

BIDBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE BIDBOROUGH VILLAGE HALL ON 23 FEBRUARY 2026 STARTING AT 7.00 PM

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

In Attendance – County Councillor Moreland, Borough Councillor Ellis, PC Danny Barnes and Neil Harris (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence

An Apology for Absence was received from Councillor Marriot

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor 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.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 26 January 2026

It was **Agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2026

Minute 16 - Dates for Council Meetings

The Clerk reported that the meeting scheduled for 1 June had to be changed because the Village Hall was not available. He also reported that the date scheduled in March 2027 had to be changed as it was Easter Monday. It was **Agreed** that the meeting scheduled for 1 June be changed to Wednesday 20 May 2026 and the meeting scheduled for 29 March 2027 be changed to 22 March 2027.

5. Local PC

Councillor Cole introduced PC Danny Bush the new Community Police Officer for Bidborough. PC Bush stated that the area he covered was Southborough, High Broom and Bidborough and that he was a Police Officer and not a PCSO and therefore had the power of arrest. He indicated that Bidborough did not have a high crime rate but noted that the village had speeding issues. He supported Speedwatch and that he would, when possible, come and join them, and was also aware that there had been an issue with drugs and some anti-social behaviour. He has a surgery in Southborough and would like to look at setting something similar in the village, but he would also come along to Council meetings when he can. He

indicated that a means of communicating with him would be through the Police’s Community Voice page, which he encouraged people to do.

The Chairman thanked PC Bush for attending the meeting.

6. Report of the Borough and County Councillors

Borough Councillor Mark Ellis updated the Council on Local Government reorganisation and that the Borough Council were supporting the establishment of 3 Unitary Councils to replace the County Council and Medway Council with this area being in West Kent. There were elections being held this May. In response to a question re 30 Woodland Way he indicated that there seemed to be nothing that the Borough Council could do but stated that he would share his papers with Councillor Cole.

County Councillor John Moreland reported that the KCC Council Tax had been set at 3.99%. The Roads budget increase was unlikely to meet inflation and that he was seeking a breakdown on how the budget was to be apportioned.

7. Public Participation

In response to a question from a Member of the Public about the rubbish being left at the flats Borough Councillor Ellis stated that he had written to the Housing Association and was awaiting a response.

A query was raised regarding motorbikes entering Birch Wood from the entrance on the Southborough side of the wood where the entrance did not seem to prevent their access. The Clerk indicated that he would take this matter up with Southborough Town Council.

8. 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
Southern Scaffolding Limited	12 Weekly inspections of scaffolding to the South Lychgate at the Church at £80 per visit	960.00	192.00	1152.00
Southern Scaffolding Limited	13 Weekly inspections of scaffolding to the South Lychgate at the Church at £80 per visit	1040.00	208.00	1248.00
Buss Murton Law	For work undertaken between 24 November 2025 and 30 January	742.50	148.50	891.00
CTP	Design of Permanent Remedial Works on Southern Lychgate	303.75	60.75	364.50

Thompson Tree Care Ltd	Birchwood – Clear broken branch across garden and fell remaining section of tree as unsafe	480.00	96.00	576.00
Dye Tabrett Architects	Second payment for work on Faculty for Church Lychgates	204.00	0.00	204.00
Vision ICT	E mail hosting for April 2026 to March 2027	160.00	32.00	192.00
SSE Energy Solutions	Streetlights Energy Costs for January	208.51	10.53	218.94
Neil Harris	Payroll for January	1082.10	0.00	1082.10
HMRC	National Insurance and Tax Payment – Month 11	388.25	0.00	388.25
April Skies Accounting Ltd	Interim Audit 2024/25	290.00	0.00	290.00
Fox Managed Solutions Limited	Recreation Ground Own risk sign x 2 and Cricket Ball Warning sign x 2	318.54	63.71	382.25
Lloyds Bank	Bank Service Charge – To be paid 19 February	4.25	0.00	4.25

Income Received since last meeting

Name	Reason for Income	Net	VAT	Gross
Bank	Interest – February	58.97	0.00	58.97
Allotments	1 Payment	40.80	0.00	40.80
HMRC	VAT Reclaim Payment	10292.56	0.00	10292.56

Transfers between Council Accounts

Account	Account to be Transferred to	Reason	Amount
None			

9. 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.

10. Finance Package

The Clerk informed the Council that the current finance package from Edge would come to a conclusion at the end of the month and it was **Agreed** that a 3 year contract be entered into with Edge IT Systems Ltd for the continuation of the finance package at an annual cost of £452 plus VAT.

11. Birch Wood Land

Councillor Cole reported to the Council that a few local residents had indicated that they would be happy to contribute to the cost of repairing the steps into Birch Wood from Darnley Drive. The Council was not able to do work to these steps as they were not in the ownership of the Council. Councillor Cole indicated that he would let the local residents know this position.

12. Bidborough HIP and Submission for funding to TWBC

The Clerk reported that the Council had applied for a grant of £23k from TWBC for the revised VAS signs approved by the Council as a change to the scheme agreed at the last meeting for the replacement of the VAS signs at a cost of £22k.

In the meantime, the Clerk was also enquiring of the cost of the other schemes in the HIP with KCC to see if these could be moved forward in the future.

It was **Agreed** that to ratify the decision of the Council to change the agreed VAS signs to a higher spec model at a total cost of £23k to TWBC.

13. Church Lychgates

The Clerk reported that the investigation work on the Lychgates would be taking place on Wednesday and that after that work can start to proceed on getting the repair works done though the scheme for repair will require DAC approval.

14. Church Wall and Church Tombs

There was nothing to report

15. Bidborough Ridge – Gap in Hedge

The issue of the gap in the hedge in Bidborough Ridge caused by a vehicle was discussed and Councillor Cole indicated that with the help of PC Bush they had been able to trace who had been responsible. It was **Agreed** that Councillor Stevens approach the person concerned to see if they would make good the damage to the hedge.

16. DAVSS Grant Application

The Council considered the request for a grant from the DAVSS and as this was not one of the approved bodies for grants and it was **Agreed** that the application for grant received from DAVSS be refused.

17. Cricket Pavilion

The Chairman reported that decisions on the pavilion had been deferred but they were meeting soon to see how to take the project forward. It was **Agreed** that the Chairman should ask the BSA to look at restricting the use of the Bowls Club site that was being used for other purposes.

18. Play Park

It was reported that there had been a problem with water being retained on the surface within the Play Park. There had been a number of ideas about how this was happening mostly revolving around water coming off the bank. The Council had asked the gentleman who had been so helpful with the drainage difficulties on the recreation ground to come and have a look. He had indicated that the possible solution could be to put in a collection sump at the bottom of the Bank with a pipe being put in to take water to the pond. He felt that it might also require a shingle trap as well. It was **Agreed** that Mr Giles Swift be asked to give the Council a detailed breakdown of the works required and a quote for undertaking this work.

19 Speedwatch

The wording of the notices for the Notice boards and the Council website seeking volunteers for Speedwatch was submitted to the Council and it was **Agreed** to approve the draft wording submitted to the Council.

It was also **Agreed** to put up Speedwatch signs on the Council's lampposts.

20. Council Meeting Sign

It was **Agreed** that an A Board sign advertising the Council meeting for placing outside the Village Hall be approved and that a quote be sought from Fox Managed Solutions Ltd

21. Bowls Club Flagpole

The Chairman reported that Speldhurst Bowls Club had asked if they could purchase the Bowls Club flagpole and it was **Agreed** that they be informed that this matter should be taken up with the BSA.

22. Website

It was **Agreed** that this be considered at the next meeting including when the contract comes to a conclusion.

23. 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.

24. Duration of Meeting

7.00pm to 9.19pm