

BIDBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE BIDBOROUGH VILLAGE HALL ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2023 STARTING AT 7.34PM

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

In Attendance – Neil Harris (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor McInroy and Borough Councillor Curry

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosures.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 31 July 2023

It was **Agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 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 member of the public raised their concerns about the fireworks display that could possibly be held in the Arthur Nicholson Recreation Ground on 3 November.
- A member of the public indicated their appreciation that the Council had arranged that the hedge along Bidborough Ridge be cut but asked that the Council consider looking at cutting it lower so that the view beyond the hedge would be visible. It was indicated that it was not the responsibility of the Council to cut this hedge and that it was the responsibility of the County Council to ensure that the public footway was

safe for pedestrians. The Council indicated that it would discuss with the contractor about whether the height could be reduced on future cuts and that it would liaise with the County Council regarding responsibilities and getting the best for the public using the path.

7. Payment List

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

Expenditure For Approval

Name	Reason for Invoice	Net	VAT	Gross
Cllr S Summers	Payment for Gift for work done on Allotments - Paid	20.00	0.00	20.00
Phoenix Stationery	Stationery for Clerk – Paid as invoice date before next meeting	47.27	9.45	56.72
Complete Weed Control	Weed control on Church Wall and paths - Paid as invoice date before next meeting	385.00	77.00	462.00
Neil Harris	Payroll and mileage for August – Paid in accordance with agreed procedure	932.85	0.00	932.85
St John Ambulance (Supplies)	School Defibrillator Electrodes - Paid as invoice date before next meeting	74.95	14.99	89.94
HMRC	National Insurance and Tax Payment Month 5 – Paid as due date before next meeting	273.96	0.00	273.96
N Power	Street Lighting Electricity costs - August	115.32	5.77	121.09
Marian Hemsted	Internal Audit Fees	600.00	0.00	600.00
ROSPA Play Safety	Annual Inspection of Play Equipment	124.00	24.80	148.80
Thorne Civil Engineers	Church Wall Repairs	15935.00	3187.00	19122.00
Neil Harris	Payroll for September – Paid in accordance with agreed procedure	918.00	0.00	918.00
HMRC	National Insurance and Tax Payment Month 6	273.96	0.00	273.96
MDH Horticultural Contractors	Lengthsman Contract August/September	3280.00	656.00	3936.00
MDH Horticultural Contractors	ANRG Contract	540.00	108.00	648.00

Income Received since 1 August

Name	Reason for Income	Net	VAT	Gross
AD Hillen	Memorial Ashes Plot	50.00	0.00	50.00
D Hewitson	Allotments Rent 22/23	14.00	0.00	14.00
V Packer	Allotments Rent 22/23	10.00	0.00	10.00
HMRC VAT	2023/24 VAT Payment up to end of August	1429.07	0.00	1429.07
A Penny	Memorial Ashes Plot	£100	0.00	£100

8. Budget Report

The Council considered the Financial Budget Comparison report detailing expenditure and income received by the Council as submitted by the Clerk.

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

9. Planning Application - 23/02029/FULL – 31 Bidborough Ridge, Bidborough

It was **Agreed** to raise no objection to planning application 23/02029/FULL – 31 Bidborough Ridge, Bidborough

10. Planning Application - 23/02471/Full – Hillrise, Hayesden Lane, Bidborough

It was **Agreed** to raise no objection to planning application 23/02471/Full – Hillrise, Hayesden Lane, Bidborough.

11. Payment System

The Council considered the report of the Clerk setting out the current payment system and the measures needed to be made to the system that alleviate the concerns raised in the Council's Financial Risk Assessment and by the Internal Auditor

It was **Agreed** that the following system be introduced

- (1) that 2 persons be involved in the payment system process with the Clerk setting up the payment and one of two Councillors with full banking powers authorising the payment;
- (2) that the 2 Councillors with full Banking powers be Councillors Summers and Vidler
- (3) that a further Councillor undertake a reconciliation of the accounts through matching the Bank statements against the Council's finance system, also against the report approved by Council and that this reconciliation take place between each payment round
- (4) that the reconciliation be undertaken by Councillor Hinds
- (5) that the appropriate amendments be made to the Council's Financial Regulations.

12. Savings Accounts

The Clerk reported that the Council had identified in its Financial Risk Assessment that it needed to set up a Savings account to enable the Council to be in the position where it did not have more than £85000 with one Bank. He had researched the various options and had identified 2 possible accounts with other providers, and which had easy access and reasonable interest rates. The first with an instant access account and an interest rate of 2.25% was the Nationwide and the second was the Cambridge Building Society which had instant access but that payments was by using cheques, which caused a short delay but had an interest rate of 2.9%.

It was **Agreed** that the Council set up an account with the Cambridge Building Society on the basis set out above.

13. Speedwatch

The Council received the latest Speedwatch figures, and it was **Agreed** that the report be noted.

14. Highways and Road Safety – Highway Improvement Plan

The Chairman reported that the Council was meeting with a representative from Kent County Council the next day to discuss the Highway Improvement Plan. She indicated that the Council was looking at the potential of 3 key projects which were the pedestrian crossing in the centre of the village, chicanes at both ends of the village, and the extension of the 30mph to the whole length and to include 20mph in the centre of the village.

It was **Agreed** that the Highway Improvement Plan be considered further at the next meeting of the Council following the meeting with KCC.

15. Streetlights

The Council considered the report of the Clerk setting out the results of the Council's streetlighting maintenance contractor Streetlights Service Inspection Report and the works required to be undertaken.

It was **Agreed** that

- (1) the streetlight works in respect of Columns 1, 5, 11, & 16 be approved subject to clarification of changes to cost arising from the change in lantern design to a Windsor lantern;
- (2) That the Clerk report back on the costs, implementation period and the funding of a change to LED Windsor lanterns to all the Council's streetlights.

16. ROSPA Play Safety Report

The Council considered the latest ROSPA Play Inspection Report of the play equipment in the Arthur Nicholson Recreation Ground and the Peter Roberts Field. The report raised no high risk items but did highlight a few medium risk items.

It was **Agreed** that

- (1) The Council would take no action in respect of the issues relating to the medium risk items in respect of the play equipment in the Arthur Nicholson Recreation Ground:
and
- (2) The Clerk be authorised to take the appropriate action to deal with the issues to rectify the issues within the report relating to the Peter Roberts field.

17. Streetlights Electricity Charges

The Clerk reported that he had approached one of these companies that specialises in finding cheaper tariffs for Parish Council streetlighting and had received a quote for the annual cost which was only valid for that day of £1593.26 for 12 months, £1636.07 for 24 months, and £1627.78 for 36 months. This compared to the quoted charge of £2626.64 from Npower, and all were a significant saving. The advice received was that 12 months might not be long enough, and energy prices might not have reduced enough and that 36 months might be too long as prices might reduce further over that period. The Clerk also indicated that the price quoted was for that day only and would change tomorrow though the variation should not be significant though could be.

It was **Agreed** that

- (1) The quote of £1636.07 for 24 months be accepted though it be accepted that the price could vary the next day.
- (2) The Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to accept a different amount to that quoted as long as it still provided a significant saving to the Council.

18. Memorial Inspections

The Clerk reported he had sought and obtained a quote from IMI a company specializing in Memorial Inspections and who were doing work for Southborough Town Council. The quote received was as follows: -

Cost of Inspection and recording - £3.80 per memorial

Cost of Vertical Staking Failed Memorials Up to 1.2m High – Per Memorial (Single Stake), pro-rotta for muti-staking - £10.00

Cost of Cordoning Off failed Memorials (including chambers), style 1 - £10.00 (16 lm @ £0.63 per lm)

Cost of Cordoning Off failed Memorials (including chambers), style 2 - £40.00 (16 lm @ £2.50 per lm)

Cost of Cordoning Off failed Memorials (including chambers), style 3 - £50.00 (16 lm @ £3.13 per lm)

Laid Memorial (hand) - £5.00 per memorial

Memorial Signage – self adhesive – installed - £3.00 per sign

Mechanical Laid Memorial - £50.00 per memorial

Mechanical Lay Tomb - £275.00 per tomb

If less than 500 memorials, then a one off surcharge of £250.00 will be incurred

With the Council being responsible for 246 headstones and 11 Tombs the total cost of inspection and recording was £1226.60

It was **Agreed** that the quote from IMI as set out above be accepted.

19. Update on Action Points

(1) Birchwood – Summer Steps

The Clerk reported that he had written to the last remaining member of the Mortlock family that was a signatory to the lease asking for information re the possible extension of the lease and the Summer Steps. He had not received a reply and if this continued to be the case, he would hold discussions the Birchwood Association and Councillor Eames and Stevens to work out how the Council should proceed and report back to the Council.

(2) Waste Bins

Councillor Eames reported that the TWBC waste control team had informed him that they would provide the 3 new bins and the collection from them. He would continue to follow this up with TWBC.

20. Play Park Tender

The Chairman reported that tenders for the new Play Park equipment was due in at the end of this week and would be considered at a public meeting on 9 October before final decision is made by the Council at its meeting on 23 October.

21. Exclusion of the Press and Public – Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

It was **Agreed** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting in accordance with the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to enable the Council to consider confidential information in respect of an employment issue.

22. Confidential Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 July 2023

It was **Agreed** that the Confidential Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 July 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

23. Duration of Meeting

7.34pm to 9.20pm