

PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL

The **Annual Parish Meeting** of Pirton Parish Council was held on **Thursday 9th May 2013** in Pirton Village Hall.

Present:

Mrs D Bailey (Vice Chair)
Mr S Davies (clerk)
Mr T Gammell
Mr R Marshall
Mr D Saunders
Mr A Scott
Mrs E Wallace
Mrs P Waters (Chair)

Also Present: District Councillors Mrs Claire Strong & Ms Faye Barnard
County Councillor Mr David Barnard

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Received from Mr R Easterbrook, Mr J Hayes and PC Matt Jenkins

MINUTES OF THE 2012 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

These were agreed to be a true record of the proceedings and were duly signed.

CHAIRMANS REPORT

Mrs P Waters had prepared and circulated a report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr S Davies, Responsible Financial Officer to the Parish Council, had prepared and circulated a report relating to the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2013, which is attached to these minutes, together with a copy of the Income and Expenditure account.

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

No written reports were submitted. Newly elected Councillor Ms Faye Barnard attended in order to introduce herself to the Council and to assure Council of her support when needed. Ms Barnard confirmed details of the proposed changes to kerbside recycling collections, and informed Council that the new Museum of North Hertfordshire would incorporate both 14 & 15 Brand Street Hitchin. Mrs Strong reported that the Local Housing Plan consultation was now closed and that following an evaluation of the information obtained from the consultation, she expected another final period of consultation early 2014. She also felt it is possible that the 10,500 dwellings proposed in the last consultation would have to be increased to allow for increased migration into Hertfordshire. She confirmed that NHDC are looking at various options for the refurbishment of Churchgate. She also confirmed that there are plans to rebuild John Barker Place and that Hitchin swimming pool is being extended by the addition of dance studios and that the changing facilities will be completely updated.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Our newly elected County Councillor Mr David Barnard submitted a statement following the meeting and a copy is attached to these minutes.

POLICE REPORT

Although PC Jenkins had prepared a written report, it was not delivered to the Clerk until after the meeting had taken place. However, his report has been circulated and is attached to these minutes.

There were no other reports and the meeting closed at 7.50pm

Pirton Parish Council - Chairman's report May 2013

This report covers the period from May 2012 to April 2013, the second year of the current Parish Council, with Sam Davies as Clerk and my year as Chairman. It has been a busy year!

Planning. We have had our usual discussions over planning applications, some being relatively easy to resolve and other causing us a lot of problems. The application for affordable housing at Holwell Turn was eventually turned down at appeal. The Council was pleased, however, that the application for 11 affordable homes at the end of Pollards Way has been approved and we look forward to seeing this come to fruition later in 2013/14.

Parish Plan. This initiative was abandoned at the end of 2010. The Council felt strongly that we should have a Parish Plan and managed to get together a good committee who resurrected it this year and published at the end of December 2012. We were very grateful for funding from NHDC and private individuals, which enabled us to print and distribute a copy to every household in the village. This would have been impossible without funding and the document would only have been available on the Parish website. I am sure you will agree a very interesting document. The Council are hoping to progress some of the high interest ideas, for example holding a Farmers Market, currently under investigation.

Neighbourhood Plan. There appears to be some interest in the village to now produce a Neighbourhood Plan. This would build on the Parish Plan, but take things to a further stage. The Parish Council will discuss this fully at a meeting later in the summer, once they have more information as to how much interest and support there is in the village. A meeting in May 2013 has been organised by a working group of Pirton residents to discuss this.

The Pond. We have had a real problem with duck weed this past year. We had hoped that it would disappear during a cold winter without intervention, but of course it didn't! Country side Management Services came along to take a look and gave us a very comprehensive report. They suggested that the only solution would be to drag out the weed with a boom, place it on the bank to dry out and allow any beasties to jump back into the pond and then dispose of it.. Having had a couple of quotes for the work, one of our Councillors offered to organise a few working parties to try to save us money. The first of these has removed a certain amount and we hope the subsequent ones will remove the remainder. We await the result!

The other problem we had with the pond was the illegal infilling at The Bury end. This has all taken a great deal of time and work to reinstate the boundaries to their original state. There are many agencies involved, eg North Herts County Council (Rights of Way, Ecology, Local Flooding Authority); NHDC planning and Building Control; Parish Council; The Bury Trust; Natural England; English Heritage and a few others. Herts County Council has been managing the project, It was hoped that the work would be completed by the end of December last year, but we understand that it will now be Summer 2013.

We look forward to having our pond restored to its usual attractive feature of the village.

Parish Newsletter. We have produced two Newsletters this year and propose to continue this going forward. The next one will be out in June. We aim to keep residents fully informed as to what is happening in the village and what the Parish Council is up to.

Village of the Year. We were delighted to win this prestigious award again for 2012 Hertfordshire North, Village of the Year. Two successive years! The criteria are changing for 2013, so we will have to see how we do. One of our Councillors is looking into this on our behalf.

Pirton Sports and Social Club. The PSSC has been trying for some years to improve facilities at the Recreation Ground. A complete rebuild has currently been abandoned due to lack of funding in these difficult times. The committee are however hoping to build a small extension at the side to facilitate the serving of food and drinks directly to the outside.. A lot of internal renovation has already been completed, making it a much better venue appreciated by the sporting organisations and those who are using it for social events. We are presently in the process of negotiating a new management licence between the Parish Council and Pirton Sports and Social Club; the old one being very out of date.

Pirton Youth Council. A couple of Councillors have been active in instigating a Youth Council which is made up of a group of around 10 young people from the village who meet every 6 weeks to discuss youth matters. Having successfully helped to install the zip wire at the Recreation Ground two years ago, their current projects include starting a Youth Club and investigating a skate board ramp. The Youth Club project has been dependent on raising money to refurbish the Methodist Church Hall and unfortunately this has not progressed as well as hoped due to lack of funding.

Allotments. The allotments in Little Lane which the Parish Council finally managed to open in 2011, are now progressing for all to see. We still have about 6 people on our waiting list, so are actively looking for more land to be able to offer more plots.

Nigel Brook – County Councillor The Parish Council was very sad to learn that, due to health issues, Nigel has decided not to stand again as County Councillor in the May 2013 elections. Nigel worked tirelessly for many years supporting the Parish Council, particularly helping with secondary school appeals, providing funding from his Locality Budget and keeping us informed on highways and general matters. Our thanks to him and we wish him well in his retirement.

Pam Waters
Chair, Pirton Parish Council



PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL

Financial Statement – 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013

An Income and Expenditure breakdown for the 2012 / 2013 financial year is attached. Amounts in some of the headings are broken down in detail on the reverse and represent the day-to-day running costs of the Council, including village maintenance and ongoing responsibilities.

Towards the end of each year, the Council holds a Budget Meeting to discuss the following year's finances and to set the Parish Precept. The Council keeps a close check on expenditure at its monthly meetings and controls the budget carefully.

At the budget meeting in November 2012, Councillors agreed that they wished to keep any increase in the precept as low as possible. Unfortunately EE (formally Orange) decided to de-commission the Orange Mast at the Recreation Ground which resulted in a loss of rental to the Council amounting to £2,250 which represents around 8% of the total income to the Council.

The Parish Council has a duty to support certain village organisations with grants, provide some support for the Pirtton Youth Council, and to finance the upkeep of the village in terms of grass cutting around the village, and grass cutting and Groundsman's work at the recreation ground. Councillors therefore felt that some increase in the precept would be necessary.

At the budget meeting, proposed expenditure was investigated in detail to ensure every item was absolutely necessary and although the Council budgeted for a reduction in expenditure for 2013 / 2014 over the figure for 2012 / 2013 of 5%, no increase in the precept would lead to a deficit for 2013 / 2014 of £1,440 which Council felt would be unacceptable.

It was resolved therefore to increase the precept by £1,380 (5%) which would still result in a deficit of £60 for the year but which Council felt was acceptable.

This increase in the precept, will also allow the Parish Council to meet its regular commitments during the coming year, as well as making small grants to certain village organisations which have requested financial assistance.

Parish Council finances showed a gain during the year 2012 / 2013 amounting to £5,263. The sum reserved for future projects will be increased by £2,650 with the remainder helping to boost the Parish financial reserves, held in case of emergencies.

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S J Davies – Clerk & RFO

PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL - 2012 /2013 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

	2012 / 2013	2011 / 12	
Balance b/f		29,792	37,177
<u>Income</u>			
Precept	27,500	26,700	
Grants	2,850	7,412	
VAT recovered	1,774	4,375	
Bank Interest	17	15	
Allotment rental	314	200	
Postcards	-	-	
Orange rent	2,249	2,440	
Parish Paths grant			
Donations	300	539	
Insurance Claims	134		
Sub-committees			
Miscellaneous	251	579	
Bonfire Night	2,310	2,699	
		<u>37,699</u>	<u>44,958</u>
		67,491	82,135
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Allotments	58	11,062	
Clerk's Salary & Office Expenses (1)	6,184	8,733	
Chairman's & Council Expenses (2)	3,327	3,589	
Village Maintenance (3)	8,518	7,644	
Insurance	3,057	2,991	
Audits	655	517	
Subscriptions and Donations (4)	817	767	
PWLB - loan on The Bury	693	693	
PSSC/Recreation Ground (5)	2,401	12,137	
Newsletters	595	-	
Notice Boards	-	-	
P Plan/Village directory	1,915		
Summer Fair			
Parish Paths	-	-	
Fireworks	2,835	3,199	
Grants			
St Mary's grasscutting	600	600	
Joycare	500	360	
Football Casuals	-	50	
Toddlers	-	-	
Playgroup	-	-	
Village Hall	-	-	
Impact (Youth)	100	-	
Youth	177		
		<u>32,432</u>	<u>52,343</u>
BALANCE c/d		35,059	29,793
less Reserve Account		8,752	8,747
less amounts set aside for projects		8,452	8,452
Working Capital		17,855	12,594

Clerk's Salary and Office Expenses (1)

Salary	5,207	6,205
Retiring Clerks Gratuity	0	1,392
Training	90	240
Office Expenses	360	360
Telephone	240	240
Postage	19	62
Stationery	268	235
	6,184	8,733

Council Expenses (2)

Chairman's Expenses	0	77
Council Expenses	160	227
Room Hire	141	165
S137	0	17
Employers N I	0	0
Agents Fees (Orange Mast)	0	3,102
Diamond Jubilee	289	0
Legal Fees	2,595	
Website	142	0
	3,327	3,589

Village Maintenance (3)

Grasscutting	4,785	3,640
Dog bins & emptying	864	756
Street Cleaner and litter pickers	2,011	2,017
Clock Maintenance	0	0
Clock Winding	100	0
Tree Warden	200	100
Parish Paths	558	558
War Memorial	0	0
Spring bulbs	0	326
Gt Green Bollards	0	247
Pond improvements	0	-
Footpath clearance	0	0
	8,518	7,643

Subscriptions and Donations (4)

HAPTC	571	567
CPRE	29	29
SLCC	15	
Chiltern Society	25	25
Icknield Way	5	
CDA (Herts)		30
NHA of PT&CC	20	
Pro-Action Youth	50	50
Information Commissioner	35	
Nat. Society Allotment & Leisure	66	66
	816	767

PSSC/Recreation Ground (5)

RoSPA inspection	56	158
Pest/Rabbit Control	0	0
Groundsman	2,345	2,398
MUGA	0	647
Cricket nets	0	0
Seating	0	0
Litter clearance	0	0
Existing clubhouse	0	612
New Clubhouse project	0	0
Car park	0	0
Ditch clearance	0	0
Access road repair	0	0
Zipwire	0	8,323
	2,401	12,137

Another year of elections over, ... it seems as if we spend half our time in the election polling stations!

This year was the turn for Herts. County Council elections, and I was privileged to be elected to represent this area, as your new County Councillor. This will complement my work as your long-serving District Councillor, and I look forward to continuing to represent you with "both hats on"!

With my District colleagues, Faye and Claire, I will work to promote the wellbeing of our communities, and support the Parish Councils and community groups during the coming year.

Both Councils have grant schemes which, with Officer support, are tailored to help with the furtherance of activities and improvement programmes locally.

The new Offley Youth Club is a good example, and we hope that this will grow and thrive, providing a worthwhile facility for our younger residents.

If your club, or community group, has a project, or could do with new equipment, etc., please contact us to see if we can help you. We don't have a bottomless "pot of gold" but we do have access to other funding sources, and advice, too.

Our other ongoing and vital work is headed by the need to work hard on your behalf to ensure that our countryside is not blighted by invasive housing development to the East of Luton, and oppose the unwarranted expansion of Luton Airport, which will block our country lanes, fill the skies with noisy night flights, and produce more land and air pollution!

So, as we go on to enjoy a warm (please?), and happy summer, let me thank you for your support and again, pledge my support to you.

David Barnard

**Councillor David Barnard -
Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward
Herts. County Council**

Offa and Hoo Ward Police Report for 2012-2013

From :- PC 272 Matt Jenkins

Please accept my apologies as due to other commitments I am unable to attend your Annual General Meeting this evening.

Crime figures for reporting period 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013 for both the OFFA and HOO wards once again show a massive reduction in recorded crime.

Both OFFA and HOO wards have seen a crime reduction of 33% on each ward compared to the same period last year.

Some areas have fared better than others but such a huge reduction in crime is great news for our rural community.

There has thankfully been a further reduction in burglaries and thefts from last year to this across both wards with numbers dropping from 98 to 76 recorded crimes.

Unlike some neighbouring Police forces, Hertfordshire Constabulary are continuing with Safer Neighbourhood Policing with dedicated officers for rural and urban wards. As such I and my rural team colleagues continue to spend as much time as possible in the community on high visibility patrol. This along with a very active and vigilant Neighbourhood Watch group and people taking crime prevention advice seriously helps us to keep crimes at a low level and dissuade criminals from committing crime in our villages and rural locations.

The Hitchin based Safer Neighbourhood Team has recently been restructured following the arrival of our new Inspector , Danny Lawrence. We now have two teams of police officers and police community support officers each with a dedicated Sergeant.

Sergeant Guy Westwood heads the rural team which comprises of three PC's and three PCSO's. Under the restructuring of the team I will be sharing responsibility for the HOO and OFFA wards with my two police officer colleagues in the rural team and will no longer be the designated police officer for HOO and OFFA.

The restructuring will enable more resources to be dedicated to solving problems that are identified in any rural location and offer more police officer availability for rural events and meetings.

We have recently purchased a quad bike that has already been out and about patrolling areas that up until now have been inaccessible using our other conventional vehicles. We are planning numerous operations where we can use the quad bike to patrol our more remote locations and by high visibility policing (it is bright red) we can disrupt and prevent rural crime such as poaching and hare coursing.

Thank you for your continued support.

Regards

Matt Jenkins