



Iden Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd October 2023 7.30pm, Iden Village Hall.

Notices

The Chairman extended the Council's sympathy to the families of Michael Coulman, Jane Whittenshaw and Jack Slater who had died since the last meeting Michael Coulman was an outstanding sportsman playing for cricket for Oxford. Jane Whittenshaw was a respected actor having television roles, been the voice over on TV documentaries and advertisements and took part in some 500 radio plays. Jack Slater had given Chrissie invaluable support whilst she looked after the Village Hall and latterly will be remembered as the bingo caller. As a good craftsman, he restored the weathervane over the Old Hall which had been there for at least 75 years.

Present

Councillors M. Miller, P. Allard, B. Luckhurst and J. Wood.

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

Members of the Public: Twelve.

Apologies

Councillor Say and District Councillor L. Hacking.

Disclosure of Interests and Dispensations

None.

Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was unanimously resolved to agree the minutes of the 4th July 2023 as a true record.

The meeting adjourned at 7.32 pm for Public Session

County Councillor Keith Glazier Report

Councillor Glazier had now responded to Councillor Miller and gave his apologies for the delay.

Locally, there was no water in parts of Rye. The water supply would return as soon as the works were completed. Pothole filling and patching repairs would continue while the weather permitted. Additional funds had been scheduled to increase the quantity and speed of repairs.

Following two bye elections in Heathfield and Eastbourne, no one party had an overall majority in the county council, but all parties would be working to reach consensus to continue the council work.

He confirmed that broadband providers did not have to give residents prior notice about works. He was lobbying central government for Highways to have the power to require utilities companies to have to make with like for like repairs following works, within a year.

Councillor Glazier would try to ascertain when fibre-optic to the properties would be offered to residents.

A resident mentioned the size of the tree growing in one of the Parkwood bungalows which was now growing across the village hall car park as making the surface slippery and asked for assistance to report it. The clerk would action.

District Councillor Paul Osborne Report

During the water supply interruption, he had assisted in arranging for bottled water to be delivered and requested Biffa collect additional plastic bottles. The council had budget overspend of £2 million whilst it only held £5/6 million in reserve.

The council was considering no longer accepting cash payments in their car parks and using pay points, in addition to 'Ringo'.

The A259 would be undergoing night works soon.

Conkers Field Development

A resident enquired about the procedure for calling in the application when the soon anticipated application came out for public consultation.

A satisfactory response from Enforcement Officers was yet to be forth coming.

The Chairman said that it was hoped there would be a drop in session to enable residents to see the plans and question the Developer's Representatives to enable their comments to be taken into account before the application is finalised.

Public Questions – None.

The meeting reconvened 7.50pm

Planning

4.1 Enforcements and Appeals

No further enforcement advice since the last meeting.

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

RR/2023/760/P Park Farm: Erection of green house. Approved.

RR/2023/1006/P Barons Grange, Readers Lane: Retention of vacant agricultural mobile home for holiday let use. Approved.

4.3 Applications Considered

None.

Council Finances

5.1 Bank Balances

Bank balances

31st July 2023 £24,620.60 (Treasurers Account £14,309.10 and Reserve Account £10,311.50).

31st August 2023 £23,656.75 (Treasurers Account £13,337.62 and Reserve Account £10,319.13).

30th September 2023 £31,439.94 (Treasurers Account £21,111.17 and Reserve Account £10,328.77).

5.2 July, August and September Receipts

| | |
|-----------|----------------------------|
| £7.00 | July Bank Interest |
| £7.63 | August Bank Interest |
| £9.64 | September Bank Interest |
| £350.00 | Continued plot reservation |
| £15.00 | Coronation mug sale |
| £21.10 | Appledore PC share of ink |
| £50.00 | Hire of playing field |
| £8,000.00 | Precept payment |
| £350.00 | Plot reservation |

5.3 July (Additional Payments), August and September payments (including charge card)

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| £41.70 | August salary allowance: Room £30 and car £11.70 |
| £525.20 | August Salary |
| £525.20 | September Salary |
| £22.18 | M Metcalfe for gate repair (vat £3.69) |
| £3.24 | Refund M Philo for a share of laminate sheets |
| £90.00 | Playsafety Limited: RoSPA play area safety inspection (vat £15) |
| £252.00 | PKF Littlejohn LLP: External Audit (vat £42) |
| £32.28 | Pett PC: share of clerk's mobile April to September |
| £4.88 | ESALC: Being a good employer |
| Charge Card (6 September) | |
| £4.75 | Tesco 17/8 ream of paper (vat £0.95) |
| £1.50 | Stamps second class x 2 |
| £25.48 | Webbs: paintbrushes and creosote for Elms mead Bus Shelter |

5.4 The following payments were authorised:

| | |
|---------|---|
| £525.20 | Clerk's October salary |
| £83.40 | Clerk's September and October salary allowances: Room/car £41.70 |
| £17.59 | Refund for additional 5 litre bottle of creosote for Elmsmead bus shelter |

shelter £14.99 (vat £2.50), Tesco file dividers £1.10 (vat 92p), parish meeting refreshments £1.50
Charge card (9th October)
£59.99 Microsoft Office renewal

Nb No RALC (membership fee) or Gibbs (grass Cutting) invoices received as yet.

5.5 Completion of External Audit

It was resolved to note that the external auditor had no concerns with the annual return but had noted that the dates advised to the external auditor regarding the public right to inspect the accounts were incorrect. The dates on the final notice published to the public were correct.

Community Asset – The Bell Inn

6.1 Report from The Bell Inn Working Party, looking into the possible acquisition of the Bell Inn

The meeting was adjourned for the report 7.55pm

The group had met and was in the process of discovery, so it was too early to come to the village to report. It was working on a questionnaire to go out to the village and looking into the question of viability.

Upon the Bell Inn being declared a Community Asset, a Rother District Officer visited the site and noted the for-sale sign which automatically triggered the window for a group to advise that it is interested in acquiring The Bell. The group does not currently have a constitution nor bank account to be considered a buyer and so it was asking the parish council to trigger the moratorium period. Rother Officers had confirmed that triggering the moratorium did not require the Parish Council to go ahead with the acquisition.

The group was looking to join The Plunkett Association to obtain advice on taking on the pub and funding. Various requirements, including a valuation survey, had to be met to be able to join. An initial grant of £2,500 would be made available once successful. The Plunkett Association is responsible for managing central government funds of £150 million for 'Levelling-Up'. The group would also be looking to run fundraising events.

Questions and responses:

- Timing was an issue: the national funds available were limited.
- Jim Wood confirmed £750 from Fete Funds towards the survey costs.
- It was not a certainty that the group would be accepted by the Plunkett Association.
- As there is no law that permits a parish council to fund a valuation survey on a property that is not their own, the parish council can only donate funds to a community group. Funds from the parish council must be paid into a bank account set up for the group alone. Funds can not be donated to an individual.

The meeting was reconvened at 8.10pm

6.2 Parish Council to start the Community Asset Moratorium period for the Bell Inn

It was resolved to advise Rother District Council to consider Iden Parish Council as a possible purchaser for the community registered asset that is the Bell Inn, and as such to request that the moratorium period commence by the 15th October 2023. There is no requirement that the parish council acquire the pub.

6.3 Funding for Valuation Survey for the Bell Inn

It was resolved on the basis, that the fete village funds provided £750 and there would be no further funding, it was resolved to donate £1,800 for the cost of a valuation survey to the Bell Inn Group subject to:

- 1) a refund of £750 from the Village Fete funds and the remainder from any Plunket Association received by the group (the Bell Inn Group)**
- 2) an appropriate bank account being set up.**

1972 Act, s.137

7. New Burial Ground

7.1 Cemetery Tidy

The boundary between the new burial ground and churchyard has become overgrown with scrub. Memorial stones and plots are being lost. Various trees have reduced the light to the new burial ground and need raising to allow contractors and visitors to pass unhindered. The garden of contemplation needs a pile of dead branches removing. A fallen tree trunk between the churchyard and additional parking needs removing. The tree overhanging the additional parking need lifting. There is also a dead tree in the churchyard and a copper beech with a few dead limbs. A sapling growing in one of the graves is rapidly becoming a tree and needs to be removed to ensure the structure of the memorial.

It was resolved to agree to contract Nigel Gibbs to carry out the work. £1,070.00 plus vat

7.2 Garden of Contemplation – Interment of Ashes

The garden is now free of any covenants and is an ideal location to create a specific location for the interment of ashes. A layout has been circulated and quotes obtained. However, as there was a query outstanding about the look of the slabs and sizes, **it was resolved to delegate the decision to the Clerk.**

1972 Act, s.101

8. Elmsmead Bus Shelter

A re-dedication ceremony would be held on Saturday 28th October at 10.30pm followed by tea and cake in the village hall.

9 Pavilion Finances

9.1 Bank Balance

Bank Balances on

31st July 2023 £2,724.13

31st August 2023 £2,811.13

30th September 2023 £2,848.13

9.2 July, August and September Receipts

£60.00 Bodium Cricket Club

£50.00 Pavilion Hire

£60.00 Bodium Cricket Club

£60.00 Bodium Cricket Club

9.3 August and September Payments

£23.00 EDF monthly direct debit payment 15th of each month

9.4 Payments Authorised

£23.00 EDF monthly direct debit payment 15th of the month

Nb. Compensation for water disruption of £350.00 has been paid into the Castle Water account. The Clerk requested the sum to be paid into the pavilion bank account on the 12th September. Hopefully the funds will be paid in shortly.

10. Iden Playing Fields and Pavilion

10.1 Pavilion Working Party Report

The group provided a report summarising the history of the pavilion and its ideas on how to move forward regarding a legal structure, fundraising event on the 27th July 2024, housekeeping (listing interior works that need doing and an inventory of the container). The council would respond to these at the next meeting. The Clerk would contact the Cricket club about the date.

11. Risk Assessment

Oak tree branch fell on the playing field.

12. Information for Councillors

Police focus groups will be meeting online between 9th October to 1st December.

The coffee morning had a visit from two PCSOs on the 3rd August.

ESALC AGM Tuesday 14th November, Uckfield Civic Centre includes a light lunch. Councillor Allard will attend.

Road sign cleaning 9th October and then join the coffee morning in the village hall.

A reminder that councillors should be considering budgeting for the next financial year.

The play area inspection has been carried out and Councillor Say had tighten the bolts on the basket swing.

2nd November Residential Development Event 10am to 2pm Manor Barn Bexhill. The Clerk will attend.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 7th November 2023 at 7.30pm Iden Village Hall.