



# *Iden Parish Council*

## **Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th May 2025 7.30pm, Iden Village Hall.**

### **Present**

Councillors M. Miller (Chair), P. Allard and G. Say.

In attendance: County Councillor K. Glazier, District Councillor P. Osborne, and the Clerk M Philo.

Members of the Public: Six.

Iden Parish Council holds the General Power of Competence

### **1. Election of the Chair**

Councillors Allard and Say nominated Councillor Miller who accepted the nomination. **It was unanimously resolved to elect Councillor Miller as Chair until the next annual meeting of the council in May 2026.** Councillor Miller signed the Acceptance of Office.

### **2. Election of Vice-Chair**

Councillors Allard and Miller nominated Councillor Say who accepted the nomination. **It was unanimously resolved to elect Councillor Say as Vice Chair until the next annual meeting of the council in May 2026.**

### **3. Apologies**

District Councillor Hacking and Parish Councillors Luckhurst and Wood.

### **4. Disclosure of Interests and Dispensations**

None. The Chair suggested that councillors should be asked again about their interest forms at the next meeting.

### **5. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**The minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2025 were unanimously agreed, as a true record.**

## **6. The meeting adjourned at 7.34 pm for Public Session**

### **County Councillor Report**

The Highways Steward had been through the village and various potholes had been marked up. Both ends of the B2080 are in the jet patching program. Residents should report potholes as often as possible.

Readying plans for devolution to be submitted for approval by central government by mid-September was all consuming. The many recent elections for county councils had resulted in many new councillors which may delay local government reorganisation in some areas while they learn the ropes.

Iden Stores, have been placing 'Shop Open' signs at local road junctions, but now have been asked to remove them by the Highways people as the one particularly on the triangle opposite the shop is seen as a potential visual hazard. They were advised they need to apply for formal permission. This sign alerts potential customers coming from Wittersham and its absence could have a detrimental effect upon trade. Councillor Glazier would make enquiries.

Residents again highlighted the water running down Mockbeggar Hill and the resulting potholes. It was believed to result from a natural spring.

### **District Councillor Report**

It had been a quiet time with a couple of meetings being cancelled.

In response to query, it was advised that there was no law about bonfires but could be considered an environmental health issue if it burned continuously for three days and should be reported to Environmental Health.

The recent motorcross day had stopped early due to insufficient first aid provision as the day progressed.

### **Public Questions**

None.

### **The meeting reconvened 7.46pm**

## **7. Councillor Appointments**

This item was deferred.

## **8. Meeting Schedule**

It was confirmed that council meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of the month except for August when there will be no meeting.

## **9. Review of Charges**

- a) Playing Fields Hire and Pavilion hire for the Cricket Club

**It was unanimously resolved that the 2025 season charges for Iden Cricket Club are £500 for the pavilion and £200 for cricket field.** Fees will be discussed with the club near the season end. **It was further resolved that the one-off match fee for Bodium Cricket Club to remain the same at £60.**

b) Expression of Interest from a Football Club for 2025-2026 Season

The clerk was instructed to organise a meeting of some councillors and Debbie Chalet with the club representative.

c) New Burial Ground Charges

**It was unanimously resolved that the charges will remain as per the updated 2023 one to include the new ashes area, with review in May 2026.**

**10. Code of Conduct – Civility and Respect**

The item was deferred.

**11. Confirmation of Borrowing Approval and Direct Debits**

**It was resolved to confirm borrowing approval for a charge card for the clerk with a limit of £1,000 in any one month. It was further resolved to agree the direct debits for EDF regarding Iden Pavilion, Microsoft Office, Information Commissioner Office.**

**12. Policies**

This item was deferred.

**13. General Power of Competence**

The council noted it continues to hold the General Power of Competence, but it has not been used to date.

**14. Insurance**

This item was deferred as there was time to consider further.

**15. Risk Management Policy**

Having reviewed the policy, **it was unanimously resolved to agree the Risk Management Policy and Risk Assessment**

**16. Council Emails and Domain Name**

The clerks hoped to provide details next month.

**17. Planning**

**17.1 Enforcements and Appeals – None**

**17.2 Planning Decisions made by Rother District Council (since the last meeting) - None**

**17.3 Applications Considered**

RR/2025/301/P Francisca, Grove lane: Creation of new vehicular access and parking space for two vehicles at the front of the property. **It was unanimously resolved to support.**

#### **17.4 For notification only - none**

#### **17.5 Delisting of the Bell Inn**

Historic England were still considering the request.

A resident recalled that the Verge in front of Lane House had been omitted whilst everywhere else had been cut. The verge was included as an urban verge last year.

The Chair was horrified to learn from a resident that the ESCC Grass cutters had that day completely mowed all the verges in the village which were growing daffodils which had not been given any time to die down and rejuvenate. The likelihood is that many will be blind next year. In the past the cutters had mowed around the bulbs. It also appears that the wilding areas were also cut, despite standing instructions that there were not to be mowed. This destruction will be taken up with Highways under strong protest

### **18. Finances**

#### **18.1 Noted April Bank Reconciliation**

31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025	£ 14,810.94
Plus total Receipts	£ 9,008.64
Less total Payments	<u>£ 993.37</u>
30 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	£ 22,826.21
(30 <sup>th</sup> April 2025 statements -Treasurers Account £12,306.61 and Reserve Account £10,519.60)	

#### **April Receipts**

£8.64	Bank Interest
£9,000	RDC: first half of council tax (precept)

#### **April Payments**

£851.00	Clerk's March salary and salary increase back pay.
£41.70	M Philo: Room £30, car £11.70
£54.20	refund m Miller: paye refund
£11.02	Castle Water: Pavilion water
£31.20	EDF: Pavilion electricity
£4.25	Lloyds' Account Management Charge
Charge Card (April): Nil	

#### **18.2 May Payments Authorised**

£647.23	Clerk's April salary.
£41.70	M Philo: Room £30, car £11.70
£4.25	Lloyds Bank: Account maintenance monthly fee
Charge Card (May) Nil	
Pavilion Electricity and Water unknown.	

#### **18.3 Fourth Quarter and Year End Financial Report**

Council balance on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 - £14,339.62.

### Receipts Fourth Quarter £2,791.17

The legally required once a year vat reclaim was made and £2,765.01 was refunded for the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024. Bank interest for the last quarter came to £26.16.

### Payments Fourth Quarter net of vat £2,314.29

Council running costs for the quarter were £2,178.91, including £95 for subscriptions, £20 on training, office costs and mobile phone £171.66 and salaries £1,887.60. Lloyds Bank levied the first monthly account fee of £4.25.

With the closure of the Pavilion account a full quarter of electricity cost and water charges were taken at £171.66.

## **Year End Report**

### Receipts for the year £23,141.29 (not including the sports pavilion)

Anticipated income was £16,700. It is unpredictable to anticipate the income from the burial ground and so this is always under budgeted. The £500 budget was significantly exceeded with a total of £3,600. Interest from the reserve bank account is similar and is not included as a receipt for the budget but total bank interest came to £115.86. The playing field hire fee of £200 was received. Wilder Iden passed over its funds of £153.00 and is ring-fenced for nature recovery items. Office costs (stationery) are shared with Beckley and Pett Parish Council and are recharged and this came to £105.28. The council charge card started offering cash back during the year and 58p was taken off the monthly statements.

### Payments for the year £19,680.94 (net of vat)

The grass contract (playing field, churchyard, and new burial ground) came in slightly under as the ground was very wet preventing heavy machinery on to it. Additionally, a saving was made as the brambles were not sprayed. There were no general maintenance costs for the playing field.

The play area inspection was in line with budgeting and there were no general maintenance costs for that area.

Following high winds, a cherry tree in the churchyard had to be removed and the cost £1,200 (allocated £1,000 to the contingency budget and £200 to burial ground general maintenance).

The council is fortunate to now have a handy man in receipt of an honorarium £100 (allocated to the contingency budget) who has carried out several tasks saving the council money. He has mended the pavilion rear toilets door, cleared the pavilion gutters, repaired the shiplap on Elmsmead bus shelter and work on the fingerposts, which easily exceeded the honorarium if a contractor had been employed.

Following on, the only other assets expenditure has been on the urban verges and wildflower verges: £670.83.

The council's running costs, which had a budget of £10,763 covering staff; office costs; insurance; subscriptions to various bodies that provide the council with legal

and financial assistance or services; salaries; website and laptop programmes; chairman's allowance, mobile phone, hall hire and additionally this year bank account monthly charges, came in at £10,633.07. However, the back pay due to the clerk will fall into the next fiscal year and the final office costs are, considering recharge is £642.61.

The level of donations is high this year because of the donation to the Save the Bell Inn of £1,650. The air ambulance received £200 and the poppy Appeal £50.

The refurbishment of Elmsmead bus shelter was completed this year and creosote and shiplap cost £231.79 (net of vat).

### Sport Pavilion

As a result of Lloyds Bank decision to start charging a management fee per account the pavilion account was closed. The hire receipts and the funds transferred from the sports association folding no longer covered the pavilion running costs. The council was having to transfer money to cover running costs by November 2024. Running costs involve a fire extinguisher check, building safety check, electricity, water, and foul waste but not insurance. Expenditure came to £1,216.52 and was not covered by income at £902.41.

### Overview

Council balance on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 - £14,339.62.

Earmarked reserves total   £9,629

Reserve                               £9,000 (update to reflect the increase in precept for 2025-2026)

Website                             £230.00

Garden Society donation   £246

Nature Recovery             £153

Leaving £4,710.62 (close to that predicted in the third quarter report)

As stated in the earlier the report the extra receipts from the burial ground and the reduction in the costs for cutting the grass through the village and savings from having a handy man, has covered the unexpected donation to the Save the Bell and pavilion deficit.

### **19.    Donation**

**It was unanimously resolved to make a donation to the Air Ambulance of £200.**

### **20.    Report from Save The Bell Inn**

On the 1st of May 2025 the Bell Inn Community Benefit Society made an offer to the owners of the Bell Inn to purchase the freehold of the pub. Unfortunately, their offer was declined. Further news will follow.

### **21.    Iden Playing Fields and Pavilion**

#### **a) Iden Pavilion Working Party Update**

During the coming week a team will be sorting the container and taking rubbish to the waste disposal centre and looking into resolving the drainage issue around the pavilion and up to the parking area and getting quotes. Without Charity Status the

group is not able to apply for grants but hopes that the applications via Sussex Community Fund will go forward in the next round. The council offered to apply in their place.

b) Pavilion Electricity Contract

The contract with EDF for the Pavilion was renewed for a further three years at a reduced rate however as standing charges have increased, the final cost is slightly less than currently.

c) Footpath by Stream Cottage

The footpath gatepost by stream cottage is rotten and needs replacing. The area remains very wet most of the year and so a kissing gate might be a solution. The clerk to contact East Sussex Prow about the this. Any work there would require a CAT scan due to the services running along the path. The Iden Footpath Team do not possess one of these but they can be hired.

d) Small refurbishment at the Pavilion

The handyman had preferred to refurbish the commercial metal toilet roll holders rather than replace with new plastic ones. He had also offered to repair the side door and repaint the area should that fit with the pavilion group plans.

## **22. Risk Assessment**

The council volunteer handyman had completed the repair works on the fingerpost at the entrance to Grove Lane and would soon repair the central shaft where the rot had been removed, with new oak. The Clerk was requested to advise him that a resident may have a suitable piece of oak.

The handyman had also repaired the Elmsmead bus shelter. Another weather board had been damaged. The clerk would repaint it.

## **23. Information for Councillors**

Agreement of the Annual Return will be at the June Meeting.

## **24. Date of Next Meeting**

Meeting of the Parish Council - Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025, 7.30pm, Iden Village Hall.