

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
Wednesday 2 September 2026 at 7:00pm

Present: Parish cllrs Bond (Chair), Golding, J Green (late), N, Green, Hawkes, Neale, Pope, Taylor & Unitt were present, as was C Radford (Clerk). D.cllr McKay and c.cllr Rake attended for parts of the meeting. 4 members of the public were in attendance.

Apologies: None

Public Forum

- A Member of the Public (MoP) attended to answer questions about the planning application on the agenda at item 7.1.

1. **Apologies** were noted from cllr J Green that he would arrive late to the meeting.
2. **Declaration of Interests** Cllrs declared an interest in the following items: Cllr Neale on payment 2609_5 and cllr Bond on payment 2609_6.
3. **Approval of Minutes** It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of 1 July 2026 as an accurate record.
4. **Community Reports** To receive reports from:
 - 4.1. South Hams District Council (SHDC) councillor
 - 4.1.1. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Cllrs were informed that the statutory change bill is expected in November, at which point, district councils will start losing control of available finances. SHDC is therefore making some decisions about funding allocation in September based on local priorities. It was noted that the Prime Minister had suggested at PMQs that there may be a review of the proposals made for Devon. The d.cllr is sceptical of a unitary authority for rural Devon on economic grounds. SHDC has delegated the decision on going forward to a Judicial Review to Devon County Council (DCC). The County Council is yet to decide.
 - 4.1.2. Amazen 100 business are now on board on this 'buy local' project. A soft launch is expected at the end of September before going live to the public in November in time for the run up to Christmas. The d.cllr is optimistic that the project will have positive benefits for the local economy.
 - 4.1.3. South West Water (SWW) spills The d.cllr has made research revealing the number and duration of spills across the South West region available on a website. The data shows the fragility of the current network. Even during months where there was no rain and therefore there should not be any active overflows, there was an average of 40 spills per day across the South West. Where there is rain, this number increases significantly. The d.cllr is being proactive in pushing this issue forward, working with Friends of the Dart. A weblink sharing these statistics will be forwarded.
 - 4.2. Devon County Council (DCC) councillor
 - 4.2.1. LGR It was reported that the joint committees being set up to shape the development of the four proposed new unitary authorities will be operational by November. Committees will have representation from 3.2m DCC, current district councils and the current existing unitary authorities where appropriate. The possibility of DCC pursuing a judicial review into The Government's decision was noted. It was commented that a judicial review challenges the way that a decision has been made. Even if successful, the same decision could be taken. The c.cllr commented that this particular decision was so egregious and fell short in so many ways that it is worthy of challenge. A Pre-Action letter outlining the case was drafted, to which The Government has not yet responded. Once DCC has received the response and legal advice, the cabinet will then make its decision on whether to move forward or not. Cllrs asked questions about population sizes of the four proposed unitary authorities, economic centres and financial viability. The c.cllr replied that initial calculations have shown that two of the urban unitaries would have the most significant financial challenges. It was also commented that it is not clear how the 3-year funding settlement given last year would be distributed amongst the new unitaries. When asked what proportion of local authority revenue is received from Central Government compared to what is earned locally, the c.cllr answered that council tax and business rates is by far the biggest source of revenue for local authorities, with very little funding from Central Government.
 - 4.2.2. Children's Services It is expected that the latest monitoring report for Children's Services will be published soon. DCC has been rated 'inadequate' for a decade and is hoping for more positive news when the report is published. There is still work to do in relation to provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The Council

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

is looking to bring this in house, by bringing inclusion hubs into schools where decisions can be made more locally rather than seeking services out of county.

- 4.2.3. Highways DCC has increased the money spent on roads, hoping that those improvements will become increasingly more visible. Data shows that DCC has halved the pothole backlog.

5. Financial Matters

- 5.1. Update from the Finance Working Group Meeting Notes from the meeting were circulated. It was reported that although still early in the year, there are no issues of concern on income or expenditure. The Working Group (WG) had agreed a reserves policy for consideration for Full Council (see item 5.2.2) and system to share authorisations between different WG members. Since the meeting it has been learned that the Dittisham Village Hall Management Committee (DVHMC) wishes to move forward with the replacement of the village hall's roof, and will have a survey done prior to developing a planning application. Any future funding would likely go towards that work.

5.2. Consideration of recommendations of the Finance Working Group

- 5.2.1. Letter to St George's Church Treasurer **It was RESOLVED** that Cllr Unitt, as chair of the Finance WG, make personal contact with the incoming treasurer to advise that the Parish Council's grant policy requests that significant grant applications from public funds via the Parish Council are received by 15 November, and that if the Parochial Church Council (PCC) wishes to apply for a grant in the 2027/28 financial year, the Parish Council would find it useful if the PCC responded to some specific queries to help establish policy criteria of "need".
- 5.2.2. Parish Council Reserves Policy **It was RESOLVED** to adopt the policy as recommended by the working group. This included clause 2.1 on setting the Parish Council's level of general reserves: *"With an NRE of approximately £65,000 Dittisham Parish Council aims to hold 6 months' worth of this in its general reserve; approximately £32,500. This is also compatible with the Parish's high dependency on its car park income."*

5.3. Receipts and Payments between meetings

The following receipts were noted:

- 21/07/2026 Refund from HMRC on VAT penalty = £68.40 no VAT
- 21/07/2026 Invoice 29 Private Ham Hire Thurs 8 July - Mon 12 July 2027 for wedding on Sat 10 July 2027 at 1666.67 plus 208.33 VAT = £1,875.00
- 24/07/2026 Invoice 28 2025/26 Q4 SHDC Car Park Receipts 2025/26 at 3385.75 plus 677.15 VAT = £4062.90
- 07/08/2026 Invoice 32 2026/27 Q1 SHDC Car Park Receipts at 15,040.50 plus 3,008.10 VAT = £18048.60
- 11/08/2026 Invoice 31 2026/27 Annual Grant GEN - Public rights of way - OOS (0%) Parish Paths Partnership Devon County Council = £180
- 25/08/2026 Invoice 33 Private Ham Hire Thurs 10 June - Sun 13 June 2027 for wedding on Sat 12 June 2027 at 1,333.3 plus 166.67 VAT = £1,500.00

It was RESOLVED to place income from Ham events booked for 2027 into an earmarked reserve until events have taken place, in case of cancellation.

The following payments between meetings were noted:

- Payment 2606_14 Bank fee Lloyds Bank =£4.25 No VAT
- Payment 2607_15 to Bartons Solicitors payment on account to progress the Options Agreement (Proforma, not VAT invoice) = £1000.00
- Payment 2607_16 to Nest Pensions for Pension contributions on clerk's July salary = £39.61 no VAT
- Payment 2607_17 to CRadford clerk salary July (Month 4) = £887.81 no VAT
- Payment 2607_18 to HMRC for Tax/NI on Clerk's July Salary = £275.76 no VAT
- Payment 2607_19 to MHurrell for monthly car park checks and banking takings (Jul) = £150 no VAT
- Payment 2607_20 to HMRC for Q1 VAT return = £804.80
- Payment 2607_21 to Geosphere Ltd Invoice: #18UG018-0009 Parish Online - Mapping Software (per Year) at £40 plus £8 VAT = £48
- Payment 2607_22 to The Community Heartbeat Trust for Village Emergency Telephone System Yr 3 01/07/2026-01/07/2027 Node 5284 5285 8355 at £100 plus £20 VAT = £120
- Payment 2607_23 to South Hams District Council Invoice 22406654 for cashless processing fees for 1st April 2026 to 30th June 2026 for The Level and The Ham car parks at £702.82 plus £140.56 VAT = £843.38
- Payment 2606_24 Bank fee Lloyds Bank =£4.25 No VAT

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

5.4. September Payments It was RESOLVED to make the following payments:

- 2609_1 to Nest Pensions for pension contributions on clerk's Aug salary: Employers contribution @ 17.09 and Employee contribution @ 22.78 = £39.87 No VAT
- 2609_2 to C Radford for clerk salary Aug (Month 5) = £1089.61 no VAT
- 2609_3 to HMRC for Tax/Ni on clerk's Aug salary = £73.96 no VAT
- 2609_4 to MHurrell for car ark attendant monthly car park checks and banking takings (Aug) = £150 no VAT
- 2609_5 to RNeale for reimbursement: JottaCloud backup services Monthly renewal July and Aug at 12EUR per month £10.28 & £10.30 and Lebara mobile phone monthly renewal Jul and Aug at £4.90 per month. = £30.38 no VAT
- 2609_6 to RBond, reimbursement: HP Instant Ink subscription (Jul & Aug) at 7.48 plus 1.50 VAT = £8.98
- 2609_7 to CRadford for reimbursement: Passpack = £13.86 No VAT
- 2609_8 to ARCCAS for Invoice 410 Monthly grounds maintenance invoice 5 of 10 at 430 plus 86.00 VAT = £516.00
- 2609_9 to ARCCAS for Invoice 447 Monthly grounds maintenance invoice 6 of 10 at 430 plus 86.00 VAT = £516.00
- 2609_10 to Trace Design Consultants for Invoice H1487 Project No: 4718 / Site: Dittisham Graveyard & Car Park: Progression of preliminary design for the vehicular and pedestrian access points (Partial month end invoice at 31 Jul 2027) at 1945 plus 389 VAT= £2,334.00
- 2609_11 to The Community Heartbeat Trust for Proforma 22449. Rescue Ready Support Yr 3 01/08/2026-01/08/2027 Node 8355) was annual support now rescue ready plan) at 165 plus 33 VAT = £198

Payments to be first authorised by cllr Pope and cllr Unitt.

5.5. 2026/27 Pay Award Consider new agreed pay rates for Local Government Services, applicable from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027. It was RESOLVED to increase the Clerk's salary according to the new agreed pay scales for 26/27: LC2 spine point 23 increases from 17.85 to 18.44 per hour and backdated to 1 April 2026.

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

- 6.1. 1587/26/ARC** Lauriston, Riverside Road, Dittisham Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 (CMP), 6 (Sustainable Drainage Option), 7 (Landscape Plan), 9 (Facing / Roofing Materials), 10 (Joinery), 11 (External Attachments) and 16 (External Lighting) of planning consent 0673/24/FUL SPLIT DECISION PART APPROVED/PART REFUSED
- 6.2. 1615/26/VAR** Twenty Fathoms, Higher Street, Dittisham Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of Planning Consent 1915/25/HHO APPROVED
- 6.3. 2026/26/COM** Near Greenslades Higher Street Dittisham Notice of intent to install electronic communication apparatus comprising three light wooden poles 10 metres high (Ref: WH5GC88Y) DECISION MADE

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

- 7.1. 1782/26/HHO** Soundings, Riverside Road, Dittisham Householder application for extension and alterations to existing dwelling. There was discussion during which cllrs asked questions of the applicant, and considered letters of objection as received from residents. **It was RESOLVED to OBJECT** to the application on the grounds of scale, massing, views from the Dart, views from The Ham, impact on the National Landscape and proximity to the conservation areas. Whilst the design is clearly enhanced, and the Parish Council commends the applicant in retaining the existing building in terms of the impact of the reduced carbon footprint, it remains out of context with the vernacular of the other buildings' scale and massing on the road and within the parish.

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

- 8.1. Neighbourhood Plan update** It was commented that a preliminary draft is on paper, which is a significant step forward. The Steering Group will review this draft at the next meeting in September, and expecting to bring to the Parish Council for comment in November ahead of a public meeting between then and the spring. Having met with a local landowner currently involved in a pre-planning process, the landowners' views on development appear to be in alignment with the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. It was noted that a full planning application might come forward in coming months, at which it was generally agreed that a single item EGM should be called to enable community engagement.
- 8.2. Maintenance Working Group update** A report had been circulated noting that the contractor had undertaken repairs to The Ham Wall, to the wall adjacent to the sailing club, had reset the stone on the wall adjacent to footpath 14, rebuilt the step at footpath 17, repaired bench 5 and bus shelter seating. The WG is pleased with the quality of workmanship. Cutting of the grass at The Ham was suspended from mid-July. Now it is greening up cutting will resume. The Ham Triangle and the Old Chapel Burial Ground were trimmed early due to dry conditions. The owner of The Platt has covered up an exposed pip end at footpath 1/14. that the post at The Ham has been struck again and may need realigning. Cllrs reported that a hole has appeared on the Level footpath. A cone will be placed on this until it can be filled.

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

8.3. Car Park/Burial Ground Project

8.3.1. Update

- The monthly report from the project managers advised the Parish Council that the Option Agreement was received from the landowners' solicitor in August and a draft presented to the Parish Council for approval. Following the approval of the fees budget for Trace Design at the July meeting, a preliminary highways layout drawing was produced which has been submitted to the DCC Highways engineer for feedback, before proceeding with a Planning Pre-Application. The invoice H1487 received from Trace Design is within the approved budget and the project managers request payment.
- The clerk has been in receipt of advice from a VAT advisor on managing the financial elements of the project and treatment of VAT on invoices received and on the passing of VAT onto other partners in the project. Once clarifications have been made, the clerk will advise the project manager, who will inform other partners.

8.3.2. Option Agreement To consider draft Option Agreement as received from solicitors **It was RESOLVED** to receive some advice on the wording of the Option Agreement and to hold an EGM to review that advice before responding to the solicitors on any changes required to the Option Agreement.

8.4. Use of the Ham

8.4.1. Guide and application process **It was RESOLVED** to adopt the updated 'Use of the Ham, A guide' document, along with updated application form, Ham Map, Risk Assessment Template and Waste Management Plan form.

8.4.2. Camping permits Consider merit of suggestion for adoption of camping permits, within context of current policies. It was agreed to monitor the situation and, should ham hire applicants include camping, this should be included in their application and considered via the application process.

8.5. National Emergency Film Due to the film having already been screened at several other local venues, it has been decided not to host a screening in Dittisham.

8.6. Parish Emergency Plan Working Group The working group will meet to agree a mechanism to check the emergency telephone number, following reports that it has not been working properly.

9. Clerk's update

- **Parish Paths Partnership Grant** The 2026/27 grant request has been submitted and processed. Waymarker discs will be posted once Devon County Council has replenished its stocks.
- **South West Water (SWW) Trial Hole Survey** SWW required access to The Ham on 14 July for a trial hole survey to support a scheme to reduce the use of storm overflows by taking storm water out of the sewerage network. The trial hole was dug in order to confirm the diameter of the pipe, and to ensure current records on its location are correct. The surveying team needed to return on 5 August to carry out another trial hole as they weren't able to locate the main sewer in the first survey.
- **Letter of Support to Friends of the Dart** A letter was drafted by the Clerk in support of a grant application being made by Friends of the Dart for funding for the River Guardians programme. The letter drew on matters discussed at July's meeting, where the Parish Council agreed to work in co-operation with Friends of the Dart.
- **Devon County Highways matters:**
 - **Hedge Cutting** The Clerk had been approached by two residents, one with a complaint about a hedge on the route from Dittisham to Brambletor that, in their view, needed to be cut back for safety reasons, and another from a hedge owner with a complaint that their hedge had been badly cut without being advised in advance, asking if the Parish Council had contracted this work. Highways confirmed that these hedges had been cut as part of DCC's cyclic maintenance programme to ensure that visibility on bends, sightlines, and the approaches to warning signs are kept clear, in line with safety policy. DCC does not have definitive information on individual hedge ownership, and in many cases landowners delay cutting until later in the summer due to bird-nesting considerations. For safety reasons, DCC carry out these essential visibility cuts earlier in the season.
 - **20mph and SLOW markings** In response to the Parish Council's request that the 20mph and SLOW markings were re-freshed in Dittisham and Capton, DCC Highways has advised the Clerk that these markings are usually renewed under a Parish Remark Programme. Following receipt of the Parish Council's request Dittisham Parish (including Capton) has been added to the county wide list. The Officer is unable to advise when this work might be undertaken as, due to costs, only a few parishes in the County get their lining refreshed each year. The route from Brambletor to Higher Street is due to be patched shortly in preparation for surface dressing next year. The Neighbourhood Highways Officer has requested

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

the Surface Dressing is not carried through Higher Street as this is more a residential area. If there are markings within the Higher Street site, then the Officer will ask if they can be remarked when the patching is completed.

- Landing light repairs The repair due in mid-August has been delayed until a bespoke bracket can be manufactured.
 - Bin Emptying It was reported to SHDC that bins on The Ham had not been emptied as per the summer agreement. The depot supervisor was reminded of the request to increase collections over the summer.
 - Payroll arrangements Due to a change in HMRC requirements, the Parish Council's PAYE scheme has now been formally registered as an authorized client on South Hams District Council's HMRC Agent Account.
10. **Dittisham Boat Park** *Update on developments in tidying the area* The owner of the Soundings was present at the meeting and able to confirm that he had cleared a line of boats that were in brambles and erected a fence to prevent boats returning to the same line. He will continue to take actions to make the area secure whilst the Harbour Authority is yet undertake agreed actions to administer the area and produce a Memorandum of Agreement. It was noted that the Harbourmaster had recently responded to emailed correspondence. The Chair will follow this up.
11. **Bonfires and how to stop them** It was **RESOLVED** to carry forward consideration of draft guidelines to the next meeting.
12. **Parish Lengthsman Contract** No applications had been received. The item was carried forward.
13. **Correspondence and Contacts** to note or consider

To note:

- Temporary Traffic Order - BRUCKTON COPSE TO ASHPLAT COPSE, Dittisham (TTRO2670729) Cllrs were informed that a road closure notice will be in place between 28 Sept to 9 Oct 2026 between the hours of 08:00 to 18:00, to enable tree cutting, pole installation, cabling and splicing by Airband. A signed diversion will be in place.
- DALC LGR bulletin #5 Cllrs were advised this bulletin includes a link to Central Government's Announcement Local Government Reorganisation in 13 areas across England. The announcement relevant to Devon, Plymouth and Torbay follows: *"11 councils being reorganised into 4 unitaries. This will align boundaries with economic geography to unlock housing and infrastructure growth, supporting Plymouth's defence sector and Exeter's expansion as key urban engines"*.
- Government confirms four unitary council model for Devon A newsletter from Devon County Council provides a link to a statement made by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with the following reference to the preferred option for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay: *"Four unitary proposal submitted by Exeter City Council and Plymouth City Council. I will exercise the power to modify the proposal to achieve the boundary change Exeter City Council and Plymouth City Council requested alongside the proposal"*. The Bulletin notes that Government's announcement marks the next stage in the reorganisation process. Work will now continue nationally and locally to develop detailed implementation plans, and the arrangements required to establish the new authorities. Devon County Council will work with partners, stakeholders and government to support the transition process.
- Riverside Road Tree Report Cllrs were informed that the Tree Officer visited Riverside Road on 9 July in response to resident concern raised. Inspection of a semi mature copper Beech located on HMPE highways verge next to Dittisham FC recommends crown lift to 2.5m on the roadside/ track leading into the football club to allow for correct highways clearance on the roadside and footpath side. Works will be scheduled within 6 months of the inspection date. In addition, overgrown brambles adjacent to the Ham Lane junction were reported 15 Jul, and notification received that this has been passed on to SHDCs contractor for cutting back. Cllrs installed cones to prevent car parking 11 – 14 Aug until works were completed. To maintain the visibility for vehicles going to and coming from the Ham 3 cones have been put out re parking by junction with notices that quote from the Highway Code: *"You MUST NOT leave your vehicle or trailer in a dangerous position or where it causes any unnecessary obstruction of the road [...] Opposite or within 10 metres (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorised parking space"*.
- An update on Local Government Reorganisation in Devon A bulletin from SHDC advises on The Government's announcement on plans for LGR, noting that the preferred option will result in a substantial part of the South Hams incorporated into Plymouth (in the West), Torbay (in the East) with the remainder of the district incorporated into the new Devon Coast and Countryside council. A quote from the Council Leader comments on the Government's *"failure to understand or appreciate the needs of Devon's rural towns and villages or our coastal communities"* and criticises the Government's *"flawed obsession with economic growth solely in urban areas, it demonstrates a lack of understanding for what matters for our residents and businesses, and what will actually support growth and prosperity for our area"*. The District Council's priority is to ensure a smooth, well-managed transition that protects essential services.
- Scoping Consultation: South Hams and West Devon Joint Local Plan Cllrs were advised that the Councils are seeking views on: the vision and objectives for the new Joint Local Plan; the key issues for the new Joint Local Plan to address; and,

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

how the Councils should engage with people throughout the plan-making process. The best way to read and respond to the local plan scoping consultation is on the council's [online consultation platform 'Commonplace.'](#) (HTML) Representations must be received by the Councils by 11.59pm on Thursday 24 September 2026.

- Temporary Traffic Notice - HIGHER STREET, Dittisham (TTRO2771089) Cllrs were informed of a road closure notice between 13 – 15 April 2027 to enable a water meter installation. A signed diversion will be in place.
- #34 2026 e-bulletin Cllrs were informed that the senior responsible officer and deputy senior responsible officer for local government reorganisation in Devon will provide an update on the reorganisation programme at DALC's annual conference on 7 Oct. The bulletin also advises that the Revised National Planning Policy Framework has been delayed until September.
- TAPs update - LGR in Devon Cllrs were informed via a Town and Parish Council update from SHDC that the Senior Responsible Officer for Devon has developed new warding arrangements for the 4 new unitary authority areas on the request of Central Government. These are interim/temporary warding arrangements to intended to enable safe, lawful and deliverable elections for the new shadow authorities in May 2027. A [presentation providing a full update on the details is available here](#) (HTML). The decision to accept these rests with the Secretary of State who will set out the final arrangements as part the draft Structural Change Order, expected in the autumn.
- The Ham (toilets) The Parish Council has received a complaint about the lack of cleanliness of the toilet facilities at The Ham. The Clerk has requested an update on the cleaning cycle from SHDC. It was noted that Cllrs Neale reported a broken toilet seat and dirty toilet area in the ladies on 14 Aug (ref. RI33432) alongside a call to SHDC to request same day cleaning. Cleaning was undertaken 15 Aug and seat replaced by 25 Aug.
- DALC e-bulletin #37 2026 This bulletin provides further information on interim warding arrangements for Devon, providing links to [DCC Cabinet papers for the special meeting of the Cabinet on 14 Aug 2026](#) (HTML), and [a YouTube recording of the meeting here](#) (HTML).
- Replacement for the Parish Magazine Cllrs were advised that DVHMC is being helped to set up a version of the 'Hear From the Halls' email newsletter, as used in Cornworthy. The plan is for it to be monthly for Dittisham, with a quarterly newsletter that will include Cornworthy events (and vice versa). The main focus will be events in the village hall but DVHMC will be happy to include other one-off events in the village. The aim is to produce the first for circulation in September which will probably be an introductory breakdown of the organisations and events that happen in the village hall such as bowling, WI, bridge etc with contact details to join or for information. The Parish Council is invited to forward any parish council events that are open to the public for future monthly editions.

To consider:

- 20260707 All Town & Parish Council Briefing: Planning Decision-Making Process Cllrs are informed of an online meeting via MS Teams at 5pm on 24 Sept to provide information on changes Central Government is making to how planning applications will be determined, with the objective to '*introduce greater clarity and consistency in the role of planning committees in Development Management (DM) decision-taking*'. Cllr Golding and Taylor requested the meeting link.
- Promoting external links on the Parish Council Website The Parish Council has received two similar items of correspondence requesting information dissemination. **It was RESOLVED** that the Parish Council not provide links to external websites from its own website.

- 14. Next Meeting** It was confirmed that the next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at 7pm on Weds 7 October 2026.