

Greener Hassocks & Ditchling AGM 2025 - Minutes

Greener Hassocks & Ditchling AGM took place on Tuesday 4th November at The Hassocks Pub.

Justine Rowan welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes from the previous AGM

Minutes from the Greener Hassocks & Ditchling AGM 2024 are available on the website.

Steering Group

The following Steering Group members were re-elected:

Kat Wood (Secretary), John Willis (Treasurer), Alistair Whitby, Jo Gilar, Justine Rowan, Katrina Wilson, Di Penly, Annabel Alder, Bethan Davies, Belinda Gordon, Andy Hanson.

Rachel Swabey and Ben Fitzsimmons have stood down from the Steering Group. Justine thanked them for their contributions with particular thanks to Rachel for her work on the newsletter, posters and climate hub.

People were invited to express interest in joining the Steering Group either by discussing with a member of the current of the Steering Group or by email.

Finances

The financial report for July 2024 - July 2025 was provided by John Willis, Treasurer. John was available to answer any questions and paper copies were available.

The balance as of 31st July 2025 was £3869.59. See Appendix 1 for full financial report.

Review of the year

A review of Greener Hassocks & Ditchling activity since the previous AGM was provided by Bethan Davies

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Climate Hub events - Greener Christmas, Trash Talk, Stitch Don't Ditch

Swish (Clothes swap) with First Hassocks Scouts

Downlands summer fair

Biodiversity

The Patch - Seed Swap, Seedling Swap, Stream Watch, Pond building with Pete the Pond
Bioblitz, bat walks, bird boxes, no-mow May
Climate Hub events - Wild Sussex, Supporting Swifts

Transport

Summer of Cycling - climate hub events, bike rides, Kiddical Mass

Energy

Ecohomes open houses with Ovesco, Climate Hub home energy

Community Engagement

Groups we have worked with over the year; Windmills Junior School, Downlands Community School, First Hassocks Scouts, Hassocks Women's Institute, Ovesco, Lost Woods.

Building Networks

Groups we have networked with over the year; Hassocks United Reformed Church, Parish of Clayton with Keymer, St Edwards RC Church, St John the Baptist Church, Ditchling Quaker Meeting, Lewes Climate Hub, South Downs National Park, Hassocks Community Organisation, Hurst Rethink, South East Climate Alliance, Sussex Green Living, Ditchling Zero, Zero Hub, Community People.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to and supported the Greener Hassocks & Ditchling events over the year with particular thanks to Proper Coffee and Age Concern for hosting our events.

Ditchling Orchard

A report from Ditchling Orchard was provided by Jane Standing.

This peaceful place has been created for the benefit of all. In 2014 local volunteers planted traditional Sussex apple trees, plums, a pear, a quince and cobnuts. In later years we have added more fruit trees. A new hedge was planted with a mix of hazel, field maple, spindleberry, guelder rose and wayfaring trees. This has now been 'laid' and forms a mature wildlife friendly habitat. In 2022 another hedge was planted.

A team of volunteers - our youngest visitor so far 2 months, our oldest 91 years - help to maintain the orchard every first Sunday in the month, spring to autumn. Do join us to work and chat. Children can investigate the wildlife and check out the mini pond. We run Apple Day on the Green every October, featuring apple pressing, many activities and the highly competitive Welly Wanging, ending with a procession to the Orchard. We also organise other activities in the orchard, e.g. a bat walk, a moth breakfast, Wassailing. We have also entertained Forest school groups. Our monthly newsletter keeps you up to date with all our activities so do sign up if you'd like to know more.

We are grateful to the Turner Dumbrell Foundation who made the land available and for their ongoing support. Special thanks to the organisations and individuals whose donations helped purchase trees: Ditchling Scouts, Ditchling Village Association, Beacon Park Residents Association, Ditchling Horticultural Society, Ditchling WI, Ditchling Downs WI, and residents of the village.

Repair Cafe

A report from Hassocks Repair Cafe was provided by Juliet Merrifield. The report covers the period January - October 2025.

22 volunteers – more are welcome. ‘The best thing about helping with the Repair Cafe is sharing in the joy that even a small repair brings to the owners of the items.’ Services are free though we welcome small donations to cover our costs (room rental, insurance, materials). 9 sessions so far in 2025 (we don’t run the repair café in August or December), always on the fourth Saturday (village market day) at the Age Concern centre on Dale Avenue.

In 2025 so far:

- Items brought for repair – 331
- Advice only – 21
- Repair attempts – 305
- Successful repairs – 241
- Not repairable – 54

79% of repairs were successful, 18% not repairable. Most of the ‘not repairable’ items were mechanical and electrical items that are not made to be repairable – they can’t be opened or parts are not available.

Types of repairs:

- Mechanical and electrical items – 159 (48%)
- Textile and sewing items – 73 (22%)
- Ceramic and glueing items – 25 (8%)
- Sharpening knives and garden tools – 33 (10%)
- Woodwork – 17 (5%)
- IT – 8 (2%)
- Other – 16 (5%)

The next AGM will be Tuesday 3rd November 2026.

Justine Rowan closed the AGM and invited everyone to contribute to the community discussion and plans for future activities and projects.

Community Discussion

People were invited to rotate around the themed tables, contribute ideas and vote for their favourite project in each area. The leads for each area gave an overview of what Greener Hassocks & Ditchling have done so far and hopes and ideas for the future.

Biodiversity and Water

- Flooding: the area next to 41 Downs View could be used as emergency water storage
- Promote water saving measures
- Water testing in villages - Great Big UK Waterblitz April + September 2026
- Hassocks Nature Map and Nature Trail - community garden, significant trees, meadows, woodland, birds etc
- Create a nature reserve/country park at the old golf course off London Road
- Creating and maintaining a wildlife garden and wildlife corridors
- Create and install bat boxes
- Swift boxes
- Pulling up Himalayan Balsam patches
- Try and enhance No Mow May and Let it Bloom June - speak to council, outreach to people by verges to 'adopt'
- Find out why the rowan trees are dying
- Link up with Ditchling allotments for seed swap/seedlings
- Plant swap in spring on the street. Bring your plants to the kerb
- Edible Map of the villages
- Veg/fruit exchange
- Connect with Downlands Gardening Club

Most popular project: Swift boxes

Community

- Library of Things
- Lego library
- Household refills
- Recycle info guide on greener website
- Terracycle, improving local recycling
- Intergenerational events
- Children eco-education on flour at Oldlands Mill
- Climate cafe

Most popular project: Household refills

Energy

- The bigger picture countrywide

- Thermal imaging camera; walk around Hassocks with thermal imaging camera on a cold day
- Open Houses
- Visit a heat pump
- Good advice on retrofits for house types for specific area
- Insulation advice - setting the thermostat, understanding smartmeter, hand-holding buddy, energy defriending
- Energy advisors at Ditchling coffee morning (WI)
- Advice for historic/listed buildings, buildings in a conservation area

Most popular project: Energy advice

Transport

- 20mph in village centres
- 30mph on Keymer-Ditchling Road
- More cycle parking
 - 1 cycle park in front of Sainsburys
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- Safe cycle route to Downs via Clayton Hill or other
 - Safe route for cyclists to Ditchling Beacon - time of day when road is one way?
 - Signage for Ditchling Beacon at top and bottom - 'share the road', 'warning - cyclists', 'don't overtake on corners'
 - Safe route to Hurstpierpoint
 - Map and promote cycle routes e.g. to Burgess Hill and identify where improvements could be made
 - Safe cycle routes to Brighton; cycle path beside A273 nursery to Jack and Jill pub
- Check progress on cycle link to Burgess Hill from new development
- Resurrect cycling club running out of Proper Cafe
- Combatting culture war cyclists vs motors
- Publish cycle routes
- School streets (Dale Avenue and Chancellors Park) closed to through traffic at pick up and drop off
- 'Bike Bus' to school
- More dropped kerbs and safe crossings for wheelchairs and buggies
- Electric car share e.g. on old garage site
- Increase width of pavements to make walking around with friends more enjoyable e.g. sacrifice a little of the grass verges

Most popular project: 20mph in village centres

Greener Hassocks & Ditchling Statement of Funds at 31 July 2025

CURRENT FUNDS

£

Balance brought forward on 1st August 2024	3,821.19
Surplus/deficit for the year (see page 2)	48.40
Balance carried forward at 31st July 2025	<u>3,869.59</u>

Represented by

Petty cash	622.31
Cooperative Bank Community Directplus account	<u>3,247.28</u>
	<u>3,869.59</u>

Breakdown of funds at 31 July 2025

Ditchling Orchard Fund
Repair Café
Floods & SUDS
HKD Transition / Greener Hassocks & Ditchling

Funds at 31 July 2025
328.60
2,307.56
78.00
1,155.43
<u>3,869.59</u>

Funds at 31 July 2024
-49.71
2,301.06
78.00
1,491.84
<u>3,821.19</u>

Prepared by.....

John Willis - Treasurer, Greener Hassocks & Ditchling



31st October 2025

Greener Hassocks & Ditchling Receipts and payments account for the year ended 31 July 2025

	31-Jul-2025	31-Jul-2024
Receipts	£	£
Donations (Note 1)	1,188.53	17.92
Events (incl Party at the Patch)	519.04	0.00
Grants from Transition Network (£400 + £500)	0.00	900.00
Grant from Hassocks Paish Council	0.00	800.00
Ditchling Village Orchard donations (mostly Apple Day)	2,492.54	2,138.96
Repair Café donations	1,048.74	1,440.09

Note 1: Donations largely due to Andy Hansen's fund raising, together with £245 cash from GHD events last year (not previously included in the accounts).

Total receipts	<u>5,248.85</u>	<u>5,296.97</u>
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	31-Jul-2025	31-Jul-2024
Payments	£	£
Venue Hire	110.00	65.00
Events	291.45	12.00
Refreshments	58.00	0.00
Printing & misc	16.00	61.10
Charity insurance (see note *)	133.67	66.16
Extra insurance cover for cycling events	99.00	0.00
Web hosting	129.60	119.99
New website - consultancy fee	758.00	0.00
Ditchling Village Orchard - misc** & Apple Day (bar, etc)	1,732.87	902.11
Ditchling Village Orchard - rainwater harvesting system	0.00	409.00
Orchard Group donation to Ditchling School FPTA	0.00	1,800.00
Orchard Group donation - purchase of Keymer Road field	400.00	0.00
Repair Café - room hire & running expenses ***	1,060.89	809.25
Library of Things (equipment purchases)	410.97	0.00
* Charity insurance split 20%/50%/30% (was 10%/50%/40% last year) with Ditchling Orchard & Repair Café (ie £113.67 / £334.17 / £200.50) ** Includes insurance for orchard and Apple Day, also scythe and new benches for orchard *** Includes insurance for Repair Cafe		
Total payments	5,200.45	4,244.61
Surplus/deficit for year	48.40	1,052.36