



## Pirton Parish Council

Dear Parishioner,

28<sup>th</sup> April 2020

As the nation enters its 6<sup>th</sup> week of 'Lockdown' (although longer for many) we wanted to reflect on life in the village over that period and to celebrate the many wonderful acts of kindness, community and care for each other as well as sharing an update on how the village organisations and clubs have reacted to the pandemic situation.

COVID-19 became very serious mid-March and for that reason the scheduled Parish Council meeting for April was cancelled. We were then advised by HAPTC (Hertfordshire Association of Parish & Town Councils) to look at our schemes of delegation and to explore other ways of meeting rather than in person and in public. So the Parish Council agreed to proactively hold an EGM (extra ordinary meeting) to delegate some decision making for the next 3 months. This was done on 25<sup>th</sup> March and the agreement was to pass any planning issues to the Planning Working Group and payments & salaries to the Chair and other finance signatories. We have since had successful trials using video conferencing and will hold the May meeting via 'Zoom'. So as much as possible, we will ensure business as usual – well a kind of usual.

The Parish Magazine has been digitally issued this month, swiftly adapting to the regulations we have to follow and what a brilliant job. Thanks to the magazine team for ensuring we can still enjoy village news and pictures. Also to the contributors who have done a great job in capturing these extraordinary times in words and pictures.

Sadly, we will see most of our treasured village events cancelled this year. We have been in touch with the community of organisers and clubs to bring you a quick overview of what actions have been put in place. In no order of priority:

- **VE & May Day Celebrations** – Both events have been cancelled
- **Open Gardens** – Cancelled for this year
- **Summer Fair and Vintage Car Rally**– A decision will be made on whether they go ahead by the end of May
- **Cricket Club** – All cricket activity is suspended until further notice
- **Football Club** – No more games for the remainder of this season. No decision yet for next season
- **Tennis Club** - Courts have closed and will remain so until restrictions are lifted
- **Walking Club** – All planned walks have been cancelled until further notice
- **Table Tennis** – Suspended until further notice
- **St Mary's** – Currently closed but are online through their Facebook page and 'HIP Benefice Churches' YouTube channel. They are using this to share morning prayer and Sunday worship together as well as Bible Study and Evening Prayer through Zoom conferencing. A weekly newsletter is also being circulated to keep people up to date. For the moment any events, fundraising or services in church are suspended.
- **Methodist Church** – Plans afoot to deliver services over video platform 'Zoom' every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday. Weekly emails and phone calls have been introduced to members of the Church
- **Pumpkin Club**- All planned events on hold until further notice
- **Pirton Players**- The production of Ladies Day has been moved until at least September
- **Village Hall**- All bookings and gathering have been cancelled until further notice



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- **WI-** All meetings cancelled until further notice with the group keeping in touch with each other
- **Film Club-** Suspended until further notice
- **Ladies Thursday Group-** May meeting cancelled. Hopeful to meet in June but planned history walk and talk could be cancelled due to social distancing restrictions. More details available from Helen Springer on 01462 713685
- **History Group** – Alison Smither is gathering photos of this lockdown period and Helen Hofton and the rest of the small team working remotely on other projects. Should you have any pictures that can be used which capture this period, then please send to helen\_hofton@hotmail.com
- **Play Aloud** – Closed until further notice – they will follow government guidelines
- **School and Pre School** – As above
- **Youth Club** – Suspended until schools' return. Hopeful they can meet again before the summer
- **The Fox-** Closed until further notice, however Steven Crowley has informed us that the brewery is still planning to go ahead with the refurbishment sometime in the future and that a new lease has yet to be negotiated. Hopefully a favourable one for Steven and his team, after such a successful relaunch last year
- **The Motte and Bailey** – Again, closed for usual business, however still serving the community with their fresh produce 'market'

The disruption to our lives has seen a magnitude of ingenuity across our lovely village and we would like to acknowledge some of those that have made a real difference by stepping up to the biggest challenge many of us have ever experienced and by helping the most needy and vulnerable villagers.

### JoyCare

With the majority of volunteers over the age of 70 and having to follow government guidelines, they were not able to carry out their usual tasks and trips.

Mandy and the small team found themselves in a position never seen by the group before so they hastily put together plan to get the details of anyone self-isolating and not just those over the age of 65. Using Facebook and leaflet drops, they had in excess of 50 new volunteers offering to help. They also successfully launched a new website, [pirtonjoycar.co.uk](http://pirtonjoycar.co.uk) – A great achievement!

So, having not only existing clients, they had many new folk who needed support from collecting prescriptions to getting shopping.

Then on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, **Jo Picton Homer the landlady of the Motte and Bailey** contacted JoyCare to suggest she use her suppliers to provide fresh produce to the village, complimenting what the shop was offering. A new venture was born between the two. This was no mean feat but between them and some amazing volunteers and a WhatsApp group to help coordinate, fresh produce became available and delivered to their members.



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Prescriptions have been collected, urine samples delivered and plenty of loo roll purchased, washing done and cakes made!

We think it is fair to say that we have our own heroes in our midst – Thank you everyone involved in the JoyCare mission and for overcoming the challenges that presented themselves to you all.

And a very big thank you also to **Jo and Elliot at the Motte & Bailey**, who adapted their business quickly once restrictions took hold. For a period, they continued to supply us with amazing food via their takeaway service which sadly had to cease due to the extra restrictions.

**Our village shop** and post office has remained open and has consistently provided excellent stock and post office services – a big thanks to Steve Ansell and all his team.

**Meadow Farm and Lawtons Farm** in Holwell have been a great resource with top quality produce available in our neighbouring village.

**Growing Strong** have also adapted how they operate by taking online orders and delivering beautiful plants, herbs, vegetables and more from their garden supplies on the Bedford Road.

Life is far from our 'normal', but we are heartened to see resilience and opportunity all around us in Pirton.

**Thank you** to all our village key workers, for the beautiful rainbows, the clapping on a Thursday evening, the online weekly quizzes and for the enormous sense of community – well done Pirton!

Stay safe

Your Parish Council

**Stay Home. Protect the NHS. Save Lives.**