



Iden Parish Council

**Minutes of the Meeting held on
6th February 2024 7.30pm, Iden Village Hall.**

Present

Councillors M. Miller (Chair), P. Allard, B. Luckhurst, G. Say and J. Wood.
In attendance: County Councillor Glazier, District Councillor P. Osborne, the Clerk M. Philo.
Members of the Public: Fifteen.

Iden Parish Council holds the General Power of Competence

1. Apologies

District Councillor Hacking.

2. Disclosure of Interests and Dispensations

Councillor Miller had a prejudicial interest in item regarding the clearing of the churchyard boundary between the church and his house.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was resolved to agree the minutes of the 2nd January 2024 as a true record. Councillor Allard abstained as he had not attended the previous meeting. It was also resolved to approve the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on the 5 January 2024.

The meeting adjourned at 7.31 pm for Public Session

County Councillor Glazier Report

Councillor Glazier apologised for his absence for the previous month.
The county council had set the budget and thus the council tax for the coming financial year. Cabinet agreed the full permitted increase of 2.99 % plus 2% for adult social care, which equated to an increase of £1.62 per week for Band D properties. This sat alongside a £5 million settlement promised by central government. Reserves would be reduced by £14.3 million next year to balance the books. Future years will see reserves continue to be reduced to cover expenditure.

The county's children services continue to be recognised for its excellent services, having just been rated Good and the Looked After Children Team rated Outstanding.

The council is seeking foster carers. A resident suggested screening the campaign video at cinemas.

School children absences remain high leading to concerns that they are missing on education they will find difficult to catch up on.

Residents queried the ineffectiveness of road closure signs information and the co-ordination of roadworks to be completed by the different services. However, roadwork plans are scheduled in advance, and it may not be possible to alter these at short notice.

District Councillors Paul Osborne Report

The District Council had agreed its budget and thus council tax for the coming financial year. The full permitted increase of 2.99% (an increase of approx. £5 a week for a band D property) had been agreed plus a draw on reserves of £3.6 million to cover next year's expenditure. Reserves would then stand at £5 million. Plans had been drawn up to increase reserves over the next three years.

The local connection requirement in the housing allocation policy had been strengthened.

Residents highlighted that there were now three affordable housing properties that had been standing empty for about a year. The Clerk was requested to make enquiries from Southern Housing.

Public Questions

In response to a query, the 'Save the Bell' group advised that it was completing forms to apply for £250,000 of funding. The group is competing against other groups for the funding. Should that be forthcoming then the group would be in contact with residents about the pub acquisition.

A resident requested that the laurel hedge along the footpath beside the Bell Inn be cut back.

A member of the public queried if the parish council was in contact with the High Weald Area of Natural Beauty. The organisation promotes Dark Skies. The clerk was asked to investigate.

Following a discussion of verge cutting in the village, the clerk was requested to put up a map showing which verges were cut by highways and the cutting schedule allocated.

The meeting reconvened 8.10pm

4. Planning

4.1 Enforcements and Appeals

No appeals outstanding and no further enforcement advice since the last meeting.

4.2 Planning Decisions made by Rother District Council (since the last meeting)

- i. RR/2023/2469/O Tyson Marsh Farm, Wittersham Road: Certificate of Lawfulness for the existing occupation of Tyson Farm in breach of an agricultural occupancy condition imposed on permission 76/0087 for use as a dwelling for person/s not employed in forestry or agriculture. Rother District Council – 'the use in breach of condition described in the First Schedule hereto in respect of the dwellinghouse specified in the Second Schedule hereto was lawful within the meaning of Section 191 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)'.

- ii. RR/2023/1053/P Twin Sisters, Church Lane: Alterations and extension to existing building and pool house. Approved conditionally. Ecological conditions noted.
- iii. RR/2023/2464/P St Annes – Installation of a detached timber outbuilding. Approved.

4.3 Applications Considered

- i. RR/2024/44/P Orchard Cottage, Readers Lane: Erection of single storey extensions to side, front and rear. **It was resolved to support.**
- ii. RR/2024/51/L Old Tudor, Readers Lane: Repairs to sunroof, replacement of rainwater goods and replacement of damaged fenestration, swapping windows and door positions. Deferred.
- iii. RR/2024/172/P Moat Farm Oast: Proposed conversion of part of garage building including new dormer to create self-contained annex for family. Deferred.

4.4 Response to consultation on Community Infrastructure Levy

As councillors sought more time to consider their response, **it was agreed to delegate the response to the clerk, who would base it on councillors' comments.**

4.5 Planning Training

It was resolved to fund planning Training 'The Future Shape of the Planning System', 14th March for Councillor Luckhurst. Cost £40 plus vat.

4.6 Footpath 20 Dedication – Bosney Farm and Track to Thornsedale Farm

Public Rights of Way have been in contact with the council. The footpath was confirmed on the definitive map in 2006 however, it has since been discovered that one of the landowners has not given permission for, the track to and short section across, Thornsedale Farm. A diversion is not possible. The council has the option to make a formal application for the route, in particular the track and land linking to Bosney Farm, which includes providing evidence of the use of the track and path from 1957 to 2004 and more recently. Thornsedale Farm owners have said that they will not prevent walkers from using it but are against a registered footpath.

The discussion was opened briefly to the public and several members of the public advised that they walked that route regularly and had done for many years. The clerk would show residents a map to confirm exactly where they were walking.

5. Council Finances

5.1 Bank Balances

Bank Balances:

31 st December 2023	£20,710.79
Total Receipts	£ 10.70
Total Payments	<u>£ 698.72</u>
31 st January 2024	£20,022.77

(31st January statements -Treasurers Account £9,650.58 and Reserve Account £10,372.19) Running balance is £20,022.77.

5.2 January Receipts

£10.70 Bank Interest

5.3 January Additional Payments

None.

5.4 The Following Payments were Authorised:

£811.20 Clerk's salary (paye £32), including back pay.

£41.70 Clerk's salary allowances: Room £30 and car £11.70

£139.97 Rother District Council: Election charge for uncontested elections

£186.00 Nigel Gibbs & Son: Cemetery hedge and tree from playing field (vat £ 35)

£32.82 Pett PC: Share of Clerk's mobile phone September 23 to March 24 inclusive (vat nil)

Charge Card (February) – Nil

Charge Card (March) to date

£ 22.60 Refund M Philo: new battery for the council laptop (vat nil)

5.5 Internal Audit

It was resolved to instruct Mr P. Phillip to complete the internal audit, subject to his agreement.

6. Churchyard Boundary Tidy

The boundary fence from the church path entrance along to the garden of contemplation has become overgrown in places. **It was resolved to contract Nigel Gibbs & Sons to trim, cut back, remove and clear brambles and various trees.** Est. £1,200 plus vat.

7. Rural Verge Grass Cutting by Highways

In response to requests from the public highways are offering to change how and when they will be cutting these verges. **It was resolved to make no changes and maintain the standard cutting service in Iden Parish.** 'Two cuts per annum of a 1 metre wide swathe along the verge plus visibility areas cut for visibility at junctions and for safety on the inside of bends where sight lines between road users may be obscured by vegetation.' This choice may be altered in future, but this choice will be the default position.

8. Pavilion Finances

8.1 Bank Balance

Bank Balances on 31st January 2024 Treasurers Account £694.93

8.2 January Receipts

Nil

8.3 Additional December Payments

Following the complaint about EDF taking £323.60 with little communication in December and the £20 compensation, the account was moved to monthly smart meter read billing. The account was left with £62.17 in credit with EDF. The 21 December to 17 January bill of £61.98, again with no communication prior to debiting the account. The account now stands at 19p in credit.

£19.67 Castle Water: estimated December bill

8.4 Payments

EDF monthly direct debit and Castle Water payments are unknown.

9. Iden Playing Fields and Pavilion

9.1 Pavilion Lease for Iden Pavilion Community Trust

As a requirement to be able to form a charitable body, the group must have a secure form of tenure such as a lease rather than a hire agreement. The trustees will be Debbie Chalet, Bruce Luckhurst and Phil Shanks. **It was resolved to not use a solicitor to provide a lease and therefore agree the lease proposed by the group for a 10-year period.** Councillors may suggest a few minor amendments.

9.2 Leaking Gutter

Councillor Say was thanked for repairing the leaking gutter connection at the rear of the pavilion.

10. Risk Assessment

Two small tree branches that had fallen in the Churchyard would be removed as part of the churchyard boundary.

11. Information for Councillors

Grove Lane closure for patching between the 16th and 19th February between 7am to 7pm.

The clerk has bought a new battery for the laptop, and all is working well now.

Power outage on 5th February for up to an hour between 8am to 9am and 15th February for 30 minutes between 13.00 and 13.30 hrs. The outage is to allow pole replacement.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Ordinary meeting Tuesday 5th March 2024, 7.30pm Iden Village Hall.