# Ditchingham Parish Council

## ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

*Ditchingham Village Hall*

**Monday 15th May 2023 - 8.10pm**

**Councillors:** Keith Weston, Brendon Bernard, Angela Gifford, Georgina Simmonds

**Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer:** Sally Chapman
**Also Present:** Two members of the public

**Public Forum – for Members of the Public**

- A parishioner reported The Dip's Youth Shelter is used for drinking and drug taking regularly. The Clerk advised it has been reported to the Police by the parishioner and the Clerk. The Police has agreed to do spot checks.

**External Reports**

- County Councillor Barry Stone sent a report uploaded on DPCs website: https://ditchinghampc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/category/meetings

## MINUTES

*All Councillors completed a Declaration Of Acceptance of Office form which was signed by a witness before the start of the meeting.*

1. **To Appoint a Chair**
   Mr Keith Weston was unanimously proposed and elected as Chair.

2. **To Appoint a Vice Chair**
   Mr Brendon Bernard was unanimously proposed and elected as Vice Chair.

3. **To Approve Apologies for Absence**
   No apologies received.
   Councillors resolved Cllr Daplyn could sign the Declaration Of Acceptance of Office form at the July meeting.

4. **Declaration of Interests and Consider Requests for Dispensation**
   None

5. **To Approve the Minutes of the Meetings held on 20th March 2023**
   The Minutes from the Meetings held on 20th March 2023 were confirmed unanimously as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

6. **Matters Arising**
   *From the minutes not on the agenda, nor included in the committee reports.*
   None

7. **To Consider Co-option to fill the Casual Vacancies**
   None

Signed ______________________________ Date ____________________

**8. Finance**

a) **To Approve the End of Year Accounts 2022/23**
Councillors unanimously approved the End of Year Balance Sheet 2022/23 as attached.

b) **To Approve the Internal Auditor's Report for 2022/23**
Councillors approved the Internal Auditor's Report for 2022/23 and commended the Clerk for the excellent report with no Internal Audit recomendations.

c) **To Approve the Annual Governance & Accountability Return Sections 1 & 2**
Councillors unanimously agreed the Annual Audit Return and the Chair and RFO signed the Annual Audit Return Sections 1 & 2.

d) **To Appoint the Internal Auditor for 2023-24**
Councillors unanimously resolved to appoint the Internal Auditor Trevor Brown for 2022-23, if he has not taken retirement.

e) **To Receive the Current Financial & Budget Reports & Approve Receipts & Payments**
The bank statement and reports were signed by the Chair.
Councillors unanimously resolved to approve the Finance & Budget Report and Receipts & Payments as attached.

f) **To Consider Street Lights Energy Quotations**
Councillors considered the street light energey quotation agreed unanimosly to accept the 12-month tariff.

g) **To Consider The Maltings Meadow Sports Association Grant Request**
Councillors unanimously resolved to award The Maltings Meadow Sports Association a grant of £2,000 and to consider donating any future CIL money to support improving their sports facilities.

h) **To Approve Hollow Hill Orchard Tree Watering Quotations**
Quotations are still being considered.

i) **The King's Coronation Plaque**
The Coronation Plaque has been received and Mr Mulley agreed to install it on the Village sign.

j) **Village War Memorial Quotations**
No grants received, as yet. Action: Clerk

k) **Grounds Maintenance 2023** – *update*
Councillors instructed the Clerk to ask the Ground Maintenance Contractors to reinstate the goal mouths on The Dip now the goal posts have been moved. Action: Clerk

l) **Play Area Roundabout Refurbishment** – *update*
The roundabout will soon be returned. Action: Clerk

**9. Planning and Highways**

a) **To Receive the Planning Applications & Decisions Report**
The Chair read out the list of Planning Applications & Decisions since the last meeting. The full list is on DPCs website: https://ditchinghampc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/category/planning

**10. To receive Internal Reports from Committees** *(if required)*

a) **Chair's Report**
No further report.

b) **Community Chair's Report**
No further report.

c) **Planning & Highways Chair's Report**
- Dangerous Crossing at Pirnhow Street, Ditchingham – *update*
  The Chair read out the main points of the email received from Grahame Bygrave, Director of NCC Highways, Transport & Waste *(attached)*
- Chicken Roundabout Lectern – *c/f*

Signed ______________________________ Date ____________________

**11. To Consider Issues Not Decided by Committees**

a) **Grit Bins** - *Re-siting Hollow Hill/Norwich Road and crossroads grit bins to the Primary School and Belsey Bridge Road.* Clerk to request the handyman to do this. Action: Clerk

b) **Hollow Hill Conservation Area** – *update*
- The trees have now been mulched by the volunteers.
- Councillors instructed the Clerk to ask the Ground Maintenance Contractors to quote for path cutting. Action: Clerk

c) **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** – *update*
The Clerk has returned the agreement to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and they will install the sign in due course.

d) **Defibrillator at Nisa Stores** – *update*
The defibrillator is regularly checked by a Bungay Community First Responder and there will be a free defibrillator instruction demonstration at Ditchingham's Fete on 9th July 2023.

**12. To Note Correspondence Received**

None

**13. Any Other Business**

*For discussion and information only, the Council may not make decisions on these items.*

a) **Ditchingham's Fete Committee Meeting –TBC** Action: GS

b) **The Dip's Willow Tree**
A branch is over hanging the entrance and needs removing before the fete. Action: Clerk

**14. To Receive items for the Next Agenda**

a) **Ditchingham Fete -** *update*

**15. To Confirm the Next Meeting Dates** *(Planning Meetings arranged as required)*

- Monday 24th July 2023 at 7.30pm
- Monday 18th September 2023 at 7.30pm
- Monday 20th November 2023 at 7.30pm

*The meeting ended at 8.55pm*

Signed ______________________________ Date ____________________

# Ditchingham Parish Council

## 8.a) Finance - End of Year Accounts 2022/23

8.a)

**Ditchingham Parish Council**
**Year End 31st March 2023**

| 2021/22 | Receipts and Payments | 2022/23 |
|---|---|---|
| £ | **Receipts** | £ |
| 37,000.00 | Precept | 38,100.00 |
| 3,535.00 | Cemetery | 3,925.00 |
| 265.00 | Allotments Rents | 245.00 |
| 7.76 | Business Account Interest | 546.46 |
| 6,075.10 | VAT Reclaimed | 6,574.63 |
| 93.30 | Thwaite Road Play Area Cashbox | - |
| 0.00 | Community Infrastructure Levy | 15,065.09 |
| 0.00 | Section 106/Grants | 2,200.00 |
| 46,976.16 | | 66,656.18 |
| | **Expenditure** | |
| 11,823.02 | Staff Costs | 12,239.45 |
| 396.00 | Clerk's Office Costs | 396.00 |
| 2,232.14 | General Expenses | 1,609.80 |
| 100.00 | Allotments rent to land owner | 100.00 |
| 1,106.00 | Dog Waste Bin Servicing | 1,106.00 |
| 766.08 | Insurance | 780.25 |
| 51.25 | Miscellaneous | - |
| 750.00 | Parishioner Magazine & Website | 750.00 |
| 2,658.37 | Cemetery Maintenance | 1,318.31 |
| 2,386.21 | The Dip Maintenance/grass cut/litter picker | 1,262.13 |
| 2,479.21 | Thwaite Road Play Area Maintenance/grass cut/litter picker | 2,017.11 |
| 2,234.20 | Village Maintenance | 2,676.84 |
| 0.00 | Tree Survey & Maintenance | 3,272.00 |
| 1,200.00 | Street Light's Electricity & Maintenance Contract | 1,051.16 |
| 6,000.00 | Village Hall Grant - Section 137 | - |
| 0.00 | Local Project Grants - S137 | 16.00 |
| 7,471.89 | VAT | 5,396.41 |
| 0.00 | General Maintenance (Handyman) | 2,170.00 |
| 0.00 | Community Projects (Jubilee) | 905.31 |
| 11,750.65 | Play Area New Equipment & Repairs | - |
| 14,002.00 | Street Lights Repairs/LEDs/Removal | 15,745.00 |
| 0.00 | S137/Community Infrastructure Levy Expenditure | 1,570.50 |
| 67,407.02 | | 54,382.27 |
| -20,430.86 | Surplus Income over Expenditure | 12,273.91 |
| 142,438.08 | Balance b/f | 122,007.22 |
| 122,007.22 | **Balance c/f** | 134,281.13 |

**Balance Sheet**

| | Cash at Bank | £ |
|---|---|---|
| 36,623.18 | Current Account | 12,930.25 |
| 85,574.42 | Business Saving Accounts | 121,350.88 |
| 0.00 | Petty Cash | - |
| 220.00 | Uncleared Receipts | - |
| -410.38 | Uncleared Payments | - |
| 122,007.22 | | 134,281.13 |
| 18,117.08 | General Reserves | 19,065.40 |
| 103,890.14 | Earmarked Reserves | 115,215.73 |
| 122,007.22 | | 134,281.13 |

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the Authority as at 31st March 2023 and reflects its receipts and payments during the year.

**Signed**
**Chair**

**Signed**
**Sally Chapman - Responsible Financial Officer**

Signed ______________________________ Date ____________________

# Ditchingham Parish Council

## 8.e) Financial Report

8.e)

**Ditchingham Parish Council Finance Report - May 2023**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Community Account balance from the last meeting** - *b/f* | | | | | £ 13,752.34 |
| | | | | | |
| **Receipts since Last Report** | | | | | |
| **Date** | **Ref.** | **Payee** | **Amount** | | |
| 12/04/2023 | credit | SNC - Coronation Grant | £ 200.00 | | |
| 19/04/2023 | credit | SNC/BDC CIL Receipt | £ 549.56 | | |
| 26/04/2023 | credit | SNC Precept - 1/2 Payment | £ 20,000.00 | | |
| | | | **Total** | | £ 20,749.56 |
| **Payments since the last Report** | | | | | |
| 28/03/2023 | 66 | The Parishioner Magazine - S137 Grant | £ 750.00 | | |
| 28/03/2023 | 67 | Mrs O Mulley - Bin Bags | £ 2.59 | | |
| 28/03/2023 | 68 | Clerk's Expenses - Fuel Claim and Staff DBS | £ 45.90 | | |
| 03/04/2023 | D/D | SSE Street Lighting Energy - March | £ 375.84 | | |
| 03/04/2023 | 2 | NALC - Subscription | £ 471.04 | | |
| 05/04/2023 | 3 | Cozens (UK) Ltd - Street Light Maintenance March/April/May | £ 108.00 | | |
| 17/04/2023 | 4 | Vandijk - Payroll Services | £ 108.00 | | |
| 17/04/2023 | 5 | Clerk's Expenses March-April | £ 230.25 | | |
| 18/04/2023 | 6 | Stewart Cable - Handyman | £ 2,446.25 | | |
| 30/04/2023 | S/O | Staff Salaries - April | £ 1,112.71 | | |
| 09/05/2023 | 7 | Westcott - SAM2 Battery | £ 109.80 | | |
| 09/05/2023 | 8 | Trevor Brown - Internal Auditor | £ 300.00 | | |
| 09/05/2023 | 9 | Litter Picker's binbags | £ 5.70 | | |
| 09/05/2023 | 10 | Clerk's Expenses - No Dogs Signs | £ 31.50 | | |
| 09/05/2023 | 11 | Stewart Cable - Handyman | £ 380.00 | | |
| | | | **Total** | - | £ 6,477.58 |
| | | | **Total** | | £ 28,024.32 |
| **Community Account Statement Balance** | | | | | £ 28,922.96 |
| Uncleared receipts | | | | | £ - |
| Unpresented payments | | | | - | £ 898.64 |
| | | | **Total** | | £ 28,024.32 |
| Unity Business Saver Account | | | £ 36,161.20 | | |
| Barclays Business Saver Account | | | £ 85,189.68 | | |
| **Total Savers Accounts** | | | | | £ 121,350.88 |
| **Total Balance In All Accounts** | | | | | £ 149,375.20 |

Signed ______________________________ Date ____________________

# Ditchingham Parish Council

## 8.e) Budget Reports

Ditchingham Parish Council - Budget Report 2023-24 May 2023

| Year End 2022-23 | | Budget 2023-24 | Actual Year to Date 2023-24 | Forecast 2023-24 | % of Original Budget | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Income** | | | | | |
| 38,100 | Precept | 40,000 | 20,000 | 40,000 | 50% | |
| 3,925 | Cemetery | 2,000 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| 245 | Allotment Rents | 308 | 0 | 245 | 0% | Plots £12 each/double £20 |
| 546 | Business Account Interest | 200 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| 6,575 | VAT Reclaim | 5,000 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| 49,391 | **Total Budgeted Income** | 47,508 | 20,000 | 40,245 | 42% | |
| | | | | | | |
| - | Thwaite Road Play Area Cashbox | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | |
| 15,065 | Community Infrastructure Levy | 0 | 550 | 550 | - | |
| - | SNC - Coronation Grant | 0 | 200 | 200 | 0% | |
| 2,200 | S106 Grants | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | |
| 66,656 | **Total Income** | 47,508 | 20,750 | 40,995 | - | |
| | | | | | | |
| | **Expenditure** | | | | | |
| 12,239 | Staff Costs | 13,339 | 1,089 | 1,089 | 8% | |
| 396 | Clerk's Expenses | 504 | 84 | 84 | 17% | |
| 1,610 | General Expenses/Internal Audit/Subscriptions/Bank Charges/etc. | 2,000 | 1,076 | 1,076 | 54% | |
| 100 | Allotment Rent to Land Owner | 150 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| 1,106 | Dog Waste Bin Servicing Charge | 1,200 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| 780 | Insurance - 3 year contract 2022-2025 | 780 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| - | Miscellaneous | 500 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| 750 | Parishioner Magazine & Website Production Costs | 750 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| 1,318 | Cemetery Maintenance & Grass Cutting | 2,000 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| 1,262 | The Dip Maintenance & Grass Cutting | 1,700 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| 2,017 | Thwaite Road Play Area Maintenance & Grass Cutting | 2,500 | 380 | 380 | 15% | |
| 2,677 | Village Maintenance & Grass Cutting | 3,100 | 32 | 32 | 1% | |
| 3,272 | Tree Survey & Maintenance | 2,600 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| 1,051 | Street Lights Energy Contract to 31/05/2023 & Maintenance Contract 2022-2025 | 5,000 | 448 | 448 | 9% | |
| 16 | Local Projects Grants - S137 | 1,000 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| 5,396 | VAT Expenditure | 5,000 | 100 | 100 | 2% | |
| 2,170 | General Maintenance (Handyman) | 5,000 | 2,446 | 2,446 | 49% | |
| 905 | Community Projects (Jubilee/Coronation Events) | 1,000 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| 37,067 | **Total Budgeted Expenditure** | 48,123 | 5,655 | 5,655 | 12% | |
| 29,589 | Budget Variance | -615 | 14,345 | 34,590 | | |
| | | | | | | |
| - | Play Area New Equipment & Repairs | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | |
| 15,745 | Street Lights/Columns -Repairs/LEDs/Removal/Replacements | 2,000 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| 1,571 | S137/CIL Expenditure | 0 | 0 | 0 | - | |
| 54,382 | **Total Expenditure** | 50,123 | 5,655 | 5,655 | - | |
| 12,274 | Variance | -2,615 | 15,094 | 35,339 | | |
| | | | 0 | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| 36,433 | **Community Account Balance b/f** | | 12,930.25 | | | |
| 65,880 | Total Receipts per cashbook (less interest) | | 20,749.56 | | | |
| 54,382 | Total Payments per cashbook | | 5,655.49 | | | |
| 12,930 | Community Account Balance | | 28,024.32 | | | |
| 121,351 | Business Saver Accounts (including interest) | | 121,350.88 | | | |
| 134,281 | **Total in Both Accounts** | | 149,375.20 | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| 19,065 | General Reserves | | 33,609.91 | | | |
| 115,216 | Restricted Reserves | | 115,765.29 | | | |
| 134,281 | | | 149,375.20 | | | |

Signed ______________________________ Date ____________________

# Ditchingham Parish Council

**8.c) Planning & Highways Chair's Report**

**Planning**
Despite the Council's objections, the Badger Homes development accessed via Hamilton Way went ahead and many properties are nearing completion.
Our District Councillor, Brendon Bernard, has objected to another phase proposed beyond the present one unless the access is via an Alternative to Hamilton Way. I support his objection.
There have been no other contentious panning applications during the year.
I have commented on a small number of non-contentious plans.

**Highways**
New attempts have been made to commemorate the chickens on Chicken Roundabout. A company called New Rock put forward a suggestion. It was based on their leasing the roundabout from the Parish Council. The Council has no ability to grant a lease and NCC Highways have consistently forbidden any artwork on the roundabout.
The PC has permission to install a lectern-style information board on the verge adjacent to the roundabout. The Council is looking into funding options for this.

This year has seen a continuation of our efforts to improve local pavements – especially those between our village and Bungay. A lot of time and energy has been spent trying to improve sight lines at the crossing point at the Ditchingham Dam/Pirnough Street junction. We have been unsuccessful.

Some of the worst areas of damaged pavement have been resurfaced. These include the entrance to Smokey Joe's and parts of the Ditchingham Dam footway. NCC tells us that more work is scheduled for 24/25 (funds permitting).

We have, through Freedom of Information requests, questioned the County Council's priorities and its apparent failure to utilise local intelligence in its decision-making. We note that large sections of serviceable pavements, in the area near to the primary school, were spray coated. Apparently, this process is intended to prevent deterioration of pavements. Major work was done to the pavements around the Norwich Road/Drapers Lane junction – an area that has very low footfall. We are told that the plastic kerbing was breaking up which made this work necessary.

I attach a letter to DPC from NCC as an appendix (with some annotations) to this report.

**Keith Weston**
**May 2023**

Appendix
Letter from NCC (with my annotations (in red)

**Grahame Bygrave** <grahame.bygrave@norfolk.gov.uk> Fri, May 5, 11:44 AM

Dear Sally,

Many thanks for your email below and the attached letter. Cllr Plant has passed your comments and questions over to me so that I can investigate and respond direct.

Signed ______________________________ Date ____________________

# Ditchingham Parish Council

First of all, thank you for the comments and feedback. It is always helpful to hear how our services viewed and feedback from local communities is always really helpful.

To help explain, our overall highway asset management strategy and approach is based upon 'prevention is better than cure'. This means that we commonly use intermediate or preventative treatments such as surface dressing on roads and micro-asphalt on footways to protect the investment already made. These treatments are most effective in prolonging the asset life when ideally applied before deterioration starts. This then delays the need for larger scale interventions which are more costly and very disruptive.

This was the case with the spray coating referenced in your letter on Waveney Road, Rider Haggard Way, Longrigg Road, Turner Close, Thwaite Road areas. This is an intermediate treatment designed to slow the deterioration of the footway asset, and it is low-cost treatment. Resurfacing or reconstruction costs are typically 10 times as much.

In addition to the approach above, we also carry out condition surveys on both roads and footways with the frequency based upon functional importance. All footways receiving a survey within 4-years. Similarly, our local highway staff undertake safety inspections based upon functional importance at least once a year.

We use the condition data, maintenance history, the social and functional importance of the asset and engineering judgement when assessing the prioritisation of the maintenance programme of highway works. However, with current funding levels unfortunately we cannot meet all aspirations and seek to make the best use of our resources.

In addition to the locations above, in 2022/23 we also delivered resurfacing and kerbing works on sections of the B1332 Norwich Road. This included the replacement of failing plastic kerbs, see attached photograph, which demonstrate the need for the works.

In summary to your specific questions:
How were the priorities for work on our village pavements arrived at?

- Condition Surveys and judgement of local highway staff using their engineering experience and knowledge of local priorities – as detailed above.

Since December 2021 I have brought to the local highway staff the state of the Ditchingham Dam footway.
Why wasn't any attempt made to find out which pavements were in most need of repair and which ones have high footfall?

- We have condition survey information of the footways and undertake regular safety inspections.
- Our local highway teams deal with local enquires, requests for service and engagement with parish councils.

Since December 2021 I have brought to the local highway staff the state of the Ditchingham Dam footway.

- Footfall is relative and if we just treated high footfall areas, then the maintenance funding would be directed to the busier urban areas across Norfolk, whereas there is a need for the Council to maintain its entire 3,000-mile-long footway network. Relative usage within communities is normally known by our local area staff, so higher priority would be given to footways near schools, village shops, village halls etc.

Once a decision has been made to carry out repairs (and funding is forthcoming) in a particular community local area staff should consult with the local council to help to identify priorities.
Will NCC adopt a policy to consult Parish Councils, when funds are available for these works, to benefit from local knowledge about how best to spend precious resources?

- Our local highway staff put forward footway maintenance schemes based upon condition data (so we get consistency across the whole county), and their assessment of both engineering need and local priority. So, why wasn't the Parish Council consulted?

Signed ______________________________ Date ____________________

- When highway improvement works are undertaken, we undertake public consultation as they be me affected by the changes i.e. a new junction, a new traffic regulation order.
- When we undertake highway maintenance schemes, engagement is via public information notices and direct contact in managing the impact of the works on businesses, services, highway users and frontages.

I hope this answers your questions and gives greater insight into our highway maintenance practices, which are based on national best practice.
We take the point that "prevention is better than cure" but still think consultation over priorities should be improved.

As always, if you have any concerns over any other highway matters in Ditchingham, please contact your local highway engineer Gary who will be able to assist.

Kind regards

**Grahame Bygrave**
**Director of Highways, Transport & Waste**
**Community & Environmental Services**
**County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH**

Signed ______________________________ Date ____________________