

Iden Parish Council End of Year Financial Review 2019 – 2020

Iden Parish Council has focused its work on replacing the old igloo climbing frame and rejuvenating the baby swings in the play area. Although the parish council had been saving towards replacement equipment over the last 5 years and had asked for small donations over that time, it was decided to use some of the reserves and the contingency fund of £1,000, along with a 50% match funding grant from Rother District Council to install a new wooden Chute activity Centre and a nest swing for young and disabled with a new safety surface. Unfortunately, as a result of the coronavirus measures brought in by central government the play area has yet to be opened with the new equipment. The total cost of the play equipment was £25,386. The council was fortunate to have the play equipment installed between the autumn rains of 2019 and spring lock down of 2020.

Otherwise the parish council final expenditure came in well below that budgeted because the cost of grass cutting was significantly reduced as the rainy autumnal weather reduced the number of usual cuts. Though a few trees were brought down on the playing fields, dealing with these did not cost the council. It was also decided not to clear the ditch along the additional parking area at the Playing Fields. Regarding the other smaller assets, the council are responsible for, the hedge at the war memorial had not taken well and was replaced with smaller plants. Should any of the original plants recuperate these would be planted in the playing fields or new burial ground. The fingerpost near to Iden Stores needs further work but no quotes have yet been obtained. Similarly, the council is still waiting for UK Power Network to reduce the trees from electricity cables crossing All Saints Churchyard. The wait for work and quotes has resulted in little spending from the budget for minor assets. This year the council took the opportunity to donate to the British Legion as per usual and to Rother Rural Trust and Iden Footpath Team.

The parish council only considers the precept as its source of income because funds from the playing fields and the burial ground are very unpredictable, however, these did total just over £1,000. HMRC has also paid the council all outstanding vat that can be reclaimed to the end of the financial year.

As a result of reduced expenditure and burial ground income the reduction on the council reserves is less. As at the 31st March 2020 bank balance stood at £15,569. The council should hold a reserve of 50% of its precept (its share of the council tax bill you pay) of £8,000. In addition to that there are the following ring-fenced sums:

£246 garden society donation for natural enhancements around the village

£1,842.54 Website and accessories (We know the new website set up cost is £850 and the hosting fee is about £150 and the Clerk will need a new printer at some point).

This leaves the council with £5480.46. We would have been nearer to £3,500.