

BIDBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE BIDBOROUGH VILLAGE HALL ON 26 JUNE 2023 STARTING AT 7.25PM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Vidler (Chairman) and Councillors Eames, Hinds, Marriott, Stevens and Mrs Summers.

In Attendance – Neil Harris (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs Collins, County Councillor McInroy, Borough Councillor Curry

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Stevens disclosed an interest in planning Application 23/01513/FULL and stated that he would not participate or vote on this application

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 5 June 2023

It was **Agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2023

There were no matters arising

5. Report of the Borough and County Councillors

There were no Borough or County Councillors present at the meeting.

6. Public Participation

The public had an opportunity to raise questions with the Council and for Councillors and the Clerk to respond where appropriate: -

- A number of comments and concerns were raised by a number of local residents to the planning Application 23/01480/FULL The Glen House, High Street and in particular raising concerns about inaccuracies in the application, access issues, overlooking and privacy issues, impact on trees in the Conservation Area, overdevelopment.

- Concerns were raised over recent thefts from vehicles and the Chairman encouraged people to join the Neighbourhood Watch. Councillor Stevens indicated that the area now had a new PCSO, and he would be happy to attend Council Meetings when he could.
- A member of the public stated that a member of the public had been allowed to see the Council's archives when not under supervision. He read out a few items of correspondence which it was claimed proved that this took place. The Chairman stated that it showed that a member of the public saw Council papers that they were entitled to see. In future proper procedures would be followed and the public would be allowed to see public documents.

7. Payment List

It was **Agreed** that the Payment List as circulated at the meeting and as set out below be approved: -

Name	Reason for Invoice	Net	VAT	Gross
Ashdown Garden Services	Grass Cutting – June	548.00	0.00	548.00
Ashdown Garden Services	Garden Maintenance - June	400.00	0.00	400.00
N Power	Street Lighting Electricity costs – May	126.48	6.32	132.80
KALC	Councillor Training for 3	150.00	30.00	180.00
KALC	Councillor Training for 1	50.00	10.00	60.00
Neil Harris	Payroll and mileage for June – Paid in accordance with agreed procedure	956.70	0.00	956.70
HMRC	National Insurance and Tax Payment Month 3	273.96	0.00	273.96

8. Planning Application - 23/01475/FULL – Judds Farm, Hayesden Lane, Bidborough

It was **Agreed** to raise no objection to planning application 23/01475/FULL – Judds Farm, Hayesden Lane, Bidborough.

9. Planning Application - 23/01476/LBC - Judds Farm, Hayesden Lane, Bidborough

It was **Agreed** to raise no objection to planning application 23/01476/LBC – Judds Farm, Hayesden Lane, Bidborough.

10. Planning Application - 23/01480/FULL – The Glen House, High Street, Bidborough

It was **Agreed** to raise an objection to this application on the following grounds: -

- (1) This development due to its size will lead to a significant overlooking of adjoining properties leading to a loss of light, loss of privacy and the creation of overshadowing for these adjoining properties
- (2) There is a significant increase in the size of this property which is out of keeping with the adjoining properties
- (3) The increase in size of this development could exacerbate the existing problems with drainage at this location where there is already some flooding to adjoining properties, and could cause subsidence issues which could cause problems for adjoining local residents
- (4) This proposed development through its size and expected increase in traffic movements will cause significant access issues for all local residents using this shared location
- (5) This site is within the Conservation Area and the proposal does not seem to have taken this into account with the proposed development having a much larger footprint and significant increase in height
- (6) There is concern about a very closely located tree to the development in the garden of the property next door and the impact that this development would have on this neighbour's tree and also the impact this tree could have on the development.

11. Planning Application - 23/01513/FULL – The Barn adjacent to the Cottage, Franks Hollow Road, Bidborough

It was **Agreed** to make no comment on this application and to leave its determination with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

(Councillor Stevens having disclosed an interest in this matter took no part in the discussion or voting thereon)

12. AGAR 2022/23

The Council considered the documents relating to the 2022/23 AGAR.

It was **Agreed** that

- (1) the Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23 as submitted by the Internal Auditor be noted
- (2) the Annual Governance Statement as attached to these minutes be approved
- (3) the Accounting Statements for 2022/23 as attached to these minutes be approved
- (4) the Internal Auditors report be noted, and the recommendations therein be approved

13. Financial Regulations

The Council considered the attached Financial Regulations, and it was **Agreed** that the Financial Regulations, as attached to these minutes be adopted.

14. Update on Action Points

(1) Birchwood Land

Councillor Eames stated that a point had been raised at the Annual Parish Meeting on 12 June 2023 by a parishioner Mr Gary Thorne. The area in question is a section of Birchwood owned by the householder of 7 Hardinge Avenue (currently Mr David Loveday).

Mr Thorne's statement was that Bidborough Parish Council had some claim to that land and should not have allowed Mr Loveday to assume ownership or install fencing.

The plot referred to and as highlighted as K55318 on the Land Registry Plan was purchased by a Mr VCI Wallace (the first owner of the adjacent property 7 Hardinge Avenue), to form a woodland extension to his property, from Spelthorne Property Company Ltd. in 1959.

The area of Birchwood owned by Bidborough Parish Council is with Title K495362 on the Land Registry Plan and was registered with the Land Registry in 1979 with the Parish Council as owners. This land was also purchased from Spelthorne Property Company Ltd.

Since the purchase of K53318 came 20 years before the Parish Council were able to make their purchase, there can be no possibility that the Parish Council had any claim to that land. The area has remained as part of the land owned by 7 Hardinge Avenue ever since.

There is some confusion possible, since there is a further area of woodland, K860974 on the Land Registry Plan, which the Parish Council obtained with possessory title in October 2003; this they were able to do since the area was not at that time registered with the Land Registry, and the Parish Council were able to show that they had been maintaining that area for many years. Mr Thorne may therefore be confusing the two pieces of land – one which had already been obtained and registered (K53318) and therefore not available for acquisition, and K860974 the owner of which could not be traced or identified.

Mr Thorne made further allegations concerning the fencing of K53318. The owner installed this in its current state (fence posts with 3-wire connections) in 2015. Before that the boundary had been marked only with the fence posts, but no wire connection. It is not known what form of fencing was put in place in 1959.

It was **Agreed** that the report be noted.

(2) Hedge along Ridge

Discussion ensued on the obstructions being caused on the footway by overgrowth from the hedges along Bidborough Ridge. Whilst understanding that this was not a direct responsibility of the Council the footway needed to be cleared. The Council's Grass Cutting Contractor had been approached for a price for the work.

It was **Agreed** that the Council should take action to clear the overgrowth on the footway along Bidborough Ridge and that the Clerk be authorised to take the appropriate action.

Following on from the discussion about Bidborough Ridge it was also brought to the attention of the Council that certain areas of the village had been left untidy following ‘No Mow May’ and it was **Agreed** that the Council would look into this and see what could be done to rectify the issue.

(3) Fly Tipping

The Chairman reported that the fly tipping in Gates Farm Road had been cleared and that future fly tipping should be reported to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

15. Waste Bins

Councillor Eames stated that there were 9 waste bins in the village but there was a possibility that the Council could look to adding to these locations at possibly a) entrance to Birchwood at St Lawrence Avenue, b) bottom of Spring Lane and c) junction of Darnley Drive and St Lawrence Avenue. He would discuss taking on the collections for these new bins with TWBC. During the discussions the Council was informed by a former Councillor that he had 2 waste bins and would pass them back to the Council. Councillor Eames indicated that he would report back to the Council following these discussions.

16. Village Defibrillators

Councillor Stevens reported that there were 2 Defibrillators in the village one at the School and one at the Village Hall. He had had to take the one at the Village Hall out of the circuit until a new battery had arrived. He had also posted 2 videos on social media indicating how to open the defibrillators using the code.

17. Cemetery – Additional Ashes Plots

Councillor Stevens had asked for a further 5 Ashes plots.

It was **Agreed** that 5 new Ashes plots be provided and that MDH Horticultural be asked to prepare at a cost of £50 per plot.

18. Bidborough Ridge

Councillor Stevens indicated that badgers were digging under Bidborough Ridge and that this should be highlighted with KCC Highways.

It was **Agreed** that the Clerk should draw this matter to the attention of KCC Highways.

19. Play Park Tender

The Council were informed of the decision of the Arthur Nicholson Recreation Ground Trust in respect in respect of the Play Park tender and it was **Agreed** that the Play Park tender document be agreed in principle and that a final document be submitted to both the Council and Trust meetings at their July meeting.

20. Duration of Meeting

7.25pm to 9.23pm