

BIDBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE BIDBOROUGH VILLAGE HALL ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2025 STARTING AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs Vidler (Chairman) Cole, Eames, Hinds, Marriott, and Mrs Summers

In Attendance – County Councillor Moreland, Borough Councillor Le Page and Neil Harris (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Stevens.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mrs Vidler stated that she had been appointed as a Trustee 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 stated that his wife was a Church Warden and that he was a member of the Bidborough Church but felt that this was not an interest that precluded him from speaking and voting on matters relating to the Church and its churchyard.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 28 July 2025

It was **Agreed** that the minutes, including the confidential minutes, of the meeting held on 28 July 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2025

There were no matters arising

5. Report of the Borough and County Councillors

Borough Councillor Le Page stated that he had not been well and that he was at the meeting tonight to answer any questions, which if he was not able to answer he would respond in writing to the Council.

County Councillor John Moreland reported that in respect of the HIP and associated work Emma Richmond had replaced Ryan Shiel as the liaison between the Council and the County Council Highways department. He also had asked the CAB to come and hold a session at Bidborough for the residents of the Flats, and he was making arrangements to put this in place. In terms of local government reorganisation whilst most authorities were adopting

either a 3 or 4 Council model, KCC were now indicating their support for a 1 Council model. There was discussion on this matter.

6. Public Participation

A Member of the public raised the issue of the announcement of KCC clearing £50m of debt, which was not the case and that there was no savings and that it was a matter of debt restructuring.

A member of the public indicated that he would still wish to see a pedestrian crossing on Bidborough Ridge. The Chairman stated that the HIP was being discussed later on the agenda.

7. 25/01754/FULL – 2 Clockhouse Mews, Swaylands, Penshurst Road, Bidborough

It was **Agreed** that the decision to not object taken between meetings be ratified.

8. 25/01755/LBC – 2 Clockhouse Mews, Swaylands, Penshurst Road, Bidborough

It was **Agreed** that the decision to not object taken between meetings be ratified.

9. 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
Buss Murton Law	Charges in respect of the work on the Money Claim made against the Council- Paid	1458.50	297.70	1750.20
CTP Consulting Engineers	Inspection of Retaining Wall, Lychgates and Bank - Paid	1485.00	297.00	1782.00
Southern Scaffolding Limited	Six Weekly inspections of scaffolding to the South Lychgate at the Church at a £125 per visit - Paid	750.00	150.00	900.00
Streetlights	Replacement Lantern in Windsor Heritage style at Column 8 The Glebe - Paid	1395.00	279.00	1674.00
Pallet Handling Penshurst Ltd	Ground Works at Alfs Corner - Paid	265.00	53.00	318.00
St John Ambulance (Supplies)	Purchase of Infant/child Defib pad - Paid	124.95	24.99	149.94

SSE Energy Solutions	Streetlights Energy Costs for June - Paid	19.59	3.92	23.51
MDH Horticultural Contractors	ANRG works – August - Paid	360.00	72.00	432.00
MDH Horticultural Contractors	Lengthsman Contract – August - Paid	1425.00	285.00	1710.00
Neil Harris	Payroll for August – Paid in accordance with agreed procedure	1067.25	0.00	1067.25
HMRC	National Insurance and Tax Payment – Month 5 - Paid	388.25	0.00	388.25
Lloyds Bank	Bank Service Charge – Paid 19 August	4.25	0.00	4.25
Banfield Wood	Cricket Pavilion – Deposit for Structural Engineering Services	410.00	82.00	492.00
Streetlights	Repairs to Damaged Light and pruning works to prevent further damage	195.00	0.00	234.00
Bidborough Village Hall CIO	Hall Hire charges from 1 May to 31 July 2025	103.20	0.00	103.20
MDH Horticultural Contractors	Lengthsman Contract – September	1575.00	315.00	1890.00
MDH Horticultural Contractors	ANRG works – September	360.00	72.00	432.00
Kent Sussex Ecology Ltd	Cricket Pavilion – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment	2400.00	480.00	2880.00
Greenlink Ecology Ltd	Cricket Pavilion – Bat Survey and Report	2750.00	550.00	3300.00
Neil Harris	Payroll for September	1067.25	0.00	1067.25
HMRC	National Insurance and Tax Payment – Month 6	388.25	0.00	388.25
Lloyds Bank	Bank Service Charge – Paid 19 September	4.25	0.00	4.25
Buss Murton Law	Charges in respect of the work on the Money Claim made against the Council	368.00	73.60	441.60

Income Received since last meeting

Name	Reason for Income	Net	VAT	Gross
Bank	Interest – August	83.58	0.00	83.58
Bank	Interest – September	66.81	0.00	66.81

Transfers between Council Accounts

Account	Account to be Transferred to	Reason	Amount
Business Reserve	Community Account	Fund approved expenditure	6400
Business Reserve	Community Account	Fund approved expenditure	6400
Business Reserve	Community Account	Fund approved expenditure	3775

10. Birch Wood Land

The Clerk stated that there was nothing to report and Councillor Eames indicated that a Working Party had been held in the wood that morning.

11. Bidborough HIP and Submission for funding to TWBC

The Clerk reported that Councillor Stevens had had a very useful meeting with Ryan Shiel and Emma Richmond of KCC regarding the Council's HIP. In the absence of Councillor Stevens, the Clerk updated the Council on this meeting as follows: -

(1) The two VAS units to be replaced with mains connected units which would operate at night. These units cost around 9-10K each so the PR2 funding should cover this. Full costings to be supplied by Kent Highways for the application to TWBC for the PR2 funding. KCC felt that although the engineers did check the current units, he was confident that they did not work at night so hence they need replacing.

(2) All the signage on the B2176 would be revised this year, probably in the next couple of months, so that additional signage and road markings could be added. It was very unlikely that it would be possible to get the whole stretch of the B2176 from east to west of the village to be 30 MPH.

(3) a) The Wrap around Yellow Lines curb protection by the village shop.

b) The Yellow Zig Zags waiting restrictions by the old schoolhouse to operate during school times.

c) The 10 metre Double Yellow Lines at junction with High Street and Bidborough Ridge. These would be lumped together under one TRO which was cheaper and once the consultation takes place with Kent Highways the Council could decide to either do them all or remove items which had been met by opposition.

The Council has until the end of December 2025 to submit its application for the PR2 projects and Kent Highways have to get their costing done by the end of October 2025. The actual work would probably get done in the 2026 financial year.

There was also other good news that Westcotec who have had the supply contract for VAS units now have a competitor which has been appointed by Kent Highways. Hopefully this should mean there will be a more competitive cost going forward.

It was **Agreed** that the report be noted and that the necessary changes to the HIP approved.

12. Church Lychgates

The Council considered the report of the Clerk including that since the last meeting of the Council it had become clear that the work to the Lychgates would be a very complicated process and would require a Faculty approval from the Diocese before any work could commence. The Faculty process would, in effect, replace the planning process with the Diocese ensuring that the scheme was in accord with the requirements that they set. In addition, Faculty approval was not about the Council applying to the Diocese but was a joint application from the Council, PCC and the incumbent.

The Clerk reported that he believed that Helen Dye's extensive experience of the Faculty process and working with the Diocese as part of this process as well as her expertise as an architect managing projects similar to this would be extremely helpful to the Council on this project. On this basis the Clerk asked her to give the Council a quote for managing the Faculty process and managing the work on this project as a whole with her quote broken down into different sections. A copy of her quote had been circulated to all Councillors

It was **Agreed** that the quote from Helen Dye from Dye Tabrett Architects for work on the Church Lychgates as set out below be approved: -

RIBA Stages	Description	NET FEE
Pre-Construction Stages		
Stage 3	Developed Design – Faculty Application Process: includes preparation the Statement of Justification. It is agreed that the Statement of Needs will be provided by the churchwardens.	Lump sum: £800 based on a maximum of 8 hours work. Should this need to exceed by more than 2 hours, an hourly rate adjustment will apply.
Stage 4	Technical Design and preparation and issue of Tender documents – to include specification documents for pricing. Incudes for two site meetings.	Lump sum: £1000 based on a maximum of 10 hours work. Should this need to exceed by more than 2 hours, an hourly rate adjustment will apply.
Stage 4	Drawings and large scale details if required (this depends on scope)	Hourly rate @ £100 an hour
Additional Work A	Measured Survey of Lychgate Structures and drawings of the existing	Lump sum: £1200

13. Church Bank

The Clerk reported that the Council had only just received the report and that he had had no opportunity to read the report in detail.

14. 16-30 Bidborough Ridge – Social Housing

The Clerk reported that a response had been received from TWBC to the FoI request and Councillor Stevens had discussed it with the local resident advising the Council on this matter and this the summary of his view: -

- (1) The Secretary of State would need to approve the sale of the property.
- (2) As far as could be identified there was no provision in the sale agreement for TWBC to influence the matter directly and it had no claw back provision as at the time of the stock transfer TWBC received the market value.
- (3) Any replacement social housing would not have to be in Bidborough. The replacement housing could be anywhere in the Borough, and they could say that they have made up the loss in one of their other property locations.
- (4) The Council's advisor was of the opinion that the current tenants would probably gain a better property.
- (5) When the land is sold and a developer is made known, the Council can oppose the development or try and insist that they must build some affordable housing. This could be hard to achieve.

The Council's advisor felt that the Council could not do much more at this stage.

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

15. Peter Roberts Field Terms of Use Policy

It was **Agreed** that the Peter Roberts Terms of Use Policy attached to these minutes be adopted.

16. Coronation Seat

The Clerk reported that he had received the quote from Pallet Handling Ltd in the sum of £746 plus VAT.

It was **Agreed** that the quote from Pallet Handling Ltd in the sum of £746 plus VAT be approved and that the Clerk also look to ensure the removal of the brambles.

17. Streetlighting Energy Costs

The Clerk reported that a new pricing schedule had been received from Cardinal Energy which had been circulated to all Councillors. The schedule indicated that SSE, the Council's current supplier was still the cheapest.

It was **Agreed** that the price from SSE at an estimated annual cost of £1984.06 over 3 years be accepted.

18. Local Government Reorganisation

The Council considered the letter from the Leader of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council seeking responses on a number of points from the Council by 6 October. It was **Agreed** that the Chairman draft a response and circulate to Councillors and respond on behalf of the Council.

19. Cricket Pavilion

The Chairman updated the Council on the current position relating to the pavilion development and in particular the comments from Sport England and their specific view regarding accessibility to the first floor terrace. They did not accept platform stairlifts as a way to access upper levels, they believed them undignified and caused issues for day to day access.

Therefore, to keep on board Sport England who would be major funder of the project there were 2 options: -

1. Omit the first floor balcony, either extending the pitch of the roof out, or making it a deck for maintenance only.
2. Re-design to accommodate a platform lift, this would likely mean a redesign of the whole stair area, eating more space into the changing rooms that ECB have just accepted are ok. A platform lift is 1.1mx1.4m(d) and requires a 1.5x1.5m access zone on both levels. This means the deck would have to be wider to allow.

The Council discussed the matter as one of the partners in this project and it was **Agreed** that Option 1 should be adopted and that the Pavilion Development Committee be informed of the Council's view.

20. School PTA Annual Fireworks Display – 8 November 2025

The Clerk reported that the Council had received an application from the School PTA to hold the Annual Fireworks Display on 8 November 2025 on the same basis as previous years with a proposed change. The change being that they would normally have all spectators on the lower playground within the school, however due to the construction equipment being on the playground, that is off limits, spectators would now be in the school parking lot, but they would also request use of the Arthur Nicholson field, next to the Bidborough Playground for any overflow of spectators. They were planning for the bulk of spectators to be within the parking lot but would like to offer the field as an option as well. All of this has been included within the Risk Assessment provided with the application.

It was **Agreed**

(1) that the application to use the Peter Roberts Field on the basis of the application submitted be approved for this year only, subject to Spring Lane being included within the clear up, before and after photos being provided, and the applicant being reminded of the requirement to make good any damage to the standard set by the Council/Trust

(2) that the Council will recommend to the Arthur Nicholson Recreation Ground Charitable Trust Committee of Management that it approve the application for the fireworks display as it affects the Arthur Nicholson Recreation Ground on the basis of the same conditions being applied by the Council

21. 30 Woodland Way

Councillor Cole indicated that he would send to Borough Councillor Le Page the e mail he had sent to Councillor Ellis.

22. St Georges Flags

The Chairman reported that for the flags to fly highways approval was required and that had been granted.

23. CAGNE

The Chairman reported that the Council had received a request for funding from CAGNE an umbrella aviation community and environment group for Sussex, Surrey and Kent who were seeking financial support to help them fund a judicial review of the decision of the government to support a new runway at Gatwick Airport.

It was **Agreed** that a £100 donation be made to CAGNE to support their work in opposition to the second runway at Gatwick Airport

24. Spring Lane – Clearing away of Tree Debris

The Clerk reported that significant tree debris from the allotment Damson Trees had accumulated on Spring Lane and that he had asked for a quote from Thompsons to clear way the tree. It was **Agreed** that the quote from Thompson Tree Care in the sum of £220 to clear away the tree debris in Spring Lane be approved.

25. AGAR 2024/25 – Response from External Auditor

The Clerk reported that he had received the External Auditor response to the Council's AGAR which stated that the Councils Accounts were in accord with Proper Practices and current legislation.

26. 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.

27. Duration of Meeting

7.00pm to 9.37pm