

PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL

The monthly meeting of Pirton Parish Council was held on
Thursday 8th March 2007
at Pirton Village Hall.

Present:

Mr Jonathan Bhowmick
Mr Michael Goddard
Mr Steven Kitchener
Mr Owain Lister (Chairman)
Mr David Saunders (Vice-Chairman)
Mrs Jennifer Smart (Clerk)
Mr James Vaughan
Mrs Pamela Waters

Apologies for Absence:

Mrs Rosemary Hamilton McLeod
Mrs Margaret Johnson

Also present:

Mrs Claire Strong (County Councillor)
Mr Kevin Green from CDA for Herts
Three members of playgroup committee
Mr Peter Johnson, member of Village Hall Management Committee,
Three members of Pumpkin Club Committee
PCSO Nikki Williams and colleague

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman welcomed Mr Green, who attended the meeting to explain to Councillors the 'Scoots' scheme, which is run by the Community Development Agency for Herts. Scoots provide transport for young people in rural areas so that they can access training or employment opportunities from which they might be excluded solely by a lack of available public or private transport. Scoots provides either 50cc mopeds or pedal cycles to youngsters aged between 16 and 25 who have a firm offer of training or work. The road safety training provided is very comprehensive and the safety equipment above regulation level. Most costs are paid by Scoots, the youngsters themselves paying only for petrol together with a set sum of £45 per month, half of which is returned to them when they hand back their vehicle. The scheme is designed to raise the levels of young people's responsibility at the same time as it provides transport.

The Chairman thanked Mr Green for attending the meeting.

The Playgroup Committee Members attended the meeting to inform the Parish Council that they are considering moving to a new venue as they feel a bigger facility will be needed in future for the playgroup, as the number of children attending continues to rise. Plans are at a very early stage, but the preferred option

would be for the Playgroup to be located on school premises, for which the Head Teacher at the school who had voiced her support.

The Chairman thanked the Playgroup Committee members for attending the meeting and invited them to return to the Parish Council if they need help and support in the future.

Three members of the Pumpkin Club then gave details of their plans for a Maypole on Great Green. It was mentioned that a Maypole had been sited on Great Green up until the 1920s, which was why Great Green was the preferred site. The Pumpkin Club would like to install a red and white striped pole 25' high, and would like the Parish Council as landowner to support the proposal by giving permission for the installation, and also by allowing a planning application to be made in its name. There was further discussion about possible parking problems when the Maypole is in use and the Pumpkin Club were asked if they would pay for any extra grass cutting that might be required to ensure that the relevant area was suitable for dancing. The Pumpkin Club were also asked how often they envisaged the Maypole being used and by how many groups. It was thought that May Day would be the main event at which it would be used, and that the school would use it regularly. As this would be the only Maypole in Hertfordshire, it was thought that there could be other requests to use it, and these would be considered, depending on the size of the event, but its use could be controlled as the ribbons are essential and would be removed when the Maypole is not in use. In answer to another question, the Pumpkin Club committee members stated that they would probably appoint a management committee to administer the use of the Maypole. Although concern was expressed about the position should the Pumpkin Club lose interest or disband.

The Chairman thanked the Pumpkin Club members for attending the meeting, stated that the matter would be discussed further and the views of the Parish Council conveyed to them by letter.

The Chairman welcomed PCSO Nikki Williams and her colleague. There had been further damage to the Recreation Ground pitches, caused this time, it was thought, by a motor bike being ridden over all three pitches, which had caused considerable damage as the ground was very wet at the time. A member of the PSSC told PCSO Williams that a record was now being kept of all damage, and that regular users had been asked to note registration numbers of cars seen there. PCSO Williams said that if anyone saw someone causing damage they should 'phone 999 immediately and that it might be possible to arrange for a Problem Solving Team to keep watch on the Recreation Ground in an effort to catch those responsible. PCSO Williams mentioned that it is hoped the theft of Sat-Nav equipment from cars in the area will drop as two prolific offenders have been arrested.

The Chairman thanked PCSO Williams for attending the meeting.

Mr Peter Johnson attended the meeting to reassure Councillors that the Village Hall licence is appropriate and adequate for all the activities that take place there, and always has been. The full licence is on display in the foyer of the Village Hall and a copy was handed to the clerk for retention. The Village Hall has a Full Premises Licence which was issued in August 2005 and covers everything that takes place there, the only relevant exclusion being the selling of alcohol. For any occasion when alcohol is to be sold, a Temporary Event Notice is obtained. However, the Village Hall Management Committee is now considering the appointment of a Designated Premises Supervisor so that TENs are not required. The Parish Council

was asked if it had any objection to the Village Hall applying for a full licence so that alcohol could be sold, which it does not.

While the Village Hall was under discussion, Councillors mentioned that they would still like to see the surface of the drive down to the road and the outside lighting improved for safety reasons, and had specified that the 2007/2008 grant of £250 should be spent on improved lighting outside the Hall. Mr Johnson explained that there were not enough people on the Management Committee to do everything that needed to be done, but that he intended to arrange for a new light to be installed. Mr Vaughan offered to take responsibility for this work, and it was suggested that the Parish Council should use the £250 grant to improve the lighting, to which Mr Johnson gave his agreement. The matter of the uneven surface was also discussed and Mr Johnson stated that a grant would need to be applied for to improve the surface but that three quotes would be needed to apply for funding. The Parish Council offered to obtain the necessary quotes on behalf of the Village Hall Management Committee.

Mrs Strong mentioned that there is a football club hoping to find a large enough area of land for five pitches locally, and that they have access to a substantial amount of money to fund new premises. Although Councillors found this interesting, it was agreed that the Recreation Ground is too small to accommodate five pitches. Mrs Strong mentioned that she still has money available under her discretionary grant and asked if there were projects in the village she could support. Mr Johnson mentioned that the Village Hall needs more tables, and Mr Saunders mentioned that he is in the process of arranging for plinths to be ordered to display the Village Map and Footpath Guide. Mrs Strong indicated that she would support both of these projects.

031.07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest in items on the agenda.

032.07 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on held on 8th February 2007 were confirmed and signed.

033.07 OUTSTANDING ITEMS

Coleman's Close – Section 106

Nothing new to report

Grants

Parish Amenity Capital Improvement Fund

Nothing to report

Southern Rural Area Discretionary Award

The clerk reported that Pirton Parish Council have been awarded £500 under this grant towards the cost of a bench made from recycled materials to be installed on Middle Green, and it was agreed that this project would go ahead even though the handover has not yet taken place. There was discussion about the best position for the new bench and agreement that a site visit is necessary.

034.07 FINANCE

Bank accounts as at 5th March 2007:

Business Premium Account	£16,208.35
Community Account	<u>£5,512.49</u>
	£21,720.84

Contingency Account	<u>£9,968.37</u>
	£31,689.21

Monies received since last meeting – included in above:

Recovered VAT	£1,738.75
Allotment Rental	£5.00
Postcards	£30.00

It was proposed by Mr Goddard and seconded by Mr Vaughan that payments totalling **£1312.52** as detailed on the monthly Finance Statement be made in full.

035.07 HITCHIN ROAD VERGES

The clerk had received a letter from CMS informing the Parish Council that funding for Heritage Sites would no longer be available. This would mean that unless money could be found from another source to fund the special cutting of the newly designated Heritage Site along the Hitchin Road verge, which would cost £300 this year, cutting would revert to Herts Highways. Councillors agreed to fund this work for 2007 out of the Hedges and Trees Budget, and would review the position at the Budget Meeting later in the year.

036.07 REQUESTS FOR FUNDING

None

037.07 PLANNING

Applications

33 High Street – 07/00376/1TCA

Remove one sycamore tree

8 Royal Oak Lane – 07/00202/1TCA

Remove two conifer trees

6 Royal Oak Lane – 07/00235/1TCA

Remove one Norwegian Spruce tree

Tithe Barn House, Shillington Road – 07/00465/1TCA

Remove one Hawthorn tree

Decisions

Rectory Barn, Rectory Manor, Shillington Road – 06/02854/1LB

Full Permission Householder : Listed Building Consent: Conversion of part of garden store into study/garden room. Insertion of double door and window in south west elevation. Internal partitioning - CLBC.

24 Royal Oak Lane – 07/00080/1TCA

Reduce canopy of 1 Beech tree by 25% - no objections

12 High Street – 07/00090/1TCA

Remove 5 x Leylandii – no objections

8 Royal Oak Lane – 07/00202/1TCA

Remove two conifer trees – no objection

33 High Street – 07/00376/1TCA

Remove one sycamore tree – no objection

6 Royal Oak Lane – 07/00235/1TCA

Remove one Norwegian Spruce tree – no objection

The clerk had received correspondence from CPRE concerning the Barker Review of Land-Use Planning. The clerk was given permission to object to the proposals in the review on behalf of the Parish Council,

038.07 HIGHWAYS

Land leading to St Mary's Church – nothing new to report

The clerk is still awaiting a reply to the letter concerning the possibility of parking bays in Crabtree Lane.

Nothing new to report on the raising of the Give Way sign and replacement of the broken pointer at the junction of Royal Oak Lane and West Lane.

Nothing new to report on the possibility of a 20mph speed limit in the village.

039.07 INSURANCE

The clerk had received a reply from the Summer Fair Committee, who would like to continue to take advantage of the Parish Council's insurance and asked what the next steps should be. The clerk informed the Parish Council that committees are normally appointed at the Annual Meeting of the Council, so that membership of the proposed Village Events Committee could be appointed then, when the new Parish Councillors have taken Office. The clerk would inform the Summer Fair Committee accordingly but ask that in the meantime minutes of their meetings are passed to the Parish Council.

The clerk had not received a response from the Bonfire Night organisers.

040.07 **GENERAL PARISH MATTERS**

Possible new Bus Shelter – nothing new to report

Postcards – Councillors approved two new postcards that had been produced by Mr Ryan, the photographer, as examples. Mr Ryan would be asked to prepare some more for the Parish Council to consider.

Tithe Barn – nothing new to report

Maypole – there was considerable further discussion about the Maypole. The Parish Council's main reason for hesitating to support the project had been the proposed height of the pole and the spread that it was thought would be required for dancing. Now that Councillors had been reassured that the height, and spread would not be excessive, they were pleased to give the project their full support. Councillors also gave agreement for planning permission to be applied for in the name of the Parish Council. The Chairman asked if any Councillors had any objections to the proposals and none had.

A Councillor had been asked about the status of the road around Great Green, which is owned by the Parish Council, with a view to residents' parking. It was remembered that Mr Jarrett, a resident of Great Green, had investigated the possibility of the roadway being adopted by Highways some years ago, and the clerk was asked to contact Mr Jarrett to ask if he had any paperwork relating to the matter that the Parish Council could examine.

Mobile 'phone mast – the clerk had now heard from 02 that they were planning to add their mast to those on the Priors Hill Water Tower.

Police Locality Plan - the clerk had received information about a meeting on Monday 19th March at Ickleford to discuss this plan. Mr Saunders would attend the meeting with the clerk.

Blacksmith's Pond – the Parish Council had been asked for permission from Pirton Players to attach balloons to the railings around the pond to advertise their forthcoming play. Permission was given.

Village of the Year Competition – nothing new to report as Mrs Hamilton McLeod was not present.

041.07 **REPORTS**

Recreation Ground and Sports & Social Club

The old goal posts had not yet been removed from the ditch near the Jubilee Row trees.

Mr Lister reported that the New Clubhouse Committee had held another meeting, and estimate that approximately £500,000 will be required to complete the project. Mr Walker, a professional quantity surveyor would attend the next committee meeting and a budget would be prepared to enable grants to be applied for.

The PSSC plan to hold a Band Night on the last Friday in March and a Quiz Night on the 27th April.

It was suggested that extra posts and a low metal barrier could be installed around the edge of the car park in the Recreation Ground, together with a chain across the tops of the posts, to prevent cars driving onto the pitches. Although this might not completely prevent vehicles driving on the pitches, it would help, and the PSSC committee were asked to consider it at their next meeting.

It was mentioned that the algae and mildew in the Play Area need to be removed, and thought that this problem is exacerbated by the shade cast by overhanging trees, and the clerk reported that Mr Simmons is in the process of cleaning the equipment. It was agreed that the Groundsman would be asked to cut back the bushes and trees in the ditch that overhang the play area and that Mr Simmons would be asked to pressure wash the safety surfacing.

Access road

As the clerk has still not received a reply to her letter to the solicitors acting for the new owners of the Old Vicarage, a direct approach would now be made to the new owners.

Bury Trust

Nothing new to report

042.07 VILLAGE UPDATES

Environment - North Herts Landfill

The last meeting had been very well attended, largely due to the controversy over the reading from one of the boreholes, which has consistently shown a slightly raised level of contamination. Biffa have now established that the contamination is from the old landfill site as no liner was used, and that their pits are all lined. There was no representation from the Environment Agency at the meeting and no money is available to rectify the situation, so there are currently no plans to do so. However, it was reported that the readings are still extremely low and water is still safe to drink.

Pirton School

Nothing to report

Village Hall

Nothing to report other than as recorded in Public Participation.

Youth Matters

Nothing to report.

Parish Paths Partnership

Nothing to report.

Tree Warden and PEAP

The clerk reported that PEAP volunteers have now planted three Lime trees in the Recreation Ground to replace those removed to make way for the MUGA, and request half the cost of the trees from PSSC.

Neighbourhood Watch

No report

Rands Trust

No report.

043.07 ITEMS FOR CIRCULATION

Letter from Defra re Review of the QPCS – 6 February

Newsletter email from CPRE – 7 February

Letter and Brochure from Enjoy England

Newsletter from East of England Association of Parish & Town Councils - January

2 x North Herts Neighbourhood Watch News

Hertfordshire Highways Information Bulletin - February

HAPTC Newsletter - February

Standards Board Leaflet - March

Houses and Gardens 2007 from CPRE

Countryside Voice magazine from CPRE - spring

LCR Magazine from NALC - March

Chiltern News magazine - March

Clerks & Councils Direct - March

Crime Figures for February

British Red Cross Open Gardens 2007 Leaflet

NHDC Members' Information – weeks ending 9, 16, 23 February and 2 March

044.07 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Council Meeting will be on **Thursday 12th April 2007**
at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.