

JULY 2011

Issue 2

Friends of Ditchling Newsletter

Managing Ditchling Village Green and Barn

What have we been up to?



Registered Charity
Company Limited
by Guarantee No:
5724504

Apart from ensuring that the Green is kept neat and tidy over the winter, and having a few private hires of the Barn, we have continued to concentrate on our plans for the future for both the Green and the Barn

We are very aware of our responsibilities as Trustees, and our most crucial duty, which is to

“preserve” the Green and the Barn for the Village.

Plans for the Green

The issue that has caught the most attention recently has been our application for planning approval of the work that we would like to do on the Green. Although these plans were explained at our AGM last April, the application has received some protests, which we believe are due to misunderstandings. Some people have apparently concluded that we are going to allow car parking on the Green. Nothing could be further from the truth.

WE HAVE NEVER PERMITTED CAR PARKING ON THE GREEN AND WE WILL NEVER DO SO IN THE FUTURE.

If vehicles are parked then the hirers are responsible and we can and will fine them.

As a matter of interest when considering our plans we thought about including perhaps two disabled parking spaces just inside the gate but concluded that even that should not be permitted.

Maintenance and Durability

Vehicles are allowed on to the Green so that hirers can deliver and collect equipment, provisions etc for functions either in the Barn or on the Green, or both. Hirers are categorically told that vehicles may

not remain on the Green. Inevitably these vehicles can and do cause damage, particularly in bad weather. Therefore our idea is to resurface the path and widen it just enough so that vehicles have no reason to go on to the grass. An alternative was to put a reinforced grass track straight across from the Barn to the gate but we find this unacceptable.

The reinforced grass is designed to withstand vehicle movements but not to be visually obtrusive and crucially to retain the character of the Green.

The proposed new wider path will be “gravel dressed” and have a gravel finish, but this will be subject to agreement with the Planning Authority. It will be bound and durable but must also be in keeping with the character of the Green and the local area.

Another part of the plans is to alter the paved area in front of the Barn (west side). The surface is uneven and is beginning to break up, and it falls towards the building, which causes water damage. The plan allows for a larger rectangular area falling away from the building. In addition the thresholds will require attention so as to facilitate improved wheelchair and disabled access.

Plans for the Green (continued)

Safety

We believe that the present footpath from the gate to the steps up to the churchyard is not particularly safe to walk on, particularly for the elderly and for small children. The proposed change should improve this situation.

As stated above we are also concerned with providing disabled access to the Barn.

Enhancement

We have always been concerned that our plans should enhance the Green, in addition to the advantages described above. Four of the trustees live within a few yards of the Green and pass it several times a day, which is a pertinent reminder of our responsibility and our clear intention to retain the Green and its environment.

Barn Heating Project

We have been progressing with our ideas for providing heating for the Barn. We have taken professional advice and have recognised that there is little point in putting in a form of heating without creating good insulation, particularly with regard to the ceiling, the doors and the windows. Again we are bound by the principles of preservation, enhancement, maintenance and durability, and safety. New doors

and windows will be necessary and great care (and permission) will be needed to ensure that the outside aspect of the Barn complies with our responsibilities as Trustees.

The total cost of all our projects are not yet quantified, but will be considerable. Local contractors and suppliers will be used wherever possible and Grants will be applied for.

About Us

The Friends of Ditchling charity was founded in 1964 in order to acquire what is now Ditchling Village Green. The Green was a farmyard at that time and in danger of being turned into a small housing estate. The founder members of the Friends of Ditchling bought the farmyard and converted it into a village green for the enjoyment of local people and others visiting Ditchling. Two of the original farm buildings remain. The Cart Lodge, on the north side of the Green, near Ditchling Museum, has never been used for anything except storage of equipment in the last 40 years. It is a very fine example of Sussex vernacular farmyard architecture. The brick-built Barn, adjoining West Street, has been used for various types of social events over the years. However, its use was always limited by a lack of facilities in the building. The Barn now has two

toilets and the management committee of the charity is currently investigating possibilities for installing heating and ensuring energy conservation through some form of insulation. That would mean that the Barn could also be used in winter months. The Green itself is hired out to residents of Ditchling in the summer months for wedding receptions. These are a useful source of income for the day-to-day running costs of Ditchling Village Green. We are also beginning to build up the membership of the Friends of Ditchling, and have incorporated the charity as a "company limited by guarantee (5724504)". This will allow members of the Friends to take an active role in the work of the charity. For further information on joining the Friends of Ditchling, please email fod@ditchlingvillage.co.uk

To book the Barn or
Green

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E-MAIL:
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WEBSITE:
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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

AGM

Date to be
confirmed

MEXICAN EVENING
Saturday 23rd July
2011

A GREAT WAY TO
MEET PEOPLE
email or phone to register
your interest

Trustees

Peter Earl, John
Hinze, Roy
Burman, Colin
Marshall, Jo
Earl and Julie
Wakerell