



Iden Parish Council

**Draft Minutes of the Meeting held on
6th January 7.30pm, Iden Village Hall.**

Notices

The Chair wished everyone a happy New Year and congratulated the village hall committee on an excellent Christmas Lunch and successful New Year's Eve Bash. All were pleased to hear about the acquisition of The Bell Inn being underway by The Save Bell Group Community Benefit Society jointly with Christopher Strangeways.

Present

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

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

Members of the Public: Two

Iden Parish Council holds the General Power of Competence.

1. Apologies

Parish Councillor P. Allard due to illness and District Councillor L. Hacking.

2. Disclosure of Interests and Dispensations

None.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was unanimously resolved to agree the minutes of the 2nd December 2025 as a true record.

4. The meeting adjourned at 7.32 pm for Public Session

County Councillor Report

Residents were reminded that the public consultation on local Government Reorganisation remains open till the 11th of January 2026.

Central Government 'Fairer' Funding Settlement (a grant to county councils to assist with their statutory services) was finalised just before Christmas. The amount that East Sussex County Council will receive is less than hoped for being £6 million. The budget gap for 2026-2027 is currently £57 million and cannot be covered by the council's held reserves. In addition to reconsidering how the council spends its £1 billion budget, it will be asking for exceptional financial support which can take two forms: a greater percentage council tax rise or a loan. The county's demographic is reflected in the highest cost being for adult social care dealing with physical and mental health issues and care homes. Fairer funding had been focussed away from this. Following a resident's enquiry, it was advised that funding was now focused more to those with disabilities.

The road condition at the Peace and Plenty entrance to Iden, continues to worsen but the area is on the schedule for spray patching works for 2026. The stretch of the B2082 down to the river had deteriorated further and not helped by the very wet weather. It is believed to be the worst B road in East Sussex.

Councillors reported to the County Councillor, the December response from Kent Highways about the Road Closed sign erected at Peace Plenty Junction that had advised the road was closed for several days when in fact the work in Small Hythe by Southeast Water closed the road at night with traffic lights during the day. The Parish Council deem the response insufficient, and it was suggested that the complaint be escalated with all parties being copied in on it. The damage being done to local businesses and the country lanes by the use of diversions is considerable and seemingly ignored by whoever is responsible for the signage. Vehicle drivers coming from Rye are being led to believe that they cannot use the B2082 to get to both Iden and Wittersham

District Councillor Report

The Local Plan Public Consultation was yet to be opened (anticipated mid-January), however parish councils had been emailed with links to the plan to allow councils to start consider any response before it opens

The campaign to alert residents to kerbside food waste collection in April this year, will start shortly.

Public Questions

Nothing further.

5. The meeting reconvened 7.45pm

6. Update on the Purchase of The Bell Inn

The planning application for change of use has been put on hold at the request of the owners, in the hope that the pub will be sold to Mr C Strangeways and The Save The Bell CBS. The December meeting about this had been very well attended by the community and the MP. The share offer is expected to be launched at a public

meeting towards the end of January. John Rogers the intended tenant innkeeper should be in attendance with a planning application to alter the interior of the building in the pipeline.

7. Planning

7.1 The Bell Inn Change of Use Application

See item 6 above.

7.2 Enforcements and Appeals

The council is still to hear from enforcement about the tree house overlooking issue. Photos were sent to enforcement showing nothing had been done to resolve the issue. A further letter about the dissatisfaction with the service and lack of taking action on any of the enforcement issues was proposed and confirmed.

Following the report about the ongoing dumping, health hazard and environmental pollution at Thornsedale to planning and environmental health, the council had received a response from Environmental Health Department which came across as complacent and did not appreciate the real health hazard and environmental pollution. No response had been received from the planning enforcement department. The considered that a further complaint stressing the issue again to include the fire hazard and calling for further investigation, should be made by the Clerk on behalf of the council.

7.3 Planning Decisions by Rother District Council – None

7.4 Applications Considered

RR/2025/2050/HOU The Granary, Wittersham Road: Replacement windows. – Deferred.

RR/2025/1915/LBC Park Oast, Wittersham Road: Proposed conversion works. Installation of new window and external door, removal of existing garage door and new window installed to part of the existing opening. Changes to existing fenestration on southern and northern side to improve traditional facade. Installation of timber cladding to first floor walling. Removal of concrete steps. Support.

7.5 Applications for Notification Only – None

7.6 New Local Plan and Propose Site Allocations

Following discussion, it was considered suitable to leaflet the village to highlight the consultation with the proposed sites and then hold a public meeting to hear from residents. The timing would coincide with the consultation opening.

8. Meeting with Rother Voluntary Action

Several representatives of the village had met with Rother voluntary Action, who wished to work closely with villages. It was suggested that they be invited to say a few words at the annual parish meeting that is usually held in April.

9. Finances

9.1 Noted December Bank Reconciliation

30th November 2025 £ 21,476.19

Plus total Receipts 5.04

Less total Payments £ 914.84

31st December 2025 £ 20,566.39

(31st December 2025 statements -Treasurers Account £9,998.21 and Reserve Account £10,568.18)

December Receipts

£5.04 Bank Interest

December Payments

£752.81 Salaries for November

£41.70 M Philo: Room £30, car £11.70

£70.32 JS Fire Protection: Pavilion fire extinguishers annual inspection (vat £11.72)

£30.72 EDF: Pavilion electricity

£15.04 Castle water: Pavilion Water

£4.25 Bank Monthly account charge

Charge card - Nil

9.2 Payments Authorised

£678.18 Salaries for December

£41.70 M Philo: Room £30, car £11.70

£54.87 Refund M Philo: Share of Clerk's Society membership.

£35.75 Refund M Philo: Grave marker (vat £5.96)

9.3 3rd Quarter Financial Report

On 22nd December 2025, the running balance stood at £20,566.39.

Total receipts were larger than usual, at £7,116.40, as the Iden Fayre fundraising came in at £6,100. There was also £1,000 due to a resident's burial. Bank interest £16.40.

Total net of vat payment came to £12,696.94 (gross £13,429.89). The grass cutting came in at £3,360. Donations were made to Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal £50 and to Iden Pavilion Trust £6,100. Running cost included the new .gov.uk email at the reduced first year price of £160; renewal of the original domain name for two year at £69.55 (reducing the funds held for the website grant); a thank you gift for the internal auditor £36.28; data handler annual fee £47 and £70.83 for the annual Microsoft subscription fee and salaries £2,282.43. Pavilion electric and water supplies cost £128.09, a single cesspit empty £150 and fire extinguishers check £58.60.

Within the funds held in the bank are earmarked reserves total £8,559.45 (reserve of £8,000 and three other ring-fenced sums (website £160.45; Garden Society donation

£246 and £153 Nature Recovery)). Anticipated expenditure for the last quarter comes to £4,750.71 but there are burial fees of £1,200 and a vat reclaim of £943.85 to come in. At the end of year, being 31st March 2026 the council might have in the bank £9,400 unallocated.

Estimated expenditure for the current year is £22,200 whilst actual spending for the year will be closer to £20,000 unless any unplanned/emergency expenditure is required before then. The current budget includes £2,000 for tree work particularly for fallen trees in the Playing Fields and £1,000 contingency. Neither of these looks like they will be exhausted. Additionally, the new burial ground has seen more burials than usual and so there is an additional receipt of £3,700 than estimated.

Councillors should note that the new financial regulations require all unused budget sums to return to the pot for consideration as part of budgeting and precepting for the next year, unless the council decides to earmark as restricted funds for a purpose that perhaps has not been completed or will be shortly.

Councillors should now consider how best to use the unallocated/unrestricted funds at the end of year. The options are to earmark funds for a project that you are saving towards; to increase the general reserve to reflect inflationary pressure; to use some towards the predicted budget and thus remain closer to the current precept level or a mixture of the prior three options.

9.4 Precept

It was suggested that a strategy for the Pavilion needed to be in place to better consider budgeting and precepting for 2026-2027. **It was unanimously resolved to set the Precept for 2026-2027 at the February 2026 meeting.**

10. Iden Playing Fields and Pavilion

10.1 Play Area Gates

The chosen contractor has been contacted and advised to go ahead with just refixing the gate and repairing the inspection drain issue at the rear of the pavilion. The clerk anticipated that the works would have to wait till the cold weather improves.

10.2 Playing Field

Between Christmas and the New Year, the Clerk had taken down the playing field sign on the high bank along the entrance drive as it was falling out towards vehicles.

The first quote for tree works around the cemetery had come in below the threshold to require three quotes. He clerk could advise that from the works contractors by other parishes that this contractor prices were reasonable. Councillors were keen to have the work done before the trees come into leaf and the bulbs arrive.

11. Risk Assessment

Nothing further to the above.

12. Information for Councillors

None.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 3rd February 2026, 7.30pm, Iden Village Hall.

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