



# Pirton Parish Council

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## Annual Report 2018 - 2019



Pirton Parish Council Annual Report gives a review of the activities of the Council and the financial report for the year ending 31st March 2019.

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[www.pirtonparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.pirtonparishcouncil.org.uk)

## Chairman's Report

It has been another busy year for the Parish Council. We have dealt with planning applications and developments, the environment of Blacksmiths pond and the Bury. We have also answered queries from people living in the village. I would like to thank the Councillors and the Parish Clerk for their hard work and diligence in the past year.

There have been some changes in personnel. I was elected as Chairman after Alison Smither's resignation. Alison was a dedicated and hard working Chairman. Her boots are difficult to fill and I hope I am up to the job. We were fortunate to employ Ted Roberts as our new Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to replace Steve Smith. We thank Steve for his hard work and service. Carol-Anne McConnellogue was co-opted to the Parish Council a few months before the election on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. She has proven her worth by becoming one of the main contacts with CALA homes. She also battled successfully with the Highways department to find the responsible agency to mend the streetlights on the roadway to the Recreation Ground.

2019 was an election year for Pirton Parish Council. Like all Parish Councils in the area there were not enough candidates to force a formal election, but the following Councillors were duly elected:

Diane Burleigh  
Tom Gammell  
Carol-Anne McConnellogue  
Marilyn Parkin  
Jill Rogers  
Nick Rowe  
Stephen Smith

There are 2 further places available and we would love people to come forward and offer their services. We are able to co-opt Councillors to the Parish Council when there are vacancies. It is rewarding being a Councillor and not as hard work as some imagine. It gives an opportunity to represent the community and play a part in supporting the village.

### Planning

Planning still plays a large part of our work, but with the start of the development at ETF1 and the dismissal of the appeal for ETF2 the workload has diminished. The Parish Council have tried to maintain communication with CALA so the village can be kept abreast of what is happening and how the ETF development affects our community. This has proved difficult as CALA have changed personnel at the site. We are continually trying to arrange meetings with the developers and keep communication with the developer. Rest assured we will continue to do so to keep everyone informed. Other developments around the village will also be closely monitored and the Parish Council will be seeking good relationships with these developers.

Our neighbourhood plan is made and is used by the Parish Council to decide whether support is given to planning applications. The NHDC Planning Committee should also use the Neighbourhood plan and the emerging Local Plan when making planning decisions.

## Annual Report 2018 - 2019

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### Village Environment

The state of the water in Blacksmith's Pond continues to be monitored. It has been treated with micro chalk which helps to break down the detritus in the water and improves the water quality for the fish and other wildlife. We also had a very productive and enjoyable pond clean up which involved the community. I do hope you all agree that the pond is looking rather lovely at the moment.

Countryside Management Services have held a couple of working parties on Toot Hill and Jack's Path on the Bury. The Parish Council continues to seek and apply for grants to continue these improvement projects in conjunction with the Bury Trust.

### Communication

Our main sources of communication are the monthly Parish Council meetings, the Parish Council website, Facebook page and newsletters which are delivered to every household in the village. All Councillors and the Parish Clerk are available via email for queries and questions. Every Parish Council meeting starts with a public participation session. Everyone is welcome to come to the meetings and have time to ask questions and make suggestions in this part of the meeting. Please come along! The meetings take place on the second Thursday of the month at 7.45 pm at the Village Hall.

I would like to thank all the Councillors and the Clerk for their support and hard work over the last year. I was privileged to be elected as Chairman of the Parish Council at the Annual Parish Council Meeting last week. I look forward to the year ahead.

**Jill Rogers**

### **A Report from our Member of Parliament**

Dear All,

I would like to thank you again for providing me the opportunity to contribute to the Pirton Parish Council Annual Report.

Since last year's Annual Report, it may have looked like everything in politics has been centered around Brexit. That is not true in the village of Pirton, where important matters such as rural school provision, housing developments and protecting our green spaces have rightly dominated the agenda and have been my focus here over the past year.

In June, I sat down with residents from Pirton & Holwell to discuss the impact that the CALA Homes development will have on the area. Since then I have been greatly concerned by the updates being received from you all, whether it be noise from the construction or HGV's travelling through the villages. I still to this day remain in complete support of this parish council and to all its residents who share and highlight these concerns. Pirton is a wonderful village and despite some fundamental changes in terms of size, the community ethos and individuals that look to further the parish, continue to ensure that its fundamental character remains unchanged.

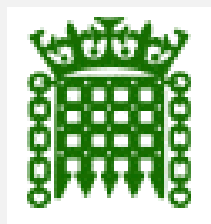
I have also been able to support Pirton when in September I made a representation to the Inspectorate against the ETF2 proposal at North Herts District Council. I was very pleased by the Inspector's decision to rule against the appeal. The time and effort that the Pirton Parish Council and residents put in to ensure the opposition was clear and concise was in no doubt a principal reason for the decision. I completely acknowledge that issues still remain with the CALA Homes development, and I will continue to work with you all to ensure all your voices are heard and acted upon.

Looking back to last summer, I had the privilege of visiting in the Pirton Summer Fair, a wonderful event in which I was able to meet local residents and take part in the festivities. I look forward to attending this year again on the 13<sup>th</sup> July.

In terms of education and supporting our rural primary schools, I recently organized for the Department of Education to visit our constituency to meet with and discuss how we can provide additional support to our rural schools. Sonia Fenner and all the staff run a truly wonderful school in Pirton and I will continue to offer as much support as possible to ensure they have the necessary support to continue providing the level of education they currently do.

I wish you all the very best and look forward to seeing you all again in Pirton very soon.

**Bim Afolami**



### Councillor's Reports

#### **Hertfordshire County Council and North Hertfordshire District Council**

Once again, an eventful year.

I was proud to represent the majority view on the Planning Appeal against development of up to 100 houses on ETF2, Holwell Road. I spoke as a Board Member of the Chilterns Conservation Board, and announced that I was also your County and District Councillor.

I took my turns, supporting your excellent members of Pirton Parish Council, and NHDC-employed barristers and experts. Your Councillors were delighted, after what seemed to be an age waiting, to have pulled off an extraordinary victory over rich and powerful land speculators. GREAT WORK!

We were pleased to support the financing of the Village Hall, and other projects, from the Table Tennis Club upwards. Pirton is a vibrant community which richly deserves support for its diverse clubs and societies.

Your Neighbourhood Plan Committee have produced a comprehensive document, of top class, which will help protect the village from further unwanted intrusion, and form a "Blueprint" for future proposals. Well done, and thank you to all.

You have new faces on the Parish Council, and my colleagues and I look forward to continuing to support the village, going forward.

Blacksmiths Pond is beautiful, but not without its problems, such as drainage, unwanted growth, etc. Tom Gammell and his team of volunteers ensure that this unique landmark is preserved for all to enjoy. My task is to cajole the Council to keep gulleys, etc. clear!

May 2nd was Election Day in North Herts., and I am grateful to have the privilege of representing Pirton for the next four years. I will continue to do my best, with my colleagues, and remain always available to help you whenever we can. Thank you for your ongoing support.

My wife Sue and I enjoyed the May Day celebrations, the children dancing around the Maypole, and the Morris Dancers...well done to everyone!

I have written with the support of Councillor Faye Frost.

**David Barnard**

### **North Hertfordshire District Council**

Following the elections in May the Council is now in "no overall control" status but next week at annual council the new council leader will be elected and a new administration formed.

Last year the council changed the contractors collecting the bins as this gave considerable financial savings but also included a new weekly food waste collection to reduce the amount of food going into the purple "all other" waste collections that goes to landfill . After initial teething problems from the handover the service is now operating well. The only complaints I am now getting is damage to the food caddies and getting these bins replaced. In the last few weeks all residents are receiving an apology from Urbaser, a free roll of bins liners and three months of no charges for those that subscribed to the brown garden waste collection service.

Leisure services in North Herts were improved last year with a new teaching pool and cafe in Letchworth. Work at Hitchin outdoor pool to replace the sand play area with a soft service is in progress and the outdoor pools will open bank holiday weekend,

The Inspectors comments from the Local Plan enquiry went out for public consultation and we are now awaiting the final report back to full council where I hope the Plan will finally be approved. This process has taken years but should finally come to conclusion.

The concerns raised over the building of Elm Tree Site and the safety of the road users between Pirton and Holwell are now a reality. Cala has constructed waiting lay-bys at both ends of Holwell and will use marshalls to control the traffic through the village, we are told, but will have to see if this improves the situation. At the moment large vehicles trying to pass is impossible in places and causing delays as the drivers argue on who is going to back up plus site traffic is arriving outside the permitted hours. One of my neighbours was on his way to work and got a call from his wife who was having a heart attack. He turned round to drive back only to find the road blocked at 8.30am by a large crane. She is now recovering in the Lister.

If you have any district council concerns please contact me.

Finally, welcome to the new councillors who have joined the council and I look forward to working with all of you in the next civic year.

**Claire Strong**

## Rural Police Report



### Hitchin Rural Police Report for 2018-2019

Following a noted increase in reported crime last year for recording period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, we are pleased to note that for the same recording period this year, there has been a marked decrease ( **16%** reduction ) in crime reported in the villages and rural area covered by our team.

Crime has fallen from **937** recorded crimes to **809** for the same recording period ( 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March ).

There have been a number of changes within the rural Safer Neighbourhood Team that continues to be based at Hitchin Police Station.

Chief Inspector ( CI ) Sally Phillips based at Hitchin Police Station took over from Chief Inspector Julie Wheatley at the beginning of 2019.

CI Phillips is responsible for all of the Policing teams based in North Herts.

The Safer Neighbourhood Team ( SNT ) continues to be headed up by Inspector Richard Lilley.

Guy Westwood replaced Steve Oliphant in December 2018 as SNT Sergeant based at Hitchin Police Station, with responsibility for the day to day management of the Hitchin Urban and Hitchin Rural teams of Police Constables ( PC's ), and Police Community Support Officers ( PCSO's ).

PC Keith Harding continues to maintain prime responsibility for CODICOTE and KNEBWORTH wards.

PC David Hine continues to maintain prime responsibility for HITCHWOOD and CHESFIELD and KIMPTON wards ( Whitwell, St Pauls Walden, Bendish, Kimpton, Blackmore End, Peters Green, Wymondley, St Ippolyts, Graveley and Chesfield which includes part of the Great Ashby estate in Stevenage ).

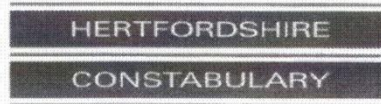
PC Matthew Jenkins continues to maintain prime responsibility for OFFA, HOO and CADWELL wards ( Pirton, Offley, Hexton, Lilley, Cockernhoe, Tea Green, Ley Green, Kings Walden, Breachwood Green, Preston and Holwell ).

PCSO Phoebe Coates left the team in December 2018 and was replaced by PCSO Chris Cornwell until he left the team at the end of April 2019. PCSO Heather Burrows continues to support all three PC's across the rural wards and she will be joined by a new PCSO who is due to join the team in June 2019.

Community engagement continues to be a key component of neighborhood policing with a number of events such as community engagement meetings, to agree and set policing priorities, street meetings and rural police surgeries taking place throughout the year.

**'Safety, Justice and Reassurance'**

[www.herts.police.uk](http://www.herts.police.uk)



Wherever possible the SNT continues to attend and support events organized by the rural community such as fetes, village days, festivals and Remembrance Day parades.

As per previous years the SNT attended the two days of the Whitwell steam fair that again proved to be the perfect event for us to engage with the farming and game keeping community as well as being at hand to meet and talk to anybody about any concerns they may have.

Following the previous year's success in reducing crime associated with poaching and hare coursing, which included criminal damage and anti-social and threatening behavior, we again secured extra resources to assist the team throughout the shooting season. The additional patrols along with a huge amount of work by land owners, farmers and game keepers to trench around fields and reinforce field gateways has resulted in there being a marked reduction in recorded crime from **38** to **14** for the same recording period leading up to and during the shooting season.

Please find below a breakdown of recorded crime across the villages and rural locations in North Herts policed by the Hitchin Rural SNT.

<b>PIRTON</b>	<b>32 CRIMES</b>
Burglary	6
Criminal Damage	6
Theft Offences	4
Violence Offences	16
<b>HOLWELL</b>	<b>8 CRIMES</b>
Burglary	2
Criminal Damage	1
Theft Offences	3
Violence Offences	2

*Hitchin Rural Policing Team*

**'Safety, Justice and Reassurance'**

[www.herts.police.uk](http://www.herts.police.uk)



### Financial Report

Once again, village maintenance was a significant item of expenditure this year, with a little over £1,800 being spent on our excellent Street Cleaner, Tony Smart, £2,400 on cutting the village green spaces and an increase to £1500 against General Maintenance. This included not only usual repairs to play equipment and provision of a new bench, but also a share of costs associated with Toot Hill and a Heritage Lottery Fund application. More work is needed to renovate our play areas, but costs are high and the Council will still need extra funds from grants or S106 monies.

Salaries and office expenses accounted for almost £9,500, bearing in mind that Councillors themselves receive no remuneration for their work. Subscriptions to professional bodies and publications were on a par with previous years at £980 and the allotments in Little Lane cost about £150 to maintain.

Expenditure on the maintenance of Blacksmith's Pond has increased this year. This is to ensure that regular treatments are applied to the water, ensuring its cleanliness and purity. Measures have been taken to reduce leaf litter and other debris from entering the water.

A major project during the year was the resurfacing of the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). The costs were offset by a substantial contribution from Pirton Tennis Club and for the future, the annual hire charges paid by the Club have been re-negotiated, allowing a maintenance fund to be built up.

The Council awarded some grants this year, including £2000 to St Mary's church towards churchyard refurbishment and £100 to the Heritage Support Group for an additional plaque at the War Memorial (now Grade 2 listed). As ever, the Council supported the Royal British Legion by laying a wreath during the annual Remembrance Day service.

Almost all the Parish Council's income is derived from the Annual Precept, which this year increased to just over £35,300. Grants and rental income were both up, with monies received for P3 paths improvements and towards work on Toots Hill. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme Grant, paid with the precept was £670. Although the 'Donations' figure against income on the next page looks to be a large increase on the previous year, this is accounted for by an increase in PSSC revenue and the sum from the Tennis Club. The figure will reduce substantially for financial year 2019/20.

Village organisations are encouraged to apply to the Parish Council for grant funding, if their activities improve the life of the Pirton community. Application forms are available on the Council's website. Go to [www.pirtonparishcouncil.org.uk/documents](http://www.pirtonparishcouncil.org.uk/documents) and look for 'doc019' under 'Standard Documents'. Applications need to be made in advance of the Annual Budget Meeting in November/December.

Parish Council finances are subject to local accountability and annual audit. The Parish Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (Local Govt. Act 1972 s151) who conducts the day-to-day administration and prepares the annual accounts for audit. An independent Internal Auditor (IAC Audit this year) verifies the Council's financial procedures. The annual accounts were approved at the Parish Council meeting held on 11 April 2019. The Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2019 will be placed on notice boards and examined by the External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn.

**Ted Roberts**

## Annual Report 2018 - 2019

### Annual Accounts Year Ended 31 March 2019

	<u>2018-2019</u>	<u>2017-2018</u>
<b>Balance B/Forward</b>	53,063.76	53,465.20
<b>RECEIPTS</b>		
Precept	35,327.85	32,745.66
Bank Interest	0.00	0.00
VAT Recovered	9,839.21	5,125.44
Rental Income	2,189.05	1,373.00
Grants	1,672.15	654.34
Donations	34,150.82	9,436.85
Miscellaneous	10.00	20.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u><b>83,189.08</b></u>	<u><b>49,355.29</b></u>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>		
Staff Costs & Expenses	9410.12	9655.27
Loan repayments	0.00	346.70
Council Expenses	3,251.76	3,674.73
Grants	2,217.00	1,035.00
Village Maintenance	9,951.92	6,886.22
Recreation Ground	4,912.48	6,123.70
Allotments	152.83	152.63
Subscriptions	988.65	948.73
Grants	2217.00	1035.00
Village projects	44151.26	16,483.23
VAT Input	10,381.81	4,450.52
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u><b>85,518.84</b></u>	<u><b>49,756.73</b></u>
<b>Increase/(Decrease) for the year</b>	<b>(2329.76)</b>	<b>(401.44)</b>
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>50,734.00</b>	<b>53,063.76</b>
<b>Bank balance at 31 March 2019</b>	<b>50,734.00</b>	
Unity Trust Account		

**Edward Roberts**  
**Responsible Financial Officer**  
**Date: 23 April 2019**

# Annual Report 2018 - 2019

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## Contact Details

### PARISH COUNCILLORS

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### COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor David Barnard	<a href="mailto:david.barnard@north-herts.gov.uk">david.barnard@north-herts.gov.uk</a> Lodge Cottages, Lilley Bottom, nr.Luton, LU2 8NH
District Councillor Claire Strong	<a href="mailto:strongcpa@aol.com">strongcpa@aol.com</a> Ashroy, Pirton Road, Holwell, SG5 3SS
District Councillor Faye Frost	<a href="mailto:faye.frost@hotmail.com">faye.frost@hotmail.com</a> Glebeheld, Lilley Bottom, nr.Luton, LU2 8NH

### PARISH CLERK

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