

PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL

The monthly meeting of Pirton Parish Council was held on
Thursday 14th February 2008
at Pirton Village Hall.

Present:

Mrs Diane Bailey
Mr Michael Goddard
Mr Steven Kitchener
Mr David Saunders (Chairman)
Mrs Jennifer Smart (Clerk)

Apologies for Absence:

County Councillor Mr Nigel Brook
Mrs Rosemary Hamilton McLeod (prior engagement)
Mrs Margaret Johnson (holiday)
Mr Rodney Marshall (holiday)
Mr James Vaughan (prior engagement)
Mrs Pamela Waters (vice-Chairman) (holiday)

022.08 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation

023.08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda

024.08 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th January 2008 were confirmed and signed.

025.08 OUTSTANDING ITEMS

Coleman's Close – Section 106

Nothing new to report

Grants

Grant Funding Awards – 2007/8

The clerk reported that Pirton had not been successful in its application to the PECF for funding towards the Street Cleaner's wages. NHDC had explained that this was because street cleaning and litter-picking was considered to be covered under the Council's existing arrangements. The clerk had spoken to some other clerks in the district and they too had been turned down this year, although they had received grants in the past. The clerk would take this matter up with NHDC when time permitted, as the NHDC cleansing department do not clean the same areas or clean as often as the Street cleaner.

026.08 FINANCE

Bank accounts as at 11th February 2008:

Business Premium Account	£24,961.92
Community Account	<u>£611.91</u>
	£25,573.11
Contingency Account	<u>£10,623.15</u>
	£36,196.26

Monies received since last meeting:

Donation from Elm Tree Farm Close Residents	£85.00
Recovered VAT	£1,520.35

It was proposed by Mrs Bailey and seconded by Mr Goddard that payments totalling **£1,304.68** as detailed on the monthly Finance Statement be made in full.

027.08 REQUESTS FOR FUNDING

Mr Owain Lister, on behalf of the New Clubhouse Committee, had reported that the committee now feel they are unlikely to be able to raise more than £250,000 at this time, and in order to move things forward would like to progress an extension with two changing rooms with showers and officials' changing rooms, which is the number that the Football Foundation grant would support, plus a changing room for officials, a plant room, a disabled WC and a store. This would have its own services with some potential for further extension, and would be tagged onto the end of the club house where the store sheds now are. The Parish Council understand why the committee propose only to extend the existing building in the short term, but would like reassurance that the eventual aim is still for complete replacement. The clerk was asked to respond to Mr Lister stating that the Parish Council would do all it could to support the committee and facilitate the planned extension, but was anxious to ensure that it was regarded by everyone concerned as a first phase with a view to eventual complete replacement.

028.08 VILLAGE OF THE YEAR PRIZE

Quotes for improved lighting outside the Village Hall are still being obtained.

029.08 HIGHWAYS

It was reported that the corner of Hexton Road and Carters Lane is being damaged by large vehicles cutting the corner when using Carters Lane as a short cut into Hitchin from the A505. The clerk was asked to contact Highways to ask if anything could be done to prevent further damage.

030.08 INSURANCE

Nothing new to report.

031.08 SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no sub-committee reports. The minutes of the Summer Fair Committee Meeting on the 24th January were agreed and signed.

032.08 PLANNING

Applications

The Dial, West Lane, Pirton – 07/02532/1HH

Full Permission Householder : Extension to east elevation and west elevation following demolition of existing garage. Insertion to 3 dormer window and 2 velux windows in rear roof slope to facilitate loft conversion.

5 Hitchin Road – 07/03017/1TCA

Removal of various trees in front garden

Barns to North West of Burge End Farmhouse, Burge End Lane – 08/00194/1 & 08/00197/1LB

Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent – Conversion and extension of former agricultural buildings to form single dwelling. Internal and external alterations.

It was not possible to discuss the planning application for the Dial, as responses had been required by NHDC before this meeting, although Councillors had viewed the application individually and had no objections. The application for Burge End Farmhouse was discussed. There were no objections among the Councillors present and the plans would be circulated among the other Councillors to give them an opportunity to comment.

Decisions

28 High Street – 07/02863/1TCA

Raise Ash tree (no.1 on plan) by five metres. Remove lower branches from two secondary trunks of Ash tree (no.2 on plan) and remove dead wood and crossing branches. Remove Ash tree (no.3 on plan) – consent

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 - refused.

26a High Street – 07/02964/1TCA

Remove one fir tree – no objection

5 Hitchin Road – 07/03017/1TCA

Removal of various trees in front garden – no objection

High Down, 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 - conditional listed building consent.

The clerk was still waiting to hear from **Mary Caldwell** of NHDC Planning Department with a suggested date for a special meeting on Planning Issues and Training with Councillors.

School Craft House – the clerk had contacted the Planning Department and been told that an appeal against the refusal of Planning Permission had been lodged. The clerk was asked to write a letter supporting the application. The clerk had also spoken to the owner of the property and he had said he would arrange for the door to be boarded up again.

033.08 PARISH PLAN AND PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

It was suggested and unanimously agreed that the launch of the Parish Plan and the production of the Parish Newsletter would be postponed until after the closing date for consultation on the Land Allocation Development Plan Issues and Options Document, as preparing and compiling objections to the potential Gypsy Site was proving extremely time consuming for Councillors.

034.08 POTENTIAL GYPSY SITE

It was suggested and agreed that this matter should be moved to the end of the agenda as there was a great deal to discuss.

036.08 PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE

Nothing new to report as Mr Marshall was not at the meeting.

037.08 GENERAL PARISH MATTERS

Dog Waste Bins – A number of Councillors had carried out inspections of dog waste bins each weekend for the past few weeks, from which it appears that most of the bins are emptied weekly but that the one in Hambridge Way and one of the Bury bins are often missed out. The clerk had passed this information on to NHDC Grounds Maintenance Department who would ask the contractor to ensure these two bins were emptied in future.

Maypole – Nothing new to report as Mr Marshall was not at the meeting.

Telephones – the clerk had contacted BT about the loss of supply and was awaiting a reply

Church sheds - The Parish Council was very saddened to hear that the storage sheds by the Church had been burnt down and their contents destroyed. This was presumably an act of vandalism and Councillors urge residents to be extra vigilant.

038.08 CORRESPONDENCE

An invitation had been received from Chief Constable Frank Whiteley to a seminar at the Police Headquarters on 22nd and 29th April. The clerk was asked to reply that two Councillors would attend each seminar, and it would be decided later who would attend.

039.08 REPORTS

Recreation Ground and Sports & Social Club

It is proving difficult to obtain a third quote for the MUGA re-marking. It was agreed that netball posts should also be part of the new equipment available to users of the

MUGA, and any grant application would include the costs of these, which the Chairman would obtain.

A question has been asked about the members of the Recreation Ground Committee, which is mentioned in the licence by which the PSSC runs the Club on behalf of the Parish Council. The Recreation Ground Committee had ceased to exist when the PSSC had taken over responsibility for the Club, and it was thought that there would be a Minute from some years ago stating that members of the Parish Council were now automatically members of the Recreation Ground Committee. There would be a search for this Minute when time permitted.

Play Area

Nothing new to report on quotes for replacement metal gates.

Bury Trust

Nothing new to report.

040.08 VILLAGE UPDATES

Environment - North Herts Landfill

The landfill tip is due to close at the end of the year.

Pirton School

No report

Village Hall

No report

Parish Paths Partnership

Nothing new to report

Tree Warden and PEAP

Mr Kitchener would install the two new benches from CMS in the Nature Area.

Neighbourhood Watch

No report

Rands Trust

The organisations whose applications had been successful had received their grants in January.

041.08 POTENTIAL GYPSY SITE

Councillors first discussed the possibility of forming a sub-committee or Action Group, in which a number of residents had expressed interest. The Chairman had hoped to discuss this with residents at the end of the meeting on the 31st January, but few people had stayed on after the Officers from NHDC had left. It was agreed that it would be good to draw people other than Councillors into an Action Group and would demonstrate that the Parish Council had listened to the wishes of residents and responded to them.

The Chairman then asked Councillors if they thought the Parish Council should obtain professional advice from a Planning Consultant. Steven Barker from Barker Parry had been recommended and the Chairman had spoken to him earlier that day. Steven Barker had said that he could prepare a suitable report for the Parish Council that would involve 5 or 6 hours work. Councillors agreed that it would be necessary to be specific about what the Planning Consultant should be asked to

provide, which would mainly be proper Planning Reasons for objection to a site in Pirton. It was also suggested that the Planning Consultant could advise on the Presentation and that an amount should be set aside to cover the cost of his work. It was proposed by Mr Saunders, seconded by Mrs Bailey and unanimously **RESOLVED** that up to £2,000 could be spent without further consultation on the services of a Planning Consultant, and that he would be asked to provide a document detailing appropriate Planning objections which could be used by residents. It was mentioned that a number of residents had offered financial assistance with the costs of professional advice, and that the letter listing points for objection could also invite people to donate to a 'fighting fund'. It was also mentioned that if Pirton is not removed from the list at the Preferred Options Stage, more money may be needed to pay for professional legal advice.

It was mentioned that the keeper of the diary at NHDC should be asked for the dates of forthcoming Cabinet meetings, and when he considered it would be suitable for Pirton to give their presentation to Council.

The Parish Council needed to obtain specific evidence of the sewers and drainage systems that were thought to be within part of the 'area of search'. It was suggested that Hitchin Museum should hold records that might provide the required information and Mr Kitchener offered to visit the museum to investigate this.

It was agreed that it might be useful to approach Mr Barry Crosse of New Wrights Farm as it was thought a Planning Application he had made had been turned down on grounds of access. Mr Kitchener would speak to Mr Crosse. Mr Kitchener would also speak to Mr Walker, whose application for a Golf Course on the road between Holwell and Pirton had been turned down.

It would be necessary to update and expand the list of contact names and addresses and websites that had been sent out with the last letter from the Parish Council. It was agreed that all communications to residents from the Parish Council would have to be by letter, to ensure that every household was fully informed. The Parish Council hoped to produce and distribute a sample letter to residents by the end of February. Pirton and Holwell Parish Councils would also send their own letters of objection to NHDC.

It could be useful to establish the exact position regarding school places – although some people thought the school was oversubscribed, others thought that there were spaces in some years. It was suggested that it would be best to contact the Admissions Department at Hertfordshire County Council for accurate information on this point.

A meeting with District Councillors Mrs Strong and Mrs Gibbs could prove useful if it could be arranged.

The responses from Sandon and Barkway Parish Councils should be examined in detail to see if any points they had made could be used by Pirton and Holwell.

There could be more investigation into the reasons why three sites had been dropped from the list, and further examination of the Scott Wilson Report could show how much they have deviated from the criteria.

It was suggested that there could be some involvement with Shillington and Stondon, as they would also be affected by a Gypsy Site in Pirton, and that

residents of both villages could be asked to write to NHDC objecting to the potential Gypsy Site in Pirton.

The Chairman had been contacted by Kings Walden Parish Council, who hoped to set up a consortium of Parish Councils to register protest at the way NHDC had dealt with the whole issue of Gypsies and Travellers. Parishes felt that they had been left with no choice but to mount time-consuming and expensive campaigns of opposition to Gypsy Sites in their villages, when it was generally accepted that the Scott Wilson report was flawed. Councillors gave their agreement to Mr Saunders becoming involved with this consortium.

It was agreed that on the advice of Mr Ian Barker of Holwell, the Gypsy Council would not be consulted by the Parishes at this time. However, it was suggested that the Police, and possibly the Health Service, could be asked for their views.

It was mentioned that the Pirton website carries a great deal of useful information and suggested that Mt Jonty Wild could be invited to relevant meetings in future.

It was agreed that as soon as the report had been received from the Planning Consultant an Action Group would be formed to analyse the report and prepare the letter for residents. The clerk was asked to contact people who had volunteered to join the Action Group.

Mr Goddard would speak to NHDC to obtain a list of the dates of cabinet and full Council meetings.

042.08 ITEMS FOR CIRCULATION

Blue Circulation Box:-

Letter and Newsletter from Charity Commission – January

Newsletter from Mid Beds DC re LDF – January

Letter from Audit Commission re external auditor – 28 January

Letters and booklet from HCC re Minerals and Waste

HAPTC Newsletter – January

CPRE The Hertfordshire Society Newsletter - February

Hertfordshire Highways Bulletin – January

PSSC Minutes of meeting 3rd December

Letter from Chilterns Conservation Board January

CDA for Herts Newsletter – January

Summer Fair Meeting Minutes – 24 January

In The Loop – December and January

NALC Briefing – Community Contracts and Charters

Majestic Trees Newsletter – Issue 1 – 2008

Email from PCSO Nikki Williams 13 February

NHDC Members' Information – weeks ending 11, 18, 25 January, 1 & 8 February

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Council Meeting will be on **Thursday March 6th 2008**
at 7.45pm in the Village Hall.