

DITTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

PRESENT: CLLRs. N NEWMAN [CHAIRMAN], M J PORTER [VICE-CHAIR], MRS J DEARDEN, A MULCUCK, MRS M NEWMAN, MRS A THROSSELL, D ADLINGTON, MRS K NASH, MRS L COX, J COX, A WATERS & R WHITE
MRS N GREENAWAY [CLERK OF THE COUNCIL], TMBC CLLR C WILLIAMS

410. **OPENING OF MEETING**

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30pm.

411. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllr Laidouci. The previously notified reason for absence was **ACCEPTED** and **APPROVED** and recorded in the absence book Ref. 573.

412. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

413. **CONFIRMATION & SIGNING OF MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 3RD FEBRUARY 2025**

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

414. **MATTERS ARISING**

Internal Audit [Page 162, Item 379(g)]

The Clerk advised that she had asked for clarification on why a further half day per visit was necessary for the following year's audit programme. She advised that the response from KCC Audit was that they had reviewed their quotations and audit programmes for parish councils following enquiries from several councils. They had issued a revised quotation keeping each of the three visits in the year to 1 ½ days per visit with a 4% increase to fees. This would mean an increase of £67.50 for the year.

RESOLVED to accept the revised quotation for KCC Internal Audit and to accept and approve the proposed audit programme for 2025/26.

415. **MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD DURING FEBRUARY 2025**

(a) For Confirmation & Signing

(i) PLANNING, HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE, 17TH FEBRUARY 2025

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

(ii) OPEN SPACES & AMENITIES COMMITTEE. 17TH FEBRUARY 2025

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

Matter Arising – Trees on KBBRG – Quotations [Page 170, Item 403,(b)]

Cllr Waters reminded members of the Committee that it had been agreed to obtain a quotation to pollard two Maple trees on KBBRG near to Pear Tree Avenue. The quotation was **NOTED** at £300.00 plus VAT. It was further **NOTED** that there were two other Maple trees and some Hawthorns on another part of the recreation ground border with Pear Tree Avenue that were due for work this year and a quotation to do the necessary work on these trees had also been obtained for £550.00 plus VAT. The Clerk advised there would be sufficient funds in the OSA budget due to an underspend on the salaries during the year.

RESOLVED to accept both quotations from Tree Monkeys to undertake this tree work as soon as possible.

416. **CORRESPONDENCE**

(a) For Noting

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

Ditton Twinning Assoc:	<u>Agenda for Meeting 04/03/2025</u>
TMBC Parish Partnership Panel:	<u>Update on English Devolution White Paper</u> <u>Minutes of Meeting held on 06/02/2025</u>
KALC:	<u>Training Bulletin</u>
KALC T&M Cttee:	<u>Minutes of Meeting held on 16/01/2025</u>
Aletheia Academies Trust:	<u>Advert for Governors for Ditton Junior School</u>

(b) For Decision

NOTED none received to date.

417. **FINANCE**

(a) Payments to be Ratified

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

February Payroll Summary

<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Gross</i>	<i>£32,167.23</i>
	<i>Net</i>	<i>£23,638.17</i>

February Deposit Refunds

07.02.25	Oaken Hall - 02.02.25	£50.00
07.02.25	Carman Room – 02.02.25	£51.50
07.02.25	Oaken Hall – 02.02.25	£50.00
11.02.25	Oaken Hall – 26.01.25	£97.75

12.02.25	Carman Room – 09.02.25	£50.00
13.02.25	Oaken Hall– 13.02.25	£100.00
27.02.25	Oaken Hall – 22.02.25	£80.00
27.05.25	Carman Room – 22.02.25	£50.00

Accounts (approved and paid 28.02.25)

Community Centre				
S & J Cleaning	Cleaning Supplies	VAT	68.10 13.62	£81.72
KCS	Cleaning Supplies/Stationary	VAT	229.10 45.82	£274.92
Capital	Cleaning Supplies	VAT	98.78 19.76	£118.54
Envirocure	Legionella Testing	VAT	48.75 9.75	£58.50
Bar				
Kent & Sussex	Bar Stock	VAT	1132.99 1735.46 573.70	£3,442.15
Lansdell	Bar Stock	VAT	266.58 114.02 191.13 104.67	£676.34
F&A				
Gallagher	Insurance		60.94	£60.94
Safety Effect	H&S	VAT	10.00 2.00	£12.00
OSA				
A & F	Hedge Cutting	VAT	360.00 72.00	£432.00
Carter Jonas	Quarry Lease		100.00	£100.00

(b) Direct Debits

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

February Direct Debits

31.01.25	Natwest	Bank Charges	£109.20
31.01.25	Paymentsense	Card Machines/Stationary	£213.24
31.01.25	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£1,028.38
03.02.25	WEX	Fuelcard	£149.82
04.02.25	HMRC	Gaming Machine Duty	£540.52
05.02.25	Carlsberg	Cellar Services	£187.20
07.02.25	Kent Commercial Services	Gas Supply	£1,450.39
07.02.25	SKY	Sky Sports	£443.15
07.02.25	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£2,096.72
10.02.25	Rentokil Initial	Washroom Services	£182.77
14.02.25	Kent Commercial Services	Electric Supply	£85.72
14.02.25	Open Space Society	Subscription	£45.00
14.02.25	Carlsberg	Bar Stock	£1,540.66
14.02.25	FDMS	Card Charges	£347.04

17.02.25	Bankline	Monthly Charge	£102.94
17.02.25	Safety Effect	H&S	£114.00
17.02.25	Sage	Monthly subscription	£264.00
17.02.25	DHFE	Till Rental	£369.60
21.02.25	Hugo Fox	Website	£23.99
24.02.25	WEX	Fuelcard	£3.60
24.02.25	Host My Office	IT Support	£754.44

(b) BACS Payments

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

February BACS Payments (not previously listed)

31.01.25	KCC Pension	Monthly Contributions	£1,490.98
31.01.25	HMRC	PAYE/NI Contributions	£5,065.79
06.02.25	Lansdell	Bar Stock	£117.47
06.02.25	Kent & Sussex	Bar Stock	£1,447.12
06.02.25	Aquaid	Water Coolers	£29.99
06.02.25	M Matei	Cleaning Services	£56.00
06.02.25	JPS	Fire Doors	£939.60
13.02.25	Tree Monkeys	Tree Work	£3,432.00
14.02.25	M Lancely	Kilnbarn Entertainment	£230.00
25.02.25	M Beautridge	Bar Services	£107.46

(d) Debit Card Payments

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

February Debit Card

06.02.25	Amazon	Projector & Stand	£630.26
06.02.25	Safelincs	Fire Door Retainers	£134.82
06.02.25	RIBA	War Memorial Photo's	£36.00
10.02.25	Amazon	Prime	£8.99
14.02.25	Amazon	Machine Oil	£85.72
18.02.25	KALC	Training Course	£60.00
20.02.25	Defibstore	Defib Battery	£174.00
25.02.25	Everflow	Water Charges	£1,185.15
25.02.25	BOC	Bar Gas	£311.08
26.02.25	TNT	TNT Sports	£487.31

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

Borough Cllr Williams reported on the following items:

LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Following on from the report at the last Parish Council meeting and contrary to general expectations, Kent was not included in the Devolution Priority Programme. This means Kent alone, in a band of southern and eastern counties stretching in an otherwise unbroken line from Norfolk through to Sussex and Hampshire, will hold County Council elections as usual on 1st May. While the pressure is off to a degree, Kent's interim plans for its new unitary council set-up have to be submitted by 21st March 2025 and final plans by 28th November 2025. Although full unitary authority status in Kent will commence later than initially expected, it is still likely to be

before the Government's five year parliamentary term ends in July 2029. Most likely as from 1st April 2028 or 2029. Prior to whichever date is chosen, there will be a transitional year where a shadow unitary authority will be in place alongside TMBC.

COUNCIL TAX 2025/26

At February Full Council, members approved a budget for the new financial year starting in April. TMBC's share of Council Tax bills will increase by £7.14 to £245.30 per annum for a typical Band D property. This is an increase of 2.99% on the current year which compares well to a national inflation rate which last month stood at 3% and once again is well under the rate of increases for KCC and Kent Police & Fire Service which were between 4.99% and 5.51% and whose budgets continue to make up the bulk of the average annual Band D Council Tax of £2,374.00.

PLANNING MATTERS

On Wednesday 26th February, Rob Cannon and other local Borough Councillors visited EMR Land Trust's Bradbourne site in connection with the planning application for land east of Kiln Barn Road and west of Hermitage Lane. Present were a number of TMBC's planning officers and representatives from EMR and their agents who faced a number of questions from Members. It has now been confirmed there will be a specially convened meeting of the combined Area 2 and 3 planning committees to consider this major application but this is now more likely to be held later in April or in May.

The Chairman expressed concern that Area 2 would also be involved in the meeting to decide this application and asked why this would be the case as the majority of the development is in Area 3 and Area 2 were only consulted because a possible highway matter may affect that area. He asked who best to voice this concern to? Cllr Williams suggested contacting the Leader of the Council, Matt Boughton.

Cllr Mulcuck asked if any consideration would be given to an access road into the Quarry Wood retail area as it had been in a previous plan. He added the area gets very congested and an additional access could alleviate this therefore can this be reconsidered? Cllr Williams noted this request.

The Chairman said that the Council had noted that the Ditton Conservation Area information was 27 years out of date and asked if this could be looked into being updated. Cllr Williams noted this request.

It was **NOTED** there was no mention of the Local Plan.

419. **REPORTS FROM NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE TEAM**

NOTED no report available.

420. **DATE SENSITIVE PLANNING MATTERS**

(a) **Plans Received for Comment**

25/00198/PA - 548, COBDOWN HOUSE, LONDON ROAD, Ditton, Aylesford

"Group of trees on a mound, over-sailing the Annexe car-park and buildings.

T1 Quercus robur - Pendunculate oak: Heavily leaning tree in the direction of the parking bays; - REDUCE the crown of the tree, removing volume and mass, by the selective removal of between 4.5-5 metres from the branch tips depending on the opportunities for cutting back to

suitable live growth in each instance. -REMOVE major deadwood, over target area (greater than 25mm) from the crown. Height reduction 15-10m radial spread from 6-3m

T2 Quercus robur - Pendunculate oak: Early mature tree standing over the car-park and footpath to the offices; -PRUNE to give 2.5-3m clearance of the street furniture. -REMOVE major deadwood, over target area (greater than 25mm) from the crown.

T3 Quercus robur - Pendunculate oak: Early mature tree standing closest to the corner of the offices and over the footpath; -PRUNE to give 2.5-3m clearance of the street furniture. -REDUCE the crown of the tree on the building elevation side only, by the selective removal of between 2.5-3 metres from the branch tips depending on the opportunities for cutting back to suitable live growth in each instance. -REMOVE major deadwood over target area (greater than 25mm) from the crown Height reduction 15-12m radial spread from 6-3m.

T4 Quercus robur - Pendunculate oak: Early mature tree (1 or 2 in close proximity) standing further back from the office; -REDUCE the crown of the tree on the building elevation side only, by the selective removal of between 2.5-3.5 metres from the branch tips depending on the opportunities for cutting back to suitable live growth in each instance. -REMOVE major deadwood over target area (greater than 25mm) from the crown radial spread from 6-3m

T's1-4 -SEVER & STRIP the ivy. Justification Under BS 3998:2010

The proposed works comply with the following key principles of BS 3998:2010 (Tree Work – Recommendations): -Crown Reduction (7.7.2) – Selective pruning will reduce mass and end weight, mitigating risks associated with overextended branches, structural imbalances, and proximity to buildings. All cuts will be made to suitable growth points to promote healthy regrowth and long-term stability. -Risk Management (7.4.2, 7.6.5) – Reductions in crown spread and height are necessary to prevent encroachment on buildings and public spaces, minimising the likelihood of branch failure or conflict with structures. -Crown Lifting & Clearance Pruning (7.8.2) – Raising the canopy will prevent obstruction of footpaths, parking areas, and office entrances, ensuring safe access while retaining tree integrity. -Ivy Management (7.10.5) – The removal of ivy will improve tree inspection visibility and reduce competition for light, water, and nutrients, supporting the trees' overall health. -Deadwood Removal (7.6.3) – The removal of large deadwood is necessary to mitigate risks in high-use areas, such as car parks and footpaths, where falling debris could pose a hazard. Standing in Area A1 of Tree Preservation Orders"

RESOLVED NO OBJECTION SUBJECT TO TMBC TREE OFFICER'S APPROVAL.

(b) Decisions from TMBC Area 3

The following decisions were **READ** and **NOTED**:

24/02080/PA - 52, BRADBOURNE LANE, DITTON, AYLESFORD, ME20 6PD

Prior Notification for Larger Home Extension (Part 1 Class A): Single storey rear extension to a depth of 5m, maximum roof height of 3.15m, and eaves height of 2.95m

Prior Approval Not Required - 18 Feb 2025

24/01468/PA - 47, Acorn Grove, Ditton, Aylesford, ME20 6EL

1 x Beech on boundary (marked as T1 on applicant's sketch) - Fell and re-plant with a more suitable native woodland tree in the vicinity. Standing in Woodland W1 of Tree Preservation Order

Approved - 20 Feb 2025

(c) Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan - Land Availability Assessment Call for Sites

It was **NOTED** a further "Call For Sites" for areas of land that are currently available for development had been circulated by email.

(d) Orchard Mill (Ditton Edge)

It was **NOTED** there were no updates. Cllr Mrs Throssell asked if a response to an email about the fence behind Cherry Orchard had been received. The Clerk advised she would check and would follow this up.

(e) Bradbourne – EMT Proposal

Following the information about the joint Area 2 & 3 meeting to consider this application, the Chairman said he will contact the appropriate TMBC members for more information.

421. **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

NOTED arrangements were in hand and the Twinning Committee had agreed to do a talk about 30 years of Twinning.

422. **DITTON GAZETTE – SPRING EDITION**

NOTED copy required by mid April.

423. **MATTERS ARISING FROM “CORRESPONDENCE FOR NOTING”**

Cllr Mulcuck said he had noted the comments made at the recent KALC T&M Area Meeting by Plaxtol PC about insufficient time to comment on Planning Applications. The Chairman advised he had attended this meeting and felt the issue was that some PC's do not meet every month and therefore planning decisions are being delegated and the public do not have the opportunity to comment. He added that as this Council meets twice per month to consider planning matters it was not an issue for Ditton. However, it was agreed to monitor further discussion on this issue.

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.

424. **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM**

The Chairman **REPORTED** that he and the Clerk had been invited to meet with the Operations Director of the London City Lionesses. Further information is contained in Confidential Memorandum Ref. 448.

425. **CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM**

Confidential Memorandum Ref. 447 was **READ** and signed as a true record.

426. **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 8.00pm.

