



# *Iden Parish Council*

## **Minutes of the Meeting held on 1st April 2025 7.30pm, Iden Village Hall.**

### **Notices**

The chair advised of the sad news of the recent passing of Charles Walton aged ninety-three who was a regular participant in village activities and a long-standing resident who will be greatly missed.

### **Present**

Councillors M. Miller (Chair), B. Luckhurst and G. Say.

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

Members of the Public: Eight.

Iden Parish Council holds the General Power of Competence

### **1. Apologies**

District Councillor Hacking and Parish Councillors Allard and Wood.

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

None.

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

The minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2025 were unanimously agreed, as a true record.

### **4. The meeting adjourned at 7.31 pm for Public Session**

#### **County Councillor Report**

The Highway Steward advice was that the road surfacing near New Bridge was nearing the 40mm point for patching. Frustrations over adjacent potholes not being filled is understandable. Central government funding had been slightly increased from £19.1 million to £21 million for the year. However, dealing with the backlog of potholes is estimated to cost £300 million.

Council tax increase for the county council will be 4.99% of which 2% is restricted to

adult social care. There would still be a £24 million shortfall plugged by allocated funds and a £12 million saving by cutting services to vulnerable people. As a result, the decision had been called in to the scrutiny committee to be reviewed and would then be put again to the full council.

Next year the county council will have to seek additional help from central government as the current low reserves will not be able to cover costs to balance the budget. The increased cost of wages and National Insurance contributions, though slightly reduced for county councils, had a significant effect on the costs relating to agency care staff. A review of the funding formula is needed to consider not just general deprivation but to also consider population needs.

Councillor Glazier had met with the Secretary of State to discuss devolution in Sussex and how the proposal of one unitary body replacing the 6 current authorities could fit into the governments requirements on population size it should represent and other conditions.

A resident raised the continued trickle of water down Mock Beggar hill and the resulting road surface damage and potholes. Councillor Glazier suggested that residents kept on reporting it.

A resident asked about speed watch having seen Police attending the Peasmarsh group. The Iden Speed watch group had ceased due to lack of volunteers. Clerk would advertise for volunteers. Any volunteers undergo training. The resident suggested speed bumps as being an effective measure but was advised this would be impractical.

### **District Councillor Report**

Parishes interested in taking on any RDC assets in their parish had until 1<sup>st</sup> September to submit an expression of interest. The District Community Grant Scheme will continue but would most likely be managed by Sussex Community Fund going forward.

Central Government will be producing a white paper on devolution and parish councils. Rother District Council will no longer be taking forward any potential projects with the short period left before its demise. The number of vacancies in the council had risen to 18% and was caused mainly by new recruits leaving.

A member of the public commented that one reason for local government reorganisation was to reduce jobs but it was advised that to the contrary, there would be more vacancies than current employees to fill them.

A member of the public mentioned that the Charity Commission is so swamped that it is taking an inordinate amount of time to get a charity number which prevented the Pavilion Group from applying for grants. The group had been bumped from January deadline to the May one, having already completed a 30-page form. The council offered assistance if possible as it could be the applicant as agent.

### **Public Questions**

A resident was delighted to see the Iden Stores fingerpost had been repaired and chased for BT to come and repair the broken glass in the phone box. Clerk to report again.

A resident highlighted that it had been by chance that residents discovered the possible delisting of The Bell Inn. Concern was expressed that the parish council had not been informed by Rother District as the council had already commented, although nobody in

Planning was able to confirm this. Historic England had already inspected the property. There was public concern that a delisting would set a precedent for other buildings beside the pub and around the village. The appearance of the area could significantly alter should delisting the pub be permitted.

The owner of the Iden Kennels advised of plans to erect a cabin as a retreat from the business when they needed time off. It includes elements to future proof the residence such as rainwater harvesting. It was not certain whether a planning application would be necessary, and the advice of the change was being given as a matter of courtesy. The owner was thanked for this information.

## **5. The meeting reconvened 8.04pm**

### **6. Planning**

#### **6.1 Enforcements and Appeals – None**

#### **6.2 Planning Decisions made by Rother District Council (since the last meeting)**

RR/2024/1968/O - Idenwood Farm, Barn, Coldharbour Lane: Lawful development certificate for the continued use of the building known as black barn, as a residential dwelling. Lawful.

RR/2024/2277/P Park Oast, Wittersham Road: proposed double garage. Approved.

#### **6.3 Applications Considered – None**

#### **6.4 For Notification Only – None**

#### **6.5 Response to Proposed Delisting of The Bell Inn**

Iden Parish Council, objects to the application for delisting The Bell Inn from its present Grade 2 status which was granted in 1987 and for reasons that remain valid.

There are mentions of its existence as far back as the 12th century and it has always been a focus for the social life of Iden ( until the mid-20th century erection of a village hall) and, in earlier days as a meeting place and a venue for the exchange of goods and produce because of its central position at the crossroads of the connecting roads into the heart of the village.

There are very many photographs and postcards documenting the stable nature of the amenity. Records at the County Archives indicate the varied history of this public house and its many re-interpretations. The one constant is the existence of the building itself and its position within 8 other contiguous Grade II Listed dwellings and the wider number of 52 Listed properties in Iden which constitute over 20% of all buildings in the village.

Importantly there is also a nearby Village Shop and Post Office which also has Grade 2 listed status.

In 2016 the current owners mentioned the historical importance of the inn when applying for planning permission for the toilet block so we find it incongruous that they are now seeking its delisting. In the details provided for the present sale of the property the agent's say "This charming two storey property is understood to date back to the seventeenth century, however can be traced as far back as 1107".

We would also point out a former public house long closed in Iden has retained its listed status and we find it difficult to imagine what reasons the Bell owners are now submitting to justify their building's delisting.

We are aware that the Save the Bell Group has already submitted a detailed letter opposing this delisting which has our full support, as such there is no cause to repeat the powerful case they have made.

In summary, Iden is a small community with many listed buildings signifying its past history, the more so by those in the area occupied by the Bell Inn- even its adjoining telephone box carries listed status. To allow the request could well mean by precedent other buildings being put at risk of losing their heritage status.

Two photographs of the Bell Inn taken around 1900 are attached and demonstrate its prominence in the heart of the village.

We hope that Historic England will deny this request.

## **7. Finances - Parish Council**

### **7.1 March Bank Balances**

The Chair confirmed the bank statement.

28 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	£ 15,643.06
Plus total Receipts	£ 8.06
Less total Payments	<u>£ 840.18</u>
31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025	£ 14,810.94

(31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 statements -Treasurers Account £4,299.98 and Reserve Account £10,510.96)

### **7.2 March Receipts**

£8.06 Bank Interest

### **7.3 March Payments**

£629.20 Clerk's February salary.

£41.70 M Philo: Room £30, car £11.70

£24.00 Mulberry Local Services Limited: Financial regulations bite size training (vat £4)

£63.40 Refund share of SLCC annual subscription

£12.79 Castle water: Pavilion water

£32.84 EDF: Pavilion electricity

£4.25 Lloyds Bank: Account maintenance monthly fee

Charge Card (March)

£32.00 Lloyds bank: Annual charge card fee

### **7.4 The Following Payments were Authorised**

£851.00 Clerk's March salary and salary increase back pay

£54.20 M Miller: Refund for PAYE

£41.70 M Philo: Room £30, car £11.70

Charge Card (April) Nil

Pavilion Electricity and Water unknown.

### 7.5 Internal Auditor

**It was unanimously resolved to ask Mr P Phillip to complete the council's internal audit.**

### 7.6 Year End Report

Deferred to the next meeting.

### 8. Dog Bins

The annual fee to empty the bin has increased by more than expected to £189.80 plus vat for a year for the one bin. **It was unanimously resolved to stay with Rother District Council to empty the dog waste bin and acquire stickers to advise residents that they could use the regular roadside bins as well.**

### 9. RDC Survey on Local Government Reorganisation

It was resolved to delegate a response to the clerk in conjunction with the Chair, after email consultation where necessary with colleagues, noting that there was little time left to do so.

### 10. Save the Bell Report

The group had submitted an extensive objection to the possible delisting of the pub. Residents were encouraged to write in to Historic England.

### 12. Iden Playing Fields and Pavilion

#### a. Iden Pavilion Working Party Update

The group was making steady progress with the Fayre and people had been signing up to help. The field usually used for parking may not be available due to insurance issues.

#### b. Pavilion Electricity Contract

The contract will finish on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April. **It was unanimously agreed to delegate to the clerk securing a new contract.**

#### c. Churchyard – Commemorative tree for John Harrison

**It was unanimously agreed to accept the offer of a small tree for All Saints Churchyard in memory of John Harrison.**

#### d. Pavilion Annual Safety inspection

**It was unanimously agreed to delegate to the Clerk in conjunction with the Chair organising an inspection for Iden Playing Fields Pavilion.**

### 13. Risk Assessment

The playing fields grass is now being cut. The soft safety surface under the slide is very mossy.

### 14. Information for Councillors

Once it had been demonstrated to Southern Homes the extent to which they were responsible for the highway in Elmsmead, they have noted the potholes for repair. Highways will be inspecting the potholes on Elmsmead for which they are responsible.

The council insurance with BHIB will be entering its last year on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2025. Should the council renew next year, a replacement valuation of the pavilion will be required.

### **15. Date of Next Meeting**

Annual Meeting of the Parish Council - Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025, 7.30pm, Iden Village Hall.