

DITTISHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Incorporating the Hamlet of Capton and the Manors of Bozomzeal and Coombe

DRAFT Minutes of the monthly meeting of Dittisham Parish Council held in Dittisham Village Hall
Wednesday 7 October 2026 at 7:00pm

Present: Parish cllrs Bond (Chair), Golding, J Green, N Green, Hawkes, Neale, Pope, Taylor & Unitt were present, as was C Radford (Clerk). No members of the public were in attendance.

Apologies: D.Cllr John McKay, C.Cllr Simon Rake.

1. **Apologies** were received as above.
2. **Declaration of Interests** Cllr Neale declared an interest in item 5.3 payment 2610_5.
3. **Approval of Minutes** *To consider approval of the minutes* **It was RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the of monthly meeting held on 2 September and the EGM held on 22 September 2026 as an accurate record, without amendments.
4. **Community Reports** To receive reports from:
 - 4.1. South Hams District Council (SHDC) councillor An update from the d.cllr in his absence is summarised:
 - Severe weather preparedness The extreme El Nino is predicted to result in a difficult winter with heavy rain, storms and possible freezing conditions. The d.cllr is in touch with Devon Communities Together (DCT) and officers at SHDC looking at preparedness for severe weather and suggesting that parish councils undertake an audit of their readiness in terms of equipment and organisation. DCT is holding its next Forum Gathering on Oct 22 in Totnes, where the British Red Cross will be conducting a day-long emergency planning exercise. It was noted that the Dittisham Emergency Plan is in regular review and covers these matters. People who are at known risk of flooding should be responsible for their own preparedness, but could be encouraged to contact SHDC to arrange delivery of sandbags. It was agreed that further pressure should be put on Devon County Council (DCC) to grit the top road.
 - 4.2. Devon County Council (DCC) councillor A update received in the c.cllr's absence is summarised:
 - Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) DCC has now been informed that Devon falls into the 'red' category of the paused LGR processes so the government will not be taking it any further for the time being. The fact it has been announced relatively swiftly means that a lot of the uncertainty that the 'pause for review' had created has been removed. The 16 July LGR announcement has forced all local authorities in Devon to work together in some form or other. This in turn has led to a greater understanding and appreciation that there are significant areas of common interest and common concern. The c.cllr hopes that the opportunities that this has created for officer teams to get a much more detailed view of how other Councils operate and the relationships forged in the 'heat of battle' will mean that this cross-Council cooperation will become the norm. If it does then that will enhance the effectiveness of individual Councils and existing bodies, including the Combined County Authority.
 - Combined County Authority (CCA) There is a consultation (open until 28 October) on proposals for Plymouth to join the CCA (<https://devolutionindevon.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/v3/section-6?step=step1>). The remit of the CCA is currently quite narrow: transport, housing and strategic planning, adult skills, economic development and resilience and contingency planning. Plymouth's membership of the CCA would be a major step towards an elected Mayor for Devon. Whilst the Mayor's remit would also be quite limited (to the above plus strategic planning and the environment and climate change, health, wellbeing and public service reform, public safety, culture, and rural and coastal communities) having an elected Mayor would unlock more funding in these areas and hopefully bring greater local knowledge and expertise in how those funds are best spent. This first step of Plymouth becoming a member of the CCA will give the CCA more weight and allow more to be done, for instance, across the whole of south Devon from the Tamar to the Axe by reducing the frictions that might otherwise come from working across the multiple local authorities involved.
5. **Financial Matters**
 - 5.1. Notice of completion of the 2025/26 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) The Parish Council noted that the External Auditors report and certificate was received with no comments. The Notice of Conclusion of Audit had been published on the Parish Council notice board and website on 11 Sept 2026.
 - 5.2. Receipts and payments between meetings were noted as follows:
 - Received on 08/09/2026 from South Hams District Council. Precept payment 2 = £10,550 no VAT
 - Payment 2609_19 to Lloyds Bank for Bank Fee = £4.25 no VAT
 - 5.3. October payments **It was RESOLVED** to make the following payments:
 - Payment 2610_1 to Nest Pensions for pension contributions on Clerk's Sept Salary: Employers contribution @ 16.98 and Employee contribution @ 22.63 = £39.61 no VAT

DITTISHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Incorporating the Hamlet of Capton and the Manors of Bozomzeal and Coombe

- Payment 2610_2 to CRadford for Clerk Salary Sept (Month 6) = £928.21 no VAT
 - Payment 2610_3 to HMRC for Tax/Ni on Clerk's Sept Salary = £73.96 no VAT
 - Payment 2610_4 to MHurrell for Car Park Attendant monthly car park checks and banking takings (Sept) = £150 no VAT
 - Payment 2610_5 to RNeale for reimbursement for JottaCloud backup services Monthly renewal Sept at 12EUR per month £10.34. Lebara mobile phone monthly renewal Sept at £4.90 per month = 15.24 no VAT
 - Payment 2610_6 to ARCCAS for invoice 477 Monthly grounds maintenance invoice 6 of 10 at £430 plus £86 VAT = £516
 - Payment 2610_7 to Source for Business for services at Standpipe The Quay Dittisham 17 June 2026 to 2 September 2026 = £21.98 no VAT
 - Payment 2610_9 to Dittisham Village Hall for 6 x DPC monthly meetings from 01/04/26 to 07/10/26 inclusive and 1 x meeting in School Room on 22/09/26 at £133.33 plus £26.67 VAT = £160
- Cllrs J Green and Unitt will authorise the payments.
- Payment 2610_8 to Bartons Solicitors Additional payment on account of £500 plus £100 VAT = £600 was not approved until an agreement on the final bill could be reached.

6. South Hams District Council's Planning Decisions To note the following:

- 6.1. [2074/26/ARC](#) Lauriston, Riverside Road, Dittisham Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 (CMP), 6 (Sustainable Drainage Option), 7 (Landscape Plan) & 16 (External Lighting) of planning consent 0673/24/FUL SPLIT DECISION PART APPROVED/PART REFUSED It was noted that the drainage plan had not been approved.
- 6.2. It was also noted that application 1782/26/HHO Soundings, Riverside Road, Dittisham Extension and alterations to existing dwelling and demolition of outbuildings was APPROVED It was noted that the Officer had referred to the Parish Council's comments about scale and massing in their report. The Landscape Officer had commented that "*the increase of scale is not incongruous within the site, given the size of the residential plot*". Conditions include approval of drainage plan and implementing the 'planting plan' as submitted to ensure appropriate landscaping is provided to integrate the site into the local area, and to conserve and enhance of the South Devon National Landscape.

7. New Planning Applications to consider a recommendation to the planning authority on the following applications:

- 7.1. [2282/26/FUL](#) Lauriston, Riverside Road, Dittisham Application for erection of garage/outbuilding **It was RESOLVED** to SUPPORT the application with the condition that the building is only ever used for the permitted use and not for any future ancillary accommodation
- 7.2. [2437/26/LBC](#) Mulberry House, Dittisham Replacement of glass conservatory roof with natural slate **It was RESOLVED** to SUPPORT the application.
- 7.3. [2259/26/HHO](#) Sunnybank, Manor Street, Dittisham Side and rear extensions with internal renovation and improvements to the principal elevation **It was RESOLVED** to SUPPORT the application.
- 7.4. [2260/26/LBC](#) Sunnybank, Manor Street, Dittisham Side and rear extensions with internal renovation and improvements to the principal elevation. Removal of render and application of limewash to the principal elevation. **It was RESOLVED** to SUPPORT the application.

8. Trees

- 8.1. Annual Tree Condition Assessment *Receipt of the report and consideration of any advised actions* The Annual Tree Inspection of trees at The Ham, The Level and Capton Triangle took place on 9 Sept 2026 and a detailed inspection report submitted, commenting on the condition of trees and groups of trees in each area. Having completed a risk assessment, the contractor advises the following works to trees on The Ham and parking area:
 - Tree no. 9. Species: White Willow – *Salix alba*. Observations: Recently pollarded at approx. 4 metres due to decayed main trunk and internal hollowing most likely caused from Phellinus spp. Decay fungi. Recommendations: Pollard lower down at crown break (3 metres in height) retain all lower growth on trunk and stems. Work priority: Medium – Risk is Tolerable but work is advised within a year for sound arboricultural management
 - Group of trees: G1 Mixed broadleaf and trimmed hedges. Observations: a) Area of young planted trees at along Ham Lane leading down to car parking area. Trimmed formal hedges of Leyland Cypress, Bay and Hazel all low risk. b) Area could have new planted trees that have great amenity value. c) Declining hazel outside Riverside House. Recommendations: a) Remove dead hazel stems outside Riverside House. b) Remove Sumac sapling next to bay trees. c) Consider reducing and shaping bay trees. Work Priority: Low – Works recommended to be carried out whenever budgets allow.**It was RESOLVED** to circulate a request for quotes from appropriate suppliers to pollard the willow and remove the dead hazel stems. **It was RESOLVED** to request a quote from the contractor that has annually cut the hedge on Ham Lane for this year's cut, and to provide an itemised quote for the works above at the same time.

DITTISHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Incorporating the Hamlet of Capton and the Manors of Bozomzeal and Coombe

8.2. Tree Policies It was noted that it had been agreed to begin work on new tree policies for Dittisham in September. The clerk will refer to SHDC and DCC policies and to provide a first draft for comment from cllr N Green.

9. Reports from Councillors' Working Groups, Parish Projects and External Forums

9.1. Neighbourhood Plan update First draft is close to being complete, with different members of the group leading on different themed sections. Next meeting will take place on 21 Oct. Shortly afterwards an agreed draft will be shared with the parish council for information and for broad feedback on the direction of the plan. A draft will be shared with the Neighbourhood Plan Officer at SHDC to invite feedback. A public meeting will then be held in December/January to share some of the draft policies for feedback. **It was RESOLVED** to include comment on the first draft of the plan on the agenda of the December meeting of the Parish Council, circulating the draft as soon as possible to give cllrs time to read and absorb it.

9.2. Maintenance Working Group update It was reported that replacement posts to protect the pay and display machines in both car parks had been installed and painted white in Sept. There are other maintenance jobs that need costing, including stabilising the football posts. A meeting will be held to undertake a thorough survey in preparation for next year's budget.

9.3. Parish Paths Partnership (P3) Report The broken footpath signs at the Sportmans Arms to Ditsum Rd end and Foxenhole to Lapthorne Rd Sign at the Lapthorne Rd were repaired by DCC in September. It remains to be seen if the parish council will be invoiced for these works or if absorbed by DCC's budget. Works contracted by the parish council including replacement of the dislodged stone in the stream on Footpath 14 and the repair to the bottom steps to the foreshore on Footpath 17 were repaired in August. Costs of these repairs will be taken from the Footpath budget.

9.4. Car Park/Burial Ground Project

9.4.1. Update/report on next steps It was reported that it has been productive that the landowner, land agent, project managers and parish council representatives have been able to meet together. The project managers have agreed to continue to be on board. Amendments proposed by the parish council to the Option Agreement have been agreed by the landowner and project managers. The land agent will discuss with the solicitor to advise of changes. The document will then be signed by the landowner and the parish council (the clerk and chair). The next stage is the pre-planning process. The DCC Highways officer has come back with several objections to the scheme for pedestrian access. There has been discussion on how best to manage this. It is noted that an application for a housing development is being progressed by the district council and there may be opportunities to benefit from joint solutions to pedestrian access. It was noted that there is an expectation that district council officers will come to a meeting of the parish council to share plans for the new development. Cllrs are in agreement that it is important the public has the opportunity to be informed.

9.4.2. Options Agreement Costs *To consider increase in solicitor fees* It was noted that the solicitor had requested additional fees to conclude work to the option agreement. As it is uncertain where the additional fees have originated, **it was RESOLVED** that the requested payment should not be approved until the outcome of a discussion between the solicitor and the land agent.

9.4.3. Public communications about project progression *To consider an approach.* It was commented that progression of the project is being recorded in the parish council's minutes, which are on the public record and being circulated via the parish council's mailing list. Cllrs would refer members of the public who had queries about the project to the minutes.

9.5. Parish Emergency Team Review Report back, Extra Team Member, Capton Defibrillator & First Aid Course

- Team composition **Cllr Hawkes** agreed to join the Emergency Team as an additional member, requesting a briefing on what will be involved.
- Emergency number and defibrillators Tests have been made to the single emergency team number. There continues to be a strange message about an ambulance being on its way that played when team responders answered. This, and concerns about ongoing servicing support for the defibrillators when out of warranty is a concern. A letter to the Trustee Chairman will be written if issues aren't resolved satisfactorily; the Community Heartbeat Trust is acting in a quasi-healthcare emergency role, and if not able to provide the service could lead to quite serious consequences.
- Medical Kit at the Village Hall If sensible and possible this kit could be enhanced, at parish expense, to also be available and meet the needs of the Emergency Team. Contact will be made with the Village Hall Committee to discuss this.
- First Aid Course A first aid course for this year had already been agreed and budgeted in principle, with the population of Capton in mind following the installation of a defib in their old phone box. It was agreed to arrange a first aid course in November, and for the date to be circulated.
- Local resources list for restricted circulation Emergency Team information document It was noted that a less formal approach to getting agreement from local owners of tractors & ATVs etc to be contacted in case of emergency would be more fruitful. To this end the use of a signed agreement doc. would be dropped. In its place a verbal agreement would be obtained for a name and phone number to be placed on the "Resources" page of the restricted circulation Emergency

DITTISHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Incorporating the Hamlet of Capton and the Manors of Bozomzeal and Coombe

Team Information Document. This page is only attached to these notes sent to the Emergency Team members and not to the wider circulation of these notes to the DPC.

- Walkie Talkies It was noted that walkie talkies were used at the Regatta and it was agreed to investigate where they were stored and if they could have dual use.
- Date of next meeting The next meeting will take place on 19 Jan '27.

9.6. Dittisham Boat Park *Update on developments in tidying the area* There was no update.

9.7. Friends of the Dart *Update on 'River Hub' website* It was noted that Friends of the Dart has launched a new online information hub to bring together information in the public domain or as a result of Freedom of Information requests about which storm overflows are spilling sewage into the River Dart right now, and which ones are spilling when they shouldn't. Cllrs reviewed the contents of the website during the meeting: <https://riverhub.friendsofthedart.org/>. It was noted in a briefing note from Cllr Hawkes that both the Mill Creek and Ferry Boat Inn (FBI) pumping stations show releases when the Dittisham Sewage Treatment Works (STW) was operating below capacity, indicating an upstream fault. So far in 2026 (to 29 Sept), STW had 29 spills lasting 152 hours in total, all in wet weather. Mill Creek had 1 (illegal) dry spill, 12 spills counted by the Environment Agency (EA) and 5 spills when STW wasn't spilling. FBI had 44 EA counted spills and 51 spills when STW was not discharging. Many of South West Water's assets perform far worse. Interestingly their figures show that the Dittisham STW is operating at 82% capacity, computed as catering for 388 people at 66 cubic meters per day. So in principle it has spare capacity for about 80 people. However, the actual capacity of the STW may not match the licensed capacity. Friends of the Dart have a Fol request asking this question. It was also questioned if 388 people matches the actual occupancy in Dittisham who are connected to the mains sewer, especially in summer months.

10. **Clerk's update**

- Litter bin emptying The request made for the Manor Street dog waste bin to be included in the regular litter bin emptying schedule has been passed to SHDC's street team for review.
- Clerk's annual review will take place with members of the Personnel Committee on 16 Oct.

11. **Bonfires and how to stop them** *Consider guidelines for local circulation/publication.* **It was RESOLVED** to accept the proposed guidance wording. It was agreed to circulate with minutes of the November meeting, and for a simple poster encouraging people to think about their neighbours and with a QR code link to the guidelines.

12. **Parish Lengthsman Contract** *Consider approach to recruitment.* It was agreed to work alongside Harberton Parish Council, also working on encouraging recruitment. Costs for training and induction processes could be shared for an applicant, particularly in support of any applicants with no prior experience.

13. **Annual Parking Pass** *For the Parish Council to consider a change of policy, and broaden the criteria on which a permit may be issued, to enable purchase by holiday let owners who pay business rates and not council tax.* After consideration of the options **it was RESOLVED** to keep the criteria as it stands.

14. **Memorial Benches** It was agreed to defer the matter to a future meeting.

15. **December meeting venue** *Confirm venue arrangements/requirements of Dittisham Sailing Club.* Cllr Unitt agreed to be the sailing club 'host' for the meeting. It was agreed that those not familiar with the route to the sailing club be met at The Ham car park by those who were.

16. **Correspondence and Contacts** to note or consider.

To note:

- Temporary toilet removal Cllrs were informed of a query from a member of the public asking if the toilet that in the parking bay on Higher Street can be removed now works have been completed.
- Temporary Traffic Notice - OLD MILL LANE TO DOWNTON CROSS, Dittisham (TTRO2672331) Cllrs are informed of the road closure in place between 08:00 – 18:00 on 17 and 18 Nov 26 to enable pole replacement. An alternative, signed route, will be in place.
- #39 2026 DALC e-bulletin Cllrs were informed that this bulletin includes an invitation to the next Connect Event that focuses on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The event will focus sharing information about the strategy, how to use its resources and how you can engage with nature recovery in your area. The online session takes place between 6.30-7.30pm on 21 Oct. A booking link can be provided to any interested councillors.
- DAA Dittisham Landing site - annual re survey - Thursday 10th September 2026 Cllrs were informed that Devon Air Ambulance would undertake a site survey on 10 Sept to check that nothing has substantially changed that would affect safety of helicopters, staff or patients. This includes resurveying for potential obstacles or height of trees, access etc.

DITTISHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Incorporating the Hamlet of Capton and the Manors of Bozomzeal and Coombe

- LGR Update It was noted that the d.cllr forwarded cllrs a letter from the Minister for Local Government, Devolution and Regional Growth that, having received updated legal advice, the Government undertake a review of the Local Government Reorganisation Programme, and any work being undertaken by local authorities to implement any decisions by Government should cease. The consensus from those on the frontline of this exercise is that this means LGR is now unlikely to proceed in any form during this parliament. The c.cllr had also written to cllrs to note that the Minister of State for Communities, Housing and Local Government confirmed that the elections to be held in May 2027 will be for Councils in their current form.
- Trees on Riverside Road Cllrs were informed that the county council's Tree Inspector has no concerns about a reported broken branch on overgrown trees on Riverside Road, commenting that this is most likely the result of the recent period of very hot weather.
- River Hub is live Friends of the Dart is circulating news that a new site, 'River Hub' has been launched. The site brings together all available data on storm overflows on the River Dart, how often it spills, whether its treatment works has the capacity its permit allows for the people it serves, the spills that happen in dry weather with no rain to excuse them, and whether an improvement is planned. Where there is a known problem and no clear plan to fix it, River Hub shows that gap. Information is freely available here: <https://riverhub.friendsofthedart.org/explore/spills>
- Town & Parish Council Briefing: Recording and Presentation Slides SHDC has circulated a recording of the 1.5hr briefing on 'Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution Update' and 'National Scheme of Delegation' along with presentation slides. **ACTION: The clerk** to forward the recording to **cllrs Golding and Taylor**.

To consider:

- New cables Cllrs were informed that residents on The Level have been upset to find two new cables have recently been installed outside their primary outlook and cut right across their previous uninterrupted view of the river, and within 2.2M from the house. They have lodged complaints to OpenReach and sought advice from Devon Natural Landscapes. The parish council noted the matter but could not do anything further to support the resident in their complaint.
 - Community Litter Picking Groups in Your Parish It was noted that South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council are reviewing and updating records of community litter-picking groups operating across both districts. The councils are seeking to establish a directory of community litter picking groups should other volunteers be interested in joining them. The Parish Council is therefore asked to provide any information about active groups known to them, to confirm if there aren't any, or to share information if there has been interest in establishing a group in the area. Information will help district councils understand where additional support, promotion or community engagement may be beneficial. **ACTION: The Clerk** to forward information about the Dittisham Beach Clean along with details of the officers that the volunteers liaise with. It was agreed to feedback that rubbish collected is picked up by the district council more quickly.
17. **Next Meeting:** the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Wednesday November 4 2026 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting closed at: 21:15