

BIDBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE BIDBOROUGH VILLAGE HALL ON 29 JANUARY 2024 STARTING AT 7.00PM

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 and Borough Councillor Curry

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Stevens and Mrs Vidler stated that they had been appointed as Trustees of the Friends of Bidborough Charity but that there was no interest to be disclosed in any of the items on the agenda.

Councillor Marriott disclosed an interest in Planning Application 23/03276/FULL – 13 Glebelands, Bidborough as it was his planning application and stated that he would not participate or vote on this application. All of the other Councillors stated that they knew Councillor Marriott.

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

Councillor Mrs Summers disclosed an interest in Agenda Item 20 the Play Park Fencing Contract as her Company could be involved in the supply of the contract and stated that she would not participate or vote on this application.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 27 November 2023

It was **Agreed** that the minutes, including the confidential minutes, of the meeting held on 27 November 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2023

There were no matters arising

5. Report of the Borough and County Councillors

There were no County or Borough 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 concern about potholes at the bottom of Gate Farm Road but it was noted that this was a matter for KCC but the Parish Council would look into it.
- A member of the public raised concerns about the condition of the path at Brookhurst Field gate. Councillor Eames stated that he would look into it.
- In response to questions from the public the Chairman stated that the Council was considering the matter being discussed in the confidential section of the meeting and that the final decision would be made public once it had been made.
- Concern was expressed about the condition of the paths within the area. These were probably not the direct responsibility of the Parish, but the Council would look into what could be done.

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 be noted: -

Expenditure For Approval

Name	Reason for Invoice	Net	VAT	Gross
Neil Harris	Payroll for December – Paid in accordance with agreed procedure	947.70	0.00	947.70
MDH Horticultural Contractors	Preparation of 5 Ashes Plots - Already paid as agreed by Council	255.00	0.00	255.00
MDH Horticultural Contractors	Lengthsman Contract – Already paid as agreed by Council	700.00	140.00	840.00
MDH Horticultural Contractors	ANRG Contract – already paid as agreed by Council	280.00	56.00	336.00
HMRC	National Insurance and Tax Payment – Month 9 - Already paid as agreed by Council	273.96	0.00	273.96
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	Election 2023 Recharge	2931.77	0.00	2931.77
MFW	Payroll charges January to December 2023	240.00	48.00	288.00
Bidborough Village Hall	Hall Hire Charges – September to November	124.00	0.00	124.00
Neil Harris	Payroll for January – Paid in accordance with agreed procedure	918.00	0.00	918.00
HMRC	National Insurance and Tax Payment – Month 10	273.96	0.00	273.96

Income Received since last meeting

Name	Reason for Income	Net	VAT	Gross
14 Allotment Holders	Allotment Rent	323.00	0.00	323.00

Bank	Interest - December	174.86	0.00	174.86
Bank	Interest - January	154.97	0.00	154.97

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 report be noted.

9. **23/01513/FULL – The Barn adjacent to the Cottage, Franks Hollow Road, Bidborough**

It was **Agreed** to ratify the decision made between meetings to raise no objection to Planning Application 23/01513/FULL.

10. **23/03254/FULL – Clock House Farm, Penshurst Road, Bidborough**

It was **Agreed** to raise no objection to Planning Application 23/03254/FULL.

11. **23/03276/FULL – 13 Glebelands, Bidborough**

It was **Agreed** to raise no objection to Planning Application 23/03276/FULL.

12. **23/03359/FULL – Great Hayesden, Lower Hayesden Lane, Bidborough**

It was **Agreed** to raise no objection to Planning Application 23/03359/FULL.

13. **23/03421/FULL – Swaylands, Penshurst Road, Bidborough**

It was **Agreed** to raise no objection to Planning Application 23/03421/FULL.

14. **23/03443/FULL – The Coach House, High Street, Bidborough**

It was **Agreed** that the Council believes there are a number of technical issues within this application which will need to be determined by the Borough Council as Planning Authority, but the Council would comment that this application is within the Conservation Area and that it would support some of the concerns raised by the neighbours.

15. **23/03450/FULL - The Coach House, High Street, Bidborough**

It was **Agreed** that the Council believes there are a number of technical issues within this application which will need to be determined by the Borough Council as Planning Authority,

but the Council would comment that this application is within the Conservation Area and that it would support some of the concerns raised by the neighbours.

16. 24/00139/FULL – 29 Bidborough Ridge, Bidborough

It was **Agreed** to raise no objection to Planning Application 24/00139/FULL.

17. 24/00218/FULL – The Glen House, High Street, Bidborough

This planning application was withdrawn from the agenda for consideration at the next meeting of the Council.

18. Public consultation on TWBC's response to the Inspector's Initial Findings on the Examination of the New Local Plan

The Council considered the correspondence received from TWBC relating to the Local Plan and potential implications for the Council.

It was **Agreed** to note the correspondence.

19. Bidborough Sports Association

It was **Agreed** to ratify the appointment of Councillor Vidler as the Council's representative on the Bidborough Sports Association.

20. Lengthsman Contract

The Clerk reported that he had received a quote for the Lengthsman Contract from the existing contractor for the forthcoming year on the basis that the Council was satisfied with the existing contractor and wished to extend the contract for a further year.

It was **Agreed** that the action of the Clerk, acting in accord with the wishes of the Council, to negotiate an extension of the Lengthsman contract with the existing contractor MDH Horticultural Contractors be approved and that the quote in the following terms be accepted: -

Every 2 Weeks

1. Alfs Corner and Bus stop areas - £40.00
2. Top of St Lawrence Avenue mow/Strim - £40.00 Hedge - £60.00
3. Allotments £60.00
4. Spring Lane - £60.00
5. Around Village Sign - £30.00
6. Cemetery and Churchyard – £280.00

Monthly

7. Lower Rec

8. Footpaths
9. Brookhurst field - £280.00 for all 3 sections

General

10. Lower Rec Hedges - £280.00
11. Brookhurst Field Hedge - £500.00
12. The Mount Hedge - £280.00
13. Bidborough Ridge Hedge - £60.00
14. Village Green Hedge - £280.00
15. Village Road Signs – £140.00
16. Churchyard Hedge - £140.00

21. Birchwood Land – Storm Damage

The Council was updated on the recent storm damage at Birchwood which had mostly been cleared away by the Birchwood Association. However there still remained one substantial tree which needed to be cleared away but could require the use of a tractor.

It was **Agreed** that Simon Pierson be approached to see if he could assist with the removal of this tree.

22. Birch Wood Land – Summers Steps

The Clerk reported that he had received 2 quotes for works to make good the Summers Steps which whilst not on land owned by the Council did allow access to the Council land known as Birchwood. The quotes were £5230 from Pallet Handling and £5700 from MDH Horticultural Contractors.

The Council gave careful consideration to this matter and in particular that there were a number of access points to the woods. They also considered that undertaking this work would give the Council an ongoing responsibility for repair of the steps. The Council felt that the quotes were reasonable but that this was a significant cost for the Council to repair these steps which were on land not owned by the Council, particularly as there were alternative access points to the woods. It was felt that the most appropriate action was to close the access point.

It was **Agreed**

- (1) that Pallet Handling and MDH Horticultural Contractors be thanked for their quotes
- (2) that no work be undertaken on the Summer Steps and that the access point be closed.

23. Savings Accounts

The Clerk reported that since the Council had considered the matter of Savings Accounts and had agreed, in principle, to set up an account with the Cambridge Building Society he had looked at this further and wished to recommend a two-tier approach for Savings. He proposed that the unallocated reserve or General Fund of £50000 be placed in the Cambridge Building Society achieving a 2.9% interest and that the other reserves up to a maximum of £75000 be placed in an instant access account with the Nationwide at a rate of 2.2%

It was **Agreed** that the approach set out above by the Clerk be adopted and that the Savings Accounts be set up.

24. Financial Regulations

The Council considered a number of amendments to the Financial Regulations.

It was **Agreed** that the following amendments to the Financial Regulations be approved: -

- 5.2 Amended to note payment schedule signed by the Chairman, not each item initialled.
- 5.5c Amended to remove limit of £2,500 transfer between accounts. No limit given.
- 6.9 Wording amended slightly re BACS payments.
- 6.15. noted RFO as signatory on the account. Noted number of councillors with authority to approve payments.

25. Fixed Asset Register

The Council considered the Fixed Asset Register circulated to the meeting

It was **Agreed** that the Fixed Asset Register as attached to these minutes be approved.

26. Action List arising from AGAR and Internal Audit Report Update

The Council considered the report of the Clerk updating the Council on the progress with Action List arising from the AGAR and Internal Audit Report. The Council was pleased to see that many of the actions had been completed and that all actions were on schedule for completion by the end of March.

It was **Agreed** to note the report and the action already completed.

27. Bidborough HIP

Councillor Stevens updated the Council on the current position relating to the HIP and the proposals within that document. He stated that KCC had informed him that the Council would probably be able to extend the 30mph zone to the extent of the 40mph zone but that it would be unlikely that they would be able to have a crossing point. However, his contact at KCC would discuss this further with his colleagues and will come back to the Council.

In the meantime, a quote for the speed signs previously agreed had been received with 10 x A4 costing £120 and 10 x A3 costing £160.

It was **Agreed** that the update report be noted and that the quote for 10 x A3 signs at a cost of £160 be approved.

28. Bidborough Ridge Pavement

Councillor Stevens indicated he had discussed the growth from the hedges coming out onto the path on Bidborough Ridge with Peter Pierson and they were going to try a method using a bulldozer to clear the undergrowth but if unsuccessful he would get a working party of volunteers together.

It was **Agreed** to note the report

29. Play Park Tender

The Chairman of the Council updated the Council that following talks with the Planning Dept at TWBC, Kompan, Friends of Bidborough and Council members it was felt, that in line with the quote to proceed with the unroofed castle.

The contract for the build has been signed – we have queried some of the T&C and are waiting to hear back from Kompan on these. They are relatively minor issues – the only one that we can't agree to is that once the supplies are on-site, they are the responsibility of the council. Kompan have included a security brief in their tender, and I have advised that the equipment has to remain the responsibility of Kompan until handover.

The current timeline is 'breaking ground' during w/c 11/3 starting with the dismantling of the old play park. The build itself will take 2 weeks. If it goes to plan, then it should be finished by 1st week of April, but the build timeline actually finishes 15 April giving 2 contingency weeks should we have terrible weather when no work can be done. This means the play park will be ready to greet the school children on their return for summer term. It also finalises around a month before the cricket season starts allowing time for restitution of the site if required.

Friends of Bidborough have provisionally allocated Friday 19th or Saturday 20th April for an opening celebration.

On that note, may I say many thanks to the Friends for their Ceilidh on 27th January. It was a fantastic evening and raised another £1,500 for the park.

Later this week we have, a meeting with the Council's on-site manager, Adam Carrick, to run through logistics from our end and then a meeting with the Contracts Manager at Kompan has been arranged for the following week. When the build commences Adam Carrick and Sandra – who are the on-site managers – may need to make immediate decisions and a decision process to enable this will need to be approved.

It was Agreed

(1) To note the report

(2) that the Clerk, in consultation with the Council, be given delegated authority to approve any amendment to the Play Park scheme as long as any such amendment to the scheme does not increase the overall cost of the scheme as either detailed within the accepted quote from Kompan or the budget allocated to this project by the Council

(3) that the Clerk be given delegated authority to approve any changes to the scheme including approving any actions raised by Mr Carrick, the Council's on site supervisor, during the supervision of the contract.

30. Play Park – Fencing Contract

The Council's original proposal was to replace the existing fencing with weldmesh panels, to provide a rooftop net replacing the existing together with standard fencing for the remainder of the Play Park perimeter. The Chairman reported that the Cricket Club had not indicated their opposition to the original fencing proposal other than to have padding applied to the fencing as it abridges the cricket playing area. The cricket club had been asked for detail of the type of padding they would want and advised there was no allowance in the budget for this so the cricket club would have to meet the cost. However, if things go to plan and the Council can cover these costs, they will, but an idea of costings would be required. She also indicated that the Council had received an offer from Excel Build and Fence Ltd to supply the approved fencing at cost and to undertake the installation work at no cost to the Council.

It was Agreed

(1) that the Council proceed with the original fencing proposal of replacing the existing fencing with weldmesh panels, to provide a rooftop net replacing the existing together with standard fencing for the remainder of the Play Park perimeter.

(2) that Financial Regulations be waived to allow the Council to receive only one quote for the provision of fencing at the Play Park, as set out in (1) above from Excel Build and Fence Ltd on the basis that they would supply the approved fencing at cost and undertake the installation work at no cost to the Council.

31. 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.

32. Duration of Meeting

7.00pm to 9.40pm