

NEWSLETTER

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PARISH

COUNCIL

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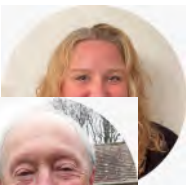
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Meet The Team—Your New Council

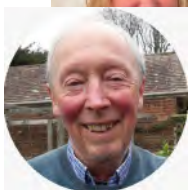
Following the elections at the beginning of May 2023, five new villagers have taken up their role as councillors for Bidborough Parish – with two existing councillors continuing.

The new cohort includes some familiar faces as well as some 'first timers'. The new councillors are:



Amanda Collins

Amanda is grew up in Bidborough and her son currently attends Bidborough Primary School. She is keen to focus on facilities for the younger members of our community and for greater liaison between the school and the council.



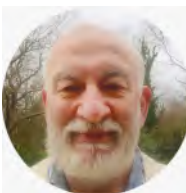
Pete Eames

Pete is an 'old hand' at dealing with council matters having previously served as a general councillor and as Chair. Having had a break from the fray, he has stood again with the hope that, going forward, council matters can be dealt with through 'good humour and friendship'.



Stephen Hinds

Stephen has lived in the village for 34 years after a long career in the City. He is very experienced with contracts, finance and management and hopes to be able to provide positive input into the ongoing running of the council.



David Marriott

An engineer by trade, David and his family have been part of the Bidborough community for over 30 years. As a new councillor, he hopes to utilise his expertise for the good of the community as a whole—with particular focus on governance and risk management.



Quentin Stevens

Quentin's knowledge of the village and council matters will be invaluable going forward. He has lived in Bidborough for over 30 years and has continued his involvement with the council on a co-opted basis for the last couple of years.

The continuing members of the council are:



Sandra Summers
Sandra



Karen Vidler
Karen has

Neil Harris

Neil is clerk to the council and is the glue that binds us together. Although not a resident, he has lived and breathed Bidborough for the last year, assisting in any way he can. Neil is the primary contact should you have any issues in the village and can be contacted on clerk@bidboroughpc.org.uk.

OUTGOING COUNCILLORS

Mr Shepherdson, Mr Hawksfield, Mrs Thorne and Mr Moore chose not to stand for re-election in the 2023 vote. These outgoing councillors have all served for a number of years and supported their specific passions with enthusiasm. The turbulence of the last 2 years and the fracture in the community (and council) caused by the pavilion planning application has been painful to witness but it is acknowledged that the outgoing councillors spent hours of energy and time serving within the community. For this, we give them our thanks.

Mr Johnson also chose not to restand for Council this year having served the community for over a decade. Over the last 2 years Mr Johnson sat through many council meetings supporting the minority councillors in the pursuit of transparency and common sense. He has now earned himself a well earned rest from local politics and we wish him all the best in his retirement.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Sadly, we are still looking for someone to take on this local initiative.

If you can spare a few hours per month to help co-ordinate the Neighbourhood Watch scheme for Bidborough please contact the Parish Clerk who will provide you with all the relevant information.

The Clerk, Neil, can be contacted on clerk@bidboroughpc.org.uk.



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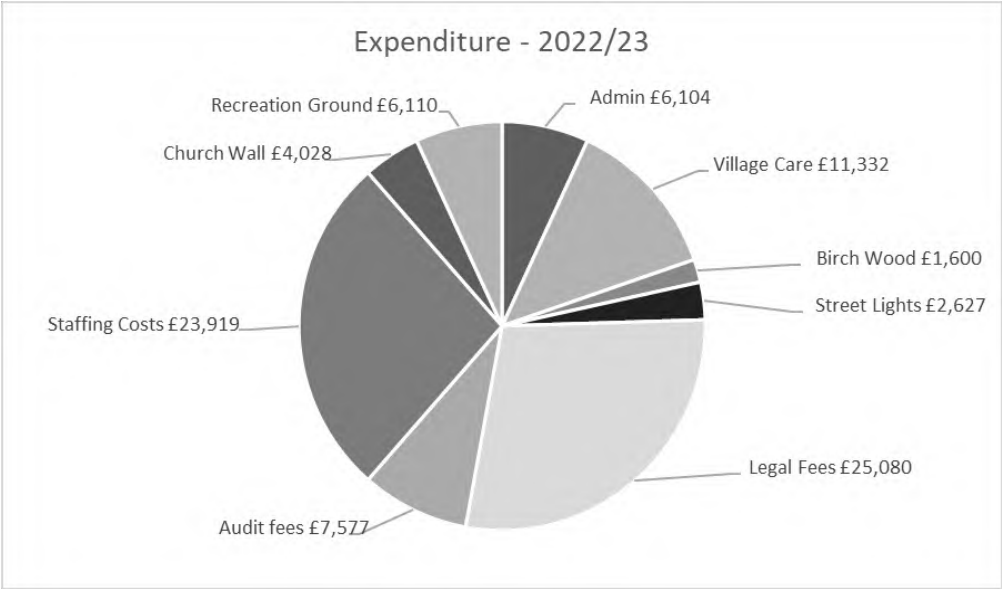
Parish Council

Accounts — 2022/2023

Income to the parish for the year to 31 March 2023 came to just over £72,061 mainly derived from our precept income and a small amount from newsletter advertising, allotment rents and burial fees.

Expenditure for the same period is given below.

Costs incurred total just over £88,380 but this includes VAT of around £7,680 which the Council can reclaim so the net expenditure last financial year was c£80,700.



This includes expected items relating to general maintenance and upkeep around the village; grass cutting, hedge trimming, repairs, tree work and so forth. The costs credited to the ANRG include the repairs to the entrance to the recreation ground.

Looking more closely at the audit, legal and staffing fees:

On the audit side this can be split between usual costs—which came to £1,360 and extraordinary costs of £6,217 which relate to challenges made to the 2021/22 Annual Governance and Audit Return (AGAR).

For the legal costs these are split between the employment dispute with the former clerk (£20,280) and advice on the Recreation Ground Trust (£4,800). There are further fees covering advice on the Trust but these fall into the current 2023/24 year.

On the staffing side £10,963 relates to amounts owed to the former clerk and to HMRC. With the balance covering locum clerk costs and employment expense for our current clerk (£12,956).

Outside inflationary increases, the Council decided not to increase the precept despite the significant additional costs incurred this year. Monies previously set aside for other village projects have been utilised to cover these and the Council will need to have a period of consolidation to build up reserves again over the next few years.

GOVERNANCE

The clerk has now undertaken his report on the recreation ground – and this can be viewed on the Parish Council website together with the legal advice received from the Council's solicitors.

The employment issue pursued by the retiring councillors in relation to the former clerk has also been settled.

The only outstanding issue in relation to this is in respect of expenses incurred by the former Chair, Mrs Thorne. The Council are awaiting further information from Mrs Thorne. On receipt of this a decision can then be made as to how to proceed.

MRS THORNE'S PERSONAL STATEMENT

In May, following an anonymous letter to Mrs Thorne's employer, Mrs Thorne felt compelled to issue a personal note regarding the stance she had taken as (former) Chair in relation to Mrs Divall and this was hand delivered to every house in the parish. This Council condemns the actions of the anonymous author as council matters have no bearing on Mrs Thorne's professional abilities – and we understand her anger and indignation in respect of this.

For this reason, the Council have not responded to the statement. However the Council's silence is *not* an endorsement of the statement as the Council believes it presents a skewed narrative on certain events and some factual inaccuracies.

NEW COUNCIL

The new Council have been kept busy since their first meeting on 17 May 2023. Detailed below are just some of the issues currently being dealt with:

Arthur Nicholson Recreation Ground Trust

Significant work has been done on this in the last 8 weeks, including amending the trust deed so that the Bowls Club are now part of the Committee of Management, reforming the Committee of Management and establishing various policies in relation to the operation of the Trust. Further details of this work are given later on in the magazine.

Summer Steps

This relates to the entrance to Birch Wood near the junction of St Lawrence Avenue and Darley Drive. These steps are steep and old and there are concerns regarding the safety of using this entrance into the wood. On assessing what work was needed to make this safer it was discovered that the land where the steps are situation is not owned by the Parish Council. As such, we are not able to make repairs without the consent of the landowner—and this is where it gets complicated.

It turns out that the local land owner died a number of years ago and none of her beneficiaries live locally. The Council is therefore trying to locate these individuals in the hope of getting the steps repaired.

In the meantime please, please take care if you use this entrance to the wood – using this access will be at your own risk.

Bonfires

The recent dry weather may present an ideal opportunity for you to burn your garden waste but please be aware that having a bonfire is a prosecutable statutory nuisance if it occurs regularly and prevents someone enjoying their garden or opening windows. In fact, a large fire that produces lots of smoke, or is left to burn for a long period, may also be considered a statutory nuisance, even if it is a one-off.

So remember, an ideal burning opportunity for you may also be the exact time when your neighbours are out in their gardens enjoying the sun and they won't welcome doing this under a cloud of smoke.

SPEEDWATCH

We currently have three volunteers who keep this important initiative going and are out and about come rain or sun.

Our thanks go to Lorraine Webb, John Lovett, and Matthew Wilson for all the work they do. It is very much appreciated.

On that note, the team are always looking for volunteers so if you have a few hours each month to support this initiative please contact the Clerk who will let you have all the necessary details.

[Legacy Issues](#)

[Skills Register](#)

[Bonfirews](#)

[Dog Waste and Bins](#)

NASTY RUMOURS

Sadly, we have recently heard of three nasty rumours circulating around the parish.

In respect of the former clerk, Mrs Divall:

1. It has been suggested that the area in Birch Wood recently fenced off by a householder was parish land and that Mrs Divall was involved in some jiggery pokery that enabled the householder to acquire the land.

This is complete rubbish. The land has never been the property of the Council and the current owner of the land has decided to fence it off (having previously only marked it with posts) - which they have every right to do.

2. That money has somehow 'gone missing' from Council funds. Mrs Divall was not, and never has been, a signatory to the Council's bank accounts and therefore it is impossible for her to have withdrawn any funds without the authority of the Council. Suggestions of money going missing are completely without foundation. REMEMBER that something oft repeated does NOT make it true!
3. A recent anonymous article in the Cricket Club fixtures booklet asks the question 'Has Major Nicholson's legacy been tainted?'

Over the last 2 years former councillors Doug Moore, David Shepherdson, Kerry Thorne and Les Hawksfield have vocally advocated the reformation of the Committee of Management (CoM) and for rules to be put in place so the roles and responsibilities for those running the trust are clear.

It is therefore surprising that there is the suggestion that these four councillors, in requesting these actions, have somehow been working against the interests of the cricket club.

As Doug and David are officers of the cricket club, the new council were very happy to support their desire for clarity on how the Recreation Trust is run. But why hide behind anonymity—is this perhaps because many of the points mentioned aren't true:

In the 1990s the Committee of Management was excluded from the decision making process :

Although technically the trustees did not need to consult with the CoM as they are only a delegated body – minutes survive from the 1990s that show dialogue between the Committee of Management, the fund raisers and the Council.

Certain individuals associated with the Parish council were seeking to nullifyspecific provisions of the Trust Deed and prevent those involved in the sports clubs from taking their rightful place as part of the decision making process :

In the early noughties, Doug Moore was part of the CoM who wrote to the council questioning whether they still had a role to play so the impetus for this came at the behest of the CoM not the Parish Council. A copy of this minute has been placed on the Council's website.

Alterations to the trust deed will be 'timely and expensive':

With support from the Charity Commission the new council have amended the trust deed and the Bowls Club is now an included sports body within the trust and will have an equal say with the cricket club, stoolball club and tennis club. This action was executed quickly and at very low cost.

Some in the village believe the recreation ground should be solely for 'walking dogs and for a play area for children':

Is this again someone believing if they say it often enough it becomes true? To our knowledge no past council, nor the present council, have ever caused the delay, deferment or cancellation of a cricket match, bowls match or stoolball match – and long may this continue.

So please be assured that Major Nicholson's legacy is very much alive and well and will continue to provided recreation facilities in perpetuity for the benefit of the *'Inhabitants of the Parish.....without distinction of age sex or of political or other opinions'*.

REVIEW OF THE ARTHUR NICHOLSON RECREATION GROUND

The long awaited report on the Recreation Ground (Rec) was presented to the village at a well attended meeting on 13th February.

The clerk presented his report and then the meetings was opened to the floor for questions.

By way of background, the Rec is registered as a charitable trust with the Parish Council acting as Trustees. The trust asset is the land that makes up the Rec and any income generated from it – and the beneficiaries of the trust are the villagers.

A summary of the report and recommendations is given below. A copy of the advice provided by the Council's solicitors can be found on the Parish Council website.

Future Management

The roles of the Parish Council and the Parish Council as Trustees of the Rec must be kept separate. This means clear guidelines must be drawn up separating the roles and responsibilities for each body – which should include a clear distinction between decision making for the two bodies.

Any Conflicts of Interest must be identified and a process put in place to ensure independent decision making for the charity when those conflicts arise.

A separate bank account should be set up for the trust.

Trustee meetings should be held separately from Parish Council meetings.

The Committee of Management detailed in the original gift of the land should be reinstated – comprising representatives of the sports clubs and parish council. Terms of reference for this body will be requested by the management committee which will then need to be approved by the trustees.

The trustees have the authority to deviate from the original terms of the trust but will require Charity Commission consent to do this.

Leases

The lease originally granted to the Bidborough Sports Association (BSA) in the 1980s is valid, as are the subsequent leases granted in 2002 and 2017. The BSA are responsible for the upkeep of the land leased to them. The leased land may be developed (for example the existing pavilion can be replaced) but this would require approval from the Parish Council as Trustees.

Church Land

The clerk has contacted the Diocese to confirm the church land boundary. Although no response had been received to date, this should not hold up any plans to replace/refurbish the play park.

Finance/ Future Play Park

The Rec does not produce an income but incurs expense for such things as grass cutting, tree work, fencing etc. These expenses will fall on the Parish Council.

For any capital projects, such as the play park development, the Council can either provide a grant to the Trustees or, with Trustee consent, pay for the items themselves.

In the open session a number of queries were raised:

Question: The Parish Council are only custodian trustees not managing trustees – they should leave the management of the Rec to the management committee.

NOTE: A custodian trustee holds the legal title only to a trust asset (i.e. the Rec) but has no say in the ongoing management of the ground which would fall to another body – in this case it is suggested that this is the Management Committee.

Response: The legal advice provided does not support this view. The trustees have certain management responsibilities and ultimate responsibility for the Rec lies with them. However, the Management Committee has an important role to play in day-to-day decision making.

Why is this important? The planning application made in 2020 was ostensibly a cricket club led initiative that bypassed the full Parish Council.

Retaining the ultimate management of the Rec in the trustee's hands should prevent any single sports club dictating the use of the Rec in the future.

Question: The Charity Commission told the Parish Council to reinstate the Management Committee. Why has this not been done?

Response: Correspondence received from the Charity Commission states '*The Commission can only provide some general advice as set out below*'. It then goes on to say that the Council should take its own legal advice to get the matter sorted out – which has now been done.

Furthermore, they state '*The charity should take advice on the different roles and responsibilities of the trustee and the Committee of Management so that all are clear on who makes what types of decision for the charity*'.

The delay in re-establishing the management committee is because there was some question as to whether the management committee is really needed as it had previously 'withered on the vine' and the committee itself requesting to be disbanded. In addition, the original trust deed does not reflect the current users of the Rec. This is something that will be addressed going forward to ensure all the sports clubs are represented.

Why is this important: The sports clubs should be represented in managing the Rec but they should reflect the current users. Now the position of the trustees has been established the terms of reference for the management committee can be defined – and any amendments to structure requested.

Question: On what basis are the later leases deemed valid?

Response: As there seemed to be a question mark over this, the clerk will get this reconfirmed with the solicitors.

Question: Can the actual legal report received from the solicitors be released to the parish?

Response: _Yes. This has now been published to the Parish Council's website.

Question: Can the Management Committee be wound up?

Response: There would have to be a very good case for this course of action and is likely to require Charity Commission consent. This is not a course of action that is being sought.

Question: Who can appoint /remove the trustees?

Response: The only body that can change the trusteeship is the Charity Commission. If a sports clubs can't put forward a representative member for the Management Committee the trustees decide how this vacancy is dealt with.

Question: A vote was taken last year at a Trustee meeting to refurbish the play park in its existing location. Does this still stand?

Response: All previous decisions made will have to be reviewed.

NEXT STEPS

Questions raised at the open session and feedback given to the clerk by councillors necessitates further input from the solicitors. Once this has been received the next step will be for the Parish Council as Trustees to meet and:

- agree their role and responsibilities, including identifying Conflicts of Interest
- agree the way to manage Conflicts of Interest
- assess how funding will work and the level of funding required for the coming year
- agree who will represent the council on the Management Committee
- decide what amendments, if any, should be made to the structure of the trust
- decide what amendments, if any, should be made to the Management Committee
- draft terms of reference for the Management Committee
- once the management committee has reformed, the sports clubs will be approached asking for nominations for representation

Following this, the management committee will meet and agree its terms of reference for approval by the trustees.

Parish Council

WHAT DO THE PARISH COUNCIL DO?

Detailed below is a list of the responsibilities of the parish council together with contact details for reporting, feedback etc.

Allotments	Parish Council
Benches and seating	Parish Council
Bins & recycling (& dog bins)	Tunbridge Wells Brough Council
Bus stops	Parish Council
Buses	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Churchyard	Parish Council
Church wall	Parish Council
Electoral Register	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Environmental Health	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Fly tipping & abandoned vehicles	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Flooding	Kent County Council
Footpaths	Kent County Council
Gritting & Sanding	Kent County Council
Highways (pot holes etc)	Kent County Council
Noise & nuisance	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Pavements	Kent County Council
Play park	Parish Council
Pollution	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Recreation Ground	Parish Council
Schools	Kent County Council
Street cleaning	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Street Lighting	Parish Council
Traffic & road safety	Kent County Council
Trees & hedges	Parish Council

Reproduced courtesy of The Tunbridge Wells Alliance

Bidborough Parish Council

Neil Harris, Parish Clerk – clerk@bidboroughpc.org.uk

Kerry Thorne, Chair, kerry@bidboroughpc.org.uk – 01892 529835

Tunbridge Wells borough Council

www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk – 01892 526121

Kent County Council

www.kent.gov.uk

For Highways – www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem

Community

Bidborough Village Hall

CHARITABLE INCORPORATED
ORGANISATION

We are very fortunate that the village hall continues to be well supported by clubs, societies, parties, TOTS and nursery who all contribute to the successful running of the hall.

We do however have opportunities during the day and evenings to hire out the small hall which is a self contained area with its own facilities.

Details on this hall can be found on our web site. (web address below)



Although we raised our hire charges in September, the hall Trustees are facing a dilemma later this year when our long term fixed price energy contract expires. We are hoping that energy prices will continue to fall and our exposure to higher prices will be minimal, but we cannot rule out having to further increase our hire charges, something we will try to avoid.

Hall hirers from outside the village often comment on what a superb position the hall has with its wonderful views and gardens front and rear.

However the gardens are in need of improvement as they are looking tired and overgrown in some areas.

We have therefore enlisted the expertise of local ladies at Lavender's Blue Gardens to get both gardens into better shape and to make them more manageable in the future.

Graham Parsons
Chairman & Trustee
Bidborough Village Hall- CIO
www.bidboroughvillagehall.com

For bookings please contact Deenah Wheeler on 01892 520967

Community

James McInroy **Kent County Councillor**

As your Kent County Council member for Tunbridge Wells West, I am involved in a variety of issues in Bidborough, mainly although not exclusively, involving Highways.

Road safety is an important issue and concerns were expressed to me by a number of residents about what could be done to reduce speeds.



The two main initiatives that I have managed to implement, with funding from my KCC Member Grant, are for the extension of the 30 mph speed limit along Penshurst Road and for the installation of the Bidborough 20 mph Speed Zone. Both of these initiatives took a few years to implement, following agreement with KCC and consultation with Bidborough residents.

There is a surprising amount of bureaucracy and cost involved with speed reduction schemes, in addition to the physical signage installed. KCC was of great assistance to me with these schemes, in addition to the schemes installed in Culverden and Rusthall. Kent Police are not often seen in Bidborough and I know that volunteers are always welcome to join the Kent Community Speedwatch team, which greatly assists in bringing awareness to safer driving.

Tree planting is a passion of mine, as trees are aesthetically pleasing and so beneficial to the environment. I have managed to install trees in several roads across my Division, most recently in St Lawrence Avenue. Sometimes I manage to obtain funding directly from KCC, as with St Lawrence Avenue. Otherwise, the funding has to result from a collaboration between residents and myself, with my KCC Grant funding 50% of the scheme and the balance being paid for by residents.

Inclement weather, especially heavy rain and sub-zero temperatures, does create issues on the highways. KCC receives thousands of requests each month to repair potholes, repair footways and clear drains.

The best way to have these problems dealt with quickly, along with many other faults and issues, is to report them on the KCC Highways system, which provides a job number for tracking purposes. You can use this link - <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem>.

I can be contacted by email or phone if you wish to discuss any of KCC's services with me.



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Community

Church of St Lawrence, Bidborough and Church of St Peter, Southborough

www.towerandsteeple.org

St Lawrence church is open every day for you to enjoy this sacred space where generations of Bidborough folk have found comfort, solace, strength and inspiration for over a thousand years.



We meet every Sunday at 11.00am and 6.30pm to worship God and have fellowship together, and you are always welcome to join us.

On the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays in the month we offer groups for children, which meet during our morning services in the school.

On the 3rd Sunday of the month we hold Forest Church at 3.00pm – a short time of worship in church either at St Lawrence or St Peter in Southborough, followed by activities for all ages outside in God's good Creation.

Our Tots&Co parent-toddler group meets every Friday morning during term-time in the village hall.

Having had major improvements made to the church in recent years, we hope to begin running a Community Café on some Monday mornings, starting this spring, here at the heart of our village.

Our parish includes St Peter's on Southborough Common, so our website takes its name from these two iconic buildings –

towerandsteeple.org You can find details of all that goes on at

towerandsteeple.org or simply point your smartphone camera at the QR symbol above, or contact our Rector, Stephen Hills on 01892 528081 or

towerandsteeple@gmail.com



Did you know...you are all welcome to join us anytime.

Community

St. Lawrence & St. Peter's Church CAMEO (Come And Meet Each Other)

Anne Hinds 01892 528372

When: June 16th

Where: Bidborough Village Hall

Time: From 12.30pm. Lunch served at 1.00pm

Cost: £6 for a two-course lunch including drinks and coffee.

All senior members of our community are welcome. Please contact Anne (telephone number given above) if you are interested in attending.



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Play Park Competition

The children at Bidborough School are very excited at the prospect of getting their play park back.

At the suggestion of parishioner Peter Reed, a competition was organised at the school and the children were asked for suggestions for what they would like in the new play park.

Over 40 entries were received and the Parish Council would like to thank all the children who entered for their imaginative, colourful and innovative designs. It certainly gave the Council food for thought! Mr Reed was asked if he would judge the competition and 6 winners were chosen (along with 6 Highly Commended entries) and presented with certificates– each winner also receiving a £10 book token kindly donated by Mr Reed.

The winning entries are given below.



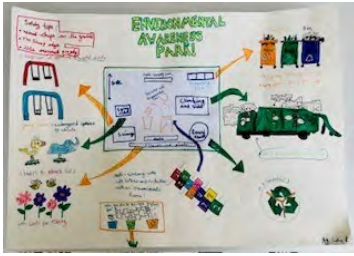
Thomas Edwards–Year 1
Fantastically imaginative and space themed – including black hole spinner, shooting star hammock and moon seesaw.



Charlotte Haylock -
Year 3
A beautifully crafted, well structured, thoughtful essay on the play park.



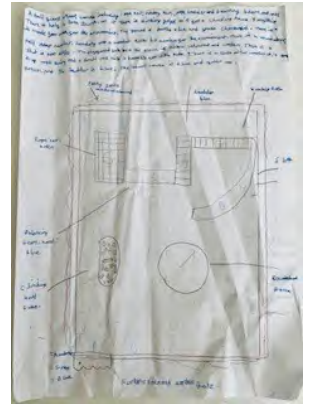
Zoya Bobowska – Year 1
A 3D model of all of Zoya's favourite play items. Very original and beautifully made.



Luke Rasmussen – Year 4
An eco-friendly design – we loved the detail here and in particular the dust cart climbing 'tower'



Leon Charles – Year 5
The monster play tower was the jewel in this imaginative design



Ellie Palin – Year 5
A detailed and environmentally friendly design Sympathetic to its location – including materials to use and safety features

HIGHLY COMMENDED



Henry Meaden
 Year 1



Charlotte Meaden
 Year 1



Aidan Marshall
 & Jacob Ingle
 Year 5



Joy Boxtel
 Year 1



Alice Thompson
 & Ivy Clarke
 Year 4



Freya Sharp
 & Eva Davies
 Year 5

Architectural Office

Michael Dillon



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For enquiries contact:

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Community—The Bidborough Coronation Seat

By Ray Skinner— *skinhicks@tiscali.co.uk*

The Coronation Seat on Bidborough Ridge, originally dedicated in June 1953, has been repaired several times during the last 70 years.

The seat facing north over the river valley rests on four brick supports (after vandals broke the original seat), it is still serviceable, the wood to be cleaned and treated with wood preservative.

The wood on the seat facing south needs repair, but is firmly fixed on metal supports.

The original idea of removal, and replacement with an information board standing on its own, is not such a good idea, again being open to potential vandalism. It would also be difficult to make it not look out of place, inside a brick 'box'.

An information board could replace the top rails, firmly fixed to the metal supports, and is the solution agreed by the Parish Council.

The top of the board (covered in replaceable perspex) can be inscribed:

1953 CORONATION SEAT 2023

Then underneath, blue, green and brown reproducing the view, and then several panels for information with approximate pointers, to – it is suggested:

- Chartwell, Leigh church (the likely original river crossing when Tonbridge was just a marsh)
- Ightam / Lullingstone Roman villa (the first significant settlement?)
- The red lights seen at night on the top of Crystal Palace and Wrotham masts



- Maybe something about the geology (the sandstone High Weald, looking down on the low weald/ river valley)
- Maybe also, industrial history (the cutting of the Straight Mile to get boats/barges up to Penshurst, before the first railway to Tonbridge coming in from Penshurst and the west, before the tunnel was constructed north to Sevenoaks, etc...)

Also on the information board I suggest, one of those clever QR codes (like a barcode, but a square full of dots, that can be read from most phones) and a website address, that leads to a 2/3 minute sound-track that can be listened to on a phone, describing what can be seen. Maybe even, for

walkers stopping off for the view at Alf's Corner and the Village Hall, and from the Church-yard, more Listening points?



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Whether for residents or visitors, the rocky outcrop of Bidborough offers a unique vantage point half-way between capital city and the south coast, to stop and think, with so many historical and geographical perspectives.

Let's make the most of our location.

Please send any further ideas about either the information board or my suggested sound-tracks, to Ray Skinner, at skinhicks@tiscali.co.uk, putting Coronation seat in the subject line.

Community

Time To Get Walking Again!

With Summer almost here it's time to get out to walk in the beautiful English countryside, but where to find new and interesting walks?

Walking in Kent <https://www.walkinginengland.co.uk/kent> has loads of walks to download and print, free, it also has books of walks, details of all the walking groups in the county and much more.

Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group all the information is there in one place.

John Harris (who maintains the website) said 'There is so much walking information on the web but it is difficult to find.

Walking in Kent (part of the Walking in England website) has brought it together in one place so whether you are walking from home, or away on holiday, you will be able to find a walk suitable for you'.

With walks from half a mile to twelve miles plus long, and a note of suitability for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone can find a walk to enjoy.

So home or away, check out the websites and get walking!

www.walkinginengland.co.uk

john@walkinginengland.co.uk

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Birchwood Association

By Martin Derham, Chair

This is the dead season for much of nature whilst it rests during the colder weather. It is also the best time to work in the woods, and we have now completed two work parties over the winter period. Many thanks to the volunteers who helped with these.



Over the winter we have improved the drainage on the path to the lake from the Birchwood Avenue entrance, and hopefully this will mean less erosion during heavy storms, but this is a perpetual task that needs attending to. We have also coppiced some of the oldest hazel stools, and cleared an ancient sweet chestnut to allow it better growing conditions.

In December we lost Peter Riley. He had just stood down as Hon. Secretary, and passed away in late December. Peter has been a cornerstone of the Association, on the committee and acting as Secretary for an amazing 44 years. Besides so much administrative work he played a major part in the recovery from the Great Storm of 1987, and had expert knowledge and skills that contributed so greatly to the conservation of the Birch Wood and lake. He will be missed

At the last committee meeting we have elected new officers, with Rod Hillen becoming Hon. Secretary and Ros Smith as Hon. Treasurer, and I look forward to their contribution to the future of the wood and Association.

All events and news is posted on the Association Facebook page, on the Bidborough Community page, and in the Event Planners monthly Village News. The Facebook page can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1628802727371113> or simply search on Birch Wood Association. Please post any Birch Wood observations, photos or comments.

Community

Nature Notes - Late Spring 2023

Winter is the time of hibernation. Whilst this primarily affects mammals it is also a feature of some reptiles and invertebrates. During this time of adverse weather and poor food supplies the metabolic rate slows and in mammals is characterized by low body temperatures, and heart and breathing rates.

Among the creatures hibernating peacefully in the Birch Wood we hope are many bats. The wood offers good roost potential in veteran trees, and the species that are known to occur locally, and therefore most likely to be in the wood, are Bechstein's, noctule, brown long eared and soprano pipistrelle.

Contrary to myth bats are not blind. Some don't echolocate at all, and some can see ultraviolet light.

British bats don't drink blood (only 3 vampire species in Latin America), cannot get tangled in your hair, and don't all carry rabies. Only 0.1% of free flying bats do. In fact very many residents will never notice bats in the vicinity.

All bats and bat roosts are legally protected, and contravening the regulations is a criminal offence. The reason is that bats are an endangered species. In the UK, bat populations have declined considerably over the last century.

Bats are still under threat from building and development work that affects roosts, loss of habitat, the severing of commuting routes by roads and threats in the home including cat attacks, flypaper and some chemical treatments of building materials.



All the exterior lighting we have on our houses is damaging to the availability of habitat for bats. It is also helpful to keep cats inside for half an hour before dark, until an hour afterwards since this is the high risk time for cat attack.

Bats are Chiroptera which means "hand wing" and their wings actually include a thumb and 4 fingers just like a human hand. The wings are the forelimbs.



The smallest bat in the world is the Kitt's Hog Nosed which weighs only about 2g with a wingspan up to 13cm. They have tiny sharp teeth that can bite through fruit and skin, very long tongues and one way valves in the arteries so they can hang upside down without the blood rushing to their heads.

The Noctule is the UK's largest at blackbird size and will fly early in the evening and in the open. The pipistrelles are widespread. Bechstein's are much rarer with only about 21000 in the whole UK, and they will most likely stay high in the canopy. The brown long eared bat also feeds above the wood, but will roost in undisturbed roof space in buildings, holes and crevices in trees, and in bat boxes.

You can install bat boxes on your house or trees and they are simply made with untreated wood. Details are widely available on the Bat Conservation Trust and RSPB websites.

<https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/bat-boxes>

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/nature-on-your-doorstep/garden-activities/build-a-bat-box/>

Community

Food Bank

The Nourish Community Foodbank currently require the items detailed below.

Kiran and Reshma operate a collection point for this very worthwhile charity and all donations are welcome. As at May 2023, the following items are desperately needed:

Chilli sauce / Sweet & Sour sauce

Rice

Cereal (500g boxes or smaller)

Coffee

Toothpaste

Cup-a-soup

Curry sauce

Tinned potatoes

Pasta sauce

Spaghetti hoops

Baked Beans

Meat meals

Tinned pies

Tinned soup

Fish

Small salt & pepper

By buying items for the Food Bank at the shop you are supporting our



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Friends of Bidborough Play Park

Katie Haylock & Sarah Carrick
friendsofbidborough@gmail.com

Friends of Bidborough ended 2022 on a high! In November we held a successful wine tasting event which sold 100 tickets in just a few days! It was a fabulous evening and we were delighted to announce on the night that we had received a grant from the National Lottery. A huge thank you to everyone who attended, who helped before and on the evening and in particular, Dominic and Deborah Cole who were instrumental in the organisation. A special thank you should also go to Flying Fish Properties who kindly sponsored the event.



Kick starting the new year, Karen Vidler organised a quiz evening to raise money for the new play park. It was the perfect start to the year and great to see so many from the village. A huge thank you to everyone who was involved on the night and to the fabulous quiz master, Clare Markey. With the National Lottery grant, Friends of Bidborough have now

raised a tremendous **£40,753.00!**

We have one more village event planned for September – we are just brainstorming the final plans for this so watch out for announcements over the next few weeks.

However, not surprisingly, prices have risen since we originally received quotations for the equipment and installation in 2020 and our final fundraising push begins. If you would love to see the new play park installed as soon as possible, please consider donating to our fundraising page below:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-refurbish-bidboroughs-play-park>



Clubs & Societies

Bidborough Bowls Club

Alan Robinson
01892 542852

We reopened our pavilion and green on Monday 24 April and our first roll-up was on Wednesday, 26 April. The green has come through the winter in very good condition.

Roll-up sessions continue throughout the season on Mondays at 5pm offering both coaching sessions for beginners and an Umbrella league competition where points are awarded both for winning and for regular attendance. These Monday evening sessions are a good place for newcomers to start. Just come along if you'd like to try the game. We also plan an open day on Bank Holiday Monday, 29 May, a further opportunity for newcomers to bowl.

Our programme of friendly matches against local clubs run from April to mid September. Match days are weekend afternoons and Wednesday afternoons or evenings.

We also compete in the Tunbridge Wells mixed triples league, which runs from May to August on Thursday evenings. After our successful season in 2022, this year we move up to Division 2.

We run club singles and pairs competitions through the season and finals day this year is Saturday 26 August.

On Saturday 13 May we will be holding our Plants Sale with Cakes and Goodies Stall in the usual place outside the Kentish Hare, 9am start.



*For more
information, please
contact Alan
Robinson on the
number above.*

Badminton Club

Mike Harris – 07595 838051

m.harris.276@btinternet.com

CALLING ALL ASPIRING BADMINTON PLAYERS - ADULTS & JUNIORS

Bidborough Badminton Club is a friendly and sociable village Club with a lit bit of competitive spirit for those who want it. Some (but not much) previous experience is required.

We meet every Wednesday or Thursday evening from 8 pm in the Village Hall. The club membership is currently healthy but we always have space available for new members, especially juniors following the recent "off to university" exit.

So if you child/grandchild is 11+ and would like to try a new sport or gain skill and experience if they play already then do get in touch. The junior section is professionally coached on Wednesdays from 6 pm.

All fees are very reasonable. Please do come along and give us a try. Contact Mike for more information



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I am Chris Morgan, an experienced bridge teacher and player. Many people in the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells area have enjoyed my classes, and private teaching, over the last ten years. I aim to create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere, and enable people to enjoy themselves as well as learn more about this great game.

For more details, please contact me on:

07817 246129 or chris.morganmh@gmail.com

Clubs & Societies

Bidborough Cricket Club

We are encouraged by recent announcements regarding the Arthur Nicholson Recreation Ground. We always knew that the very generous gift by Major Nicholson had the playing of cricket at the heart of his wishes and we look forward to the re-establishment of the Management Committee. Both the play area and the pavilion need to move forward and we are ready to engage in meaningful discussions so that the aims of all the parties can be satisfied but it certainly helps that we now know the correct legal basis for such discussions.

So the prospects for 2023 are exciting - we are not certain that we can order a repeat of 2022 where we enjoyed 18 rain free Saturdays - but we are hopeful !

Doug Moore



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BIDBOROUGH

Clubs & Societies

Bidborough Dramatic Society

Liz Pretty

lizpretty@uwclub.net / 07881294371

Bidborough Dramatic Society's Spring production this year is the original stage version of **"STEEL MAGNOLIAS" by Robert Harling.**

There are no men in this version of the well-known and much-loved film of the same title – just six women of Chinquapin Parish, Louisiana, who meet regularly at the local hairdressing and Beauty Salon for pampering and gossip; but over a three year passage of time, we see a deep strength and purposefulness emerge when sadness comes to the Parish which affects them all deeply.

Whilst there is sadness, there is some wonderful comedy interacted between the six ladies which audiences will find rewarding.

Performances will take place from Thursday 20th April to Saturday 23rd April inclusive at Bidborough Village Hall. Curtain up at 7.30 and tickets will be £12.00 (£9.00 for full members of the Society).

Details of booking options will be available shortly on the website – www.bidboroughdrama.org or call Liz on the number given above.

Bidborough Hospice in the Weald Friends Group

Marilyn 01892 536217

Carole 01892 542233

Bidborough Hospice in the weald Friends Group have four functions planned for the coming year.

Sunday 25th June: Open Gardens . All money raised to The Hospice.

Sunday 2nd July: NGS Open gardens. Money raised from the plant sales and refreshments to The Hospice.

Tuesday 22nd August: Bridge and afternoon tea.

Saturday 11th November: Christmas Fayre at Bidborough Village Hall.

All welcome. Please contact Carole for any further details (telephone number given above).

Bidborough Gardening Association

Glenys McDonald

New Members: Please contact kelvinpaterson@gmail.com

www.bidboroughgardening.co.uk

As we move forward to the Spring, Bidborough Gardening Association is looking forward to:

The Spring Show

1st April, 2.30 at the Village Hall

All are welcome - afternoon teas, raffles and a wonderful display of flowers, floral arrangements, fruit and vegetables, home craft and children's entries.

BGA has a full diary of events which can be viewed on the website (given above).

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Clubs & Societies

Bidborough Stoolball Club

Kerry Thorne

kerrythorne@ymail.com

"Stoolball is an ancient English game which has been played for over 500 years. It is the origin of baseball and perhaps cricket too, and is mentioned in Shakespeare's 'The Two Noble Kinsmen'.

Two teams compete to score the most runs. There are two wickets standing at shoulder height, about 14 metres apart.

The bats are willow, with a round face and a long, sprung handle. The ball, small and hard, is bowled underarm towards one wicket. Just like cricket, batsmen score by hitting the ball into the field and running between the two wickets. They can also hit the ball beyond a boundary line to score 4 or 6. Batsmen can be bowled, caught or run-out, or even body-before-wicket."

Stoolball England

Bidborough stoolball club play in the West Kent league. The club has been in existence for ninety years and has provided a sporting diversion for many ladies and girls in the village. That is still very much the case today with a strong foundation of teenagers coming through, several of them daughters of the senior players.

Match nights are Monday and Wednesday and like cricket is played on a home and away basis, home being the Arthur Nicholson Recreation Ground and the furthest we travel is to Ashurst!

Unfortunately, over the last couple of years and in part due to COVID, several teams have disbanded or amalgamated. Bidborough however, has always managed very well most probably because we encourage our younger players to get involved and have a go.

The last few seasons have not really seen us challenging for the league but like most clubs this is due to transition. Injury and work commitments meant that we lost a couple of senior players, but as mentioned earlier we have a very good group of youngsters who are propping the club up!

Some weeks some of us felt like we were fighting for our place, that is however a good position to be in going forward.

One very constant in the stoolball club is our secretary and scorer, Jenny Keates.

I asked Jenny if she could think of a few items for this article and she began in 1972!



'Miss Dunlop was our chairman and Molly Faircloth retired as the scorer.

1981 saw fund raising for the new pavilion and a new boundary rope!

1991 saw Karen Bassett, Yolanda Tanzi and Emma Hickmott selected for Kent under 21's and Jenny celebrated her 20th season as captain.

2017 saw the passing of Eddie Keates who had been our umpire and sadly this year we also lost Bill Hickmott who had been an umpire for many years.'

The club has had much success over the last ten years including a continued presence in the Kent squads; Emma Hickmott (as captain) and Becky Steptowe and Yolanda Tanzi representing the seniors.

Vicky Thorne, Abi Stanton and Daisy Alexander representing the under 21's. Emma, Becky and Vicky have also played in the England stoolball set up - quite an achievement for a small village club.

We start our very informal training sessions at the end of March and matches begin in early May.

We always welcome new players of any age so if you like the idea why not come along to a practice session and give it a go!

For more information. please contact Kerry on the email given above.

Clubs & Societies

Bidborough Tennis Club

Dominic Cole
domfcole@outlook.com
Membership Secretary

Chris Hollyoak – *Chair*
c.hollyoak@btinternet.com

Last year's Platinum Jubilee celebration fete on 2 June was well attended by the majority of the Bidborough residents who visited the event at some point during the day. The Tennis Club ran a 'strawberries and cream' stall which was a huge success, raising £220 to go towards the new Children's play area.

In the summer we sadly said goodbye to our Welfare Officer, and minute taker, Robert Masters who has now moved out of the area to find pastures new in the Canterbury area. The Tennis Club Committee would like to thank Rob for his services and also welcome Richard Pullen, who has stepped up to take control of those duties.

The Tennis Court was thoroughly cleaned in the first week in October. Furthermore the trees, immediately to the right of the court, were given a 'haircut' in February [2023] as parts of the court were becoming a little slippery due to sap and foliage coming from the (previous) overhang. Hopefully, this recent cut has addressed the matter. As always, please contact a member of the Tennis Committee if you encounter any problems with the court.

This year's 'Junior Coaching' will take place in the week commencing Monday 31 July [2023], again with the coaching provided by Ian Chapman from the Indoor Centre.

After many years as Tennis Club Chairman, Rosalind Packer was deservedly made the first Honorary Vice Life President of the club for her services over the last 22 years.

Keep playing tennis everyone it is an excellent facility in a fabulous setting.



Bidborough Ladies

Anne Holford – 01892 520970

a.c.holford@gmail.com

We continue to meet on the 4th Friday of the month at 2.30pm in the Village Hall, the meetings are regularly attended by at least 30 ladies.

We normally have a speaker followed by a cuppa and a time to catch up and get to know people.

In the autumn we enjoyed some interesting talks about women keeping beautiful in WW2, Tonbridge Worthies (well known past and present residents of Tonbridge) and how sloe gin and chocolates are made which did involve some tasting!

Unfortunately our planned Christmas meal in December had to be cancelled due to the snow, which was disappointing but was rebooked for April.

The New Year began with a very interesting talk about Medical Detection Dogs and in February we learnt about reflexology from local resident Sophie Playford.

Over the next few months we are looking forward to hearing about Dickens in Kent, Victorian Street life and the story of the evacuation of Jews from Denmark.

We try to offer a wide range of topics and are always open to suggestions about speakers.

We are also planning, as requested by members, the occasional meeting without a speaker when ladies can enjoy a social time with tea and cake.

We would stress that meetings are open to all and there may well be topics that are of particular interest to husbands, partners, sons etc who are always very welcome.

If you would like any more information about our meetings please call Anne Holford on the number given above.

Clubs & Societies Directory

Badminton Club – Mike Harris
07595 838051 / m.harris.276@btinternet.com

Bidborough Cricket Club
enquiries@bidboroughcricketclub.org.uk

Bidborough Dramatic Society – Liz Pretty
lizpretty@uwclub.net

Bidborough Bowls Club – Alan Robinson
01892 542852

Bidborough Event Planners – Amanda Harris & Sarah Smith
bidboroughevents@gmail.com

Bidborough Gardening Association - Glenys McDonald
secretary@bidboroughgardening.co.uk
www.bidboroughgardening.co.uk

Bidborough Ladies – Anne Holford
a.c.holford@gmail.com / 01892 520970

Bidborough Brownies – Anne Musker – anne.musker@gmail.com
Bidborough Rainbows – Elizabeth Lash – elizabethlash@gmail.com

Bidborough Stoolball Club—Kerry Thorne
kerrythorne@ymail.com

Bidborough Tennis Club – Dominic Cole
domfcole@outlook.com

Birchwood Association – Martin Derham
www.facebook.com/groups/1628802727371113

Friends of Bidborough Play Park
Katie Haylock & Sarah Carrick
friendsofbidborough@gmail.com

St Lawrence & St Peter's CAMEO (Come And Meet Each Other)
Anne Hinds—01892 528372

St Lawrence Tots and Co - Amanda Harris
amandakateharris@btinternet.com / 01892 528797

VILLAGE DIARY

Held in the Village Hall:

Weekly

Mon		Brownies
Tues		Rainbows
Wed	5:00 – 7:30 pm	Junior Badminton
Wed & Thu	8:00 pm	Badminton
Fri	9:30 – 12:00 noon	Tots & Co (term time only)

Monthly

4th Fri	2.30 pm	Bidborough Ladies
3rd Fri	7.30 pm	Gardening Association
Last Mon	7:00 pm	Parish Council (Small Hall)

Newsletter

*This edition was put together by Cllr Karen Vidler and she apologies for any errors or omissions and formatting issues! The next edition – Autumn 2023- is likely to be distributed in October 2023. Anything you would like included (articles, letters, adverts), should be submitted to kar@bidboroughpc.org.uk by **30th September 2023**.*

ANDY NORMAN

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WHO'S WHO

CLLR AMANDA COLLINS

amanda@bidboroughpc.org.uk
Village Care
ANRG Management Committee
School Liaison

CLLR PETE EAMES

pete@bidboroughpc.org.uk
BSA
Birchwood

CLLR STEPHEN HINDS

stephen@bidboroughpc.org.uk
Finance
ANRG Management Committee
Allotments

CLLR DAVID MARRIOTT

davidm@bidboroughpc.org.uk
Vice Chair of Trustees
Finance
Risk Assessments

CLLR QUENTIN STEPHENS

quentin@bidboroughpc.org.uk
Cemetery/ Closed Churchyard
Allotments
Birchwood
Village Care
Village Hall Representative
Facebook

CLLR SANDRA SUMMERS

sandra@bidboroughpc.org.uk
07850 285348
Vice Chair
Chair of Trustees
20 is Plenty/ Highways
Website
Finance

CLLR KAREN VIDLER

karen@bidboroughpc.org.uk
07711 033857
Chair
BSA
Newsletter/Website
20 is Plenty / Highways
ANRG Management Committee

WHOLE COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

Governance
Charities
Insurance
Bidborough In Bloom

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL & COUNCIL CORRESPONDANCE

Neil Harris
clerk@bidboroughpc.org.uk

CO-OPTED

Martin Derham – Birchwood Association

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Harry Allen
07523 005178
Harry.Allen@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Paul Curry
Paul.Curry@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Matthew Sankey
Matthew.Sankey@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

VILLAGE HALL BOOKINGS

Deenah Wheeler
01892 520967



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