

PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL

The monthly meeting of Pirton Parish Council was held on
Thursday 9th August 2007
at Pirton Village Hall.

Present:

Mrs Diane Bailey
Mr Michael Goddard
Mrs Margaret Johnson (arrived late)
Mr Steven Kitchener
Mr David Saunders (Chairman)
Mrs Jennifer Smart (Clerk)
Mr James Vaughan
Mrs Pamela Waters (vice-Chairman)

Apologies for Absence:

Mrs Rosemary Hamilton McLeod (holiday)
Mr Rodney Marshall (holiday)

Also present:

Nigel Brook (County Councillor)
Mr Herbert Dzapata – Rural Officer from CDA for Herts

109.07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

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

110.07 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2007 were confirmed and signed

111.07. MR DZAPATA was welcomed by the Chairman.

Mr Dzapata explained that Parish Plans are the County's way of trying to involve the Community in Local Government and that such Plans have to demonstrate that local consultation has been carried out and that the Plan has the full support of the community. Village Design Statements and Village Appraisals were the forerunners of Parish Plans, but Parish Plans cover every aspect of life in the community, not just planning, and can take up to three years to complete. A Parish Plan also requires a great deal of time and commitment on the part of the volunteers involved in creating it. Normally, a steering committee is appointed to lead the project, which would be independent of but linked to the Parish Council, residents are asked which issues are of greatest concern to them so that a questionnaire based on their answers can be prepared. A report is drawn up based on the completed questionnaires and an action plan formed with short, medium and long term aims. The CDA would be on hand to offer help and advice with the whole project.

Mrs Johnson arrived

Councillors asked how much weight the finished plan would have, as the Parish Council would not wish to spend a great deal of time and money producing a document that was of no practical use, and Mr Dzapata replied that it is useful to involve agencies like Highways and Housing Associations at an early stage to ensure that the aims of the finished plan are feasible. Mr Dzapata stated that there has been a firm commitment from Central Government to support Parish Plans, and that communities have been able to obtain grants as a direct result of a Plan showing evidence of a local need. Mr Dzapata was asked if the Plan would give the Parish Council the power to deal with traffic issues and speeding within the village, and replied that it should do, providing the community were in agreement, although Mr Brook pointed out that Highways and the Police would also have to back any plan for a lower speed limit. Mr Dzapata was asked if there was any funding available towards the cost of Parish Plans and replied that as CDA is a non profit-making organisation it cannot itself provide funding, but that grants have been made and it is hoped more will become available in the future, as the current Prime Minister has given his support to Parish Plans. Mr Dzapata was asked whether the creation of a Parish Plan would contribute towards the achievement of Quality Parish Council status, and replied it would as one of the criteria is consultation with the community. Councillors stated that although they would be considering a Parish Plan, the current priority was to reduce speeding in Pirton, and Mr Dzapata suggested a meeting with one of his colleagues to discuss this, which the clerk was asked to organise. Mr Dzapata was thanked for attending the meeting.

MR BROOK congratulated the Parish Council on winning three prizes in the Village of the Year Competition, and mentioned that he feels the creation of a Parish Plan would be worth pursuing. Although it is good news that the owners of Luton Airport no longer intend to apply to build another runway, Mr Brook believes there is now a far greater threat to Hitchin from Luton's plans to build houses west of Hitchin, which he believes the Government will support.

112.07 **OUTSTANDING ITEMS**

Coleman's Close – Section 106

No progress to report on the handover. Councillors discussed the poor state of the grass on Middle Green; Carol Brown had been asked to quote for improving it many months ago when it was thought that the handover was about to be finalised. As there has been no progress on the handover, Councillors asked the clerk to contact Wimpy to request that they pay for the condition of the grass to be improved.

Grants

Parish Amenity Capital Improvement Fund

Nothing to report

Grant Funding Awards – 2007/8

The clerk has applied for funding from NHDC PECF towards the cost of the Street Cleaners Wages.

113.07 **FINANCE**

Bank accounts as at 6th August 2007:

Business Premium Account	£18,822.93
Community Account	<u>£300.07</u>
	£19,123.00

23 High Street – 07/01574/1TCA

Felling of one Cherry tree and one Apple tree – no objection

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

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

Former Pirton JMI Craft Workshop – 07/00185/ 1

Full Planning Permission : Conversion of former school craft workshop into one bedroom dwelling. Addition of pitched roof to single storey front extension- refused.

118.07 HIGHWAYS

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

The clerk had reminded Highways about the possibility of parking bays in Crabtree Lane and of a new 'Shillington' pointer by the turning into Great Green, and been told both matters were under consideration.

The two Give Way signs at the bottom of Royal Oak Lane had not yet been replaced.

The clerk reported that NHDC had been informed that the 'High Street' road sign by Little Green had been broken again and appeared to be beyond repair. The 'Three Closes' sign had also been broken, and the clerk would report this to NHDC as well.

119.07 INSURANCE

The clerk had submitted a claim for the replacement of the two damaged cricket nets.

The clerk had still yet received a reply to her letter from the organisers of the Bonfire Night and Firework Display.

120.07 GENERAL PARISH MATTERS

Postcards – Mr Goddard was still awaiting quotes and also waiting for permission to use a photograph of one property.

Tithe Barn – Councillors were pleased to learn that the planning application for a change of use had been withdrawn, but remain very concerned about the dilapidated condition of the barn and feel that it should at least be made safe and weatherproof as a matter of urgency. The clerk was asked to contact the NHDC Conservation Officer again to ask for advice on the restoration and preservation of the barn.

Maypole – nothing new to report.

Broken Fence – Mr Vaughan reported that he had cleared away the broken fencing and tidied the corner of Walnut Tree Road and Hitchin Road.

Church clock – Mrs Hamilton McLeod had spoken to Mr Newbery and he had offered to examine the paperwork and speak to the Clock Maintenance Company. The clerk was asked to liaise with him and pass the relevant paperwork on to him.

Grass cutting – It was mentioned that when the Parish Council asks for quotations for work in the village later in the year, contractors should be asked to submit their quotes as sealed bids.

Annual Parish and Town Councils Conference/Waste and Recycling – the clerk reported that she had booked the village hall on the 20th September for a briefing by NHDC on the new Waste and Recycling Service, which will be advertised in the Parish Magazine and around the village.

Blacksmiths Pond – some residents have expressed concern about the large amount of green algae on the pond this year which is thought to be caused by unusual weather conditions. Members of the Pumpkin Club have tried to clear some of it, and Mr Kitchiner offered to place some barley in the pond as that might help, but in any case the situation should improve as soon as the weather becomes colder. It was also mentioned that there are a lot of goldfish in the pond again and it was noted that the Parish Council has set aside £200 towards goldfish removal.

Little Green – following complaints from residents last December, the clerk had complained to the developers of the Elm Tree Farm houses about damage caused to Little Green by contractors who had dug up the green to lay telephone cables to the new houses. It had proved very difficult to obtain a response from the developers, although they did eventually agree in the spring to pay for restoration work to be carried out. A quote had been sent to them but they had ceased trading a few months later, before responding to the quote. The clerk had then complained to BT, for whom the contractors had been working, and had recently met a representative from John Henry Communications, who did offer to cut out various sections and re-seed or re-turf them. However, as such a long time had elapsed, the grass has grown back over most of the Green and the stones become buried in the soil. Councillors feel that digging up the Green again now might well cause more problems than it would solve, so no further action will be taken.

121.07 **CORRESPONDENCE**

The clerk had received a further email from the resident who had asked whether P3 money could be used to cut the grass on the 'horse riding side' of Hambridge Way, who had stated that the grass had definitely not been cut. Mrs Bailey, as P3 representative, would investigate.

A letter had been received from a resident informing the Parish Council that he had strimmed the grass in Little Lane as it was very long and had not been cut for some time. The clerk was asked to reply to him stating that the Parish Council was not responsible for grass cutting there, and asking that in future he report any such issue to the Parish Council, who would ask the relevant authority to deal with it.

The clerk had received information about two shared ownership houses in Elm Tree Farm Close, and the Parish Council were asked if they would help to advertise them. Councillors were pleased to hear that priority for these houses would be given to residents of Pirton and the clerk was asked to reply that the Parish Council would be pleased to help advertise them.

122.07 REPORTS

Recreation Ground and Sports & Social Club

The PSSC had held its AGM and would be holding a Quiz Night on the last Friday in September.

Access road

The clerk had still not received a reply to her letter but, as requested, had contacted the Property Officer at the Legal and Democratic Services Department of NHDC to ask for his advice and was waiting for his response.

Play Area

It was mentioned that the Play Area gate still does not close properly and needs replacing. It was also mentioned that RoSPA suggest play areas should have two gates to reduce bullying and intimidation. The clerk would obtain quotes for new gates and investigate possible sources of funding towards the cost.

Bury Trust

It was reported that Mrs Hofton is now the Chairman of the Trust for this year and that a working party was planned.

It was also reported that the Bury hedge was overhanging Walnut Tree Road. Mr Saunders offered to trim it where necessary.

123.07 COUNCILLORS' SUGGESTIONS AND MEETING WITH OTHER GROUPS

It was agreed that a meeting to discuss Councillors ideas would be held on the 18th October in the PSSC clubhouse. It would be decided at that meeting when to hold a meeting with other groups in the village.

124.07 VILLAGE UPDATES

Environment - North Herts Landfill

The next meeting will be in early September.

Pirton School

Nothing new to report

Village Hall

See minute 115.07 headed Village of the Year for information concerning lighting outside the Hall. The Management Committee are very pleased with the newly resurfaced drive.

Youth Matters

It was suggested that the Youth Club leaders and the PSSC be consulted about the possibility of remarking the MUGA so that it can be used for sports other than tennis, and there was some discussion about the best way to arrange bookings of the MUGA.

Parish Paths Partnership

Nothing new to report.

Tree Warden and PEAP

It was proposed by Mr Kitchener, seconded by Mrs Bailey and unanimously agreed that PEAP become an official sub-committee of the Parish Council, and that they be given the power to spend money up to the limit of their designated budget.

Neighbourhood Watch

No report

Rands Trust

Nothing new to report.

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

Letter from NHDC re: School Craft Workshop

Minutes of North Herts Landfill Site meeting 21 May

Letter from Herts CC re: Minerals and Waste Development Framework

Hertfordshire Highways Information Bulletin – July

Email from CPRE – 1st August

HAPTC newsletter – July

CDA for Herts – newsletter June and other literature

Hertsbeat – 11th edition

Towards Better Transport in Hertfordshire from Herts CC

Letter and brochure from NHDC Arts, Museums & Heritage Strategy

Chiltern Woodlands Project Newsletter Summer

Peter Lilley Surgery dates

Minutes of Neighbourhood Watch meeting 21st June

Minutes of Southern Rural Inter-Parish Meeting 21st June

Letter from Herts CC re: Corporate Plan

Letter re: free postage for service personnel serving overseas

NHDC Members' Information – weeks ending 13, 20 and 27 July, 3 August

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Council Meeting will be on **Thursday September 13th 2007** at 7.45pm in the Village Hall.

