THE BELL INN IDEN COMMUNITY LIMITED

The Bell
at Iden

Annual Report & Accounts 2026



The Bell Inn Iden Community Limited Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2026

The Bell Inn Iden Community Limited
A Community Benefit Society registered under the
Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014
FCA Registration number: 9244

Registered Office
Danesbury, Main Street, Iden, East Sussex, TN31 7PT

Management Committee
Jeremy Cooper (Chair)
Simon Phillips Jones
Hugh Kermode (Secretary and Vice-Chair)
Andrew Lane
Gary Meek
Christopher Melchers (Treasurer)
David Patten
Colin Pettit (co-opted October 2026)
Christopher Vane

Chairman's Review

The Bell Inn has for centuries been central to the life of Iden, a natural meeting place and hub for village life. In 1987, to reflect its historic importance it was granted Grade Two Listed status, this was reconfirmed in February 2025.

The Bell Inn (The Bell) was put up for sale in June 2023, having ceased trading earlier that year. This prompted a campaign by residents, leading to the formation of The Bell Inn Iden Community Limited, a Community Benefit Society (CBS) whose aim was to buy The Bell and reopen it for the community.

Since then, together with the generous support of local residents, we have moved forward, initially raising the money to buy The Bell and then developing plans to restore and reopen it.

Preserving and reopening The Bell has proved to be a monumental challenge involving a large number of people and a number of moving parts that do not always move together at the same time or in the same direction. We remain confident that as the Project continues to gain momentum thanks to the work, generosity and commitment of a number of individuals, together with the strong support the Project has received from the local community of Iden, we will achieve our goal.

We expect The Bell to reopen in summer 2027, fit and ready for a successful future.



Jeremy Cooper
Chair
The Bell Iden Community Limited

Management Board Report

To keep members fully informed this report covers the period up to 1st November 2026 and includes additional events since the Chairman's Report at our Annual General Meeting on 26th September 2026.

The last year has seen significant progress in our aim of purchasing, restoring and reopening The Bell, bringing it back to the heart of Iden.

In November 2025 we reformed the management committee, bringing together a team with the skills to take our project forward.

Working with local publican John Rogers, we negotiated a reduction in the asking price of The Bell from £595,000 to £425,000 and in January 2026 we held a Community Share Offer to fund the purchase. Over a three week period we raised £297,500 in shares and £25,600 in donations, together with an additional £2400 in small grants. Local resident Christopher Strangeways contributed £127,500, enabling us to jointly purchase The Bell for £425,000 in April 2026.

John Rogers had originally proposed that he would restore and reopen The Bell at his expense in exchange for an option to purchase the freehold within a fixed period. However, after fully assessing the financial requirements of the project he decided to withdraw. While disappointed with his decision, we remain grateful for his assistance in negotiating the purchase price and developing refurbishment plans for which he obtained planning permission.

With John's withdrawal we examined alternative business models for The Bell to identify which would provide the greatest resilience and opportunity for success. The consistent advice received was that a model which included three revenue streams in the form of beverages including alcohol sales, food and letting rooms was most likely to succeed.

To deliver this business model successfully requires the first floor landlord's flat in The Bell to be converted into letting rooms. The Management Board appointed local firm RX architects to assist us in developing a Planning Application. Our project brief to RX centred around three key principles:

• The restoration and refurbishment of the buildings to reveal their original historic character.
• The remodelling or removal of disfiguring modern additions.
• The upgrading of existing facilities to current standards of accessibility, energy performance, comfort and business functionality.

To achieve our objectives we worked closely with RX, potential tenants and professional consultants to develop a Planning Application. The Application was submitted to Rother District Council on 10th September 2026. It is open to inspection and a decision is expected from RDC by the end of November 2026.

The Application is more sympathetic to the historic fabric of the building and less intrusive than the existing approved design submitted by John Rogers. Crucially it also includes the conversion of the first floor to three en-suite letting rooms and we have a high degree of confidence that it will succeed.

Restoring The Bell
After many years of neglect, the restoration needs to be comprehensive, repairing The Bell while preserving and enhancing its historic character. The building will additionally be brought up to current standards of fire safety and accessibility, together with a three-phase electrical supply, air-source heat pump and improved insulation.

We have five building contractors tendering for the project and will be in a position to appoint the chosen company by early December.

Management Board Report

continued

Funding the next stages
The Management Board have examined a number of options for funding the next stages of the project from grant funding to private loans, commercial mortgages and a second Community Share Offer.

Grant funding
We researched an extensive range of grant giving bodies and made a first stage application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Their response was that without a substantive 'Community Benefit' aspect to the project (for example the inclusion of a village shop or post office within the pub) our application would not succeed. The same criteria apply to all the major grant giving bodies.

We may qualify for some smaller grants (e.g. solar panels) and will submit applications for these on approval of our Planning Application. However these grants would provide a relatively minor contribution to the funds required to complete the Project.

Private loans and Commercial Mortgages
We are in discussions with individuals and building societies about the options available to part fund the building work with a private loan or commercial mortgage. Although a loan or mortgage will give us a substantial level of funding, it will not cover the full costs involved in restoring and upgrading The Bell.

Second Community Share Offer
Our first Share Offer provided the resources for us, together with Christopher Strangeways, to buy The Bell. A second is the most viable option to enable the next step and fund the restoration and refurbishment of the building. We intend to launch our second Share Offer in the New Year, once we have planning permission and have signed a legal agreement with our proposed tenants.

Tenant contribution
The prospective tenants will pay for the fitting out and business opening costs of The Bell once the restoration of the building is complete.

Tenancy agreement
We are finalising legal agreements with our prospective tenants and their business partners and aim to complete this process by the end of November 2026.

Summer 2027
We are making good progress, but there remains much to be done. With your continued support we're looking forward to reopening and welcoming everyone back.

The Management Board
The Bell Inn Iden Community Limited

Statement of net assets

As at 31st March 2026

Assets	**2026**	**2025**
	£	**£**
Fixed assets		
Freehold land & buildings	297,500.00	0.00
Current Assets		
Coop Bank Current Account	1,395.43	4,392.41
Coop Bank Savings Account	20,443.88	10,001.34
Accounts Receivable	217.19	0.00
Total Assets	**319,556.50**	**14,393.75**
Liabilities		
Share Capital		
297500 Shares of £1.00 each	297,500.00	0.00
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	1,890.00	0.00
Loans	0.00	90.00
Total Liabilities	**299,390.00**	**90.00**
Net Assets/(Liabilities)	**20,166.50**	**14,303.75**
Net Assets brought forward	**14,303.75**	**0.00**
Net Income this year	**5,862.75**	**14,303.75**
Net assets carried forward	**20,166.50**	**14,303.75**

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions of FRS 105

Signed

Chairman **Secretary** **Treasurer**

Income & Expenditure account

As at 31st March 2026

	Year to 31st March 2026	18 months to 31st March 2025
Income	**£**	**£**
Grants	1800.00	13,553.19
Fund raising events	0.00	15,004.18
Donations	25,625.00	0.00
Rent	0.00	0.00
Bank interest	583.13	1.34
Total income	**28,010.13**	**28,558.71**
Expenditure		
Fund raising events	0.00	2294.73
Professional fees	12,252.26	7,948.92
Communications etc	1,100.04	3,741.31
Land tax	7,525.00	0.00
Maintenance	506.78	0.00
Administration & audit	229.00	270.00
Insurance	497.30	0.00
Bank charges	37.00	0.00
Total expenditure	**22,147.38**	**14,254.96**
Net income	**5,862.75**	**14,303.75**
Net income brought forward	**14,303.75**	**0.00**
Net assets to date	**20,166.50**	**14,303.75**

Approval of accounts

At the AGM on 10th September 2026, the Members approved the accounts and financial report presented to them by the Treasurer and voted to request an audit of the accounts by 2 lay auditors.

The accounts have been submitted to The Financial Conduct Authority under form AR30.

Get involved

Details of how to contact the committee, join upcoming meetings, subscribe to our mailing list, or register an interest in Phase 2 fundraising can be found at bellatiden.com

Community Benefit Society No 9244
Registered address:
Danesbury, Main Street, Iden, TN31 7PT