



# *Iden Parish Council*

## **Minutes of the Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024 7.30pm, Iden Village Hall.**

### Local Plan 2020-2024 Public Consultation

Planning officers were keen to hear the thoughts of residents on the plan to inform the final policies. The plan would be the basis on which planning applications would be decided in the future. It is centred around two main ideas: 'Green to the Core' and 'Live well Locally'. The first focused on protecting and enhancing the environment of the district particularly the High Weald National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), improving biodiversity and dealing with climate change. Whilst the second focused on making communities sustainable with services available closer to home. This would be achieved through the plan's strategies: Development, Transport, Health & Wellbeing, Infrastructure, Housing, Heritage, Environment Management, Economy and Landscape Character. Iden formed part of the Rye and Eastern Cluster. The plan indicated a possibility to allow a small residential development of around 20 dwellings, in addition to the 12 already allocated on the field behind Conkers. The consultation is open to 23<sup>rd</sup> July and responses can be submitted online or posting a hard copy of the survey. Hard copies of the plan can be seen at local libraries and exhibitions are being held across the district.

### **Notices**

The chair thanked those who had attended the Annual Parish Assembly and congratulated the Save the Bell Group on another well attended pop-up on the previous Wednesday and wished them success with obtaining the monetary pledges needed to attain grant match funding.

### **Present**

Councillors M. Miller (Chair), G. Say, P. Allard, B. Luckhurst, 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. Election of the Chair**

**It was resolved to elect Councillor Miller as Chair until the annual meeting in 2025. Proposed by Councillor Allard and seconded by Councillor Wood. Councillor Miller signed his acceptance of office.**

### **2. Election of the Vice Chair**

**It was resolved to elect Councillor Say as Vice Chair until the annual meeting in 2025. Proposed by Councillor Wood and seconded by Councillor Luckhurst.**

### **3. Apologies**

County Councillor Glazier who was attending another meeting and District Councillor Hacking was attending the Peasmarsh Parish Council meeting.

### **4. Disclosure of Interests and Dispensations**

None. Councillors confirmed their register of interests remained unchanged.

### **5. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was unanimously resolved to agree the minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024 as a true record.

### **The meeting adjourned at 7.53 pm for Public Session**

#### **District Councillors Paul Osborne Report**

Following the local plan presentation Councillor Osborne highlighted that a neighbourhood plan for Iden could help to influence planning decisions in the parish. Funding for creating a plan and the cost of the local referendum is available but it does need a resolute team of volunteers to develop one and it takes several years to achieve. Additionally, the contribution that the area would receive from Community Infrastructure Levy on larger developments in the parish would increase to 25%.

#### **Public Questions**

A member of the public highlighted that the section of the road to Iden at the Peace and Plenty Junction was so potholed it was undriveable. The temporary filling was not much of an improvement. A request was made to ask Councillor Glazier for assistance to have area resurfaced.

#### **The meeting reconvened 7.57pm**

### **6. Councillor Appointments**

**It was unanimously resolved to appoint councillors to various bodies as follows:**  
**Iden Community Emergency Forum – Councillor Luckhurst.**  
**Rother Association of Local Councils - Councillors Allard and Miller.**  
**East Sussex Association of Local Councils Annual Meeting – Councillors Allard and Miller.**

## **7. Meeting Schedule**

**It was unanimously resolved that meetings will continue on the first Tuesday of the month except for August when there will be no meeting.**

## **8. Policies**

The public works contracts thresholds to comply with legislation specifying tendering procedure has been increased from £25,000 to £30,000. The proposed Standing Orders and Financial Regulations have been amended to reflect this.

NALC has just completed a review of the standard Financial Regulations that councils use but the latest version was yet to be released. The Parish Council may have update these as a result.

**It was unanimously resolved to agree the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.**

It was noted that the remaining policies would be reviewed at the next meeting.

## **9. Borrowing Approval for Charge Card for the Clerk**

**It was unanimously resolved to confirm the approval for a charge card for the clerk with a limit of £500 in any one month. Full payment to be made by direct debit.**

## **10. New Burial Ground and Ashes Area Creation – Item was deferred**

## **11. General Power of Competence**

To date the parish council has not acted under the General Power of Competence. The council remains compliant with all criteria and whilst it remains, so the council can consider using the General Power of Competence for any new actions going forward.

## **12. Risk Management**

**It was unanimously resolved to agree the Risk Management Policy and Schedule.**

## **13. Planning**

### **13.1 Enforcements and Appeals**

No appeals outstanding and no enforcements.

### **13.2 Planning Decisions made by Rother District Council (since the last meeting)**

Amended Plans RR/2024/237/P Milestones, Playden Lane: Change of use of agricultural land to residential garden – Approved.

**The meeting was adjourned to hear public comment on the ‘Conkers’ amended plans application at 8pm.**

Members of the public made the following comments:

- The affordable homes appear to have been removed as there was no reference to them.

- The number of proposed dwellings exceeded the number recommended by the Planning Inspectorate for the site.
- The flawed access via Elmsmead (unsuitable for large dumper trucks and excavation equipment).
- The proposed access via Conkers is detrimental to the surrounds of a listed property that is Conkers.
- The deadline for commenting is the 21<sup>st</sup> May.
- The site exceeded the area approved in the Local Plan.
- The application is sufficiently different that it should be considered a new application which would mean the biodiversity gains of the latest legislation, applicable from 1<sup>st</sup> April, would apply.
- A resident had instructed a solicitor.

The meeting was reconvened at 8.24pm

### **13.3 Applications Considered**

- a) **Amended plans RR/2023/2153/P Conkers Main Street, Iden: Erection of 15 dwellings together with associated access, car parking and landscaping and demolition of modern extension of Conkers (grade II Listed) together with renovation works.**

**It was unanimously resolved to object:**

**Iden Parish Council stand by their original comments made in January 2024 and wish to add the following:**

**We take issue with 5 main areas: Access, Allocation, Breaking of Rother RDC guidelines, Ecology mitigations and Transport. There appear to be so many changes to the initial application that ‘amendment’ seems a misnomer. The Planning Inspectorate concluded originally that this site was suitable for 12 dwellings (not particularly houses) and the increase to 15 is nowhere justified. The pre-app conditions laid down in Spring 2023 have frankly not been met.**

**Access to Conkers site has caused serious concern and argument. The initial proposal suggested an entrance via Elmsmead which is a narrow residential road with on-road parking mostly; it is a green and pleasant site with much vegetation and quite generous gardens. Elmsmead is a stable community of longstanding residents who contribute much to the social and working life of the village. Some of the few children in Iden live there and have the luxury, lost to many now, of being able to play and cycle safely in their own road. To attempt to take construction vehicles along this small road and then allow daily Conkers traffic would change utterly the way of life of these people.**

**The more recent access via Conkers and straight on to the B2082 causes even more concern. Highways May 2024 report states that they have ‘many concerns about the safety of pedestrians and vehicles’ and attach 8 conditions before any permission can be granted. The building of an access road between 2 listed buildings (East View and Conkers) and through the curtilage of the latter is of serious concern to us. There are 42 listed buildings in Iden and these buildings**

constitute 20% of all buildings in Iden and 12% of the 2,200 listings in Rother's 200 square miles. This is a very high percentage in such a small village. Were permission to be granted then a precedent could be established which would affect all other listings in Rother. Perhaps our original suggestion of a suitable site on Wittersham Road where there is a light industrial area would be a viable alternative? We appreciate the necessity for the originally mooted 10 new properties in Iden and this area is now suggested in the Local Plan outline for 2020 – 2040.

We do not feel the proposed housing is accessible to all. There should be 40% affordable housing, 25% first homes and 10% shared ownership. The Viability Statement by Bespoke Property Consultants (15 April 24) concludes after 88 pages of very detailed financial analysis that 'no affordable housing or additional S106 costs can viably be funded' (7.03).

BPC also state 'we have not inspected the property '(1.2) yet 'we have acted ... with reference to all appropriate available sources of information'. (1.7) Just not the real thing.

Rother here are breaking their commitment by allowing culs de sac building of an 'estate' on land whose soil indicates the need for substantial piling, with little regard for the wishes of the local residents, their natural environment and the need for affordable housing.

In terms of ecological issues, the Newt Officer presents a full and clear response to biodiversity and mitigation, compensation and enhancement. Conkers is in a Red Zone and has the unusual situation of being under 2 kilometres from an AONB, an SPA, an SSSI and a Ramsar. A serious consideration when this is the site chosen for building.

Transport has been much discussed and is noted for its paucity. Most Iden folks have a car or access to one. It is a necessity, sadly. We were therefore amused to discover in the Transport Statement that 0.004 of a train arrives daily but that none leave. This seems to sum up the expensive folly of this application.

- b) RR/2024/500/P Spring Farm, Land Adjacent to Military Canal: Existing Store to be restored and extended to accommodate storage facility for sheep farming.

It was unanimously resolved to object as it found the application was not significantly different to RR/2023/2156/P with little evidence of agricultural use.

## **14. Finances - Parish Council**

### **14.1 Year End Report**

#### Parish Council Finances

Receipts Fourth Quarter (£1,455.98)

All council tax (precept) has already been received, any income received in this quarter is small – share office costs refunded £37.20 and bank interest £33.61. At this time of year, the council puts in a vat reclaim and this came to £1,385.17.

Payments Fourth Quarter net of vat £3,713.24

Council running cost came to £2,107.62 including a new battery for the laptop. There was a 2023 election charge of £139.97, additional cemetery boundary tidy work totalling £1,355 and the bill for rock salt (£110.65) for Iden Emergency Forum finally came through.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2024, the balance stood at £ 18,674.60. There were payments awaiting clearance.

Earmarked reserves total approx. £ 8,850 (reserve of £8,000 and two other ring-fenced sums - Website £608.61 and garden society donation £246).

Outstanding projects and their bills:  
£2,829.60 (inc. vat) for the Ashes Area creation.

That leaves the council with an unallocated sum after reserves and cost for the Ashes Area of about £6,500.

#### Pavilion Account 2023-2024

The account started the year holding £5,569.31 and finished with £514.74. The running costs came to £1,383.87 and the pavilion roof, guttering and moss clearing came to £6,225. These costs have been covered by hire fees of £1,020; water compensation of £350; the parish council contributing to roofing cost £1,516.90 with the remainder from funds already held in the bank account.

#### Overview of Council Finances for the Year

The parish council spent more than budgeted as it embarked on a refurbishment of various assets much of which fell within sums not spent on regular costs and the contingency fund, but some did not. The cost of refurbishing the Elmsmead Bus shelter was covered by the contingency fund and underspends in other areas whilst the Sun Dial and two cemetery boundary tidy ups, and the share of the pavilion roof costs did not. These were covered by reserves.

### **14.2 Bank Balances**

Bank Balances:

31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024	£18,159.86
Plus total Receipts	£ 8,010.74
Less total Payments	<u>£ 1,020.60</u>
30 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	£25,150.00

(30<sup>th</sup> April statements -Treasurers Account £14,744.16 and Reserve Account £10,405.84)

### **14.4 April Receipts**

£10.74	Bank Interest
£8,000.00	First half of precept (council tax share to the parish council)

#### **14.5 April Additional Payments**

£32.41 Pavilion share of vat reclaim collected in January

#### **14.6 The Following Payments were Authorised:**

£629.20 Clerk's April salary.

£45.90 Clerk's salary allowances: Room £30 and car £11.70, £4.20 Navigator paper for ICE (vat 70p)

£179.40 Rother District Council: annual dog waste removal charge (vat £29.90)

£714.00 East Sussex County Council: additional urban verge cuts (vat £119)

£145.55 East Sussex Association of Local Councils: annual subscription for NALC and ESALC

Charge Card (7 May)

£98.59 Viking Direct: set of ink (vat £16.43) – net amount to be shared with Beckly and Pett PCs.

#### **14.7 Save the Bell Valuation Survey**

The Save the Bell Inn group now has a bank account. The council had previously agreed to fund up to £1,650 of a valuation survey on the condition that this was on the basis of a loan to be repaid by funds from The Plunkett Association. The survey cost of £2,400 (including vat £400) has been paid by the Save the Bell group however the Plunkett Fund dedicated to this had already been exhausted. The group is still awaiting to hear about its application for funds to acquire the pub.

**It was unanimously resolved to pay £1,650 to the Save the Bell Group towards the costs of the valuation survey.**

#### **14.8 Pavilion Funds**

The account holds insufficient funds (£108.31), even with the £500 hire fee from the cricket, this will not cover the estimated £1,400 annual cost. In order to ensure the account has enough funds to cover direct debits and other costs, for the next 6 months, **it was unanimously resolved to transfer £500 the pavilion account, on a non-return basis.**

#### **14.9 Donation - Air Ambulance**

**It was unanimously agreed to donate £200 to Air Ambulance.**

## 15. Finances - Pavilion

### 15.1 Pavilion Annual Figures

2023-2024

Iden Pvaillon Accounts

Unaudited

2023-2024 year														
Payments	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Year End	running costs not maintenance
Electricity	£ 21.86	£ 21.86	£ 21.86	£ 21.86	£ 21.86	£ 21.86	£ 21.86	£ 21.86	£ 336.76			£ 71.57	£ 561.35	£ 1,383.87
Castle water			£ 138.18					£ 12.83	£ 5.80	£ 19.67		£ 105.04	£ 281.52	
Effluent			£ 135.00										£ 135.00	
Fire extinguishers check								£ 56.00					£ 56.00	
Safety Inspection			£ 350.00										£ 350.00	
Field hire transfer to Pc			£ 200.00										£ 200.00	
Pavilion roof maintenance				£ 2,710.00					£ 3,515.00					
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 21.86</b>	<b>£ 21.86</b>	<b>£ 845.04</b>	<b>£ 2,731.86</b>	<b>£ 21.86</b>	<b>£ 21.86</b>	<b>£ 21.86</b>	<b>£ 90.69</b>	<b>£ 3,857.56</b>	<b>£ 19.67</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>£ 176.61</b>	<b>£ 7,808.87</b>	
Vat	£ 1.14	£ 1.14	£ 71.14	£ 1.14	£ 1.14	£ 1.14	£ 1.14	£ 12.34	£ 16.84			3.58	£ 109.60	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£ 23.00</b>	<b>£ 23.00</b>	<b>£ 916.18</b>	<b>£ 2,733.00</b>	<b>£ 23.00</b>	<b>£ 23.00</b>	<b>£ 23.00</b>	<b>£ 103.03</b>	<b>£ 3,874.40</b>	<b>£ 19.67</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>£ 180.19</b>	<b>£ 7,941.47</b>	
<b>Receipts</b>														
transfers from IPC									£ 1,516.90					
Hire Seasonal includes £200 to PC		£ 700.00												
Hire- one offs		£ 60.00	£ 30.00	£ 60.00	£ 110.00	£ 60.00								
Castle Water compensation							£ 350.00							
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£ 760.00</b>	<b>£ 30.00</b>	<b>£ 60.00</b>	<b>£ 110.00</b>	<b>£ 60.00</b>	<b>£ 350.00</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>£ 1,516.90</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>£ 2,886.90</b>	
Balance as at 31st March 2023			£ 5,569.31						Bank Statement as at 31st March 2024	£514.74				
receipts			£ 2,886.90											
payments			-£ 7,941.47											
			£ 514.74											

### 15.2 Bank Balances

Bank Balances on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024 Treasurers Account £108.31.

### 15.3 April Receipts

£32.41 Transfer of vat from Parish Council Account.

### 15.4 April Additional Payments

Castle Water overestimated the read for the end of year. With a slight improvement of the weather a water meter reading was obtained. The April bill left the account in credit by £48.71. The monthly standing charge is about £6.

£18.84 EDF monthly debit

## 16. Iden Playing Fields and Pavilion

Oliver Curd Trust wishes to hire the pavilion and the ground on the 20th July to celebrate its 15th Anniversary. The Pavilion Group had been in touch with them. **It was unanimously agreed that the Playing Fields could be used for the occasion.** Another village picnic had been suggested for the summer and the parish council hoped that this would be feasible with any plans for the group had the facility.

## 17. Risk Assessment

An exceptionally large branch/trunk of a cherry tree in the Churchyard had fallen. The other two branch/trunks had been found to be diseased and should be felled quickly. A quote for £1440 had been obtained and the council will instruct a contractor to fell the tree, under emergency powers.



## **18. Information for Councillors**

Witness statements are still coming in regarding Footpath 20.

## **19. Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024, 7.30pm Iden Village Hall.