

BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL – RECREATION FIELD MAINTENANCE

1. For many years the mowing of the grass on the Recreation Field has been undertaken by the Thorne family without charge. More recently Ali Thorne has sub-contracted the close mowing of the Play Area at an annual cost to the Council of £200. Ali has asked to be relieved of the main mowing job. He also suggested that whilst quotes were being obtained for that, one should also be obtained for mowing the play area.
2. The situation has recently become slightly more complicated with the planting of the Community Orchard. It is felt that the grass in the orchard strip between the main field and the play area should be left semi wild. Michael Pratt will trim this as necessary as part of the orchard tree maintenance programme.
3. Whilst this matter was under consideration it became apparent that the Chalke Valley Sports Centre in Broad Chalke was also looking to secure a mowing contractor. In discussion it was agreed to seek quotations for a combined operation in the expectation that the economies of scale would produce a lower cost than if bids were requested separately.
4. Quotes for this work have now been obtained from two companies. The Financial Regulations indicate that three quotes should be the norm, but it has proved impossible to obtain more than the two submitted. The quotations are from idverde (www.idverde.co.uk) and Bawdens (www.bawdengroup.com), both national ground maintenance companies.
5. Both quotes are for mowing from the beginning of April until the end of October. They are very different.

idverde

“Gang mow the rec field using our tractor and large roller mowers 14 times from April to the end of October £780.00 + vat.”

Bawdens

“Our pricing allows for 8 cuts of the field area on a 4 weekly basis between 1st April 2025 and 31st October 2025. £ 2,148.00 + vat.”

The idverde quote provides for nearly twice as many cuts at a third of the cost.

6. Idverde have also quoted for hand mowing and strimming the Play Area 14 times at a cost of £488.00 + vat, a total cost (both field and play area) of £1,268 + vat = £1,521.60.
7. Both companies also submitted quotations to the Chalke Valley Sports Centre for maintaining their cricket field. The CVSC have now confirmed that they wish to accept that from idverde. This is important because, whilst the CVSC and Bishopstone PC contracts will be separate, they form part of an overall package so far as the company is concerned.

Recommendation

8. **I recommend acceptance of both quotations from idverde (ie main field and Play Area) at an annual cost of £1,521.60 (£253 of which will be recoverable vat).** We could continue with the ad-hoc arrangement for mowing the Play Area but, and subject to any information Ali provides about whether the person who does it now wishes to continue, I suggest it would be simpler all round, and a stronger guarantee that the work will be done regularly, if we let both to idverde. The quotation covers the main growing season, but it is possible that extra mowing may be needed depending on the weather and the use being made of the field. If needed these can be negotiated separately. Resources are available to meet the cost of this contract in 2025/26 and can be taken into account in setting the Precept in future years.

Mike Ash
Clerk
March 2025