

PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL

The monthly meeting of Pirton Parish Council was held on
Thursday 12th July 2007
at Pirton Village Hall.

Present:

Mrs Diane Bailey
Mrs Rosemary Hamilton McLeod
Mr Michael Goddard (arrived late after attending Rural Conference)
Mrs Margaret Johnson
Mr Steven Kitchener
Mr Rodney Marshall
Mr David Saunders (Chairman)
Mrs Jennifer Smart (Clerk)
Mr James Vaughan
Mrs Pamela Waters (vice-Chairman)

Apologies for Absence:

Nigel Brook (County Councillor)

Also present:

Six members of the public

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman welcomed the members of the public, who explained that they were attending the meeting to share with the Parish Council their concerns about a planning application for the Tithe Barn in Shillington Road, which was for a Change of Use from B1 to the storage, repair and sale of architectural salvage and antiques. The Chairman explained that the Parish Council had become so concerned about the dilapidated state of the Tithe Barn that they had requested the Conservation Officer from NHDC to inspect it with a view to making suggestions for its preservation and use, although she had not yet had time to do so. The Chairman mentioned that most Councillors felt the submitted plan provided too little information to enable an informed decision to be made, although if a suitable commercial use could be found for the barn, it was more likely to be preserved.

A spokesman for the residents pointed out that an error had been made on the application in that the applicants stated that they own the whole of the area for which the change of use has been applied although they do not own the access road, which is owned by the management company made up of all of the residents of Rectory Manor. The residents also felt that although the application gave too little detail of the type of work to be carried out, because the barn is closely surrounded by houses, the change of use applied for is inappropriate. Furthermore, the applicant states that sewage disposal will be as existing, which the applicant states to be by means of a septic tank. However, sewage disposal for the properties at Rectory Manor is by means of a bio-disc treatment plant, which would be unable to cope with either a substantially increased flow or with pollutants and foul water.

The residents have many other concerns, such as the noise and fumes likely to be generated by the work as proposed; a substantially increased number of vehicles likely to be visiting the Barn, including heavy lorries delivering and collecting items as well as the vehicles of those visiting to view and possibly buy articles for sale; consequent increased traffic at what is already a dangerous and difficult junction at the bottom of Priors Hill; damage to the access road caused by heavy vehicles; danger to children and pedestrians from the increase in the number of vehicles using the access road, who may not realise the area is predominantly residential; problems with storage of materials and rubbish awaiting disposal.

Residents would like the barn to be preserved, and feel that action needs to be taken soon as it is already very dilapidated. Possible conversion to housing or a more appropriate business use should ensure the future of the barn.

Most of the residents left the meeting

093.07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Mrs Johnson and Mr Marshall both declared an interest in the Pirton Local History Group, which had submitted a request for funding.

094.07 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2007 were confirmed and signed.

095.07 OUTSTANDING ITEMS

Coleman's Close – Section 106

No progress to report

Grants

Parish Amenity Capital Improvement Fund

Nothing to report

Grant Funding Awards – 2007/8

The clerk would apply for funding from NHDC PECF towards the cost of the Street Cleaners Wages.

096.07 FINANCE

Bank accounts as at 9th July 2007:

Business Premium Account	£18,822.93
Community Account	<u>£3,242.61</u>
	£22,065.54
Contingency Account	<u>£10,536.18</u>
	£33,601.72

Monies received since last meeting – included in above:

Interest – BPA	£61.94
Interest – Contingency	£35.43
P3 Grant	£1,000.00
Summer Fair sub-committee	£1,200.00

It was proposed by Mrs Hamilton McLeod and seconded by Mrs Johnson that payments totalling **£2,770.04** as detailed on the monthly Finance Statement be made in full.

097.07 REQUESTS FOR FUNDING

The clerk had received a letter from the Secretary of the Pirton Local History Group, requesting financial assistance. The Group requested a grant of £60 to cover the cost of payment to a specialist company for hosting their website, and after discussion, Councillors agreed to make this grant this year. The clerk was asked to suggest to the Group that they apply for funding for next year by applying in writing to the Parish Council before the November budget meeting, but pointing out that no commitment for funding next year could be made at this time.

098.07 ADOPTION OF REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT

Parish Councils had been asked to formally adopt the Revised Code of Conduct, which had come into force on the 3 May, having first given consideration to paragraph 12(2), which is not mandatory for Parishes. This paragraph gives members with a prejudicial interest the same rights as members of the public to speak at a meeting on the issue then leave before the main discussion and vote, provided members of the public also have a right to speak. After discussion, it was resolved that the Model Code of Conduct for Members, including paragraph 12(2), be adopted and take immediate effect.

099.07 BANKING

The clerk had not yet changed the bank account as she would shortly be on holiday, but will do so as soon as practicable.

100.07 PLANNING

Applications

The Green, Great Green – 07/01078/1

Erection of 8m high permanently sited Maypole on village green.

(Application dated 18th April but missed from that week's list)

Tithe Barn, Rectory Manor, Shillington Road – 07/01412/1

Full Planning Permission : Change of use from B1 to the storage, repair and sale of architectural salvage and antiques.

35 Royal Oak Lane - 07/01358/1HH

Full Permission Householder : Single storey rear extension. Rear dormer window

10 Danefield Road – 07/01482/ 1HH

Full Permission Householder – Two storey and single storey front extension and single storey rear extension

10 Elm Tree Farm Close – 07/01506/ 1HH

Full Permission Householder – Installation of two front roof lights and garage doors to existing carport

23 High Street – 07/01574/1TCA

Felling of one Cherry tree and one Apple tree

9 Elm Tree Farm Close – 07/01406/ 1HH

Full Permission Householder – Loft conversion with two front roof lights and window in east gable end. Garage door to front of car port.

Discussion

Councillors discussed the application for the **Tithe Barn**. While agreeing that insufficient information had been provided to enable an informed decision to be made, Councillors considered the proposed development inappropriate, and noted that no mention had been made in the application of any proposals for the renovation of the barn. It was also noted that no details of any proposed infrastructure had been given, nor a detailed description of the work that was to be carried out in the barn. The dangers of increased traffic at an already dangerous junction, as well as the poor visibility from the access road were also considerations. Councillors agreed that the barn should not have been left as it was while houses were developed around it, and that it would have been better to have converted the barn to housing at the same time. The clerk was asked to write a letter objecting to this application for the various reasons discussed, and also mentioning that Councillors felt they had not been given sufficient information, but that they would be pleased to consider any reasonable application that would ensure the preservation of the barn.

Councillors then discussed the application for **35 Royal Oak Lane**. Objection to this application was unanimous, as it is against the recommendations of the Village Design Statement and Councillors felt the front dormer window and porch in particular would look very out of place on a house of this style.

Although Councillors had no reason for objecting to the application for **9 and 10 Elm Tree Farm Close** on planning grounds, it was mentioned that by enlarging these two houses, which had both been designated affordable homes, they would no longer fall into an affordable category.

Councillors had no objections to the remaining applications.

Decisions

The Green, Great Green – 07/01078/1

Erection of 8m high permanently sited Maypole on village green – standard conditional permission.

13 Hitchin Road – 07/00591/1TCA

Removal of five cypress trees – no objection

1 Great Green – 07/00706/1

Full Planning Permission : Side pergola – conditional permission

32 Royal Oak Lane – 07/01108/1HH

Full Permission Householder: Two storey side extension – conditional permission

101.07 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.

The two Give Way signs at the bottom of Royal Oak Lane had not yet been replaced. The possibility of a new 'Shillington' pointer by the Great Green turning is still under consideration.

Unfortunately, Mr Dzapata, the Rural Officer from CDA for Herts, failed to attend the meeting to discuss, among other things, the possibility of a 20 mph speed limit in the Village. The clerk was asked to invite him to the August meeting.

The clerk was asked to write a strongly worded letter to Highways about the extremely poor state of the road in Holwell Road, especially between the row of cottages and the corner by Northmead.

It was mentioned that a car is often parked on the pavement by the corner of Royal Oak Lane and Hambridge Way. It is not known to whom the car belongs, but suggested that the PCSO be contacted about it as it is causing an obstruction.

102.07 INSURANCE

The clerk had finally heard from insurers that the cricket nets were covered and would submit a claim for their replacement.

The clerk had not yet received a reply to her letter from the organisers of the Bonfire Night and Firework Display.

103.07 GENERAL PARISH MATTERS

Postcards – nothing new to report, although when Mr Goddard arrived he reported that he was still awaiting a quote.

Tithe Barn – nothing other than as above. The NHDC Conservation Officer had not yet inspected the barn.

Maypole – the Pumpkin Club would be meeting the next week and it was expected that the Maypole project would now proceed.

Village of the Year Competition – Councillors were very pleased to learn from Mrs Hamilton McLeod that Pirton had won two first prizes, one for Best Kept Village and one in the Environment Category, and had also been awarded a commendation in the Business Section. The prizes include a Rose Bowl, plaques, a tree and a cheque for £100, all to be presented at a ceremony in Ickleford on the 21st July. Thanks are due to all those who gave up their time to show the judges round, including Helen Hofton, Ann Wilshere, Zoe Railton, Rosemary Hamilton McLeod and Dick Woodward.

Mr Goddard arrived

Broken Fence – Mr Vaughan offered to remove the dead trees and broken fencing from the corner of Walnut Tree Road and Hitchin Road. Mrs Hamilton McLeod would speak to the owner of the land and ask her if she would allow the Parish Council to tidy this corner of her land.

Church clock - although entering a three year 'pay in advance' contract with the company that maintains the clock would probably represent a small saving, Councillors were concerned that if the company ceased trading, or the clock was deemed to be beyond repair and in need of replacement, the money paid in

advance could be lost. It was agreed that Mr Newbery, who winds the clock, would be asked for his views.

Grass cutting – Councillors feel that in order to comply with Parish Council Standing Orders, work like grass cutting should in future be put out to tender to ensure best value for money, and agreed that this would be done at the end of this year's grass cutting season.

Annual Parish and Town Councils Conference - Mr Goddard reported that it had been confirmed at this conference that he had attended earlier in the evening that fortnightly rubbish collections would start in October and that sites were being sought for plastic collection points. It had been mentioned that a representative from NHDC would be prepared to speak to residents at an open meeting about Waste and Recycling, and the clerk was asked to arrange this. It had also been mentioned at the conference that NHDC hoped to appoint one 'Planning Champion' from each parish.

Meeting with other Village groups - it was agreed to arrange a date for this later in the year, with a view to holding a meeting in January or February. It was also suggested that other groups be invited to the Annual Parish Meeting.

104.07 CORRESPONDENCE

The clerk had still heard nothing further from 02.

The NHDC Enforcement Officer had visited the site of the swimming pool and changing room construction behind Royal Oak Lane, and had informed the Parish Council that neither exceeded the size for which planning permission is required. The concerns about damage to the road had been passed on to the owner of the land.

The clerk had received an email from a resident asking whether P3 money could be used to cut the grass on the 'horse riding side of Hambridge Way, but was told by Councillors that it had already been cut and asked to pass this information on to the resident.

105.07 REPORTS

Recreation Ground and Sports & Social Club

The events being held on the last Friday of each month were proving very successful.

Access road

The clerk had still not received a reply to her letter and was asked to send another reminder. The clerk was also asked to find out from the NHDC legal department whether there was anything that could be done to force the owners to repair the road.

Play Area

Nothing to report.

Bury Trust

The AGM had now been held, and consideration given to the possibility of scheduling the rest of the Ancient Monument area, which would include part of the gardens of numbers 7,9 and 11 Bury End, about which the householders would have to be consulted. It is planned to carry out more fencing, including around the pond where poaching continues to be a problem. The terms of the constitution are being reconsidered as it is felt that there should not be a majority of Parish Councillors on the Trust.

106.07 COUNCILLORS' SUGGESTIONS

It was agreed to arrange a date for a meeting to discuss this after the summer.

107.07 VILLAGE UPDATES

Environment - North Herts Landfill

Nothing to report.

Pirton School

Although Mrs Houghton, the Head of Pirton School, is now also the Head of Hexton School, the schools will continue to be run independently of one another.

Village Hall

The drive had now been resurfaced. However, it had not been possible to find anyone to fit new lights for the £250 Parish Council Grant. It was suggested that some of the prize money from the Village of the Year Competition could be added to it.

Youth Matters

It had been suggested that the MUGA could be marked out as a Basketball court as well as a Tennis Court in the hope that more use would be made of it, and possibly also as a Netball court. New nets and hoops would be needed, and a quote would be obtained from suppliers. It was mentioned that insufficient use was made of the MUGA for tennis only, and that it was always intended to be a facility for the whole village to use. It was also mentioned that the MUGA should be available for anyone in the village to use, not just members of the PSSC.

There was some discussion about the fact that those running the Youth Club are not CRB checked or affiliated to an official body. However, it is regarded simply as a drop in centre for young people, and thought that it will not continue if the organisers are told they have to obtain qualifications and undergo police checks.

Parish Paths Partnership

The Village Map and Footpath Guide has been encapsulated and laminated ready to be attached to plinths. Little Green and Great Green are likely sites for the plinths, and two other suitable sites are needed as well.

Tree Warden and PEAP

The members of PEAP had agreed that they would like to become an official sub-committee of the Parish Council so that they can benefit from the Insurance cover provided for sub-committees. This would be formalised at the next meeting. The PEAP stall at the Summer Fair had raised over £90 by raffling nest boxes and bird feeders made by members of PEAP.

Neighbourhood Watch

It was reported that lead had been stolen from the roof of the Methodist Chapel and the hut behind the Church had been broken into and a lawnmower stolen.

Rands Trust

Nothing new to report.

108.07 ITEMS FOR CIRCULATION**Blue Circulation Box:-**

Crime Figures for June

Hertfordshire Highways Information Bulletin – June

Letter from NHDC re: Partnership Working – 27 June

Email from CPRE – 4July

Clerks and Councils Direct - July

Freeplay brochure

EEAPTC News - June

LCR - July

The Clerk - July

Copy of letter from PPC to Des Browne – 2 July

SLCC Flyer advertising National Conference

Letter from NHDC re: Licensing Policy – 26 June

HAPTC Annual Report

HAPTC newsletter – June

Leaflet re: SLCC Institute of Local Council Management

CPRE Countryside Voice – summer

NHDC Members' Information – weeks ending 15, 22, 29 June, 6 July

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Council Meeting will be on **Thursday August 9th 2007** at 7.45pm in the Village Hall.