

Ditchling Village Association

AGM Agenda

Mon 27 October 2025 19:30

The Old Meeting House, The Twitten



Minutes

Attended: Catharine Robinson, Neil Iosson, Melissa Mathur, John Willis, Pamela Roy-Jones (Horticultural Society), Mary Holman, Lucie Broadbent-Smith, Stephen Brewis (Monday Group), Briony Coomber, Bridget Blomfield, Sarah Wadham, Victoria Ingham (Village Hall), Rosemary Burns (WI), Judy Moody-Stuart, Mark Moody-Stuart, Mike Felton (Speedwatch), Nigel Adams (Wine Society), Shea Rawlings

Apologies: Hugh St John (Ditchling Naturespace), Margaret Bovill (Ditchling Royal British Legion), Wendy Standen (Attic Art Club), Karen Hollamby (Vivace! Choir), Liz Pope (Horticultural Society), Malcolm Roberts, Inge Roberts, Jenny Barna (Parish Council, Speed Watch), Maralyn Hine, Keith Hine, Greg (Scouts), Tessa Haughton (Beacon Parish), Jeanne Argent

Item	Notes
1	Adoption of AGM Minutes Meeting of 29 Oct 2024 – Agreed unanimously.
2	Presentation by Wendy Agate from St Peters & St James Hospice. She outlined her role and the way the hospice is supported by community groups.
3	Chair's Address Welcome and thank you all for attending this evening. This year both Lucie and I have shared the Chair and Lucie came up with some good ideas to try out. One of them is a Games Evening in the village hall, playing various board games, have not been able to put this into action yet but something to keep for the future. Due to unforeseen circumstances Lucie has had to step down but will continue to be on the committee. We held the Newcomers' Party and as usual it went very well and I would like to thank the societies that attended, it really is a joint effort and I hope you have new members as that is what it is all about as well as welcoming new residents to the village. We have arranged the coffee mornings, but as you know they were not as well attended as they used to be so we decided to move them to a Thursday to coincide with the village market in the Bull car park. This has made a such a difference as the numbers have increased. I would like to thank all the societies for undertaking the coffee mornings and hope that they have noticed the difference. The sports day this year was not rained out thank goodness, thanks to Hannah Tedman and her team for putting on this wonderful village event. How quickly the time goes, we are looking forward to our wonderful fair again next year. Lucie has taken over the role of the DVA representative. Thank you so much to the fair committee, they work so hard, we are so very grateful to them. Next fair 20th June 2026.

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	I just want to remind the societies of the website, we are currently revamping it so we will need every societies information but we will keep you updated as we go along. The Christmas Sparkle competition was successful and we are putting it on again this year and hope that more people will become involved. It is open to all residents and shops. We really hope that it will make Ditchling Sparkle and the judging will be held on the 19th December. Not just windows but gardens and front of house! I noticed on the Whatsap Ditchling Village notice board that a number of people were saying that they wished Ditchling would put up decorations so let's see if they do! As always I would like to thank David in the Post Office for all his help that he gives to the village, but also other businesses for their contribution to the fair and for making it such a wonderful village to live in. Thanks again to the Committee – couldn't operate without you all. As i said earlier Lucie is stepping down form the Chair sharing but I am happy to continue if elected. Pam has offered to be the deputy Chair. Malcolm Roberts has offered to join the committee which is wonderful and hopefully the rest of the committee is happy to stand.
4	Treasurer's Report The accounts have been circulated to Committee members for 2024. They are straightforward and require very little explanation. In 2024, Firstly our annual events we held the coffee mornings in the Ditchling Village Hall, for which we fund the hall costs (£437.50) and any donations go to the hosting society. We ran a third Christmas window competition with prize pot of £250 purchased from village businesses and awarded to participants the judges from the DVA held to be most worthy winners. We held the newcomers party. Our website costs continued as previous years and this remains a focal point for Ditchling contacts and calendars please do use it to co-ordinate and publicise your events. In addition to hosting the above events we held the Village Fair. Costs of £9,745 and income of over £15,000 resulting a profit of more than £5000 which provides us with reserves for future fair expenses and to support our diary of events. We also continue to offer grants to clubs and societies, this year we continued to provide the insurance cost for the village sports and we provided £200 towards the administration of a cycle event requested by the Sussex Nomads. Further to the Accounts: In 2025 we have held coffee mornings and the new comers party and bought a new A frame board to promote the coffee mornings which we have moved to Thursdays to coincide with the Sussex Peasant market in The Bull car park. We made a donation of £2000 to the village land purchase west of the new carpark and a donation of £300 for new toys and to buy some storage equipment and play trays. We held the village new comers party in early 2025. As of the 27th October 2025 we have reserves of £9974.99 and £635.15 in our current account.
5	Election of Officers • Chair – Catharine Robinson

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	• Vice Chair – Pamela Roy-Jones • Treasurer – Melissa Mathur • Secretary – Neil Iosson • Executive Committee – Mary Holman, John Willis, Lucie Broadbent-Smith, Malcolm Roberts Proposed – Victoria Ingham, Seconded Bridget Bromfield All candidates accepted unanimously.
6.	Amendments to the DVA Constitution (Proposed text overleaf) • Change to timings of the meeting (April -> October) and related financial year reporting • Executive committee to comprise up to 10 people, references to Good Neighbours removed as scheme defunct. • Meetings are quorate with 4 committee members (was five) including Chair or Vice-chair Proposed Victoria Ingham, Nigel Adams Agreed unanimously. Text at end of the minutes including the changes. A final version is available on the website.
7.	New Grants Application Process – Update The new grants application scheme was outlined. To promote more applications the instructions have been updated and they and the form are on ditchling.com Applications are welcome from any community group based in Ditchling. Applications will be considered at several points during the year.
8.	New Website – Update John Willis summarised the current situation with the Ditchling.com website is now quite dated and to update the layout and design to make it more modern and easier to use. The aim is to launch the website in the near future – it is also intended to make it simpler and less effort to maintain and improve engagement. We are keen to continue having a calendar of events and to act to provide new items and then a register linking to local community groups. There was a request for all societies to check their details and contact John Willis if they need updating.
9.	Reports from Societies (and Future Activities) Monday Group – Stephen Bris Work within Ditchling has been business as usual. Lots of checking footpaths and stiles and clearing footpaths. Replaced a way-marker in The Twitten, added a pinch-point, added a new noticeboard near the Village Hall. Plan is to replace the last stile on to Lodge Hill with a gate – this will ensure that each corner is accessible by gates. The Hassocks end of the Roman Road linking to Ditchling has had the surfacing improved so that it is more tolerant of wet weather. Friends of South Downs are funding 4 new gates to replace the existing stiles. This aligns with the new policy to change stiles to gates/kissing gates to improve accessibility.

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	They are seeking a 4 wheel-drive pick-up that is affordable to help with moving equipment around fields etc and are keen to hear. Ditchling Horticultural Society – Pamela Roy Jones Good evening, this report is on behalf of the Horticultural Society. The Society continues to grow in numbers and we have enjoyed another busy year. We have a very strong and talented committee who work tirelessly to make the shows and other activities successful and good fun. Shows There were our three shows, Spring, Summer and Autumn all of which were very successful. We are particularly seeing more and more children's entries which is very heartening. Our shows are now on a Sunday which seems to suit the majority of people better. To continue to encourage the children we are going to be involved with the new Thursday Gardening Club at St Margaret's which being led by Susie Godley. I understand that there is a waiting list to join, which is great to hear. Liz Pope, whom I'm sure everyone will know will be our DHS representative at the club and will be encouraging more and more children to enter the shows Coffee Morning In April the DHS hosted one of the DVA coffee mornings which was excellent. Wisley. On the 16th July we visited Wisley gardens and the sun shone all day. Once again there was lots of interest, in fact it proved so popular that Claire McQuillan, our organiser had to order an extra bus! We plan to do another visit in 2026. Open Gardens In June we had the Open Gardens in support of St Peter and St James with 9 gardens open which were visited by over 300 people. The weather was exceptionally hot 32-34 degrees which understandably did deter some people. National Garden Scheme This too was successful with and even with the day being rather wet. There were 6 gardens open and we had over 300 visitors. Between the two we raised over £9000 in aid of very worthy caring charities. Co-ordinating these day takes a lot of energy and effort and a big thanks goes to Yvonne Hennessy who was the main organiser, supported by her very good team. Jane Baker who you may know as the NGS Regional Organiser and she and Nick also of the beautiful Parham House snowdrops in the Spring, sadly passed away earlier this month. Jane will be missed in lots of ways. Thank you to everyone who supported those days, all the bakers, dish washers, café helpers and all the others who support us in many ways. We couldn't do it without you. Next year we will only do the Open Gardens as it is Fair Year when we do a rather large plant sale which also take a lot of organising.

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	We are delighted that Mike and Jane Howard and Vervan Greenwood will lead on the planning for next year. We are looking for some new gardens for 2026 so if you or anyone you know would like to open their garden please speak to Mike and Jane Howard, to me or anyone on the DHS committee. You don't need to have the garden from Wisley, just something interesting and possibly a bit different. Allotments I am happy to report that the allotments have no vacant plots at the moment The hedge trimming is booked for November for the path area at North End and for the path leading from The Twitten to The Dumbrells Show Schedules We will be delivering the new schedules in January and one particular thing we would like to put in place is to have as many members as possible on Direct Debit. More and more of the banking is being expected to be done electronically and if you can help us to put this in place it would help us tremendously. Lastly our AGM will be held here on Thursday 6th November at 7.30pm Please look at the DHS website to see what is new on this. Ditchling Naturespace / Friends of Ditchling - Hugh St John "I would also like record my thanks to DVA for the many ways in which they have supported the project to purchase the field along Keymer Road. As you will know, that has been done and Ditchling Naturespace has been incorporated within the Friends of Ditchling. We are now starting to work on how to go forward with the field and had a very positive response from those who attended the AGM of FoD on Saturday 25th October." Community Speedwatch - Mike Felton Have been active since 2018. They work under the framework of Sussex Police. They cover all the main approaches to Ditchling at various times. They are always looking for additional volunteers to improve coverage. Information is collated by Sussex Police via their Speedwatch scheme and is intended to help improve the speed of vehicles. People observed to exceed the limits will receive an advisory letter. Women's Institute - Rosemary Burns Monthly speaker, have occasional outings e.g. Newhaven Incinerator, Tour of Wren churches in London. Meet on 1st Tuesday of the month in the Village Hall and all are welcome. Ditchling Wine Society - Nigel Adams The society continues to organise tastings and parties. Village Hall – Victoria Ingham She works with committee and trustees. Their AGM is Thursday 30 October. Looking forward to improving the AV facilities.

Ditchling Orchard & Apple Day - John Willis

Very successful Apple Day this year – good weather. Tae Chisolm died earlier in the year – she had been central to the Orchard and organising Apple Day. Simon Wopplin has now stepped forward to help. This year had a very good year for apples and creating juice and has generated £2000 profit to fund the insurance, equipment and surplus is often given to the school. Liz Pope is heading up maintenance work on a Sunday morning on the Orchard – usually 1st Sunday of the month. New volunteers and drop-ins are welcome.

Greener Hassocks & Ditchling (was HKD Transition) continue to support and provide banking facilities for The Orchard.

Royal British Legion – Ditchling Branch

“Please accept my apologies for not being with you this evening.

The Branch Committee has met regularly, and we are grateful to the White Horse for allowing us to hold our meetings there.

This year we commemorated two events VE Day on 8th May and VJ Day on 15th August.

On May 8th at our VE Day commemoration at Ditchling War Memorial we were honoured to have the Marquess of Abergavenny, Christopher Nevill, Deputy Lieutenant, who laid a wreath on behalf of HM King Charles. We were delighted that many residents from the village attended. On Sunday 11th May we held a celebratory afternoon tea at Westmeston Parish Hall, which was very well supported. We had games for the children and inside the Hall Susan Fleet came and sang some of the well-known songs from the time.

On August 15th at our VJ Day commemoration at Ditchling War Memorial we were honoured to have Kathy Sambrook, Deputy Lieutenant who laid a wreath on behalf of HM King Charles. Again, there were many residents from the village who attended on a very hot morning, which saw three attendees faint in the heat. I am delighted to say that they all made a full recovery. On Sunday 17th August an event was held on the Village Green, not organised by the Branch, but one that we did participate in with our game of ‘Find the Poppy’.

Remembrance is now the focus for the Branch. Our Poppy boxes have been distributed to some of the shops and businesses in Ditchling as well as to our Collectors in Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston.

As Keymer and Hassocks no longer have a Branch we have also distributed Poppy Boxes in some of the shops and businesses there too.

This is the second year for our own Field of Remembrance in the northern triangle of the War Memorial ground. Leaflets about this have been distributed to households in Ditchling, whilst in Streat and Westmeston these leaflets have been available in both churches. Committee members have been out on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays promoting this. Please support this – we all have had someone from our family who has served in WWI, WW2 and this is a touching way of remembering and honouring them. (If you haven’t got yours yet there is still time – they are available in the Post Office).

We are grateful to the Ditchling Parish Council for adopting our Parade (as RBL regard all parades as Civic Events). This will start from St Margaret’s School along the Lewes Road, up West Street to the War Memorial for the ceremonials and wreath laying and

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	we will be accompanied by Burgess Hill Marching Youth band. We are delighted that the Mr Christopher Whittick, Deputy Lieutenant will be with us. Following on from the ceremonials at the War Memorial we move into St Margaret's Church for the Remembrance Service. Armistice Day – Monday 11th November there will be a brief service of Remembrance at the War Memorial beginning at 10.50 am Future plans: A stall at Ditchling Fair This concludes the Ditchling & District Branch Report. <i>Lest we Forget</i>" Ditchling Quakers- Judy Moody-Stewart 4-14 people meet each week and on some weeks they meet in Hayward's Heath instead and they are available via Zoom for housebound people who can't attend. They are generally supportive of the village community activities.
10.	Dates of Future Events and Next Meetings • Christmas Sparkle • Newcomer's Party: 2026 – Saturday 18 April 1830-2030 • Ditchling Fair – June 13th 2026
11.	Any Other Business No other items raised.

DVA Draft Constitution (2025)

1. The Association is known as 'Ditchling Village Association'.
2. The objects of the association are:
 - To unite all who live in the Parish of Ditchling for the good of all.
 - To promote the welfare and wellbeing of all who live in the Parish of Ditchling.
 - To help, support and encourage each Council, Society and Club to fulfil its particular objects.
3. Every person who lives in the Parish is automatically a member of the Association.
4. Members shall meet annually at an Annual General Meeting on or before the last day of ~~April~~ October of each year to receive a report from the Chairman of the Executive Committee and a report and financial statement for the previous financial year ~~year ended December 31st~~ from the Treasurer; to discuss and decide further plans and to elect a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Hon Secretary and Hon Treasurer for the coming year.
 - At the same meeting a minimum of two representatives will be elected to the Executive Committee (see 6 below).
5. During the year the Executive Committee shall meet on at least three occasions, and preferably quarterly to discuss and decide matters relating to the objects of the Association.
6. The organisation of the Association shall be in the hands of an Executive Committee of up to 10 people:
 - Chair, Vice-Chair, President, Secretary, Treasurer, Fair Chair, ~~Good Neighbours~~ and ~~two~~ other members elected at the AGM

The Committee will have power to co-opt as necessary and to delegate particular activities to sub-committees which will report back to the Executive Committee and through them to the full Council.
7. No decisions may be made by the Executive Committee unless there is a quorum of ~~five~~ four members in attendance one of whom must be either the Chairman or Vice-Chairman.
8. Any alterations or additions to these rules shall only be made at the Annual General Meeting or by the Council with the consent of the Annual General Meeting.

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