions that would affect the other residents/tenants that are located on this site and use this access road.

The traffic plans for the cars and staff are prudent and fit in line with the existing development. We note the introduction of coaches and we would hope this will not be an issue or cause any disturbance to the properties in Station Road.

No mention has been made as to whether the facilities will be “opened up” for community use in the future but if this were to happen, this council would seek assurance that adequate parking and traffic control would be in place. The council would welcome more engagement with the local community from the new owners as this facility has previously always been well used by local people.

This council has noted the objections submitted by local residents.

(b) Plans dealt with by Area 3 Committee

24/01467/PA – 425, Silver Birches, London Road, Ditton, Aylesford, ME20 6DB

1 x Group of Leylandii (marked G1 on applicant's sketch) - Cut back all over hanging branches encroaching into garden of 57 Primrose Drive (applicant's property) back to boundary.

6 Weeks Expired

(c) Orchard Mill [Ditton Edge] Development

There was nothing to report about this development. It was **NOTED** that KCC Cllr Andrew Kennedy had reported to the developer the issue of excessive mud on the roads from the construction vehicles.

(d) Bradbourne - EMT Proposal

It was noted from Borough Cllr Cannon's report that TMBC Council Members from Area 3 and Area 2 had been invited to a site meeting which indicated the application would go to a meeting in March or April for consideration.

(e) Local Plan Engagement and Consultation Strategy

It was **NOTED** that the Local Plan was proceeding despite the devolution proposal and that they were working to completion by December 2026. It was also noted that it had been proposed to hold a series of smaller meetings with just a few parishes at a time.

383. **KALC CHAIR'S NETWORKING FORUM / DEVOLUTION**

The Chairman **REPORTED** that he had attended this forum and that the Head of KALC spoke about devolution but nothing new was really discussed other than the concern about a “skills drain”.

384. **VE DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY**

It was **NOTED** various events and actions to mark this anniversary would take place around the country. It was also noted that although a specific event had not been planned for Ditton, the anniversary should be acknowledged. It was likely other groups and organisations would hold their own events to commemorate this anniversary. It was also **NOTED** that it would be the 80th Anniversary of VJ Day in August. The Clerk said she would ask that both these important Anniversaries are acknowledged at this year's Remembrance Service.

RESOLVED to purchase 50 of the 80th Anniversary lamppost signs and a large transparent sign for the parish office window.

385. **REMEMBRANCE SERVICE 2025**

The Clerk advised she was trying to arrange a meeting with the Church to discuss last year's service and this year's service and any changes that may be required.

386. **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, MONDAY 28TH APRIL 2025**

It was **NOTED** that the Twinning Committee had agreed to give a talk about Twinning as it is the 30th Anniversary of the twinning with Rang du Fliers.

387. **DITTON GAZETTE – SPRING / SUMMER**

It was **NOTED** it would not be possible to get Spring/Summer edition out before Easter and the church would be advised of this. It was hoped to have it ready for delivery by early/mid May.

388. **MATTERS ARISING FROM "CORRESPONDENCE FOR NOTING"**

There were no matters arising.

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and standing Orders 27 & 50 the Chairman to move that due to the confidential nature of the next item the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting.

389. **PERSONNEL MATTER**

The Clerk advised that two members of Grounds Staff were nearing the end of probation periods. Further details are contained in Confidential Memorandum Ref. 447.

390. **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 8.24pm.

Chairman
3rd March 2025

