



NEWSLETTER

BIDBOROUGH

PARISH

COUNCIL

SPRING
2025





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WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Parish Council Newsletter.

As I write, the sun is pouring in through my window and, although cold, it brings with it the promise of warmer days ahead of us when we can enjoy the beautiful surroundings we are lucky enough to live in.

As usual there has been lots going on for the Council. Road safety continues to be an issue, with the gap in the hedge on Bidborough Ridge being a daily reminder of the perils of speeding in our village. Cllr Quentin Stevens continues to pursue this with Highways and others at Kent County Council, providing updates at Council meetings, but the wheels continue to turn very slowly. Parking for the school also continues to be a thorny issue – with vigilant parishioners reporting inconsiderately parked cars direct to the Council and on to the school for naming and shaming. The school have a defined parking policy and if selfish drivers continue to flout this we may have to look at other measures.

With the first anniversary of the installation of the play park looming, there is some minor clearing and cleaning work required on the site but it has been a joy to see so many children using the park in all weathers. We very much hope that the future refurbishment of the pavilion in the recreation ground will bring as much joy to the village.

Putting this newsletter together reminds me of all the people in our community that volunteer hours of their time for others; from Birch Wood volunteers to bowls players, crafters to chess fiends, church folk to Brownies – there is something for everyone in our lovely village. So thank you to all those who give us their energy and time to make Bidborough what it is.–and GET INVOLVED because without you the wonderful clubs, societies and community groups that we have will not survive. Wishing you all a wonderful summer.

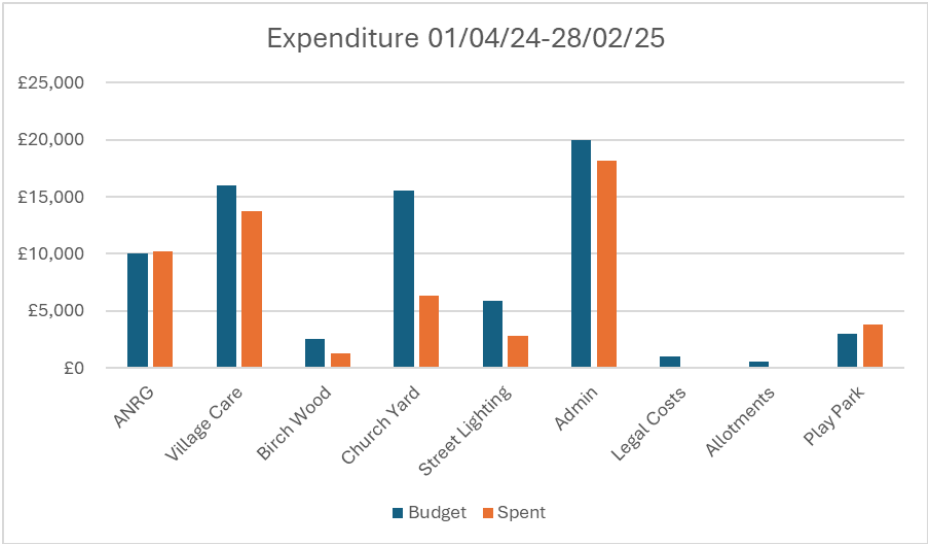
Karen Vidler, Chair, Bidborough Parish Council

Parish Council

Accounts — 2024/2025 to 28 February 2025

Income to the parish for 11 months of the financial year came to just under **£167,880**; £71,970 came from the precept, £33,598 from VAT refunds, £60,000 from Friends of Bidborough and the balance from interest earned and sundry items (newsletter advertising, allotment rents, burial fees etc).

Expenditure for the same period came to just over **£135,860** with the largest item being for Kompan, the play park equipment provider (a little over £93,800). Other expenditure is detailed below (excluding the play park cost). The graph shows the budget set for each expenditure area (on the left) and the current spending compared to budget.



Although it appears that there is a good surplus of c£32,000 in the accounts, there is planned work on both the churchyard and in Birch Wood this financial year which will bring us up to near our forecasted budget, with a small surplus of c£6K predicted by the end of the financial year.

We also have other items to fund. These include upgrading of the

LED traffic displays on Bidborough Ridge, further repairs to the church wall, remedial work to the two church lych gates and the replacement of the sports/community pavilion in the recreation ground.

Council Website—www.bidboroughpc.org.uk

Minutes for all Council meetings are available on the Council Website along with information on the workings of the Council, finances, policies and so forth. The website also now has a dedicated community area in order to promote the facilities and many clubs and societies that are based in the parish – and are always on the lookout for new members. Please take a look.

Neighbourhood Watch

Bidborough Parsh Council has been keen to resurrect a local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, the largest volunteer-led crime prevention charity in the country.

We are delighted that Cllr Dominic Cole has volunteered to restart the scheme for Bidborough. If you are interested in becoming a member of a Bidborough Neighbourhood Watch Scheme then please read on.



What is Neighbourhood Watch?

Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) is the largest voluntary crime prevention organisation in the country; Kent alone has over 4000 schemes. NHW has been successfully operating in Kent since 1991 and is a recognised and successful crime-fighting initiative.

NHW is a partnership where like-minded people come together to prevent crime, reduce the fear of crime and increase community cohesion. It involves the Police, Community Safety departments of local authorities, other voluntary organisations and, above all, individuals and families who want to make their neighbourhoods better places to live.

It is important that the Police and the community work in partnership to prevent and detect crime. The aim is to help with:

- Burglary (of houses, garages, sheds, etc.) - informing residents of local burglaries quickly and giving crime prevention advice.
- Bogus callers and Distraction Burglary - helping elderly and vulnerable members protect themselves. Distraction burglary/artifice is where the offenders trick or dupe the occupant or distract them, allowing the other person they are working with to gain access to the property and commit burglary. The elderly are particularly vulnerable to distraction burglary.
- Vehicle Crime - warning members about leaving property on show in their cars etc.

Please call or email Dominic to join the scheme in Bidborough.

Your Local Coordinator is **Dominic Cole**
Phone Number **07711 058716**
Email **dominic.cole@me.com**



Bidborough Highway Improvement Plan UPDATE—March 2025

Following on from my last article and subsequent Parish Council meetings this is a brief update on Bidborough's Highway Improvement Plan (HIP).

Automated Traffic Surveys

At the time of going to print we are awaiting results of the three Automatic Traffic surveys carried out recently at three locations along the B2176 (Bidborough Ridge).

Double Yellow Lines Survey

The Pre-Consultation for Double Yellow Lines to be imposed in



various areas, including the High Street and Glebelands, was inconclusive. There was an even split for those in favour and those against their inclusion. We have advised Kent Highways of this and are awaiting their decision on whether they will take matters forward.

As there was no definitive yes or no it may be that this initiative is removed from consideration in relation to school parking, however, we still feel it's necessary to have the yellow lines outside the Village Shop, by the electric substation and at the Old School House in Spring Lane.

Incidents

Many of you may know of the two traffic incidents which happened in February.

One was a hit and run which resulted in a resident being hurt and the other was a young driver who came off the road and through the hedge. Both these incidents happened along the B2176.

Although the Police were involved in both cases we also submitted the details to Kent Highways, Bidborough's Police Constable, Simon Fuller of Kent Police and the Community Safety Unit in Tunbridge Wells. We very much hope this will have some bearing on our HIP so that we can make the road safer.

The Parish Council still wants the entire B2176 from the east to west of the village to become a 30mph zone.

Also we haven't given up just yet on a crossing point although as I have said before this is unlikely for the reasons already known.

We are also looking to upgrade the Speed Indicator Devices (SID) to more modern versions with the possibility of these being relocated. There may be some funding available for this from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

As with most projects of this scale it is difficult to say how long it will all take and therefore I will continue to review and update residents at future Parish Council meetings.

Cllr Quentin Stevens

*Don't forget, you can report **potholes** directly to Kent Highways on: www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem*

Disruption To The Water Supply

MESSAGE FROM SOUTH EAST WATER

Firstly, we are very sorry to everyone in the Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Bidborough areas impacted for an extended period following the outage at two of our water treatment sites. It is not the service our customers expect, and equally, it's not the service we want to provide.

Throughout Saturday 25 January, Sunday 26 January and the majority of Monday, no customers were impacted by loss of water supply as they were still being supplied by the water within our drinking water storage tanks. However, by Monday evening time the drinking water storage tanks which served Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Bidborough were low, and some customers in the Sevenoaks area experienced a short supply interruption on the evening of Monday, 27 January.

Our incident team had expected water supplies to be fully restored overnight, despite our storage tanks still being low. However, it became clear shortly after we had sent notifications to customers and stakeholders that the recharge of our system overnight on Monday into Tuesday had not gone according to plan.

By the morning of Thursday, 30 January, the majority of customers had their supplies restored, however some customers in

Bidborough had a further interruption that day when air in the system impacted the local pumps that boost water to these customers at higher elevations.

Why was the fresh water distribution point at the offices of Speldhurst Parish Council? Why was there not a distribution point or points in Bidborough, where there are several suitable sites?

Locations are chosen for their size to enable the safe operation of a bottled water station, as well as their access to ensure large HGVs can get to the location. We have risk-assessed Bidborough Village Hall as an option for a bottled water station, but unfortunately it is not suitable as a location, with access from the main road (B2176).

We also looked at alternative locations, including in Southborough, but unfortunately we were unable to operate a bottled water station there either and Speldhurst Village Hall was the safest and most suitable location available.

What are the arrangements for compensation?

Customers in Tonbridge and Bidborough affected by the incident will receive compensation.

The majority of customers in the area are receiving £120 which has been applied directly to their account with us. Based on our current average bill, this represents just under six months of free drinking water.

Those in the Bidborough area who experienced a longer interruption, are receiving £150. This represents more than six months of free drinking water, based on our current average bill.

Customers do not need to contact us, we have automatically applied this credit to their account.

We are in the process of writing to all those affected to let them know. Businesses and schools are also being given £150 compensation, which will be paid through their retailer.

Message from Kent Fire & Rescue Service

Check your smoke alarms are in date!

Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) is urging people to check the expiry date on their smoke alarms, as they only have a lifespan of up to ten years.

Between 2022-2024, approximately 6,600 expired smoke alarms were discovered at properties in Kent and Medway during Home Fire Safety Visits carried out by KFRS with some residents unaware that they expire or how to check them. The service has now launched its own campaign to raise awareness that smoke alarms expire, how to check their date and how to replace them.

Having an in-date smoke alarm is important in helping keep homes safe, as once they expire the sensors in the alarms become less reliable. This means that they might fail to sound in an emergency or could go off for no reason and could impact how effectively they work if there was a fire.

Rachael Spencer, Safe and Well Manager at KFRS, said: "Whilst many residents in Kent and Medway are great at checking their smoke alarms work, which we recommend testing once a week, we found an increase in the amount of expired smoke alarms on our checks as people don't realise, they have an expiry date.

"Making sure your smoke alarm is in-date is so simple to do and provides an extra level of safety in your home that could make a real difference in case there is ever a fire."

How to check your smoke alarms

The expiry dates for smoke alarms, whether battery-powered or wired-in, should be on the back or side.

To check it, you might need to remove the alarm from the ceiling. Depending on the type of alarm you have, here's the most common ways how:

- twist it counterclockwise to remove from the base; or

- use a screwdriver to unscrew it from the base; or
- (for some wired alarms) push a screwdriver into the slot to release it.

If there's no expiry date, it means you'll need to replace the alarm and even if the smoke alarm still sounds, if it has expired then it needs replacing as soon as possible.

If your smoke alarm is out of date, you can buy a new one on any reputable website or in a hardware shop.

If you can't change the smoke alarm safely, we recommend asking a friend or family member for help. But if that's not possible, give us a call us on **0800 923 7000** for advice and to book a free Home Fire Safety Visit.

For more information visit: www.kent.fire-uk.org/smoke-alarms-10-year-lifespan



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Community

Bidborough Village Hall www.bidboroughvillagehall.com
CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION

No doubt there will be articles in this Spring edition of the Newsletter over the issue of parking in the village.

I want to focus on parking at the village hall. When we have large events where the carpark is unable to accommodate all hall hirers vehicles, it becomes necessary to park on Bidborough Ridge.

Unfortunately, we have experienced several occasions whereby irresponsible parking on the Ridge has led to pedestrians having to walk in the road as the footpath has been blocked. Cars parked across the footpath and sometimes blocking entrances to house drives is totally unacceptable.

We have added a couple of photos on the hall entrance doors as examples of poor parking which we hope will make hall visitors be more considerate when parking cars.

We have also amended the T&C's for the hall to included a statement on parking on Bidborough Ridge.

Hall bookings remain positive but if you are thinking about hiring the hall please contact our Booking Secretary Deenah Wheeler on 01892 520967. The earlier the booking is made the greater chance of securing your preferred date.

Graham Parsons,
Chairman & Trustee



LAMBING DAYS

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Bidborough Drama Society

<https://bidboroughdrama.org.uk>

Contact: Patty Judge on sid.judge@btinternet.com

Once again BDS is putting on a Spring Show on:

**Thursday 8th & Friday 9th May in the Village Hall .
"MURDER AT THE VILLAGE FETE "**

We want all of you to get the " little grey cells " going. See if you can spot the murderer...possibly even before the Inspector! Tickets will be available through the BDS website in a while.

Do please come and support us, as we nearly had to close last year, but with new members and a new spring in our step, we look forward to seeing you in May.

Bidborough Parish Council do not endorse any specific candidate for local elections but offer the opportunity for current and prospective candidates to provide information to our residents. For a full list of candidates standing in the county elections in May 2025 please check out the Kent County Council website.

Prospective Kent County Councillor

Richard Long

The Parish Council have kindly allowed me this opportunity to introduce myself. I am standing, as a Conservative, for Kent County Council.



I was previously County Councillor for Tonbridge, having lived there in the past, but have lived in St Lawrence Avenue, Bidborough with my wife Tina and two children (now grown up) since 2013. We are both solicitors, working these days from home.

During the time I have lived in this village I have tried to help out in various ways. I do a little now and then for the Church and offered advice when asked to by the Parish Council. People may recognise our golden retriever Sandy whom we walk daily through Birch Wood.

Further afield I was until recently Commandant (Colonel) of Kent Army Cadet Force, which does great work with over 1,100 children, as cadets, throughout Kent. I was previously an army reservist. I believe I can be of service to Bidborough by representing us all at the County Council.

KCC runs education, adult and children's social care, waste disposal (not collection - that's the Borough), Highways, Libraries and other services. With the pressure on spending in Social Care and Education, repairs to our roads sometimes comes lower down the list. I will always push to have our roads repaired when required. Most County Council work is not specific to any locality, but I will always vote for policies that deliver the core services at best value for the ratepayers.

I will oppose policies that are political projects or likely to waste money. I will oppose grandstanding. I will listen to and promote the wishes of those I represent. I have already been attending the Parish Council regularly (and Speldhurst and Rusthall Parish Councils, as the electoral division includes those villages also) and know that in any rural seat it is vital to stay in close touch with the Parish Council.

Finally I know that many of us would like a reduced speed limit on Bidborough Ridge and, when possible, a pedestrian crossing. I will work with the Parish Council and Kent Highways to seek a workable and safe solution to the problem of traffic on the Ridge.

I would be very happy to hear from anyone who has questions or points for me on the email below.

Richard Long
Email: RichardLongTW@outlook.com



The greatest card game in the world!

Are you interested in learning to play bridge?

Would you like to polish up your game?

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

Bidborough CoE Primary School

<https://www.bidborough.kent.sch.uk>
headteacher@bidborough.kent.sch.uk

Our school's vision is epitomised by 'Faith in Our Future'.



Matthew 17:20 - Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there.' And it will move. Nothing would be impossible.

Our life together at Bidborough Church of England Primary School is rooted in Christ's words describing how a little faith can make all things possible. With the values of love, hope, forgiveness, courage and koinonia underpinning all that we do, we seek to prepare all to step out into the world reflecting God's love for one another.

With 'Faith in Our Future' we encourage all to:

- Grow confidently, as a responsible, life-long learner
- Achieve highly, not only in academic areas but in their own personal goals
- Contribute successfully, as a member of the wider community.
- Enjoy life, feeling prepared for every stage of life's journey

At Bidborough Primary School we are always looking at ways we can further enhance our engagement with our local residents and community and we welcome support and ideas.

Every week the school publishes a newsletter online and would actively encourage the whole community to log on and take a look at what our wonderful children have been getting up to and events planned—just click on the Newsletter button on the homepage.

We actively seek support from volunteers to come into the school and engage with activities such as:

- 1:1 reading with pupils
- Become part of our gardening gang

- Every year we try to give pupils an opportunity to try a new skill (we had everything from magicians to majorettes) and are always on the look out for people with a wide range of hobbies or skills to come in and run some sessions.

We have a Governing Board whose role it is to provide strategic leadership to the School. We are always on the look out for new members with a broad range of skills such as finance, HR, business development, Health & Safety, to join us to help the school to develop and grow.

Free money!

School funding, like everything is getting tighter and squeezed, but you can help and it will literally cost you nothing! Just sign up on your phone or computer to:

Easyfundraising <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk>

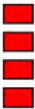
Select Bidborough CoE Primary School as your cause to support and with a whole host of online retailers whether you are browsing or buying you will be generating donations to the PTA charitable fund at no cost to you at all!

These are just a few ways you might consider becoming more involved with the school.

If you would like to know more please do email:

Julie Burton - Headteacher - headteacher@bidborough.kent.sch.uk
or

Emma Leitch or Tara Kwak - Co-Chair of Governors -
chair@bidborough.kent.sch.uk

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St Lawrence Church, Bidborough

On Easter Sunday, there will be a Holy Communion service at 8am and a family friendly service, to include Holy Communion at 11am.

St Lawrence is open every day and for private prayer and contemplation during Holy Week and Good Friday.

In addition to the Easter Sunday services there will also be:

- Holy Communion at 7:30 pm at St Lawrence on Maundy Thursday 17th April
- Reflective prayer at 11:00 am at St Lawrence on Good Friday 18th April

Nourish Community Food Bank

Kiran and Reshma at the Village Shop operate a collection point for Nourish. The following items are urgently needed:

Long-life Milks

Washing Powder Tablets

Pasta

Cereal

Tea & Coffee

Tinned Pulses

Rice Pudding

Toiletries

Tinned Potatoes

Dog/Cat Food

Chilli/Sweet & Sour Sauce

Baked beans

Tinned Spaghetti

Spreads – Jam, Peanut Butter, Marmite

Biscuits

Tinned Fruit

Soup

Noodles

Tinned Fish

Household/Cleaning Products

By buying items for the Food Bank at the village stores you are supporting our village shop as well as the wider community in Tunbridge Wells.



St Lawrence Tots and Co

Amanda Harris–01892 528797/ amandakate.harris@btinternet.com

Run by a group of volunteers, Tots and Co is a group for parents/ carers and little ones (babies up to preschoolers) that meets for friendship and fun. Each session consists of free play, a craft activity, refreshments, singing and story-time.

We meet at **Bidborough Village Hall** from **9:30am –11/11:15am** on **Friday mornings during term-time**.

We are always pleased to welcome new people along and would particularly encourage you to join us if you are new to the village and are keen to get to know other local families. Please contact Amanda if you would like to find out more.

Youth Group

An opportunity for our local young people of secondary school age to come together in church for fun and friendship. We meet one evening a month for games, activities, snacks and fellowship.

Where: **St Lawrence Church, Bidborough**

When: **4th Friday each month**

Contact : Alison Boulton 07739 378637

St. Lawrence & St. Peter's Church

CAMEO Lunch (Come And Meet Each Other Lunch)

Anne Hinds 01892 528372

St Lawrence Church hosts CAMEO lunches every other month in the **Village Hall** for the more senior members of our community. A two course lunch including refreshments is provided and the next lunch is on:

Friday April 11th –12.30pm to 2.30pm

If you would like to join us, please contact Anne for further info.

Sports & Community Pavilion—UPDATE

Since the Autumn 2024 newsletter, lots has been happening on the redevelopment of the Sports & Community Pavilion.

Legal and tax advice has now been received and distributed to the members of the Pavilion Development Group (PDG) which comprises representatives from the Parish Council, Bidborough Sports Association, Bidborough Cricket Club, Bidborough Bowls Club, Bidborough Tennis Club and Bidborough Stoolball Club.

We are mindful that not all parishioners may welcome the redevelopment and concerns have already been expressed regarding how the new building will be used. If you have any concerns or questions about the development please feel free to contact either Karen Vidler on karen@bidboroughpc.org.uk or Sarah Smith on bidboroughpavilion@gmail.com.

We are now at the stage where contracts with the architect, Michael Dillon of AOMD, have been signed and the various surveys required for planning permission have been commissioned.

The first design meeting was held on Friday 7th March and broad criteria were discussed for the future build. A meeting was then held on site on Friday 14th March to look at specific items that had been identified and discuss possible solutions.

Michael hopes to draw up the broad design over the next few weeks with regular meetings with the PDG as matters progress.

The provisional timeline going forward will be broadly:

- **Tuesday 20th May 2025 - 7pm to 9pm**
First consultation with the community at the Village Hall. A 3D model of the design will be on show and it will be an opportunity for parishioners to ask questions and give feedback on what is being proposed. Michael and members of the PDG will be present.



Architectural Office Michael Dillon

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michael@aomd.co.uk | www.aomd.co.uk

- May/June 2025 – plans will be revised taking into account feedback received and a pre-planning application will be made to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) to gauge their views on what is being proposed.
- June/July 2025 – feedback from the pre-planning review.
- **Sunday 20th July 2025–12 noon to 2pm**
Second consultation with the community This is when the near final plans will be re-presented for the parish to provide feedback. This will take place at the pavilion alongside the 6-a-side cricket tournament which is the 'kick off' event for the fundraising campaign.
- August 2025 – final revisions will be made and full planning permission will be sought. You may then also comment on the application via the planning portal once it is submitted to TWBC.

So what happens now? To complete this project we will be making grant applications and fundraising within the community.

The 'kick-off' fund-raiser will be a **6-a-side cricket tournament** to be held in the rec on **Sunday 20th July 2025**. This event is aimed at players, non-players, youngsters and oldies, mums and sons, dads and daughters! The only criteria is that players must be aged 14 and above. Further details are given later in the newsletter.

Our **headline fund-raiser** will be a family fun day provisionally entitled ***The Bidborough Bonanza*** which will centre around a lottery/raffle draw with every 10th ticket winning a prize! An 'It's A Knockout' competition is planned, along with a dog show, stalls and entertainment going on into the evening. The date for this extravaganza is **Saturday 6th September 2025**. As plans firm up, further details will be given on community noticeboards and the parish website. *May we take this opportunity to thank the Gardening Association for changing the date of their Autumn Show in order to allow us to hold The Bidborough Bonanza on the 6th September. We are very grateful. The Gardening Association show will now be held on Saturday 30th August 2025.*

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Community

Birch Wood Association

Martin Derham

Chair, Birch Wood Association

We have now completed our 2 main work parties of the winter with Kent High Weald Partnership. The next will be in late Autumn 2025 once the breeding season and summer period of activity from the various woodland creatures has started to die down.

In addition we have begun a regular 2 hour Monday morning group. It is amazing how much can be achieved in a short space of time, and we hope wood users will have noticed views opening up as holly is removed. Some holly is good in a wood, but it spreads very quickly, cutting out light and removing other plants from their environment, so control is an ongoing task in any managed woodland.

Once the winter work period ends in the middle of March we will consider if other tasks can be completed during the summer which will not disturb breeding species.

Although the wood is owned by the Parish Council it is largely managed by volunteers. Most of us do not have special skills, just a willingness to work with some guidance. We would welcome any adult from the community who would like to help us.

Regular updates are published on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1628802727371113>

or search under Birch Wood Association. In addition posts are regularly shared with the Bidborough Community Facebook page.

If you would like to support us then you can do so by joining the Association. We ask for



£10 per household per year, and this money goes towards funding tools, projects and any training we need. It helps us to work to continue maintaining the wood for everyone's benefit.

Recently we have bought loppers which are being well used in our work parties for example, and we are investigating waders for lake maintenance and a scythe for minimal impact in keeping the glades as open spaces.

If you have not joined and would like to do so, please contact us through Facebook, the contacts on the Parish Council website, at birchwoodassociationbidborough@gmail.com or admiralhardinge@btinternet.com

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Nature Notes - Spring 2025

WHY MANAGE WOODLAND?

Many people may wonder why woodland cannot be left to its own devices without management activity. The answer is that unmanaged woodland becomes less diverse, less beneficial to the environment, and less accessible.

The Forestry Commission list the top 5 reasons for managing woodland of which 3 are directly relevant to Birch Wood:

- Be more resilient to the threat of pests and diseases.
- Increase biodiversity and support nature recovery by encouraging woodland regeneration – promoting stronger, more genetically diverse seedlings to grow as well as allowing other woodland plants and flowers to flourish.
- Capture carbon – otherwise known as carbon sequestration, which improves air quality and benefits the local community and the wider environment.

If Birch Wood was left alone then we would see the 2 glades close up, dominant invasive plants would take over throughout the wood, most of the growth would be of one age, some tree species would fail, paths would slowly close up, flowers such as bluebells disappear, and the flora and fauna would generally become much less diverse. Pest and disease would then be much more likely to be present, and the carbon sequestration benefit would be significantly reduced.

You can see how these problems develop throughout the wood and it is a constant task to control this. You will see areas where the wood is very densely populated with silver birch of a certain age. Almost all of this is self seeded and grown since the Great Storm of 1987. The areas where it has grown like this are short on light, the trees are tall and thin as they try to reach



the light at the top of the canopy, and they are so close together that neither they, other species nor the larger trees have space to grow healthily. It is a major job to control this and one of the key strategic tasks we have is to improve the age profile of the wood following the post-storm regrowth.

You will see areas where there are wood piles, and these are areas that have been thinned. There are older woodpiles, many now overgrown and these are from when thinning was carried out 5 to 10 years ago, and now we are doing the same job again as the trees have grown.

We are also being careful to leave good examples of beech, cherry, oak and other species since these take longer to grow and mature, and stop the wood from being even more dominated by silver birch.

Hopefully in decades to come, as some of the larger trees reach to end of their lifecycle we will have examples growing and ready to replace them as the dominant woodland trees. We also try to keep a clear halo around some of the veteran trees, and trees such as yew which provide variety, so that they have space to grow.

Cherry laurel and holly will both spread and take over. They remove light from the woodland floor and in the case of cherry laurel can poison the soil. Lack of light and dominant trees end up reducing the huge variety of food plants and the habitats of many species.

Healthy woodland has many more species than poor quality unmanaged woodland. There are thousands of species that are in Birch Wood that we never see. Most remain constantly out of sight, often unidentified or unrecognised. An oak tree supports more than 2000 species alone, for example. The species we can see in the wood are just the tip of the iceberg, but they wouldn't be there if conditions didn't suit them with poor food sources and poor habitat.

The management task in Birch Wood can seem daunting at times and it can never be complete or perfect, but it is a testament to community commitment and volunteer workers since 1967 that it has been managed for so many people to enjoy on a regular basis.

"No job too big or too small"



Ryan King

M: 07917 414261

E: ryanking.13@btinternet.com

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Clubs & Societies

Bidborough Bowls Club

Alan Robinson – 01892 542852

Judy Liddall - 01892 525862.

Our 2025 season begins with an away match at Coleman's Hatch on Saturday 26th April. We then have a first roll-up session on our home green on Bank holiday Monday 5 May starting at 2.30pm. Newcomers welcome, just come along to try the game. Coaching and equipment will be available.

Roll-up sessions will continue throughout the season on Mondays at 5pm offering coaching sessions for beginners and an Umbrella league competition. Again, newcomers welcome. **For those interested enough to join, the Club is offering free enrolment for your first season.**

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

We will also play a friendly match against Bidborough Cricket Club, date to be arranged.

We will compete in the Tunbridge Wells mixed triple league, which runs from May to August on Thursday evenings. We had a good season again in 2024 and retain our place in Division 2, now extended to seven clubs.

Club singles and pairs competitions are run through the season and finals day this year is Saturday 23 August.

At the time of writing we have just held our annual Brain of Bidborough Quiz (Saturday 8 March) which was very successful with 18 tables of six competing. After ten rounds of questions two teams, Bidborough Event Planners and St Lawrence Church, were tied in first place. After a challenging tie break St Lawrence Church were confirmed worthy winners of the Brain of Bidborough trophy.

The quiz is our main fund raiser and the event raised nearly £1,700. Our warm thanks go to all who supported the event.

We will not be running our May Saturday morning plant sale this year. However, Colin Barber will be taking orders by email for sweet peas (ready to plant, in mixed colours, and highly scented), tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet peas and chilli peppers. All at 75p for a 9cm pot plant and available first weeks of May. Please email your order to: colinbarber@nappa-bidborough.co.uk.

Bidborough Ladies

Jane Hebditch on 01892 539401.

Our main news over the winter has been the sad loss of Anne Holford; she died just before Christmas and many of us were able to attend her funeral at St Dunstan's Church. Anne had worked very hard for our organisation for many years and was a close personal friend of many members; she will be greatly missed.

We continue to meet on the fourth Friday of the month at 2.30pm at Bidborough Village Hall. Our meetings are well attended and we normally have a speaker followed by time for chat and a cuppa.

In December many of us enjoyed a Christmas meal at the Hand and Sceptre in Southborough and in January we were entertained by the choir from Bidborough School. It was a really happy occasion and it was lovely to see the enthusiasm and enjoyment of the children.

We have a full programme planned until July when we will hold our AGM. This is quite an informal meeting with only a small amount of business followed by refreshments. There will obviously be some changes to the committee this year, so we are hoping to encourage some new people to join.

Our meetings are open to all; we are always happy to welcome new members and visitors. If you would like more information, please do contact Jane.

Girl Guiding—Update

Bidborough Rainbows (for 4-7 year olds) and Brownies (for 7-10 year olds) collected items for the charity Nourish over 10 weeks in the run up to Christmas. Our two units, representing 40 families, donated over 293kg of food and other essentials, which is truly fantastic; we are very grateful to our girls and their families for their generosity.



We've done lots of other fun stuff too, including attending a Girlguiding-exclusive screening of Moana 2 and a visit to Parliament for Brownies!

New Guide unit? With two thriving units in the village, we would like to open a Guide unit in Bidborough for girls aged 10-14, possibly on a Tuesday from 6.30pm-8pm. In order to do so, we will need a team of leaders/ unit helpers to run the unit – if you would be interested in volunteering please contact Bev Pearce on bevpearcedc@gmail.com to find out more.



'KICK START' FUNDRAISER FOR THE BIDBOROUGH PAVILION

6-A-SIDE CRICKET TOURNAMENT

SUNDAY 20th JULY 2025

10am to 6pm

£10 per team member

Bidborough Recreation Ground

Family groups, friends, club mates – whatever the mix - take your bat in hand and spend the day in the recreation ground for a fun 6-a-side knockout cricket competition.

A man short?

Bid for a 1st Team Player to make up your team.

Bids can be registered on the email below.

Players must be 14 years and older

**Prize for 'best dressed' team
Choose your 'walk out' music!**

Helmets, bats and pads provided

**To register your interest please email Rodger on
*enquiries@bidboroughcricket.org.uk***

BBQ / BAR / TEAS & COFFEE / CAKE

For **The Bidborough Bonanza** on 6th September 2025 we will need an army of volunteers to help.

If you are a cake maker, can man an entry point, help put up bunting, make a good cuppa, organise an activity, flip a burger, set out chairs, help put up a marquee etc etc etc then we would love to hear from you. Please email *friendsofbidborough@gmail.com* if you think you'll be able to help in any way. Thank you.

Bidborough Cricket Club

Each year cricketers around the country wait in anticipation, of the clocks changing, the rainclouds and cold clearing, for an indication the cricket season is almost here, and in Bidborough it is no different.



Although the sound of leather against willow is the indication the season has actually started, the winter has been spent preparing for what promises to be an exciting and watershed season for Bidborough CC.

We would like to announce that Justin Clarkson has been elected as the new Bidborough CC President, after we sadly lost Brian Wood our previous president of a number of years and true club legend. Justin is looking forward to be the non-playing face of the club going forward and is also going to be more "hands on" than previous Presidents, in fact he has been co-opted as a working president rather than a ceremonial President.

Seniors Cricket

From a playing side, winter nets have been well attended, for the first time in a number of years, which is a indication that all players want to put the poor results from last year in the past and put Bidborough back on the cricketing map.

Anthony Bouffe has taken over as the First X1 captain after a stalwart effort of 5 years by Dale Hillhouse. Rob Cook has taken over as second team captain and Simon Bussell as third team captain.

We are always looking for new players to join, as a you can see from above. We have 3 Saturday sides and 1 Sunday side captained by Archie Wells, we also have a mid-week team that participates in the Sevenoaks smash, which is great fun and exciting if you are lost for some entertainment during the week. With our headquarters at the Kentish Hare on a Saturday and the ground in the middle of the

village you won't find a more welcoming cricket club. Please contact Ant Bouffe on 07968 159818.

Junior Cricket

Our Juniors have always been a thriving section of our club and we have spent a lot of time during the off season improving what we hope we can offer the youngsters of the club this season.

Charlie Harding, a stalwart and the leading run scorer for Bidborough CC, has taken over the coaching of the junior winter nets and the reports have been excellent in the results and enjoyment by the juniors.

We are also really pushing the Dynamo's and All Stars cricket structure at Bidborough, which is an ECB initiative, to introduce children to soft ball cricket, and hopefully to a lifetime of enjoying cricket. We have recruited James Poulson, and Drew Beazleigh to head up this section, James who has spent the last 6 months coaching in South Africa and Drew who spent a summer in Australia at the Joe Root academy there, both have also recently been recruited to play for Tunbridge Wells CC. They in conjunction with Dan Page, will also be looking to run some holiday cricket camps at the Arthur Nicholson Rec, during the May half term and two further weeks in the summer holidays for children aged 8-13. So if you're looking for some fun activities for your children please keep an eye on our social media.

We have 3 junior age groups that participate in the local junior leagues, U11, U13 and U15, we still have spaces in some of these squads in particular the U11. If you are interested please contact Sue Steptowe on 07979 798414 / bidboroughccjuniors@gmail.com

Fund Raising

2025 is also seeing focus moving back to the New Community Pavilion on the Arthur Nicholson, this is discussed elsewhere in the newsletter but it is really exciting to see the architect appointed and the initial designs being developed for the new pavilion. Anyone who has been in and around the pavilion will understand the desperate need for this.

As usual the cricket club will be involved in a number of fun fundraising events not only for Pavilion fund, but the financial requirements for the club, these events are great fun and enjoyable. These include

- a pre-season dinner and casino night at Nizel's Golf Club on Saturday 26th of April
- Our Annual Golf day at Sweetwoods Golf club Date TBC
- The successful Race Night returns at the Village Hall on Saturday 15th of November
- We will also be helping to set up a Inter Village fun 6-a-side cricket competition for cricketers of all and even no ability, as a chance for our villagers to experience cricket and a bit of fun on the rec, the date is set for Sunday 20th July.

We will again be distributing our Bidborough CC fixture booklet, where all the above days will be finalized, and lots more information regarding our village societies will be available. If you have any queries relating to any of the above please contact us on enquiries@bidboroughcricket.org.uk

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 little 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.

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.

Bidborough Stoolball Club.

Contact us at: stoolballbidborough@yahoo.com

We had a successful 2024 season coming fourth in the West Kent Ladies Stoolball League which was very encouraging and down to the fantastic cohort of young players that we have encouraged over the last few years. It has been extremely encouraging to see this group of young ladies work together and bond as a team. The league is continuing to develop and for the first time in five years a new team has formed and will be based in Cowden.

Our officers of the club are:

President: Mrs Olive Harrison

Chairman: Kerry Thorne

Vice Chairman: Vicky Thorne

Secretary: Della Oatley

Treasurer: Emma Stanton

Team Captain: Emma Stanton / Vice-Captain: Vicky Thorne

Matches will continue this season to be played on a Monday and Wednesday evening at the recreation ground.



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Bidborough Event Planners

Over 550 people are on the distribution list for our monthly newsletter, Bidborough Village News, so we would encourage village groups and societies to send us information about their meetings, membership etc. so that we can share that with local residents.

We are also happy to receive entries about any charitable or fundraising events being held in the village, but we don't advertise business ventures.

You can email your entries to bidboroughevents@gmail.com or pop copy through the letterbox at 43 Bidborough Ridge.

Please also email us if you would like to be added to our distribution list.

Bidborough Tennis Club

Chris Hollyoaks—c.hollyoak@btinternet.com / 07889 706794 (Chair)
Dominic Cole—domfcole@outlook.com (Membership Secretary)

The last 3 years have been a rewarding and pleasurable time in post and I would like to thank the committee members for their hard work and continued support. But, we are sorry to announce that Adam Carrick had to step down from his role coordinating our Junior Coaching due to his other work commitments and we thank him for the work he did in the short time that he was with us. However, we are pleased to announce that Valerie Hawksfield has joined the committee and agreed to take over the organisation of Junior Coaching.

We still have at least one more available committee place so if any person is willing to step forward to volunteer as a committee member, or to assist us with the running of the club/court, we would be very pleased to welcome them onboard.

The Tennis Court was cleaned in the first week in October and this has proved to be useful in enabling everyone to enjoy playing all year round. Please note that there is an accident/incident report

book so if any member has any issues with the tennis court, or were to have an accident, then please let Chris know. For information, we are aware of a loose paving stone that has come adrift near to the entrance of the court and also that the glass fronts to our notice board, within the court area, need to be replaced – both of these problems are being addressed. In general though, the court is in excellent condition.

Last year's Junior Coaching took place in the week commencing Monday 12th August with our regular coach Ian Chapman (full DBS clearance) - this again was very successful. This year's Junior Coaching will take place in the week of Monday 11th August 2025 and is available to non-members at a slightly higher cost to our existing members. So if any local children, who are currently not members, are interested in playing this wonderful game then this would be an ideal opportunity to try it out. Please contact either Dominic Cole (domfcole@outlook.com) or Valerie Hawksfield (valhawksfield@gmail.com) for further details.

Membership of the Tennis Club continues to be strong with 95 family groups / households giving us 206 individual members including juniors. In order to reduce costs and avoid paper usage, 'electronic' Membership Renewals will be used this year and sent out at the end of this month – however, if anybody has any problems with this new format then regular paper membership forms can be provided. There has been no change to our membership fees which, in my opinion, provides our members with excellent value for money. Keep playing tennis and enjoy our lovely court.

Art and Craft Group

An informal, sociable group which meets to work on independent projects e.g. knitting and painting. A small charge is made to cover the hire of the hall

Where: Bidborough Village Hall – Small Hall

When: Monday afternoons – 2-4pm

Contact: Tricia Arnold - 01892 527008

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(Kiran & Reshma Masrani)



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Mon to Fri: 7.30 am - 6.30 pm
Sat: 7.30 am - 2.00pm | Sun: 7.30 am - 1 pm

We do not close for lunch

Tel. 01892 531016

Bidborough Gardening Association

Website: www.bidboroughgardening.co.uk

Contact: Glenys McDonald gmcdmbe@btinternet.com

The Association also has a Facebook page.

Bidborough Gardening Association is in its 77th year and has over 200 members.

We are affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society; member of the Rose Society UK; The Daffodil Society; The Sweet Pea Society and Kent Federation of Horticultural Societies. Members enjoy discounts for some plant purchases from Royal Mires Nursery, Crowborough and Plantbase, Cousley Wood.

During the Year we hold three afternoon and four evening meetings plus a Christmas Party, at the Village Hall.

The Spring Show on 5th April; Summer Show on 28th June and Autumn Show on 30th August (*note the change of date*) are enjoyed by exhibitors, members, Brownies, Bidborough School children and observers, afternoon teas are served from 2.30 which many villagers and visitors enjoy.

In June there is an evening outing to a NGS garden at Boars Head, Crowborough and at the end of July a summer outing by coach from Bidborough to Batemans and King John Nursery.

The BGA holiday 2025 is to Cambridge in September.

So, there is something for everyone.

CHESS CLUB

A monthly club for all ages and abilities.

Do bring a chess set and/or clock, if you have one.

Bidborough Village Hall (Small Hall)

First Monday of the month 6-8pm

£2 entry

Contact: *Richard Swain - richardswain99@hotmail.com*

VILLAGE DIARY

Weekly

Mon	6.00-7.15pm	Brownies *	Village Hall
Mon	2.00-4.00pm	Art & Craft Group	Small Village Hall
Tues	10.00-12.00pm	South Aisle Café	St Lawrence Chur.
Tues	5.00-6.15pm	Rainbows *	Village Hall
Wed	5:00-7:30pm	Junior Badminton	Village Hall
Wed & Thu	8:00-10.00pm	Badminton	Village Hall
Fri	9:30-11.15am	Tots & Co*	Village Hall

Monthly

First Monday	6.00-8.00pm	Chess Club	Small Village Hall
First Monday	2.00-4.00pm	Mahjong Club	St Lawrence Chur.
3rd Fri	7.30pm	Gardening Association	Village Hall
4th Fri	2.30pm	Bidborough Ladies	Village Hall
4th Friday		Youth Group*	St Lawrence Chur.
Last Mon	7:00pm	Parish Council	Small Village Hall

* term time only

WHO'S WHO

WHOLE COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

Planning

Governance

Charities

Insurance

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL & COUNCIL CORRESPONDANCE

Neil Harris

clerk@bidboroughpc.org.uk

CO-OPTED

Martin Derham

Birch Wood Association

VILLAGE HALL BOOKINGS

Deenah Wheeler

01892 520967

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mark Ellis

mark.ellis@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Brendon Le Page

brendon.lepage@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Joe Opara

joe.opara@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Newsletter

This edition was put together by Cllr Karen Vidler and she apologises for any errors or omissions and formatting issues! The next edition - Autumn 2025 - is likely to be distributed in October 2025. Anything you would like included (articles, adverts), should be submitted to karen@bidboroughpc.org.uk by 19th September 2025.

WHO'S WHO



Dominic Cole

dominic@bidboroughpc.org.uk

Responsibilities: School Liaison, Neighbourhood Watch



Pete Eames

pete@bidboroughpc.org.uk

Responsibilities: Bidborough Sports Association, Birch Wood



Stephen Hinds

stephen@bidboroughpc.org.uk

Responsibilities: Finance, Allotments, ANRG CoM*



David Marriott

davidm@bidborough.org.uk

Deputy Chair of Trustees **

Responsibilities: Finance, Risk Assessments, ANRG CoM*



Quentin Stevens

quentin@bidboroughpc.org.uk

Responsibilities: Cemetery, Allotments, Birch Wood, Village Care, Village Hall Rep, Facebook, Highways, ANRG CoM*



Sandra Summers

sandra@bidboroughpc.org.uk

Deputy Chair

Chair of Trustees **

Responsibilities: Highways, Website, Finance, ANRG CoM*

Karen Vidler



karen@bidboroughpc.org.uk

Chair

Responsibilities: Bidborough Sports Association, Newsletter, Website, Highways, Pavilion Development Group

** Arthur Nicholson Recreation Ground – Committee of Management*

*** The Council as Trustees of the Arthur Nicholson Recreation Ground*



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