

The Bell Inn - Request to Delist

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.

