

Pirton Parish Council



Minutes of Pirton Parish Council Meeting held in
Pirton Village Hall on 13 April 2023 at 7.45 pm

www.pirtonparishcouncil.org.uk

Present:

Cllr J Rogers (Chair), Cllr Burleigh, Cllr S Maple, Cllr M Parkin, Cllr Rowe

In attendance:

Mr Edward Roberts (Parish Clerk)

22-220 To receive and accept apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Goodman.

22-221 Public Participation

Three members of the public, including a newly elected member of the Parish Council, were present, along with District Cllr Claire Strong. One resident raised the following matters:

- A proposal to reduce or turn off the street lighting in Pirton. This would encourage the return of barn owls and benefit the dark skies project.
- Parking on verges such as Little Green, Danefield and Pollards Way. In Hitchin, mature trees had been planted to deter such parking and the resident was willing to sponsor such a scheme in Pirton.
- Drainage ditches, particularly around the Recreation Ground. There were currently issues with the pond and the ditches, especially behind the tennis courts and at the back of the Recreation Ground. These needed clearing by machinery and a suggestion was to remove the hedge along one side of the ditch to facilitate this. The hedge is currently in a poor state. It was agreed that work needed to be done to encourage the flow of water.

A second resident answered questions regarding planning application 23/00338/FP at New Wrights Farm.

22-222 To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the Agenda and to consider any requests for dispensation.

Declarations of interest were received and recorded from Cllr Burleigh as a member of Wild About Pirton, Cllr Parkin as a member of the Wrights Farm Working Group, Cllr Maple as a member of the PSSC.

22-223 To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 9 March 2023 as a true and accurate record.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9 March 2023, be approved as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be duly signed.

22-224 To receive Bank Reconciliation and Financial Summary and to approve accounts for payment.

- Bank account as at 31 March 2023: Unity Trust Account £66,699.36.
- It was **RESOLVED** that payments totalling £2100.71, as detailed on the monthly Finance Statement (Appendix A) be made.

PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES: 13 April 2023

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

22-225 To sign the Annual Governance Statement.

The Annual Governance Statement was duly **AGREED** by the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

22-226 To approve the accounts for the financial year 2022-23 and sign the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

The accounts for financial year 2022-23 were duly **APPROVED** and the Accounting Statement signed by the Chairman.

22-227 To receive the Clerk's Report

The Clerk began by drawing the attention of Councillors to the Net Position financial report circulated prior to the meeting, listing expenditure against budget.

He reported that the end of year audit tasks had been completed and the accounts closed. The internal audit would take place on 18 April. External auditors PKF Littlejohn had been reappointed and there was little change from previous years. A VAT reclaim up to 31 March 2023 had been submitted to HMRC.

Parking and allotment invoices had been delivered and revenues were coming in. The Tennis Club had paid their 6-monthly rental.

The light on the track to the Recreation Ground had been fixed and the Clerk had been in correspondence with the HCC contractor regarding the maintenance of the lights. The contractor was of the opinion that these lights had been "missed" during an asset data transfer and that HCC would take over ownership and responsibility accordingly.

Work is due to start on the repairs to the swings at the Recreation Ground on 15 May, all being well.

A letter had been delivered to the residents of Great Green informing them of the Community Day on 10 June to repair potholes on the track.

22-228 To receive the New Pavilion Working Group report.

Cllr Maple had previously circulated the report (Appendix C). He highlighted a number of areas, particularly regarding the rising costs of various aspects of the project. It was agreed that an Extraordinary Meeting should be held on 28 April 2023 to cover topics as suggested at Paragraph 31 in the report.

Publicity needed to be arranged to advertise the Annual Parish Meeting on 25 May 2023, during which support for the proposed PWLB loan would be further assessed.

22-229 To resolve to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to apply for a PWLB loan of £300,000 over the borrowing term of 30 years for the construction of the new pavilion at Pirton Recreation Ground. The annual loan repayments will come to around £18,000. It is also intended to increase the council tax precept for a Band D property from 1 April 2023 for the purpose of the loan repayments by 20.8%, which is the equivalent of an additional £13.25 a year. This has been subject to a precept increase consultation.

Proposed by Cllr Burleigh and seconded by Cllr Rogers, it was **RESOLVED** by all present that the Parish Council seek approval for a loan as detailed above.

22-230 Planning.

- a. To consider Planning Applications (as in Appendix A). Draft responses had been circulated from Cllr Rowe. These were agreed and final versions will be sent out by the Clerk.

- b. To receive an update on Blakeney Homes. Cllr Rowe had met with a representative from Herts County Council at the site of Footpath 005. It was agreed that the fence adjacent to 2 Cotman End should be removed. There should also have been dropped kerbs for the Footpath, but it would be difficult to enforce their installation now.
- c. To receive an update on West Lane Farm. Cllr Parkin reported that there had still been no sale. There had been a lot of interest in the land.
- d. To consider the situation with regard to Wright's Farm. Cllr Parkin had circulated her report. There was little concrete to update. Cllr Burleigh offered to write to NHDC regarding the proposed changes to the conservation area as Wright's Farm was not currently in the area, but would be if the proposals were adopted.

22-231 To receive updates on Pirton road safety issues, including speed limits.

Cllr Parkin had circulated her report. There would be no response from HCC regarding the design of traffic calming measures until after the May elections.

22-232 To receive an update from the Communications Working Group.

There was nothing to report.

22-233 To approve donations to the Pirton Pre-school and Pirton Youth Club to mark their assistance at the Community Action Day, in line with similar donations in October 2022..

Proposed by Cllr Burleigh, seconded by Cllr Rogers, that sums of £25 be donated to the Pirton Pre-school and Pirton Youth Club. **AGREED** by all present.

22-234 To discuss the purchase and installation of a dog waste bin to be located in West Lane.

Proposed by Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Maple, that a dog waste bin be purchased and installed in the vicinity of the litter bin at the junction of West Lane and Davis Crescent. **AGREED** by all present.

22-235 To conduct the Annual Review of the pitch maintenance agreement between Pirton Parish Council and Lea Sports Football Club (Reference Minute 20-16 dated 14 May 2020).

Following discussions, all were content for the agreement to continue in its present form. It was noted that the Council did not hold a signed copy of the agreement. The Clerk was to follow this up.

22-236 To consider funding proposals for the Bury Trust.

Cllr Maple had circulated a short report (Appendix D). It was agreed that there was little more to add. Cllr Burleigh suggested that the Parish Council might withhold monies if there was disagreement with the Trust's policies for the Bury.

22-237 To discuss a remedy for the lack of drainage at Blacksmith's Pond.

Cllr Burleigh volunteered to try to contact a relevant person at HCC Highways to discuss the clearing of the ditches that were contributing to the overflow of the pond.

22-238 To receive reports on the following:

- a. Parish Paths Partnership (P3). Already covered under 22-230b.
- b. S106 Projects. Nil
- c. Village Environment. Cllr Burleigh had conducted a walk round the village and reported on various areas, including Blacksmith's Pond, verges and footpaths. She asked that the footpaths not be strimmed at present as there was an abundance of wild flowers and that the village should consider "No Mow May" for the green spaces. She volunteered to liaise with the contractors regarding this. There were still no interpretation boards at the scheduled monument site on Priors Hill. The trees planted on Hambridge Way by Wild About Pirton appeared to be doing well.
- d. Bury Trust. Already covered under item 22-236.

e. Village Hall. Cllr Parkin reported that the floor in the PlayAloud room had now been repaired and activity continued to try to find the source of the problem.

22-239 To suggest items for the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council to be held on Thursday, 11 May 2023 at Pirton Village Hall at 7.45 pm.

Nil

Meeting Closed: 21.56 pm.

Appendices

Appendix A – Monthly Finance Statement

Appendix B – Planning Applications

Appendix C – New Pavilion Working Group Report

Appendix D – Bury Trust Funding Proposals

Appendix A – Monthly Finance Statement

Pirton Parish Council

Bank Reconciliation at 31/03/2023

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------------|
| Cash in Hand 01/04/2022 | | | 63,484.97 |
| ADD | | | |
| Receipts 01/04/2022 - 31/03/2023 | | | 64,569.48 |
| | | | 128,054.45 |
| SUBTRACT | | | |
| Payments 01/04/2022 - 31/03/2023 | | | 61,355.09 |
| A Cash in Hand 31/03/2023 | | | 66,699.36 |
| (per Cash Book) | | | |
| Cash in hand per Bank Statements | | | |
| Petty Cash | 31/03/2023 | 0.00 | |
| Pirton Parish Council Unity Trust | 31/03/2023 | 66,699.36 | |
| | | | 66,699.36 |
| Less unrepresented payments | | | |
| | | | 66,699.36 |
| Plus unrepresented receipts | | | |
| B Adjusted Bank Balance | | | 66,699.36 |
| A = B Checks out OK | | | |

Payments

| Code | Date | Description | Supplier | Net | VAT | Total |
|------------------------|------------|---------------------|---|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Website/IT | 13/04/2023 | Website Software | TEEC | 28.80 | 5.76 | 34.56 |
| Community Day | 13/04/2023 | Room Hire | Pirton Sports and Social Club (PSSC) | 50.00 | | 50.00 |
| Salary | 13/04/2023 | Salary | Edward Roberts (Clerk) | 734.50 | | 734.50 |
| Room (Office Expenses) | 13/04/2023 | Expenses | Edward Roberts (Clerk) | 30.00 | | 30.00 |
| Telephone | 13/04/2023 | Expenses | Edward Roberts (Clerk) | 20.00 | | 20.00 |
| Room Hire | 13/04/2023 | Room Hire | Village Hall | 18.50 | | 18.50 |
| Postage & Mileage | 13/04/2023 | Expenses | Edward Roberts (Clerk) | 37.30 | | 37.30 |
| Street Cleaner | 13/04/2023 | Street Cleaning | Tony Smart | 212.50 | | 212.50 |
| Tax | 13/04/2023 | Tax & Employers NI | HMRC Clerk's Tax | 183.40 | | 183.40 |
| Employer's NI | 13/04/2023 | Tax & Employers NI | HMRC Clerk's Tax | 22.07 | | 22.07 |
| HAPTC | 13/04/2023 | Annual Subscription | HAPTC | 694.38 | | 694.38 |
| Room Hire | 13/04/2023 | Room Hire | Village Hall | 18.50 | | 18.50 |
| Training | 13/04/2023 | Councillor Training | Bucks & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils | 45.00 | | 45.00 |
| Total | | | | 2,094.95 | 5.76 | 2,100.71 |

Receipts

| Code | Date | Description | Supplier | VAT Type | Net | Total |
|-----------------|------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Miscellaneous | 03/04/2023 | Annual Licence | Pirton Sports and Social Club (PSSC) | | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Parking Permits | 04/04/2023 | Parking | Etherington | | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| New Pavilion | 04/04/2023 | Donation | L McConnachie | | 150.00 | 150.00 |
| Allotment Rents | 05/04/2023 | Allotment rent | Wheeler | | 20.00 | 20.00 |
| Allotment Rents | 05/04/2023 | Allotment rent | R & D Black | | 40.00 | 40.00 |
| Parking Permits | 05/04/2023 | Parking | Terry Sargent | | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| New Pavilion | 05/04/2023 | Donation | Rupert Hennen | | 97.82 | 97.82 |
| Parking Permits | 05/04/2023 | Parking | Jarrett | | 10.00 | 10.00 |
| Parking Permits | 05/04/2023 | Parking | Terry Sargent | | | |
| Allotment Rents | 06/04/2023 | Allotment rent | I Bokisa Plot 3b | | 20.00 | 20.00 |
| Grants | 06/04/2023 | CTRS First Payment | North Herts District Council (NHDC) | | 400.18 | 400.18 |
| Precept | 06/04/2023 | Precept First Payment | North Herts District Council (NHDC) | | 27,099.82 | 27,099.82 |
| Allotment | 07/04/2023 | Allotment rent | Mr & Mrs Willis | | 40.00 | 40.00 |

PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES: 13 April 2023

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Rents

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Allotment Rents | 11/04/2023 | Allotment rent | Mark Cooper Plot 2 | 40.00 | 40.00 |
| Allotment Rents | 11/04/2023 | Allotment rent | W Hill | 40.00 | 40.00 |
| Tennis Club | 12/04/2023 | Tennis Club Rental | Pirton Tennis Club | 1,553.66 | 1,553.66 |
| Total | | | | 29,532.48 | 29,532.48 |

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Appendix B – Planning Applications

| Reference | Detail |
|-------------------------|---|
| i 23/00573/FPH | <p>The Spinney, West Lane, Pirton</p> <p><i>Single storey rear extension. Insertion of three rooflights to existing rear roof slope. Alterations to rear elevation including removal of pitched roof. Installation of external cladding and insertion of two additional roof lanterns.</i></p> <p>Comments to Ben Glover by 14 April 2023</p> <p>No objections</p> |
| ii 23/00338/FP | <p>New Wrights Farm, Holwell Road, Pirton</p> <p><i>Change of use of the land from agricultural to a hybrid of dog walking and agricultural and replacement 6ft boundary fencing</i></p> <p>Comments to Andrew Hunter by 20 April 2023</p> <p>No objections</p> |
| iii 23/00371/FPH | <p>2 Cotman End, Pirton</p> <p><i>Insertion of front ground floor window following removal of garage doors and rear elevation door to facilitate garage conversion into habitable accommodation Alterations to front driveway. (As amended by plan no A1 received 28.03.23).</i></p> <p>Comments to Tom Rea by 20 April 2023</p> <p>Objections on ground of car parking</p> |

Planning Decisions (for information only)

| Reference | Detail |
|-----------|--------|
| i | |

Appendix C - New Pavilion Working Group Report

New Pavilion Working Group report to PPC 13 April 2023

1. The Working Group has met formally 17 times to date.
2. There has been a lot of activity over the last month, but not as much progress as expected, due to a number of challenges.
3. The EGM planned for the 16th March to appoint a Quantity Surveyor, agree the QS contract, and confirm and award the architect's contract for Stage 4 had to be cancelled.
4. Meetings held since the last NPWG meeting:
 - 14th March Interviews with each of the Quantity Surveyor bidders
 - 14th March PSSC meeting with FF to discuss potential management arrangements
 - 17th March Fund raising meeting
 - 22nd March Fund raising meeting
 - 23rd March Football funding webinar
 - 28th March Structure/drainage/soil survey workshop
 - 2nd April Art for the pavilion canvasses given out
 - 4th April Funding webinar
 - 4th April NPWG
 - 5th April Football Foundation project update
5. The assessment of the QS tenders has resulted in a clear winner. However, cost is an issue for the next stage of work. PPC to be updated at the meeting.
6. There have been concerns that the structures engineers have not performed as we would like, in particular not engaging with workshops to seek to reduce building cost. Simon Knight has therefore sought an alternative, and is proposing to engage David Byrne of Fairhurst. David attended a meeting on 28th March to discuss the project, and appears to be more proactive. He plays football with Lea Sports so has a personal interest.
7. The costs for stage 4 have increased. The costs were based on a lower construction cost than is currently estimated, and each party - Architect, Structures Engineer, M+E Engineer – has raised its costs, in the case of the M+E Engineer by 37%. Following challenge, some of the increases have been reduced. £1k of architect's fee has been removed as there is a duplication with the QS work. Also, Simon Knight has waived his 10% fee for management of subcontractors in this phase to assist.
8. The cost of a soil survey has been a particular problem, with a quote of £21k against a £1.5k budget. Work is still continuing to agree a satisfactory scope and cost. There are a number of items that it would be useful to do earlier, for example a ground penetrating radar survey to locate the gas pipe, but these may have to be deferred.
9. One aspect of the soil survey is to assess the effectiveness of soak-aways for rainwater. However, the cheapest solution (subject to levels) would be to pipe rainwater into the ditch behind the pavilion/playground. This is where the rainwater from the Blakeney development ends up (via an attenuation tank, the Walnut Tree Road ditch, the pipe under Walnut Tree Road, and under the old vicarage garden). It is therefore proposed to remove soak-aways from the soil sample scope.
10. The Football Foundation requested £1k for the preliminary legal assessment, but following challenge have reverted to the £750 previously advised, and authorised by the PPC.
11. Subject to agreement on the QS appointment, and scope, and finalization of the soil survey discussions, the costs for the next stage are:

| | | Budget £k | Current £k |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| Architects and Engineers | | 20.481 | 24.205 |
| QS | | 5 | 10.4 (see below) |
| Cricket pitch feasibility | 1.75 | | 0 |
| Soil survey | | 1.5 | 7 |
| FF prelim legal check | 0.75 | | 0.75 |
| Building Regs fee | | 0.65 | 0.65 |
| Archaeology | | 0 | 0.47 |
| Contingency | | 4.869 | 1.525 |
| TOTAL | 35 | | 45 |
12. The initial QS cost was £12.6k including a detailed Quantified Schedule of Works (QSoW). This was reduced to £10.4k following negotiation. It would be possible to reduce the QS

cost to £8.1k without the QSoW, but this is felt to be very useful in controlling costs at tender and construction phases. Of the £10.4k, only £8.25k will be billable initially, with the remaining £2.15k billable following Client approval to proceed with the project.

13. PPC have agreed a cost of £35k for the next stage, and approved funding from its reserves. However, the cost is now £45k giving a £10k funding gap. PSSC have offered to contribute £10k (of the £40-50k currently earmarked for the pavilion project) at this stage, subject to it being repayable if they are not selected to manage the Pavilion/Recreation ground operations.
14. The working group has not come up with any other alternatives for funding the £10k gap, but concerns have been expressed that the proposed use of a PSSC contribution would not be appropriate prior to agreement of the management arrangements.
15. Although a PPC meeting was held on the 18th January to discuss Management arrangements there has been no further PPC discussion on the subject. It is requested that this is expedited.
16. There are 3 planning conditions that require specific attention and agreement with NHDC:
 - Cricket pitch specifications – It is intended that we confirm that we will adhere to ECB/Sport England specifications
 - Temporary facilities during build – It is proposed to use construction facilities – toilets, possibly showers, office space as changing area.
 - Archaeology – We have obtained a quotation for preparation of a Written Scheme of Investigation (cost included above) as well as evaluation and monitoring during construction at a total cost of £4-5k.
 There is a risk that NHDC will require more work than anticipated during the next stage.

Funding

17. Some donations have been received over the last month totaling c£1.2k.
18. The Art for the Pavilion initiative has distributed c250 canvasses to allow the creation of artworks. The school is fully involved with this which will provide all of the schoolchildren with knowledge of the project. The art show and sale will take place in the village hall on Sunday 14th May to raise funds for the project.
19. An update meeting with the Football Foundation has confirmed that we are unlikely to receive a grant for more than £250k. Further update meetings to support our application are planned for May and June.
20. A grant application for £250k will be able to be approved without going to a panel, and the timescale is flexible, with a decision expected in 6-8 weeks.
21. With the reduction in the FF grant we are anticipating a funding gap of c£300k. A revised funding budget has identified potential sources for all but £50k, but there are challenges in achieving the funding budget.
22. It is proposed that the Annual Parish meeting is used to seek confirmation from villagers that they are content that the PPC seeks a long-term (30 year) loan to contribute to pavilion cost. Although it may not be necessary, it is recommended that this meeting also seeks agreement for the loan to cover bridging funding of c£100k.
23. It is requested that the Parish Clerk commences preparation of Loan registration paperwork so that if villagers agree on May 25th to the loan, an application can proceed without delay.
24. We need more resources to assist with fundraising, ideally a team of 4 or more. Although we have an agreed Terms of Reference for a funding working group, we do not yet have any people to form the group. One person has been identified who may be willing to assist.
25. An A5 leaflet requesting donations has been produced, and distributed to each house with the Spring PPC Newsletter. Future fund-raising requests are likely to focus on seeking £100 or more for a "brick". Corporate donations will be sought at the £1k level.

Costs

26. The new structures engineer believes that there is scope for some cost reduction for the roof structure. The overhang on the entrance side may also be restricted to just cover the entrance area to reduce cost. The other key cost saving/deferment areas are externals (£170k in the cost plan) and the M+E.
27. Once the next stage commences, the first month will be used to finalise cost saving proposals.

28. It is requested that the website is updated (last update May 2022) to reflect the current position with the project. This will assist with fund raising.
29. It is requested that publicity for the May 25th meeting is produced.

Schedule

30. A schedule has been produced for the next phase and a copy is attached. Progress is probably 2-4 weeks behind this plan.

Decisions

31. A number of decisions are required to allow progress on the project. To avoid extending the PPC meeting it is recommended that an EGM is scheduled to discuss these:

Selection of the Quantity Surveyor

Agree the QS scope

Agree that the QS contract for the next phase can be awarded by the

Parish Clerk

Confirming the scope for the next phase (eg GPR, soak-aways)

Agreeing funding for the next phase

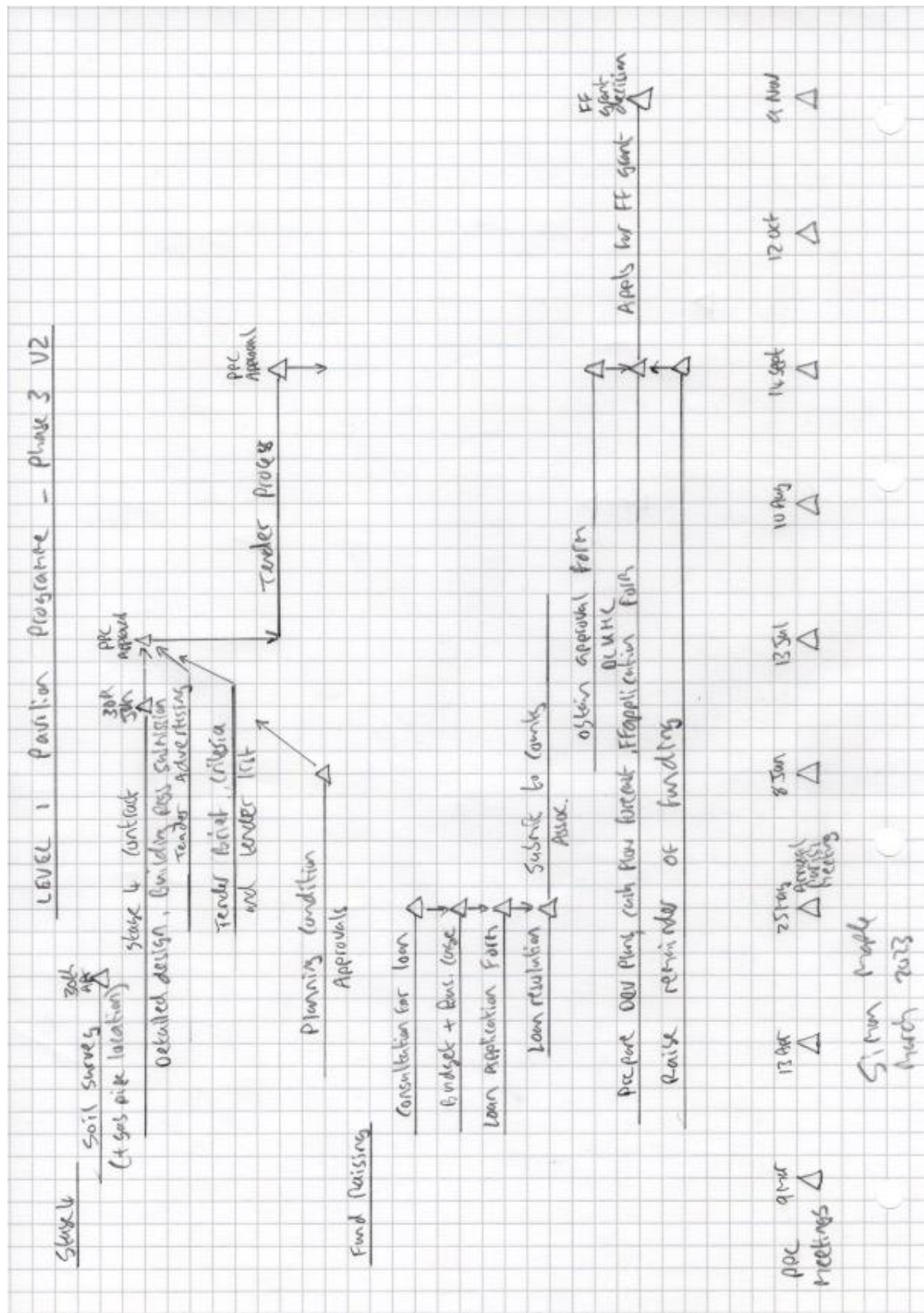
Confirm and award the architect's contract for Stage 4 of the project

32. The PPC is requested to:

- a. NOTE the contents of this update.
- b. PROVIDE any comments or direction on the matters contained in this update.
- c. EXPEDITE management arrangements for the new pavilion
- d. AUTHORISE the Parish Clerk to prepare the loan registration paperwork
- e. ARRANGE an update to the website details for the project
- f. ARRANGE for publicity for the May 25th consultation for the loan
- g. ARRANGE an EGM to discuss the matters in item 30 above.

Simon Maple

Attachment Level 1 Pavilion Programme – Phase 3



Appendix D – Bury Trust Funding Proposals

To consider funding proposals for the Bury Trust

1. The Bury Trust Trustees produced a financial plan for the Bury in June 2022, which was discussed by the Parish Council at its meeting in July 2022. It was noted that an increase in financial support from the Parish Council would be needed in the future.
2. The paper suggested yearly increases in PPC's budget for the Bury from £1k pa in 2022/23 up to £2.7k in 2025/26 (2021/22 prices).
3. By far the largest potential expenditure is on fencing – potentially £2k pa. The Trustees did succeed in securing repairs to cattle damage of the fencing by the grazier last year, and have had barbed wire inserted between rails on the 3-rail fence section by the church to discourage (hopefully stop) damage by the cattle putting their heads between the rails and then breaking the rails.
4. It was recognised that taking up English Heritage's suggestion of producing a conservation management plan may lead to some grant funding.
5. A draft conservation management plan was produced in October 2022, and discussed by the PPC in November 2022.
6. The process that would lead to a grant in 2024 has commenced, and a meeting was held at the Bury last week to discuss the application.
7. Over £1000 was donated to the Bury Trust in Memory of Dick Woodward.
8. As stated in the financial plan the Bury Trust proposes to use some of its reserves, reducing the amount held from c£15k to £7.5k. It has paid for the reinstatement of the fencing on the boundary by Jack's path.
9. It is of course advantageous where appropriate for PPC budget to be used for capital works allowing the cost to be reduced by the 20% VAT cost.
10. Also, as stated in the financial plan there are a number of uncertainties in the financial position which it seeks to resolve over the next year or so (from June 2022) to allow the plan to be firmed up.