

Ditchingham Parish Council

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Ditchingham Village Hall

Monday 20th January 2025 - 7.30 pm

Councillors: Keith Weston (Chair), Brendon Bernard (Vice Chair), Andrew Evans-Hendrick, Angela Gifford, Fred Hartwell, Gill Oliver and Tony Swan

Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO): Sally Chapman

Also Present: County Councillor Barry Stone & one parishioner

A. Public Forum – for Members of the Public

No questions

B. County Councillor, District Councillor and External Reports

County Councillor Barry Stone sent a report: <https://ditchingham-pc.gov.uk/category/meetings>

Main Points:

- **Devolution:** The deal proposes changes to local governance structures, particularly for District and County Councils, and includes the introduction of a directly elected mayor. County and District Councils will continue managing their current responsibilities, such as local services, planning, and infrastructure. Parish Councils will remain unaffected at this stage. The Local Elections originally scheduled for 1 May 2025, may be postponed as over half of English County Councils are considering delays due to the UK government's devolution plans.
- **Grant:** There are still funds available in the environmental grants scheme for allocation. The Village Hall is eligible to apply for funding towards solar panels.
- **Norfolk County Council:** Funds are insufficient, and a council tax rise of 5.99% is expected, which includes a 2% increase earmarked for social care.

District Councillor Brendon Bernard gave an update:

- **South Norfolk Council:** Busy putting together the budget for next year. The main pressure on the budget currently is the increasing demand for temporary accommodation, as it is with councils across the country.
- **Solar Farms:** Plans for several large solar farms in the district are raising concerns. Following motions we presenting in December, the Council is progressing work on the landscape impact of energy infrastructure towards having a Supplementary Planning Document to inform future application decisions. The Council will also now support the CPRE Rooftop Solar campaign.
- **Devolution:** The potential impacts of the Government's devolution proposals are being reviewed and discussed, as they could result in major changes across Norfolk.

MINUTES

1. To Approve Apologies for Absence

None

2. Declaration of Interests and Consider Requests for Dispensation

6. d) Cllr Weston and Cllr Bernard declared a non-pecuniary interest as members of the Ditchingham Village Hall Committee and The Parishioner Parish Magazine Committee in relation to the grant requests.

3. To Approve the Minutes of the Meetings held on 18th November 2024

[The Minutes from the Meetings held on 18th November 2024 were confirmed unanimously as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.](#)

Signed _____

Date _____

Ditchingham Parish Council

4. Matters Arising

None

5. To Consider Co-option to fill the Casual Vacancies

Mrs Margaret Clifton submitted a résumé to the Council for co-option.

[Councillors Approved her Application and welcomed her to the meeting.](#)

Mrs Clifton signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and joined the meeting.

6. Finance

a) To Receive the Current Financial & Budget Reports & Approve Receipts & Payments

[Councillors Resolved unanimously to Approve the Finance & Budget Report and Receipts & Payments \(attached\).](#)

b) To Approve the Play Area Quotations

[Councillors Approved the Quotations for the Handyman, Ground Maintenance, The Dip's Skate Park Repairs and Thwaite Road Play Area Repairs.](#) The Clerk confirmed the budget funds of £19,540.

c) To Consider the Street Lights and Play Areas Earmarked Reserves

The Clerk informed the Council that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) reserve, allocated for street lighting and required to be used before 2027, could instead be used for play equipment repairs. [Councillors resolved that £10,752.38 be transferred from the Play Area Reserve to the Street Lighting Reserve, and the CIL funds be used to cover the cost of play area equipment repairs.](#)

d) To Consider Grant Requests

Cllr Weston and Cllr Bernard declared a non-pecuniary interest as members of the Ditchingham Village Hall Committee and The Parishioner Parish Magazine Committee and did not vote on the grant requests.

- **Ditchingham Village Hall Committee** requested a grant to support funding for solar panels for the village hall.

[Councillors Approved the allocation of £2,412 from the Village Improvement Reserve and £1,000 from the Local Projects Grant to the Village Hall, totalling £3,412.](#)

- **The Parishioner Parish Magazine (new) Committee** submitted a grant request for production costs.

[The Parishioner Magazine Production Budget of £750 was Agreed.](#)

e) Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant 2025 Commemoration Fund Grant - update

The Clerk confirmed she had applied for the grant of £500 and was awaiting a response.

f) New Rubbish Bins at Ditchingham Dam - update

The Handyman has installed two new rubbish bins at Ditchingham Dam, and South Norfolk Council (SNC) has added them to their collection route.

g) Clerk's Telephone

The Clerk informed the Vodafone tariff had doubled in cost, and she proposed taking out a Lebara contract, which would be adequate and cheaper.

[Councillors Approved the new contract of £5.00 per month.](#)

7. To Receive the Planning Applications & Decisions Report

The Chair read out a list of four planning applications and decisions made since the last meeting. Full details can be found on DPC's website: <https://ditchinghampc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/category/planning>.

a) Applications

2025/0066

Proposal: Conversion of a single storey car port into a single storey room

Location: 7 Clark Road Ditchingham Norfolk NR35 2QQ

[Councillors Approved Neutral to the above application with no comments.](#)

Signed _____

Date _____

Ditchingham Parish Council

b) Norfolk County Council (NCC) – Hamilton Way

NCC has proposed a 20 mph speed limit on Hamilton Way and has requested DPC's views.

Councillors Resolved that they were in favour of the 20 mph speed limit.

8. To Receive Internal Reports from Committees (if required)

a) Chair's Report

The Chair gave a verbal update of his report (*attached*) and circulated the Beauly Homes site plan.

b) Community Chair's Report

The Chair gave a verbal update of her report (*attached*)

- **Victory in Europe (VE) & Victory over Japan (VJ) Commemorative Event** will be held on Sunday 11th May, at the Village Hall. A piper will be booked. **Action: FH**

- **Thwaite Road Play Area BMX Track – update**

A sign is being installed at the BMX track, asking if it is required and requesting responses to be sent via text to the Clerk.

c) Planning & Highways Chair's Report

Included in the Chair's report above.

9. To Note Correspondence Received

None

10. To Consider Issues Not Decided by Committees

a) To Consider changing the Date of DPC's meetings to a date earlier in the Month

Councillors Approved that future meeting dates will be held on the second Monday of alternate months, instead of the third Monday. **Action: Clerk**

b) Village War Memorial– update

Cllr Evans-Hendrick is working on this project independently, as DPC does not have a power to provide a war memorial.

Cllr Evans-Hendrick reported that work will commence shortly and the Chair commended his work on this project.

c) The Parishioner Parish Magazine – update

The Parishioner has been taken over by a new editorial team, and the next issue will be out in early February. A copy will be available on DPC's website.

d) Cemetery

The Chair informed that the current water butt is full of holes and leaking.

Councillors Resolved to purchase a new water butt for the Cemetery's Lychgate.

11. Any Other Business

For discussion and information only; the Council cannot make decisions on these items.

a) Defibrillator

The Clerk reported that the defibrillator at the shop had been sent away for repairs. The nearest alternative is at the village hall.

12. To Receive items for the Next Agenda

a) Policies Review

b) Reserves

Signed _____

Date _____

Ditchingham Parish Council

13. To Confirm the **NEW** Meeting Dates (*Planning Meetings arranged as required*)

- Monday 10th March 2025 - 7.30 pm
- Monday 12th May 2025 - 7.30 pm
- Monday 14th July 2025 - 7.30 pm
- Monday 8th September 2025 - 7.30 pm
- Monday 10th November 2025 - 7.30 pm

The meeting ended at 8:28 pm

6. a) Finance Report

Ditchingham Parish Council Finance Report - January 2025					
Community Account balance from the last meeting - b/f					£ 7,168.38
Receipts Since the Last Report					
Date	Ref.	Payee	Amount		
18/11/2024	Invoice	Beccles Funeral Care - Memorial HF	£ 230.00		
22/11/2024	Invoice	Rosedale Bungay - Burial MCW	£ 160.00		
27/11/2024	Transfer	Allotment - MT	£ 12.00		
			Total	+	£ 402.00
Payments Since the Last Report					
18/11/2024	31	Cozens (UK) Ltd - Street Light Maintenance (September-November)	£ 108.00		
18/11/2024	32	Mr I Soulsby - Remembrance Piper	£ 150.00		
18/11/2024	33	Glasdon UK Ltd - 2 x Waste Bins	£ 385.12		
18/11/2024	34	Clerk's Expenses - October-November	£ 96.64		
21/11/2024	credit	CAS Insurance (LTU expires 06/08/2025) - Refund	£ (6.54)		
30/11/2024	DD	Bank Service Charge	£ 6.00		
27/12/2024	36	Excite Solutions Ltd - Grounds Maintenance October	£ 549.49		
27/12/2024	37	Excite Solutions Ltd - Grounds Maintenance November	£ 549.49		
27/12/2024	38	Handyman - S. Cable	£ 205.50		
27/12/2024	40	Tomato Energy - Street Lights 01/09/2024-31/09/2024	£ 220.75		
31/12/2024	41	Tomato Energy - Street Lights 01/10/2024-31/10/2024	£ 228.14		
31/12/2024	42	Tomato Energy - Street Lights 01/11/2024-30/11/2024	£ 220.75		
30/12/2024	DD	Bank Service Charge	£ 6.00		
Nov-December	S/O	Staff Costs	£ 2,580.72		
			Total	-	£ 5,300.06
27/12/2025	Transfer	From Saver Account to Community Account			£ 5,000.00
			Total		£ 7,270.32
Community Account Statement Balance					£ 7,040.32
Uncleared receipts					£ 230.00
Unpresented payments				-	£ -
			Total		£ 7,270.32
Unity Business Saver Account				£71,607.44	
Redwood Bank Business Saver Account				£86,127.52	
Total Savers Accounts					£ 157,734.96
Total Balance in All Accounts					£ 165,005.28

Signed _____

Date _____

Ditchingham Parish Council

Ditchingham Parish Council - Budget Report 2024-25		January 2025				
Year End		Budget	Actual	Forecast	% of	Notes
2023-24		2024-25	Year to Date	2024-25	Original Budget	
	Receipts					
40,000.00	Precept	47,000	47,000	47,000	100%	
3,275.00	Cemetery	1,500	1,635	2,000	109%	adjusted
322.00	Allotment Rents	308	338	338	110%	
1,984.68	Business Accounts Interest	1,700	2,301	2,500	135%	
3,765.86	VAT Reclaim	5,000	2,007	5,000	40%	
49,347.54	Total Budgeted Receipts	55,508	53,281	56,838	96%	
51.75	Wayleave Payment	0	0	0	-	
-	Thwaite Road Play Area Cashbox	0	0	0	-	
549.56	Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	0	0	0	-	
1,500.00	S106/Grants	0	0	0	-	
-	Youth Shelter Payment	0	400	400	0%	
51,448.85	Total Receipts	55,508	53,681	57,238	-	
	Budget Variance			1,730		
	Expenditure					
14,446.81	Staff Costs	14,059	10,714	14,585	76%	Inc. pay award
504.00	Clerk's Expenses	504	336	504	67%	
1,893.84	General Expenses/Internal Audit/Subs/Bank Charges/Defib/etc.	2,000	1,280	2,000	64%	
100.00	Allotment Rent to Land Owner	150	100	100	67%	
1,238.70	10 x Dog Waste Bin Servicing Charge	1,250	1,350	1,350	108%	
849.38	Insurance - 3 year contract 2022-2025	900	866	866	96%	
200.50	Miscellaneous	500	210	500	42%	
750.00	Parishioner Magazine Production Costs	750	0	750	0%	
1,981.61	Cemetery Maintenance & Grass Cutting	2,755	1,030	2,755	37%	
2,194.55	The Dip Maintenance & Grass Cutting	2,755	1,210	2,755	44%	
2,174.56	Thwaite Road Play Area Maintenance & Grass Cutting	2,755	1,030	2,755	37%	
2,413.92	Village Maintenance & Grass Cutting	2,755	1,366	2,755	50%	
456.00	Tree Survey & Maintenance	2,600	0	2,600	0%	
2,037.97	Street Lights Energy Annual Contract & Maintenance Contract 2022-2025	3,000	1,170	3,000	39%	Includes £114 energy refund
2,720.00	Local Projects Grants - S137	1,000	0	1,000	0%	
4,483.42	VAT Expenditure (to reclaim)	5,000	1,438	5,000	29%	
3,341.25	General Maintenance (Handyman)	5,000	206	5,000	4%	
356.81	Community Projects (Jubilee/Coronation Events)	0	0	0	-	
5,570.18	Play Area's New Equipment & Repairs	5,500	-75	5,500	-1%	Refund Goal Anchors, bought sec
3,590.00	Street Lights/Columns -Repairs/LEDs/Removal/Replacements	2,000	395	2,000	20%	
42,143.32	Total Budgeted Expenditure	55,233	22,627	55,775	41%	
9,305.53	Budget Variance			542		
549.56	S137/CIL Expenditure	0	0	0	-	
910.25	Chicken Roundabout Lectern	0	0	0	-	
52,763.31	Total Expenditure	55,233	22,627	55,775	-	
(1,314.46)	Total Variance	275		1,463		
	Community Account Balance b/f		4,631.11			
49,464.17	Total Receipts per cashbook (less interest)		51,380.35			
52,763.31	Total Payments per cashbook		22,627.02			
4,631.11	UTB Community Account Balance		7,270.32			
#####	UTB & Redwood Bank Saver Accounts (including interest)		157,734.96			
#####	Total in Both Accounts		165,005.28			
20,000.38	General Reserves (should be at end of year 50% of precept - £23,500)		52,333.99			
#####	Restricted Reserves		112,671.29			
#####			165,005.28			

Signed _____

Date _____

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8.a) & 8.c) Chair's Report January 2025

Combined Planning and Highways & General Chair's Report

General

I should like to commend the handyman we employ on a casual basis. He is reliable and his work is of a high standard. He sends full reports, with photos, to the clerk.

We have been attempting to carry out an appraisal of Jon Harper, who we employ for litter picking and other duties. At the time of writing this appraisal is still in the pipeline.

Following interest shown at the last Parish Council meeting, "The Parishioner" magazine has been "reprieved." It will continue "under new management" with six issues per year. The group of volunteers taking it forward includes three Councillors. Chris Yapp is the new editor.

Highways

A section of the footway in Hollow Hill Road (from Woods Close towards the crossroads) has been repaired. I have written to Gary Overland to express my appreciation for this work and for the vast improvement to the Ditchingham Dam footway.

Focus Foods in Halesworth attached an advertising board to the signage at Chicken Roundabout. I contacted them, backed up by Gary Overland, and it was removed. This was followed by an advertising trailer positioned there by Wensum Print. I contacted them and it was removed.

In Cllr. Barry Stone's Parish Report he says that Norfolk road users are generally satisfied with the CC's dealing with pot holes.

Planning

There is one planning application for our consideration at Item 7.a) on the agenda. I don't consider it contentious and will suggest that we make a neutral response.

Cllr Bernard and I recently had an onsite meeting with representatives from Beauly Homes. They are still at pre-application stage and have made some modifications to the plans we previously saw. Drawings will be available at the meeting. Personally, I think the changes are improvements that take account of views expressed at our November meeting. I see no reason for changing DPC's current position (That we support the development in principal).

Chair Keith Weston

16.01.25

8. b) Community Report January 2025

As of 17th January 2025, the Bakers Lane road sign has not been replaced.

As of 17th January 2025, the grass growing in the middle of Bakers Lane has not been removed.

The hedges in Ditchingham on several roads have been cut and the frontal grass curbs attended and they look neat and tidy.

During the December storms, several large tree branches came down and blocked Bakers Lane. The landowners however, were called and they cleared the blockages on three occasions.

Signed _____

Date _____

Ditchingham Parish Council

A road/field flood around the Hollow Hill Rd and Drapers Lane in January was reported and Anglian Water were soon on the scene, closing one side of the road to repair the broken pipe.

The removal of the shelter on The Dip appears to have been a success in that the area now does seem to have more activity especially at the end where the shelter was.

Pirnhaw Street is becoming much busier and minor accidents are occurring, The first bridge, Ditchingham side relies on the common sense of drivers giving way to oncoming traffic. However, some drivers just seem to go for it regardless. Would it be appropriate to request the sign giving priority over the traffic such as on the street in Broome on the traffic calming measures.

Angela Gifford DPC

Signed _____

Date _____