

BIDBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE BIDBOROUGH VILLAGE HALL ON 29 JUNE 2026 STARTING AT 7.00 PM

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

In Attendance – County Councillor Moreland and Neil Harris (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Cole and Hinds and Borough Councillors Ellis and Johnson

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.

All of the Councillors present at the meeting indicated that they knew the applicant, Ray Skinner, in the case of the planning application regarding 6 St Lawrence Avenue.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 20 May 2026

It was **Agreed** that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2026

(1) Minute 22 – Peter Roberts Field – Basketball Hoop

The Clerk reported that a Basketball Hoop and Backboard had been found on the Kent County Supplies website at a cost of £74.99 excl VAT and for which the Council could be invoiced. It was **Agreed** that the Basketball Hoop and Backboard be purchased from Kent County Supplies.

5. Report of the Borough and County Councillors

County Councillor John Moreland reported that there had been a change in the KCC Highways contractor from Amey to Ringway. He also reported that he had written to the Cabinet Member for Highways on the speed of traffic along Bidborough Ridge following a supportive discussion but had been disappointed to receive an unhelpful officer reply from him. He would continue to follow up on this. He also indicated that he was aware of a

possible charge of £250 to Mr Strong for information and he indicated that he would take this up with Mr Strong to ensure that he gets the information for no charge.

6. Public Participation

A member of the public reported that the Government had made £4.5 billion available for highways including some possible funding for crossings where not previously allowed. The Council agreed that it would look into this.

Concern was also expressed about the condition of some of the paths in the village including from Bidborough Ridge and Woodland Way and from the Recreation Ground to Rectory Drive. It was **Agreed** that the Clerk would take up with the KCC PROW team when they would be clearing these paths as they were public footpaths and also seeking a quote from MDH Horticultural for clearing the paths.

7. 26/01168/TPO – High Banks, High Street, Bidborough

It was **Agreed** to raise no objection to Planning Application 26/01168/TPO.

8. 26/01330/FULL - 6 Woodland Way, Bidborough

It was **Agreed** to raise no objection to Planning Application 26/01330/FULL.

9. 26/00784/FULL – 6 St Lawrence Avenue, Bidborough

It was **Agreed** to raise no objection to Planning Application 26/00784/FULL.

10. 26/01258/FULL – Land South of Mill Court, Bidborough

It was **Agreed** to raise no objection to Planning Application 25/01258/FULL.

11. Finance

(1) 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
Kent Creative Solutions Ltd (Kalli Kwik)	Publication of Spring Newsletter - Paid	790.00	0.00	790.00
Pallet Handling Ltd	Payment for works to the Kissing gate at entrance to Brockhurst Field - Paid	336.00	67.20	403.20

Dye Tabrett Architects	Faculty Submission for both Lychgates - Paid	1734.00	0.00	1734.00
Complete Weed Control	Weed control to Church Wall and Paths	417.15	83.43	500.58
Southern Scaffolding Limited	8 Weekly inspections of scaffolding to the South Lychgate at the Church at £80 per visit	640.00	128.00	768.00
SSE Energy Solutions	Streetlights Energy Costs for May	115.72	5.79	121.51
Neil Harris	Payroll for June	1067.25	0.00	1067.25
HMRC	National Insurance and Tax Payment – Month 3	388.25	0.00	388.25
Lloyds Bank	Bank Service Charge – To be Paid 18 June	4.25	0.00	4.25
MDH Horticultural Contractors	ANRG works – June	360.00	72.00	432.00
MDH Horticultural Contractors	Lengthsman Contract – June	1360.00	272.00	1632.00
CJS Plants Ltd	12 Hanging Baskets and 2 Planters	2100.00	420.00	2520.00
McCabe Ford Williams	Payroll Services April to June 2026	60.00	12.00	72.00

Income Received since last meeting

Name	Reason for Income	Net	VAT	Gross
Bank	Interest – June	50.47	0.00	50.47

Transfers between Council Accounts

Account	Account to be Transferred to	Reason	Amount
Business Reserve	Community Account	Fund approved expenditure	7000
Business Reserve	Community Account	Fund approved expenditure	2900

(2) 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.

(3) Final Audit Report 2025/26

The Council considered the Final Internal Audit Report for 2025/26, and it was **Agreed** that the report be accepted by the Council.

It was **Further Agreed** that the Clerk should check the valuation of the Playground equipment on the Council's insurance and report back to the Council.

12. AGAR 2025/26

The Council were informed that the AGAR for 2025/26 needed to be submitted by the end of the month. The Council were pleased with the response but accepted that more work had been needed to be done in respect of Assertion 10. This work would now be completed at this meeting which meant that the Council would then be compliant

It was **Agreed**

(1) that the Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26 be noted and submitted to the External Auditor

(2) that the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 responding Yes to all except for No to Assertion 10 be approved and submitted to the External Auditor.

(3) that the Accounting Statements as submitted by the Clerk to the Council be approved and submitted to the External Auditor.

(4) that the Explanation of Significant Variances to the Accounting Statement document as reported to the Council be approved and submitted to the External Auditor.

13. Council Compliance with Assertion 10

The Council considered the report of the Clerk on Council compliance with assertion 10 on the Annual Governance Statement. It was noted that the website provider had indicated that the Council was technically compliant but did suggest that a MOT of the site by them at a cost of £145 could be helpful. The Clerk reported that the Council was compliant with the Freedom of Information Act and the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities other than the Council did not have an IT Policy and a Complaints Policy. The Clerk had therefore prepared these policies as drafts for consideration by the Council.

It was **Agreed** that

(1) the draft IT Policy and Complaints Policy attached to the agenda be approved

(2) the suggested MOT from VisionICT be not proceeded with at present.

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 he had consulted with the Councillors on whether they wished to proceed with the 3 sites being considered for yellow lines namely on the main road at Gate Farm Cottages, on the entrance to the High Street and outside the Old School House in Spring Lane. Discussion also ensued on the danger caused for children crossing at the Twittens at Woodland Way.

It was **Agreed** that

(1) Councillor Stevens would undertake an informal discussion with residents directly affected by the proposals and report back to the next council meeting

(2) Councillors Cole and Stevens would discuss with the school the proposals relating to yellow lines at the Old School House and also the danger to children at the Twittens with a view to finding the best way to proceed

16. Church Lychgates, Wall and Bank

The Clerk reported that there was nothing new to report on the Lychgates and that the Council was waiting for the Diocese. It was felt that the Council should look to see if the Diocese and/or other bodies could contribute to the cost of these works.

In respect of the monitoring of the wall the Clerk had contacted Site Engineering Services Ltd a company recommended by the Council's Structural Engineer who had quoted £1330 for monitoring the walls for a year as recommended by the Structural Engineer.

It was **Agreed** that the quote received from Site Engineering Services Ltd in the sum of £1330 for the monitoring of the Church wall be approved.

It was **Further Agreed** that the Clerk should look at the Diocese making a contribution to the cost of the works and also look to see whether there were other bodies the Council could seek potential funding assistance for this work.

17. Churchyard – Felling of 2 Conifer Trees

The Clerk reported that he had received a quote from Thompsons for the felling of the 2 Conifer Trees of £750. The Rev Ti Chase had asked if one element of the Trees could be retained but the advice from Thompsons was that this would not work.

It was **Agreed** that the quote from Thompson Tree Care Ltd for the felling of 2 Conifer Trees in the Churchyard at a cost of £750 be accepted.

18. Bidborough Ridge – Gap in Hedge

Councillor Stevens reported that the works had been completed.

19. Play Park Drainage

The Clerk reported that Councillor Stevens was meeting with MDH this week to discuss the problem of water access with sufficient water pressure to be able for them to undertake this work. If the result of this discussion was that they were not able it was **Agreed** that the Clerk obtain quotes from Companies able to provide this service.

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 the Summer holidays on 28 and 30 July, 4, 6, 25 and 27 August on the same basis as before 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 in the Summer on 28 and 30 July, 4, 6, 25 and 27 August 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 plans had been approved and the scheme was progressing to the stage of submission for planning.

22. Acute Respiratory Wheeze and Bonfires

Councillor Stevens stated that a local resident had raised with him concerns of the impact of bonfires on people with acute respiratory wheeze and in particular on the residents seven-year-old son.

It was **Agreed** that the Council would have no objection to the local resident putting a flyer out about this but the Council's name could not be added to the flyer and that the Council would also be happy to publish an appropriate article from the local resident on this matter in the next Parish Newsletter.

23. Thanks to Councillors

The Chairman thanked Councillor Eames for his work in helping clear the fallen tree in Birch Wood. She also thanked Councillor Stevens for his work in relation to Travellers.

24. 30 Woodland Way

On behalf of Councillor Cole, the Chairman reported that since the last Parish Council meeting, he had pursued a number of different angles/steps to see if he could resolve the terrible state of the property (30 Woodland Way). Two of the actions that he had taken away from May's meeting was to write to and bring the matter to the attention of the local MP, Mike Martin, and to arrange a meeting with the new Borough Councillor Kimberley Johnson.

He had taken a number of photographs which showed the extremely poor condition of the house (e.g. a huge hole in the soffit/fascia that would allow birds and rodents to enter the roof space, a roof space shared with No. 28 Woodland Way, though he did understand that a fire screen exists between the properties separating the roof space).

He had written to Mike Martin 3 weeks ago and had not received any response. Last week he forwarded the same email with his disappointment that he had not even received an acknowledgement and has now received an acknowledgement but has not yet heard anything further. He will chase Mike Martin if he has not had any further correspondence by the time that he returns from holiday on 8 July. The photographs of the property mentioned above were sent with the emails.

He met Kimberley Johnson, the Parish's newly elected Borough Councillor, a couple of weeks ago and she went with him to see the property at the end of that meeting. She had responded to him a couple of times and was investigating whether she could get the Housing or Planning teams to issue a Section 215, although she did admit that they are hard to get as evidenced by the time taken by Mark Ellis to get one imposed on The Water Margin in Southborough (there has to be a danger to the public). He is waiting to hear back from Kimberley.

He has wondered whether the Council should be looking into whether the property remains in Sally Wilson's name (the deceased mother of Oliver Wilson who has previously come down once or twice a year to cut down some foliage). He had received conflicting advice regarding the probate application - CHAT GPT suggested that probate must be applied for within 12 months however he had recently spoken to a person who had gone through the probate process and he had said that he could find nothing to force the application (timescale) for probate although he did mention that once applied for the process needed to be completed within 2 years. It was now 15 years since the death of Sally Wilson and so he would imagine that they have deliberately not applied for probate as HMRC would require a value of the estate and near immediate payment of any inheritance tax / death duties. The Council had agreed that he could undertake a Land Registry search on the property (£20) to confirm that the property remains with Sally Wilson and not 'owned' by executors of Sally's will. Clearly there are a number of things that cannot be easily investigated such as whether probate had been applied for, who are the executor / sole executor, and who were the beneficiaries of the estate etc.

In his recent meeting with PC Danny Barnes, he showed him the property as he had seen two young boys trying to get into the back garden (and told them to leave) - he had also raised this with TWBC as it potentially could lead to a "broken window" situation - a person throws a brick through a window (breaking it) and then others follow suit when no action is taken - in a worst case scenario, this could also allow squatters to move in.

Apparently Oliver Wilson's daughter came down to visit last week and allegedly stayed there overnight, having told Jean Weller (his neighbour) that she would like to move in. Please bear in mind that the house has neither electricity nor gas (she claims that water is still available in the property) and that the meters have been removed by the utility companies following failure to settle outstanding bills. Although, he could not believe that she would move in, the only way to prepare food etc. would be using a portable gas stove and that would clearly be a fire risk given all the papers and books piled up within the house.

He had still not been told whether any Council Tax was being paid on the property - apparently in another case they were threatened by TWBC for non-payment of council tax on his mother's property after less than a year of probate being submitted and the property being empty – he could not understand why such vigour was not being applied to Oliver Wilson, given this property was causing issues for local residents (no 28, no 32, no 26 and others in the vicinity).

People had seen birds flying around in the front bedroom, unable to escape - they would now certainly be dead and decomposing. He had reported this to TWBC but not heard anything further, even though it must now be getting into environmental health 'territory', especially with the huge hole in the soffit/fascia.

He was firmly of the view that the only way to progress this situation was via a formal, legal route. There needs to be a demand to restore or sell the property using a section 215, compulsory purchase order or demand for backdated Council Tax [15 years].

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

25. Neighbourhood Watch

On behalf of Councillor Cole, the Chairman reported that he had again met with Danny Barnes, the Parish's local PC, for their regular monthly meeting. PC Danny Barnes had provided advice on securing the field at the top of Gate Farm Road, asked for Local Community Voice emails to be posted on the Bidborough Facebook page and continued walking around the village on a regular basis. He had also offered to join the next Speedwatch session on Monday 13th July (7:30 am) and has been very supportive with questions/support requested (e.g. finding the owner of the BMW that crashed on the Ridge).

He has continued to regularly send out emails from Neighbourhood Watch to local members including crime prevention regarding scams and frauds and advising on a rural theft on Friday 19 June within the village. Although they have the new six NHW signs on lampposts, they are still very low on members which remains disappointing.

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

26. Defibrillator and First Aid Course

Councillor Stevens reported that the course could go ahead on 22 July or later in the year in September.

It was **Agreed** that the course go ahead in September.

27. Bidborough Ridge Flats

Councillor Stevens reported that he had been in contact with Town and Country Housing who had informed him that there was still 1 resident in the flats and once they had vacated the property would be made safe and secured.

28. Duration of Meeting

7.05pm to 8.46pm