

## **PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL**

The monthly meeting of Pirton Parish Council was held on  
**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2007**  
at Pirton Village Hall.

### **Present:**

Mrs Diane Bailey  
Mr Michael Goddard  
Mr Rodney Marshall  
Mr David Saunders (Chairman)  
Mrs Jennifer Smart (Clerk)  
Mrs Pamela Waters (vice-Chairman)

### **Apologies for Absence:**

Mr Nigel Brook (County Councillor)  
Mrs Rosemary Hamilton McLeod (prior engagement)  
Mr Steven Kitchener (illness)  
Mrs Margaret Johnson (on a course)  
Mrs Claire Strong (District Councillor)  
Mr James Vaughan (prior engagement)

### **Also present:**

Five residents – Mr Goodman, Mr Lomas, Mr England and Mr and Mrs Ransom

### **179.07 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

#### Potential Gypsy and Traveller Site in Pirton.

The residents were attending the meeting to hear a report of the briefing that had been held at North Herts District Council offices on the 21<sup>st</sup> November, which had been attended by a number of Councillors, and which had included a presentation of the Scott Wilson report and a question and answer session. One of the Councillors gave a brief résumé of the meeting for the benefit of other Councillors and for the residents, and stated that she felt the briefing had been something of a sounding board for people to let off steam and had not found it very constructive. NHDC Planning Officers had stated that a sub-group of the East of England Regional Assembly would meet on the 12<sup>th</sup> December to recommend pitch number requirements, and the full assembly would meet on the 25<sup>th</sup> January to consider the recommendations. There had been many criticisms of the Scott Wilson report at the briefing, but NHDC explained that it had been necessary to employ independent consultants to carry out the study as officers working for NHDC would have had vested interests in the matter. The residents were told that a letter drafted by a solicitor who is a member of Holwell Parish Council had been sent to NHDC by Pirton Parish Council, and that Holwell and Pirton Parish Councils intended to hold a joint public meeting late in January, which would be attended by a senior Planning Officer, who would explain the process of consultation over the selection of Gypsy Sites and also answer questions.

Mr Lomas offered his company's services free of charge to the Parish Council, for the printing and distributing of leaflets, posters or flyers, and was thanked by the Chairman. One of the Councillors reported that someone in Pirton had offered a

sum of money towards the cost of a barrister, should this be considered necessary in the future.

The Chairman stated that there did not appear to be anything specific to object to yet, as the Scott Wilson report would form part of the Draft Development Plan and Pirton might then be rejected as a suitable Gypsy site location, and that NHDC had suggested waiting until they know how many pitches they have to provide. The Parish Council intended to wait until they knew more before taking further action, and to hold a public meeting jointly with Holwell Parish Council to discuss strategy and produce an action plan. It was again mentioned that the matter is still very much in the development and planning stage and that when certain sites are highlighted, NHDC will start a full consultation process.

It was not known whether Mrs Parker would be willing to sell the part of her land that had been included in the area of search, but mentioned that NHDC could make a compulsory purchase order if necessary, because they will have to provide the number of pitches specified by the East of England Regional Assembly. Councillors feel that Pirton would be low on the list of suitable sites, as it fails to meet so many of the listed criteria. The Government had also specified the types of land not considered appropriate for Gypsy and Traveller Sites, one being greenbelt, but in the new development plan greenbelt areas may change, so more areas of land may become available, some of which may prove more suitable than Pirton. It had also been made clear at the NHDC briefing that any objections to the identified locations have to be based on sound planning grounds, such as proximity to a conservation area and lack of screening. The fact that the school might be full would carry little weight though, as money would be found to increase the size of the school if necessary to accommodate Gypsy and Traveller children. The Scott Wilson report does appear to be very controversial, and Councillors felt that the District Council themselves were anxious that the villages of north Hertfordshire should not be spoiled by the establishment of Gypsy Sites in the wrong places. It had also been recommended by NHDC that objections should not be by petition, but by individual letters written by residents; it was suggested that people should write in their own words, but that they could be based on objections suggested by the Parish Council.

It was hoped that Ian Barker of Holwell Parish Council, who had drafted the letter of objection sent by the Parish Council, would be at the joint meeting, and stressed by a resident that it will be necessary for people to know what the planning objections are so that they can base their letters on them. Although the information can be circulated on the Pirton website, there should also be a leaflet drop to all houses as not all residents can or do access the website.

The Chairman thanked the residents for attending the meeting and for their offers of help.

The residents left the meeting.

It was mentioned that NHDC had provided no clear definition of a Gypsy or Traveller, and that when they want to be given a pitch, Gypsies and Travellers register themselves with every Council in the Country.

#### **180.07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda.

**181.07 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007 were confirmed and signed.

**182.07 OUTSTANDING ITEMS**

**Coleman's Close – Section 106**

The Parish Council's solicitor had sent an outline plan of the area to be handed over, which Councillors were asked to check for accuracy. The clerk would inform the solicitor that the plan appeared accurate.

**Grants**

Grant Funding Awards – 2007/8

Nothing new to report

**Recreation Ground Access Road**

The clerk had at last received a reply from the Property Officer at the Legal and Democratic Services Department of NHDC, who had stated that there appeared to be no obligation on the owners of the Old Vicarage to maintain the access road. Although the Parish Council has no responsibility for the condition of the road, it was suggested that warning notices be put up by the Parish Council at either end to avoid any liability for injuries on the access. However, Councillors felt that it was possible the new owner would carry out improvements to the access road when the work to the Old Vicarage itself is complete, especially as his solicitor had stated in an earlier letter that he was 'in correspondence with a statutory utility company' over the issue of the damaged road surface. The clerk was asked to add this item to the agenda for next May when the position would be reviewed.

**Rent for Orange Mast**

Mrs Hamilton McLeod had examined the paperwork relating to the lease for the Orange Mast, and reported that she did not think the Parish Council could request any increase in rent over the RPI increase.

**183.07 FINANCE**

**Bank accounts as at 10<sup>th</sup> December 2007:**

Business Premium Account	£14,895.76
Community Account	<u>£11,334.54</u>
	£26,230.30
Contingency Account	<u>£10,578.32</u>
	<b>£36,808.62</b>

The clerk drew Councillors' attention to the large balance in the Community Account, which was due to the bank failing to carry out her request on the 7<sup>th</sup> November to transfer £10,000 to the BPA.

**Monies received since last meeting:**

Gross profit from Bonfire Night	£465.00
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It was proposed by Mr Goddard and seconded by Mrs Waters that payments totalling **£1,407.22** as detailed on the monthly Finance Statement be made in full.

**184.07 DONATION OF PROFITS FROM BONFIRE NIGHT TO PSSC**

After discussion, it was proposed by Mr Saunders, seconded by Mr Goddard, and **RESOLVED** that the profit of £398.08 remaining after payment of £66.92 for the Glowsticks, be donated to the PSSC.

**185.07 REQUESTS FOR FUNDING**

There were no requests for funding.

**186.07 VILLAGE OF THE YEAR PRIZE**

No progress to report as Mr Kitchiner was not able to attend the meeting.

**187.07 HIGHWAYS**

Nothing new to report on any of the outstanding issues. Mr Marshall offered to speak to the Area Engineer and ask him to respond to the clerk.

**188.07 INSURANCE**

Nothing new to report.

**189.07 PLANNING**

**Applications**

**Highdown, Hexton Road – 07/02644/1LB**

Listed Building Consent : Internal and external alterations to main house and internal and external alterations to stable building to facilitate its use for ancillary residential purposes.

**Pirton Court, Priors Hill – 07/02657/1HH**

Full Permission Householder : Single storey replacement side extension

**4 Walnut Tree Road – 07/02695/1LB and 07/02697/1HH**

Listed Building Consent and Full Permission Householder : Rear Conservatory following demolition of existing storage building.

**Highdown, Hexton Road – 07/02645/1**

Full Planning Permission : Detached pitched roof boiler house

**Pirton Court, Priors Hill – 07/02795/1TCA**

Removal of 4 Leyland Cypress trees

*Councillors discussed each planning application separately. There were no objections to those for Highdown or Pirton Court.*

*All Councillors present felt that the planned 'garden room' at the rear of 4 Walnut Tree Road was too large for the existing building and would both overshadow and dominate the rear of the house. Councillors also felt that the garden room would be totally out of character with the existing house and that the roof as planned was too high, being above the level of the first floor windowsills. Councillors also felt that the planned slate roof was out of keeping with the existing house, and would prefer to see a roof of thatch or cedar shingles. The clerk would pass these objections to NHDC.*

## **Decisions**

### **Docwra Manor, Hitchin Road – 07/02196/1LB**

Listed Building Consent : Replacement windows; change glazing of garden room to stone walls and introduce rooflight to west elevation – conditional listed building consent

The clerk was still waiting to hear when **Mary Caldwell** of NHDC Planning Department could attend a special meeting with Councillors.

### **190.07 ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUTH**

The clerk had established that there are currently no members of the Youth Parliament living in Pirton.

Councillors agreed that it was now a matter of Parish Council policy to engage with youth, and that young people could be consulted via the proposed Parish Plan. However, it was thought that the Parish Council should not wait until the publication of the Parish Plan to take action. There was some discussion about the best way to find a suitable young person to advise Councillors on how to involve all the young people in the village. It was suggested that the proposed newsletter, which would be delivered to all houses in the village, could incorporate an appeal to young people to come forward to talk to Councillors. It was suggested that Jamie Marshall could be asked for his advice on the wording of such an appeal.

There was some discussion about whether the Youth Club would be able to continue without Mrs Reed and it was mentioned that there has been some damage to the Clubhouse on Thursdays, and the alarm has been set off. Councillors hope this sort of vandalism might be reduced if young people feel they have been consulted and that action is being taken towards meeting their needs.

### **191.07 PARISH PLAN**

The clerk reported that funding towards the cost of producing Parish Plans is now available. Mrs Bailey was still studying the Parish Plan folder supplied by CDA for Herts. After further discussion, it was agreed that it would not be practicable to hold an initial Parish Plan meeting on the same evening as the forthcoming public meeting about the proposed Gypsy Site.

### **192.07 POTENTIAL GYPSY SITE**

The clerk had received a reply from NHDC to the letter of objection sent by Pirton Parish Council, stating that comments in the letter would be taken forward as a formal representation on the Land Allocations Development Plan Document. The letter also stated that consultation on this Document would begin in January. The clerk reported that she was in the process of arranging the proposed public meeting with senior Planning Officers from NHDC, and that this was likely to take place in late January.

### **193.07 PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER**

The Chairman explained that he was in the process of preparing a newsletter, to include details of the Parish Council's achievements over the last three months and plans for the next three, as well as contact names and numbers and an explanation of the precept. As had been suggested under Minute **190.07**, an appeal to youth would be included. Councillors were asked for their suggestions for any other topics

to be included in the newsletter. It was suggested that a tear-off slip could be included in the newsletter or Parish Plan as a simple way for Residents to let Councillors know of any concerns or suggestions they may have.

#### **194.07 PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE**

The clerk had obtained information from Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils of a company that set up websites specifically for Parish Councils. Mr Marshall offered to look at their website and to carry out some other investigations that he would bring to the next meeting.

#### **195.07 GENERAL PARISH MATTERS**

**Dog Waste Bins** – The clerk had been informed by NHDC that all dog waste bins should be emptied every Friday and Councillors would try to monitor the situation. It was suggested that the telephone number of the contractor responsible for emptying the bins be included in the Parish magazine in the future.

**Emergency Plan** – as the clerk has not had time to update the contact names and addresses in the plan, Mrs Waters and Mr Marshall offered to do so.

**Maypole** – Mr Marshall reported that the Maypole had been purchased and would soon be installed, and that he would mark Great Green with a stake and paint so that Councillors could ensure that they were happy with the proposed position.

#### **196.07 CORRESPONDENCE**

A letter had been received from Hertfordshire Air Ambulance seeking the permission of the Parish Council to identify the Recreation Ground as a secondary landing site in the village. Councillors were unanimous in their agreement to this request.

#### **197.07 REPORTS**

##### **Recreation Ground and Sports & Social Club**

Tyre tracks have been seen on the grass of the Recreation Ground again.

The clerk had obtained information about the necessity for an asbestos register and was asked to obtain three quotes for the necessary work.

A further quote was still awaited for the re-marking of the MUGA.

##### **Play Area**

Nothing new to report on quotes for replacement metal gates.

##### **Bury Trust**

Nothing new to report

#### **198.07 VILLAGE UPDATES**

##### **Environment - North Herts Landfill**

Nothing new to report

##### **Pirton School**

Nothing new to report

**Village Hall**

The Management Committee have produced a new brochure advertising the Hall.

**Youth Matters**

See minute 190.07

**Parish Paths Partnership**

Nothing new to report

**Tree Warden and PEAP**

Nothing new to report

**Neighbourhood Watch**

It was reported that on the night of 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> November, 310 metres of exchange telephone cable had been stolen from an exchange box on Shillington Road, which had resulted in the temporary loss of all telephone and internet connections in Pirton and surrounding areas.

**Rands Trust**

Nothing new to report

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

Countryside Voice – autumn

HAPTC Newsletter – November

PSSC Minutes – 10<sup>th</sup> September and 8<sup>th</sup> October

Lea Sports New Pavilion Project report - September

Clerks and Councils Direct Update - November

Minutes of Southern Rural Inter Parish Meeting – 21<sup>st</sup> June

Letter from HAPTC – 20<sup>th</sup> November

Chilterns Commons Day and Deer on our Roads Seminar reports

P3 Meeting minutes – 27<sup>th</sup> September

Letter from P K Shadbolt - 11<sup>th</sup> October

Crime Figures - November

Email from CPRE – 5<sup>th</sup> December

Extract from The Clerk magazine – for interest

News of the Woods - Autumn

Chiltern News - December

The Clerk – November

Peter Lilley Surgery dates

Letter from NHDC re Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Study

Fieldwork magazine from CPRE - December

NHDC Members' Information – weeks ending 9, 16, 23 and 30 November, 7  
December

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Council Meeting will be on **Thursday January 10<sup>th</sup> 2008**  
at 7.45pm in the Village Hall.