

PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL

The monthly meeting of Pirton Parish Council was held on
Thursday 6th March 2008
at Pirton Village Hall.

Present:

Mrs Diane Bailey
Mrs Rosemary Hamilton McLeod
Mrs Margaret Johnson
Mr Rodney Marshall
Mr David Saunders (Chairman)
Mrs Jennifer Smart (Clerk)
Mr James Vaughan
Mrs Pamela Waters (vice-Chairman)

Apologies for Absence:

County Councillor Mr Nigel Brook
Mr Michael Goddard
Mr Steven Kitchiner (illness)

Also present:

Mr and Mrs K Macan-Lind
Mr and Mrs S Clark
Mr and Mrs J Lauder

043.08 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr and Mrs Macan-Lind attended the meeting to talk to Councillors about the Planning Appeal for the former **School Craft House**, which is just beyond the boundary of their garden. At the February meeting, Councillors had agreed to support the appeal that had been lodged by the purchaser of the Craft House against planning refusal, believing that it is now both an eyesore and a danger to children. However, before the clerk had written a letter of support, further information on the matter had been received from the Planning Department, to the effect that if permission for conversion to a house was granted, it would be difficult to refuse other similar applications, which might lead to unwelcome developments in back gardens. Mr and Mrs Macan-Lind believed that if planning permission was granted, anyone living in, and visitors to, the Craft House would almost certainly park in Docklands, where parking already causes significant problems for residents. Mr and Mrs Macan-Lind also mentioned that the conversion of the Craft House would not follow a number of recommendations of the Village Design Statement. Parish Councillors explained that they had decided to support the appeal against planning refusal because they felt that development would at least improve the appearance of the Craft House and stop it presenting a danger to children, and that

they believed it was the choice of any prospective purchaser whether or not to accept the lack of vehicular access, parking or amenity space.

Mr and Mrs Clark attended the meeting to talk to Councillors about the Planning Application to extend **1 Elm Tree Farm Close**. Mr and Mrs Clark believe that the proposed extension would result in an unacceptably small gap between their house and 1 Elm Tree Farm Close. Furthermore, their garden would be overwhelmed and shaded by the extension, and wind would be funnelled into their garden due to the narrow gap that would remain between the walls of the two houses. Mr and Mrs Clark also pointed out that the planned new dormer windows, which would overlook their kitchen window, would be far more intrusive than the existing Velux window, and that the proposed extension would constitute overdevelopment of the site and be contrary to the recommendations of the Village Design Statement..

It was suggested by the Parish Council that Mr and Mrs Clark ask a surveyor to carry out a light test in their kitchen.

Mr and Mrs Lauder attended the meeting to make suggestions and offer help to the Parish Council in their opposition to the potential **Gypsy Site**. Mr and Mrs Lauder were particularly concerned that some older members of the community might lack the ability to send a letter of objection, and would like help to do so. The Chairman mentioned that the Parish Council were proposing to issue a 'follow-up' letter reminding residents to write and were considering holding a letter writing session in the Village Hall, inviting anyone in need of help to attend. The Chairman asked if Joycare would be able to help with this, and Mr Lauder replied that they were already doing so. Other ways of helping and encouraging people to write were discussed, before it was agreed that members of the Action Group and Parish Council would endeavour to call at every house in the village over the coming weekend, and would offer to anyone who hadn't yet written a pro-forma letter that they could sign there and then, as this would be better than not sending a letter at all. It was agreed that it was vital to show that Pirton was united in its opposition to a Gypsy Site in Pirton.

Mr and Mrs Macan-Lind and Mr and Mrs Clark left the meeting

044.08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda

045.08 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th February 2008 were confirmed and signed.

046.08 OPPOSITION TO GYPSY SITE

It was suggested and agreed to move this item forward on the agenda so that Mr and Mrs Lauder could take part in the discussion without waiting for other Council matters to be dealt with.

The Chairman mentioned that he had received some positive feedback on the Parish Council's handling of this issue. The report from the Planning Consultant had now been received and was being studied. Holwell Parish Council had made an excellent response to NHDC, and was going to work with Pirton on the preparation of a joint presentation to NHDC Cabinet. Mr Ian Barker had indicated that he was

still willing to give this presentation at the appropriate time. The Chairman also mentioned that he understood that District Councillors Mrs Strong and Mrs Gibbs did not feel it wise to ally themselves strongly with the Parish Councils as this might prejudice their voting position in Cabinet. The Chairman had now been told that the best time to give a presentation would be in June or September, closer to the time Cabinet would discuss the issue. It was suggested that a follow-up letter be delivered to residents, thanking them for their support and explaining that the presentation would not be given until later in the year as this is considered the best time.

It was agreed that a meeting would be held with the Action Group, (Mr Hofton, Mr Goodman, Mr Wild and Mr Dye) on Tuesday 11th March to agree the next steps, which would include knocking on all doors and offering pro-forma letters at the weekend, as well as the erection of some further signs reminding people to write. The Chairman mentioned that he had been approached by various other Parish Councils who proposed a joint approach to NHDC to complain about their handling of the Gypsy and Traveller Site issue, and Councillors gave their permission for the Chairman to join such an alliance. It was thought that letters of objection written by people living outside North Herts would not receive consideration by NHDC, but it would be in order for them to send letters of support for the Parish Councils' stance.

047.08 OUTSTANDING ITEMS

Coleman's Close – Section 106

Nothing new to report

Grants

Nothing to report

048.08 FINANCE

Bank accounts as at 3rd March 2008:

Business Premium Account	£23,461.92
Community Account	<u>£1,035.99</u>
	£24,497.91
Contingency Account	<u>£10,623.15</u>
	£35,121.06

Monies received since last meeting:

HAPTC Computer Grant for Broadband Subscription £199.48

It was proposed by Mrs Hamilton McLeod and seconded by Mr Vaughan that payments totalling **£1,693.14** as detailed on the monthly Finance Statement be made in full.

049.08 REQUESTS FOR FUNDING

There were no requests for funding.

050.08 VILLAGE OF THE YEAR PRIZE

See Village Hall in Village Updates, Minute **058.08**

051.08 HIGHWAYS

Nothing new to report.

052.08 INSURANCE

Nothing new to report.

053.08 SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no sub-committee reports.

054.08 PLANNING

School Craft House – *after further discussion, Councillors agreed that although they fully understood the concerns of the residents of Docklands, they also felt that the School Craft House could provide useful affordable housing if converted. Councillors are anxious to see the Craft House either demolished or enhanced, so that it is no longer an eyesore and a danger to children, as the health and safety issues must be paramount.*

Applications

1 Elm Tree Farm Close – 08/00055/1HH

Full Permission Householder: Side extension and rear dormer window

After discussion, Councillors were unanimous in their objection to this application. Most Councillors had been to the site and felt that the extension as planned would be overdevelopment of a site that is already pressured for reasonable spatial living and would bring the property too close to the boundary wall. Furthermore, this application is against the recommendations of the Village Design Statement, which states that comfortable spaces should be provided between and around houses. The planned extension would also be in very close proximity to the house nearest to it, would overlook the windows of that property and overshadow the garden to a significant extent. Councillors recalled that when Planning Permission was originally sought for the development of Elm Tree Farm Close, one of the reasons it was initially refused was because some of the new houses would be too close to existing houses in Hambridge Way, and the plans had to be altered to allow more space between properties..

15 High Street – 08/00303/1HH

Full Permission Householder: Two storey rear extension

Councillors agreed that this extension was well planned and would improve the property

'Copsford', West Lane – 08/02997/1HH

Full Permission Householder : Conversion and extension of bungalow to form two storey dwelling with detached double garage to front of dwelling incorporating changes in levels to front garden and drive.

Although this application makes good use of the available space, the majority of Councillors felt it did not respect the original building and would bring the property

too close to the boundary and to neighbours at the back. Most Councillors also felt it would constitute overdevelopment of the site.

The clerk had now heard from **Mary Caldwell** of NHDC Planning Department and was asked to arrange a date in June for a special meeting on Planning Issues and Training with Councillors.

Decisions

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 - refused.

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

Full Permission Householder : Single storey replacement side extension – conditional permission

Highdown, Hexton Road – 07/02645/1

Full Planning Permission : Detached pitched roof boiler house – conditional permission

055.08 GENERAL PARISH MATTERS

Village of the Year Competition – Mrs Hamilton McLeod would co-ordinate with Mr Woodward over Pirton's entry

Parish Council Website – Mr Marshall had further investigated this and would prepare a presentation for the next Parish Council meeting.

Maypole – Mr Marshall reported that this would be installed as soon as the weather was suitable

Telephones – the clerk was still awaiting a reply from BT about the loss of service.

056.08 CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence had been received that needed to be brought before the Council.

057.08 REPORTS

Recreation Ground and Sports & Social Club

A quote including the costs of netball posts had now been received and the clerk would endeavour to find a funding source for the re-marking of the MUGA. Mr Saunders had been told that there is only enough room on the MUGA for one netball court.

There was some discussion about the reference to the Recreation Ground Committee in the deeds, which Mrs Hamilton McLeod believes needs to be removed by means of a variation of licence, which she would investigate further.

The clerk had been assured by the Chairman of the Clubhouse Replacement Committee that the planned extension is regarded only as a first phase of the project and that the aim is still for complete replacement of the existing building.

Play Area

Nothing new to report on quotes for replacement metal gates.

Bury Trust

At a recent meeting, it had been agreed to consider scheduling more ground to provide greater protection against development, and also to install more fencing.

058.08 VILLAGE UPDATES

Environment - North Herts Landfill

Nothing new to report

Pirton School

A new member of staff had been appointed to replace the deputy Head who was leaving to take up a Headship.

Village Hall

Charges for the Village Hall would be increased for functions such as weddings and birthdays, although would remain lower for local people. An electrician has agreed to install outside lighting when he can.

Parish Paths Partnership

A meeting would need to be held in the near future, before the start of the grass cutting season.

Tree Warden and PEAP

Nothing new to report.

Neighbourhood Watch

There had been an unusually large number of reported incidents in January and the Police had spoken to the group of youths thought to be responsible. Only one incident had been reported in February. It had been confirmed that the burning down of the Church Sheds had been arson.

Rands Trust

No report

059.08 ITEMS FOR CIRCULATION

Blue Circulation Box:-

Chiltern News - March

LCR Official Journal of NALC - March

Enjoy England – 23 April

Letter from Mid-Beds District Council 14 February re Site Allocations DPD

Hertfordshire Highways Bulletin – February

PSSC Minutes of meeting 10 September and 8 October

Article from Comet re Post Office Closures

The Clerk – Journal of SLCC – March

Crime Figures – February

Trustee Voices - March

NHDC Members' Information – weeks ending 15, 22, 29 February

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Council Meeting will be on **Thursday April 10th 2008**
at 7.45pm in the Village Hall.