

## **PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL**

The **Annual Parish Meeting** of Pirton Parish Council was held on **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014** in Pirton Village Hall.

**Present:**

Mrs D Bailey (Vice Chair)  
Mr J Hayes  
Mr R Marshall  
Mr D Saunders  
Mr A Scott  
Mr S Smith (Clerk)  
Mrs E Wallace  
Mrs P Waters (Chair)

**Also Present:** District Councillor Ms Faye Barnard  
County Councillor Mr David Barnard

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Received from Mr R Easterbrook, Mr T Gammell and PC Matt Jenkins

### **MINUTES OF THE 2013 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

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

### **CHAIRMAN'S 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 for the year 2013-14, had prepared and circulated a report relating to the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, which is attached to these minutes, together with a copy of the Income and Expenditure account.

### **DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

Mr David Barnard had submitted a report which is attached to these minutes.

Ms Barnard informed the Council that the District Elections had been postponed until 10<sup>th</sup> July 2014. She also announced that after her marriage in July her surname would be Frost. The Council passed on its good wishes to Ms Barnard.

Mr Barnard announced that he had a discretionary fund of £10,000 available and that Parish Councils were welcome to apply for funding for local projects.

### **POLICE REPORT**

PC Jenkins had submitted a report which is attached to these minutes

There were no other reports and the meeting closed at 7.53pm

## **Pirton Parish Council - Chairman's report May 2014**

This report covers the period from May 2013 to April 2014, the third year of the current Parish Council. Another busy year.!

**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 on Parish Council matters. We would remind readers that minutes of the monthly PPC meetings are displayed in the Church porch for all to see.

**Parish Clerk.** We were sorry that Sam Davies our Parish Clerk decided to retire in March. I would like to personally thank him for all his hard work and support since I have been Chair and wish him well in his retirement. We welcome Steve Smith as his successor and wish him a long and successful association with the Parish Council.

**Planning.** We have had our usual discussions over planning applications, some being relatively easy to resolve and others causing us a few problems. We decided this year that we would set up Planning Committee to screen applications and then take our recommendations to the full Council. We felt that this would streamline our process. So far it has worked well, but we have not had any really contentious ones since! We will see how we go. The planning application for 11 affordable homes at the end of Pollards Way was approved, but we are still no further to seeing this development commence. There have been problems with land values and the access road and we are still waiting for matters to be finalised.

**Neighbourhood Plan.** There has been some interest in the village to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. This would build on the Parish Plan, but take things to a further stage. A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been set up and approved by the Parish Council. This Group has had approval from North Hertfordshire Council for the designated area for the Plan which is the actual Parish Boundary. This Steering Group are now working towards a public meeting in the Village Hall to keep villagers up to date with the work they are undertaking.

**The Pond.** We have had a real problem with duck weed this past year. It was very thick last summer, but Alan Scott, one of our Councillors offered to organise a few working parties to try to remove all the weed.. This has been successful (so far!) and we have our lovely pond back. We are still unsure about the viability of the outflow from the end of the pond into the ditch in Walnut Tree Road. The footpath and the culvert under it are unstable, so we could not jet it to investigate. We are now waiting for both to be repaired and the pipe checked.

**Rural Living Awards** (previously Village of the Year). We were very pleased that Pirton received two awards in 2013. Joelle Sweatman was presented with the Young Person of the Year and the Craft Group received highly commended for their Knit the Village project. When the Village of the Year award was current, we were awarded it for two successive years and when it was changed to Rural Living Awards, we were offered the opportunity to acquire the award sign now to be seen on Little Green.

**Film Club.** In 2013, when we published the Pirton Parish Plan, one of the responses to questionnaires was strong support for a Film Club in the Village. This has taken quite a long time to arrange, not least in obtaining funding. Happily this is all now in place and we are ready to go! Equipment will be installed in the Village Hall and a committee set up to administer the Club. It is anticipated that we will screen an adult film once a month and then progress to showing childrens' films. Watch this space!

**Pirton Sports and Social Club.** The PSSC has been trying for some years to improve facilities at the Recreation Ground. A complete rebuild was abandoned last year due to lack of funding. The committee, however, obtained planning permission to build a small extension at the side to facilitate the serving of food and drinks directly to the outside. This is now in progress. It was noted some time ago that there is no current agreement between the Sports and Social Club and the Parish Council and we are now in the final stage of negotiating a new management licence.

The Parish Council has been concerned for some time about the **MUGA** in that, in the not too distant future, it may require resurfacing at considerable cost. It was also noted that there had never been anything in writing as to the ownership of the **MUGA**. A letter of ownership has been sent to the Sports and Social Club agreeing that the Parish Council is the owner. A new Committee has now been set up, consisting of representatives from the Parish Council, Sports and Social Club, Lea Sports PSG Football Club and the Tennis Club. They will look into the viability of funding the court in the future.

**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 regularly to discuss youth matters. Their current projects include starting a Youth Club which will meet once a month initially and investigating a skate board ramp.

**Allotments.** The Parish Council allotments in Little Lane progress well and are looking good this Spring. They will be opening them for Open Gardens in June. The Parish Council is actively looking for more land for allotments as we still have 6 people on our waiting list..

**County and North Herts Councillors.** The Parish Council was pleased to welcome David Barnard, a County and North Herts Councillor, to represent Pirton. Faye Barnard is also welcome as another North Herts District Councillor They join Clare Strong who has been one of our local Councillors for many years.

*Pam Waters*  
*Chair, Pirton Parish Council*



## **PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Financial Statement – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014**

An Income and Expenditure breakdown for the 2013 / 2014 financial year is attached. Amounts in some of the headings are broken down in detail 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 December 2013, Councillors endeavoured to keep any increase in the precept as small as possible.

However, the Parish Council has a duty to try to support certain village organisations with grants, provide some support for the Pirton 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. Council also felt it necessary to increase reserve funds in case of emergencies, and to try to build up funds for potential projects in the future.

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 slight increase in expenditure for 2014 / 2015 over the figure for 2013 / 2014 of 1% (£344.00), no increase in the precept would lead to a deficit for 2014 / 2015 of £1,523 which Council felt would be unacceptable.

It was resolved therefore to increase the precept by £1,450 (5%) which would still result in a deficit of £73 for the year, but which Council felt was acceptable.

This increase in the precept will 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 2013 / 2014 amounting to £10,007. This was due mainly to the Council successfully bidding for grants worth £4,259 and receiving £3,415 in donations. The sum reserved for future projects will need to be increased by £7,500 (which includes £2,775 for the Village Hall cinema project), with the remainder helping to boost the Parish financial reserves, held in case of emergencies.

April 2014

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S J Davies – Clerk & RFO

**PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL - 2013 /2014 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

	2013 / 2014	2012 / 2013	
<b>Balance b/f</b>			<b>35,059</b>
			<b>29,792</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>			
Precept	28,880	27,500	
Grants	3,259	2,850	
VAT recovered	2,247	1,774	
Bank Interest	21	17	
Allotment rental	396	314	
Orange rent	0	2,249	
Parish Paths grant	1,000	-	
Donations	3,415	300	
Insurance Claims	131	134	
Sub-committees			
Miscellaneous	4,414	251	
Bonfire Night	2,420	2,310	
		<b>46,183</b>	<b>37,699</b>
		<b>81,242</b>	<b>67,491</b>
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>			
Allotments	478	58	
Clerk's Salary & Office Expenses (1)	7,038	6,184	
Chairman's & Council Expenses (2)	347	3,327	
Village Maintenance (3)	9,367	8,518	
Insurance	2,992	3,057	
Audits	415	655	
Subscriptions and Donations (4)	1,116	817	
PWLB - loan on The Bury	693	693	
PSSC/Recreation Ground (5)	8,128	2,401	
Neighbourhood Plan	30	-	
Newsletters	420	595	
Notice Boards	0	-	
P Plan/Village directory	11	1,915	
Parish Paths	558	-	
Fireworks	2,970	2,835	
Grants			
St Mary's grasscutting	600	600	
Joycare	500	500	
Meditation Group	25	-	
Bumps, Babes & Toddlers	100	-	
Pre School	215	-	
History Group	100	-	
Impact (Youth)	0	100	
Youth	68	177	
		<b>36,169</b>	<b>32,432</b>
<b>BALANCE c/d</b>		<b>45,073</b>	<b>35,059</b>
<b>less Reserve Account</b>		<b>12757.75</b>	<b>8,752</b>
<b>less amounts set aside for projects</b>		<b>17061.03</b>	<b>8,452</b>
<b>Working Capital</b>		<b>15,254</b>	<b>17,855</b>

2013 / 2014

2012 / 2013

**Clerk's Salary and Office Expenses (1)**

Salary	6,157	5,207
Retiring Clerks Gratuity	0	0
Training	115	90
Office Expenses	390	360
Telephone	260	240
Postage	6	19
Stationery	110	268
	<b>7,038</b>	<b>6,184</b>

**Council Expenses (2)**

Chairman's Expenses	0	0
Council Expenses	217	160
Room Hire	130	141
Diamond Jubilee	0	289
Legal Fees	0	2,595
Website	0	142
	<b>347</b>	<b>3,327</b>

**Village Maintenance (3)**

Grasscutting	4,692	4,785
Dog bins & emptying	1,005	864
Street Cleaner and litter pickers	2,011	2,011
Clock Maintenance	511	0
Clock Winding	50	100
Tree Warden	200	200
Parish Paths	558	558
General Maintenance	340	0
	<b>9,367</b>	<b>8,518</b>

**Subscriptions and Donations (4)**

HAPTC	567	571
CPRE	29	29
SLCC	91	15
Chiltern Society	25	25
Icknield Way	5	5
CDA (Herts)	30	0
NHA of PT&CC	20	20
Pro-Action Youth	50	50
Information Commissioner	35	35
Nat. Society Allotment & Leisure	66	66
Donations	198	
	<b>1,116</b>	<b>816</b>

**PSSC/Recreation Ground (5)**

RoSPA inspection	115	56
Groundsman	2,625	2,345
Artificial Cricket Strip	5,088	0
Access road repair	300	0
	<b>8,128</b>	<b>2,401</b>

# David Barnard County Councillor Hitchin Rural

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## **ANNUAL REPORT 2014**

It's a year now since I became your County Councillor. Time has flown past, and I have been on a steep learning curve in respect of my new duties, which differ greatly from those of my other role as a District Councillor.

I have represented the Southern Rural area of North Herts. District Council for 23 years, and this background has helped me, enormously, to integrate the two roles.

Ickleford and Holwell are two additions to my area, and I have made many new friends here. I am proud to have been able to support community, sports, and local democracy, and share information which benefits our community.

Many community groups, and Parish Councils have asked for financial support for a variety of projects, such as lighting for Pirton Players, goal posts in Lilley, a Christmas tree and lights in Ickleford, and many other projects in St. Pauls Walden, Kings Walden, Offley, Preston, St. Ippolyts, and so on.

I have supported all of these, and will continue to use my personal budgets for similar worthwhile projects next year.

Hertfordshire County Council froze its Council tax again this year, and expects to maintain its front line services, despite further central government cuts.

It has been a difficult year for our new highways contractors, Ringway, who took over a backlog of work, and then were faced with unprecedented flooding, fallen trees, and road damage, due to one of the worst winters for many years. Despite all this, progress is being made, and we hope that our local works programme will be "on track" in summer.

Speeding in our villages, and sensitive areas, continues to be a concern, and I am working with colleagues to investigate the possibility of introducing 20mph speed limits where required.

I am looking forward to the challenges that my second year will bring. I assure everybody that I will continue to fully represent our areas, and will continue to be always available to help whenever asked.

Thank you

David

# Hitchin Rural Police Report for 2013-2014

From :- Hitchin Rural Policing Team

As reported to you at last year's Parish Council AGM your Rural Safer Neighbourhood team underwent a restructuring process in relation to Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers responsibilities for specific wards and villages.

The team which is based at Hitchin Police Station currently comprises of four Police Officers and two Police Community Support Officers and is headed up by PS Guy Westwood.

PC 1690 Chris Suckling, PC 1738 Keith Harding, PC 272 Matt Jenkins now share responsibilities for Crime investigations and operations and tasking within Hitchin rural, supported by PCSO Heather Burrows and PCSO 6039 Elaine Cuozzo.

Two quad bikes were purchased last year for the Rural Neighborhood Team, one based at Hitchin and one at Royston Police Station. Both bikes have been deployed on numerous occasions to search for Hare Coursers , poachers and vehicles being used anti-socially on tracks and farmers land. The bikes have been well received by farmers and gamekeepers and we take every opportunity to promote the presence of the bikes to deter would be offenders who believe they are out of reach of the Police on remote rural tracks. They also proved to be very popular with the children ( and some adults ) at the many village fetes we attended last summer.

This last year has seen a steady increase in recorded crimes across nearly all the wards covered by the Rural Neighbourhood Team with total recorded crime rising from 858 to 947 for recording periods from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March for both 2012 to 2013 and 2013 to 2014.

Every effort is being made to combat the rise in crime with extra targeted Patrols by specialist units supported by the Safer Neighbourhood and Intervention teams based at Hitchin.

Thankfully only 19 of the above crimes for 2013-2014 occurred in Pirton.

Maydencroft Manor hosted another successful 'Barn Meeting' arranged by the Safer Neighbourhood Team last year and we have this year's meeting planned for Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June at the monthly Clay Pigeon shoot hosted by Almshoebury Farm off of the B656 between St Ippolyts and Langley. The meeting is an ideal opportunity to raise any concerns or ask specific questions in relation to Policing in North Herts Rural.

Thank you for your continued support.

Regards

Hitchin Rural Safer Neighbourhood Team