

BIDBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD IN THE BIDBOROUGH VILLAGE HALL ON 20 MAY 2026 STARTING AT 7.05 PM

PRESENT: Councillors Cole, Eames, Hinds, Marriott, Stevens and Mrs Summers

In Attendance – Borough Councillor Ellis and Neil Harris (Clerk)

1. Election of the Chairman of the Council

It was **Agreed** that Councillor Mrs Vidler be elected Chairman of the Council until the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2027.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Vidler and County Councillor Moreland

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Stevens stated that he 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.

4. Election of the Vice Chairman of the Council

It was **Agreed** that Councillor Mrs Summers be elected Vice Chairman of the Council until the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2027.

5. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 27 April 2026

It was **Agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed subject to the spelling of Marriott being changed to include 2 t's.

6. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2026

(1) Minute 22 – Speedwatch

Councillor Cole informed the Council that the equipment had been transferred to the Village Hall and that the training of the new set of volunteers was underway.

7. Report of the Borough and County Councillors

Borough Councillor Mark Ellis reported

(1) that at the recent Borough Council election 2 new Councillors had been elected for the area of Bidborough namely Kimberley Johnson and Ash Shakula

(2) that the ability for individual Borough Councillors to call in applications for consideration by the Planning Committee had been removed and that the Borough Council had started the Call for Sites process.

(3) that the position on local government reorganisation would be clarified in July with the likelihood of elections for the new shadow unitary Council taking place in May 2027 and the new Council coming into place in May 2028. A new Town Council for Tunbridge Wells was also being set up in accord with the same timescale.

(4) the latest position on the Royal Victoria Place project and that the Stage 1 plans were complete and showing more entertainment in relation to retail than previously.

(5) in response to a question that he had not received any response to his enquiries, which included the Housing Association, relating to the flats in Bidborough Ridge and that he would chase this up and get back to the Council

(6) in response to a question that the Borough Council Officers had informed him that the Council had no power to take any action in respect of its powers under planning legislation on 30 Woodland Way, at this point in time in its current condition. He did indicate that he would take up the possibility of rodent infestation with Environmental Health and the matter of the payment of Council Tax with the Council's Council Tax team and get back to Councillor Cole.

8. Public Participation

There were no questions or issues raised by the public other than concerns over 30 Woodland Way.

9. Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies

It was **Agreed** that the following Councillors be appointed to the following outside bodies: -

(1) KALC Area Committee – Chairman of the Council (Councillor Mrs Vidler), Substitute Vice Chairman of the Council (Councillor Mrs Summers)

(2) Bidborough Sports Association – Councillors Eames and Mrs Vidler

(3) Birchwood Association – Councillors Eames and Stevens.

10. Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The Council had no proposals for change and there being no new model from NALC to consider that the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations would remain unaltered.

11. Payment List

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

Expenditure For Approval

Name	Reason for Invoice	Net	VAT	Gross
Thompson Tree Care Ltd	Cut down Sycamore Saplings and poison stumps with eco plugs in Churchyard	220.00	44.00	264.00
CTP	Design of Permanent Remedial Works on Southern Lychgate	1195.00	239.00	1434.00
Vision ICT	E Mail Hosting	100.00	20.00	120.00
Bidborough Village Hall	Cost for hire of Hall	81.35	0.00	81.35
Pierson Agriculture	Gang Mowing Recreation Ground and Peter Roberts Field	341.10	68.22	409.32
Buss Murton Law	Work between 26 March and 11 May	133.87	26.77	160.64
Neil Harris	Payroll for May	1067.25	0.00	1067.25
HMRC	National Insurance and Tax Payment – Month 2	388.25	0.00	388.25
Lloyds Bank	Bank Service Charge – To be Paid 20 May	4.25	0.00	4.25
MDH Horticultural Contractors	ANRG works – May	360.00	72.00	432.00
MDH Horticultural Contractors	Lengthsman Contract – May	1360.00	272.00	1632.00
SSE Energy Solutions	Streetlights Energy Costs for April	124.91	6.25	131.16
April Skies Accounting Ltd	Final Audit 2025/26	290.00	0.00	290.00

Income Received since last meeting

Name	Reason for Income	Net	VAT	Gross
Bank	Interest – May	47.57	0.00	47.57

Transfers between Council Accounts

Account	Account to be Transferred to	Reason	Amount
Business Reserve	Community Account	Fund approved expenditure	4300

12. Final Audit Report 2025/26

The Clerk reported that he had received and had forwarded the Final Audit Report for 2025/26 to Councillors that day and that they would consider the report in detail at their meeting in June in conjunction with the AGAR documents.

13. Council Reserves

The Council considered the report of the Clerk on Council Reserves and that whilst it agreed that it had to allocate funds to the earmarked reserves accepted that the position would change during the year as the costs relating to the Lychgates and other matters in the Churchyard became known.

It was **Agreed** that the Councils Reserves would be allocated as follows: -

General Reserve Fund - £50000

Churchyard works (inc Lychgates, Wall, Tombs and Bank) – £32991.39

Highways Schemes - £10000

Community/Sports Pavilion - £3000

14. Birch Wood Land

The Clerk indicated that there was nothing to report at this meeting.

15. Bidborough HIP and Submission for funding to TWBC

Councillor Stevens reported that the new VAS had been agreed and that the Council was awaiting installation. He also reported that a response had been received from the KCC Cabinet Member to the petition submitted by Andrew Strong to KCC about extending the 30mph speed limit to the whole length of Bidborough Ridge. The response was not very positive and had now been taken up with Mike Martin MP.

He also reported that KCC had produced plans for double yellow lines for the proposals in the Council's HIP and in response he had gone back to KCC asking that the proposal on the north side of the Bidborough Ridge be extended so that the wrap around is extended to include the Substation and was awaiting a response. On the proposal at the top end of the High Street, he was consulting local residents including the pub. In respect of the bottom of the High Street going into Franks Hollow Road and Spring Lane he did not feel double yellow lines was necessary but was consulting local residents and the school. He stated that he would come back to the Council following the consultation and the response from KCC.

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

16. Church Lychgates, Wall and Bank

The Clerk reported that in respect of the Lychgates the Council had received the report from the Structural Engineer on the works that was required and that these were going through the faculty process. Once this had been completed the Council should be in a position to receive the price for the work.

In respect of the monitoring of the wall the Clerk was in the process of finding contractors to undertake the work.

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

17. Bidborough Ridge – Gap in Hedge

Councillor Stevens reported that he had been informed that the works would be completed by the end of May

18. Play Park Drainage

The Clerk reported that he had got onto the Council's contractor and was expecting a quote for Jet washing in the near future. He also indicated it would not be appropriate to do the weed control until after the jet wash. In addition, he also stated that he had written to Savills but was awaiting a response.

19. Peter Roberts Field – School Fair Date

Councillor Cole reported that the School Fair date had changed to Friday 12 June.

20. Peter Roberts Field Application for Use by Streets Football Academy

The Council were informed that the Council had received an application from the Streets Football Academy for the use of the Peter Roberts Field for every Wednesday between 3.15pm and 4.15pm for the remainder of the School year starting from the first week in June on the same basis including the Risk Assessment as agreed by the Council last year.

It was **Agreed** that the application received from the Streets Football Academy for the use of the Peter Roberts Field for every Wednesday between 3.15pm and 4.15pm for the remainder of the school year starting from the first week in June on the same basis including the Risk Assessment as agreed by the Council last year be approved.

21. Cricket Pavilion

The Council were informed that there was nothing new to report.

22. Peter Roberts Field – Basketball Hoop

Councillor Stevens stated he had agreed with the applicant that the location of the new Basketball Hoop and backboard be on the existing goalmouth frame, and the applicant had indicated that he would fit the hoop and board on this basis.

It was **Agreed** that the Council purchase a Basketball Hoop and Backboard for fitting as detailed above.

23. Garden of Remembrance Fir Tree

Councillor Stevens reported that there were problems for some residents to access the Garden of Remembrance because of the Fir Tree located at the site.

It was **Agreed** that the matter be discussed at the next meeting and that in the meantime Councillor Stevens take photos of the issue and that Councillors take the opportunity to visit the site.

24. Defibrillator and First Aid Course

Councillor Stevens had indicated that a Defibrillator and First Aid course was being arranged for villagers at the Village Hall. There was no cost for the provision of the course but there could be a charge for the use of the Village Hall.

It was **Agreed** that the course go ahead and that the Council would meet the cost of the use of the Village Hall.

25. Kent Air Ambulance Charity

The Clerk reported that the Council had received a letter of thanks from the Kent Air Ambulance Charity for the recent donation of £400.

26. Duration of Meeting

7.05pm to 8.30pm