

CATSFIELD PARISH NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026



Dear Parishioners,

HAPPY NEW YEAR!! We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and Happy New Year from Catsfield Parish Council. We are looking forward to a new year for our upcoming projects, liaising with local government on devolution and receiving your views on the upcoming Parish Priority Statement questionnaire [further information can be found on this below].

If you would like to contact the Parish Council, the email addresses are listed below.

Vicki Rutt – Clerk	clerk@catsfield-pc.gov.uk
Cllr Keith Robertson - Chair	cllr.robertson@catsfield-pc.gov.uk
Cllr Des Christian – Vice Chair	cllr.christian@catsfield-pc.gov.uk
Cllr Sarah Jacques	cllr.jacques@catsfield-pc.gov.uk
Cllr Sharon Harris	cllr.harris@catsfield-pc.gov.uk
Cllr Diane Wilson	cllr.wilson@catsfield-pc.gov.uk

If you would like to see something specific, or have a good news story to share with the village, this newsletter will be published quarterly so please send any information to the Clerk via clerk@catsfield-pc.gov.uk

PARISH PRIORITY STATEMENT

What is a Parish Priority Statement and how can it benefit Catsfield?

A Parish Priority Statement (PPS) is a statutory document (from 2023) which outlines in broad terms what Catsfield considers to be the priorities for development in the Parish for the next 15 years. This must be taken into consideration by Rother District Council (RDC) in their preparation of the Local Plan (consultation on that begins in January 2026).

There have been no other PPS's created in Rother to date. Catsfield Parish Council are working with RDC to produce the first in Rother.

In making the PPS, unlike Neighbourhood Plans (NP), we are not required to submit detailed evidence to support the PPS. This means it can be produced quickly (within 6 months) and at minimal costs to Catsfield. A PPS does not carry the same statutory weight or impact as a NP, but it does give us the opportunity to state our views which must by statute be taken into consideration by RDC.

We now have the opportunity to state what we consider to be important and terms of the type and locations of housing development, but we don't have a lot of time to do that.

The process of producing a PPS for Catsfield requires us to think about our priorities for the future and to define our values and outlooks. The PPS can be aligned with the Parish Councils Strategic plan for Catsfield to provide a framework for future decision making by the Parish Council and for the deployment of resources – both time and money.

Before we can submit and PPS, we must consult with residents to establish their views, consolidate those views and then consult on a draft PPS before submitting a final version to RDC, before the RDC Local Plan is completed in late 2026.

How will we produce a Parish Priority Statement for Catsfield?

Stage 1. Jan 2026-Feb 2026

Publish the Parish Council's strategic aims for Catsfield. This does not address housing development because that is not within our remit as a Parish Council. (RDC has the authority on housing). Issue a survey/questionnaire to receive residents' views on any subject that they wish to comment on to include the Parish Council's draft strategic plan and their views on housing development in the Parish. Analyse the survey responses.

Stage 2. Produce and consult on a draft Parish Priority Statement. March-April 2026.

This will be published via a further survey, the Parish Council's website, social media, Email. Public meetings will be held to review the draft Statement. Responses will be collated and a final version of the Parish Priority Statement will be produced and sent to Rother District Council by June 2026. RDC will then be legally required to consider the Parish Statement when producing the RDC Local Plan.

How will the Parish Priority Statement be Used?

Defining the Community priorities and development priorities of the Parish will enable the Parish Council to decide what objectives to work on in the Parish and inform our responses to local planning applications, applications for grant funding, responding to consultations and lobbying local bodies such as the District and County Council, or the soon to be new Unitary Authority for our part of East Sussex.

WE NEED YOUR HELP – PLEASE COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE

You can complete the questionnaire here: <https://forms.gle/AttHFtJZHm4t8vFi7>

Alternatively, the questionnaire can be downloaded from the PC website or social media and returned via email to the Clerk or through the PC postbox on the Village Hall.

Paper copies are also available from the Village Store.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATES IN 2026

They are held in Hermon Cottage, Catsfield Village Hall at 19:00

- Thursday 15th January 2026
- Thursday 19th February 2026
- Thursday 19th March 2026
- Thursday 16th April 2026
- Thursday 7th May 2026 (*Parish Assembly in Main Hall*)
- Thursday 21st May 2026
- Thursday 18th June 2026
- Thursday 16th July 2026
- *No meetings held in August 2026*
- Thursday 17th September 2026
- Thursday 15th October 2026
- Thursday 19th November 2026
- *No meetings held in December 2026*

COMMUNITY STREET MEETING WITH PCSO SAMANTHA KEMP



Future dates to meet with our Community PCSO can be found below:

All meetings are held in the Catsfield Village car park

- 24th January 2026, 11am to 12:00pm
- 9th May 2026, 09:30am to 10:30am
- 1st August 2026, 09:30am to 10:30am
- 7th November 2026, 09:30am to 10:30am
- 6th February 2027, 11am to 12pm

Devolution and Local Government Re-organisation (LGR)

The UK Govt has decided that Sussex which has District, Borough and County Councils will re-organise to have Unitary Authorities. This means that the current District, Borough, and County Councils will cease to exist with all services then being provided by one Unitary for a given area. Several proposals for the new Unitary areas within Sussex have been submitted to the Government with a decision on these areas expected in Spring 2026.

Devolution

This means having a Mayoral authority such as exists already in London and Manchester with the Mayor responsible for strategic planning that crosses unitary borders, e.g. East Sussex, West Sussex, Brighton. The Mayor will work with representative of the Unitary authorities to agree on strategy, and to receive and distribute funds from central government.

The timetable for change

Elections for the new Mayors was to have been in May 2026. The Mayor would then begin to build the government strategies and structures to be ready for the new unitary authority elections in 2027 and formally to come into being in 2028. The Govt has now proposed that the elections for the County and District elections may also be postponed. At the time of writing it is unclear what the election dates may be. May 2027 perhaps. This would be contrary to democratic principles but possibly necessary practically for County Elections.

Borough Councils (Hastings and Eastbourne) will also cease to exist in 2028 (but effectively in 2027). They could choose to become Town Councils at that point, if not their residents would be represented directly by the unitary.

What does this mean for Catsfield, and other Parishes?

Legislation going through parliament does not clarify what the role of Parish Councils will be in the new structure, but it is likely to remain broadly the same, possibly with Parish Councils taking on the responsibility for more local services. We will continue to maintain the recreation ground, streetlights and other services in Catsfield, we could take on more on our own or in partnership with other Parishes (e.g. Library services). We won't know what this looks like until the Unitary is in place. The services currently provided by the District Councils (Local Housing, Planning, Bin emptying etc) will move to the new unitary, as will services provided by the County Council e.g. Highways. The new unitary Council will decide if all or some of the services that are non-statutory will continue.

Further information on this issue can be found in this document on the PC website:

<https://www.catsfieldpc.co.uk/Docs/Devolution%20and%20Local%20Government%20Reorganisation.pdf>

AN UPDATE FROM CATSFIELD CRICKET CLUB

As I sit gazing out over Hastings Old Town and wondering what damage Storm Goretti has done in the garden I wonder if we'll ever get back to playing cricket at The Field in the late Spring, given the dousing that the ground and square has received recently, not to mention the freezing start to January. Having said that, I always think that this time of year and it always seems to work itself out for the best.

The planned spreading of a lime organic fertiliser over the square along with another 'sprinkling' of 'Easy Green' never happened in late November as the materials were trapped in the Pavilion Boiler Room with our key not functioning. This seems to have been resolved, and treatment proceedings will recommence when the weather settles down and warms slightly when more selective fertiliser will be spread over the square.

The author met 'George the Mower' towards the end of 2025 and handed over the club's two mowers and one scarifier for their winter service. The equipment will, as always, be returned in March this year in tip top condition ready for the start of the season in early May.

The club's late winter pre-AGM committee meeting will be held at the White Hart on the evening of Monday 16. The AGM and Dinner will be held at the same venue on Saturday 7 March 2026. Committee member David Pratt has put out a 'save the date' to members and the committee hope for a good turnout for this special occasion in the club's calendar.

As far as the composition of the committee for the 2026 season is concerned, David Taylor is still keen to relinquish part of his joint role as Secretary/Treasurer, so the committee has advertised within the club for a replacement Secretary but no offers so far. The position of Safeguarding Officer has been taken up by club scorer Barbara Cook who is in the process of gaining the relevant accreditation to fill the role. She should be in position for the start of the season in early May.

The fixture list is fully prepared and has gone out in draft form to opposition clubs. Once this is finalised the posters can be prepared and placed at strategic points around the village as was the case before the 2025 season. There are still a few clubs who have yet to confirm but the club is optimistic that, with a bit of chasing, the list will be finalised for inclusion in the next piece in the Parish News.

You will remember the poster and leaflet campaign throughout the village by the club to try and recruit more players from the village to turn out for the club. This met with limited success and will be repeated over the coming months before the season starts. Limited success is better than no success at all and the club looks forward to welcoming more respondents at future matches over the 2026 season.

It would be wonderful to welcome more people from the village to play and enjoy a game of 'social' cricket on a Sunday afternoon. People of any ability, age and experience would be most welcome. Rest assured that you would not be expected to play week-in, week-out, but on a 'when available' basis. Very few people do play every week, and the club can usually cope with that, but it would be nice to have a bit of 'headroom' in that respect.

Match fees are modest, currently ten pounds for adults and five for juniors covers playing expenses, in play and tea-time refreshments. There is no annual subscription. It's never too late, so if you are interested, then please contact club vice chair, Keith Cook, via mobile 07916 717870 or email keith.cook@btinternet.com with a view to playing next year.

Keith Cook
Catsfield Cricket Club

Dark Skies – Why we need them

To support our strategic aim to 'improve the quality of life for those living and working in the parish' by promoting good ecology, we intend to seek accreditation from the International Dark Skies Association. Our understanding of ways in which light pollution is harmful to our health as well as nocturnal wildlife is increasing. Artificial light interferes with our circadian rhythms and reduces melatonin production which can affect us in a variety of adverse ways including sleep deprivation and reduced immunity. It disrupts the natural behaviours of animals, impacting on their migration, feeding and reproduction.

Did you know that moths pollinate flowers at a faster rate than day-flying insects? Worryingly, many moth species are now in serious decline in Britain.



By planting white flowers and allowing patches of scrub, including bramble and rough grass to develop, we will be supporting night pollinators. By turning off night lights or at least ensuring they are motion sensitive will also support these beautiful and vital insects.



Research published March 2023 by [Professor Fiona Mathews](#) Professor of Environmental Biology at University of Sussex and Dr Max Anderson, South-West Landscape Officer at the Butterfly Conservation.

Catsfield Social Club

If you are free on a Wednesday evening between 7pm and 10pm why not come and join a bunch of friendly people in the village hall for a variety of games. They include Wii, table tennis and board games - or just come and chat, with tea and biscuits thrown in and wine once a month, all for just £2.

If you are interested in receiving information from the Parish Council, please sign up to our communications list.

You can do this, via Vicki Rutt, Parish Clerk on 07483 306519 or clerk@catsfield-pc.gov.uk

Parish Council meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month, except in August and December, at 19:00 in Hermon's Cottage which is adjacent to the Village Hall.

Each meeting starts with public questions so please come along and have your say.