

Pirton Parish Council



**Minutes of Pirton Parish Council Meeting held in
Pirton Village Hall on 11 September 2025 at 7.45 pm**

www.pirtonparishcouncil.org.uk

Present:

Cllr J Rogers (Chair), Cllr D Burleigh, Cllr S Maple, Cllr A Goodman, Cllr N Rowe

In attendance:

Dr Janine Budd (Parish Clerk)

25-93 To receive and accept apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence had been received and accepted from District Cllr Strong and Cllr Topliff.

25-94 Public participation.

One member of the public attended.

25-95 To receive declarations of Interest from Councillors on items on the Agenda and to consider any requests for dispensation.

Declarations of Interest were accepted as those recorded in the book. Cllr Maple is Chair of the New Pavilion Working Group.

25-96 To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 14 August 2025 as a true and accurate record.

It was **RESOLVED** that minutes of the Council Meeting held on 14 August 2025, be approved as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Burleigh and seconded by Cllr Goodman.

25-97 To receive Bank Reconciliation and Financial Summary and to approve accounts for payment.

- a. Bank account as of 11 September 2025 is £152,488.41.
- b. It was **RESOLVED** that payments totalling £49,767.53 as detailed on the monthly finance statement (Appendix A) be made.

25-98 To receive the Clerk's report.

A Football Foundation grant of £16,225.78 has been applied for to help fund the new community pavilion.

We have requested that NHDC carry out the annual inspection of the play area and zip wire at the recreation ground, and of the play area at Coleman's Close.

So far, three volunteers have kindly offered to help maintain the war-memorial garden.

PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES: 11 September 2025

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

25-99 To receive the New Pavilion Working Group report and Cash Flow projection

Cllr Maple had circulated the report (Appendix B). Alan Scott has been co-opted onto the New Pavilion Working Group. Progress on the new community pavilion is reported to be approximately seven weeks behind schedule, as strong winds delayed the fitting of the roof panels. The roof installation has now begun, as has the floor screeding. The next key milestone after the roof completion is the commencement of the electrical first fix. Representatives from the Football Foundation visited on 3 September and they were pleased with the progress that has been achieved.

There is still a need to raise c£25k more funding to cover the works associated with the kitchen and bar. £1.1k was received in August from “brick” purchases. There are still opportunities to seek sponsorship for naming rights for rooms, and the pavilion. There was a good turnout for the “topping out” ceremony held on 3 September, demonstrating the ongoing commitment of residents to the project.

25-100 Planning

There has still not been a submission of a planning application by Blakeney Homes. They are talking to NHDC planning officers.

In keeping with the Parish Council’s Development Protocol, Cllrs Rowe and Burleigh met with the proposers of the development of the land South of Pound Farm on 22 August. The proposers are speaking to HCC and NHDC about their school and housing needs. The intention is to build a SEN school for around 30 pupils with social and emotional needs first, and NHDC is keen to have the school. The school would be funded by S106 money initially and then from HCC’s SEN budget. The school will incorporate a lot of green space, including three playing fields, two of which could be used by the community on evenings and weekends. Approximately 200 houses are proposed to be built, with 50% of the market-rate houses being three-bedroom family homes. The developers are keen to protect footpaths and design a safe crossing for pedestrians over the A600. At the request of the developers, Cllr Rowe contacted Ickleford Parish Council to let them know about the meeting. Ickleford Parish will be impacted much more than Pirton by the proposed development. There will not be much S106 money available for Pirton as the parish is on the periphery of the development. Increased traffic might be an issue for residents. The full notes of the meeting will be posted on the Parish Council website.

Cllr Goodman asked when the Gladman application is likely to go to committee. At the last meeting of the Parish Council, District Cllr Strong said that it would be closer to end of the year.

25-101 To consider Planning Applications (as in Appendix A).

No new applications to consider.

25-102 To receive an update on Pirton road safety issues, including speed limits

HCC is to proceed with the implementation of the 20 mph zone in Pirton, including West Lane, Priors Hill and Hitchin Road, with a likely build date of 22 September. However, due to a change in approach by the new County Council, the previously consulted on traffic-calming features will not be implemented. Cllr Goodman has asked HCC for confirmation that the speed indicator on Priors Hill will be decreased in line with the new speed limit. Cllr Rogers reflected that the implementation of a 20 mph zone is a great legacy for Cllr Marilyn Parkin, who campaigned tirelessly on this issue.

A drainage project seeking to improve the flooding issues on West Lane is currently on site.

Work to improve drainage on Walnut Tree Road and around Blacksmith's Pond was carried out on 21 and 22 August. Cllr Goodman is awaiting confirmation from Ringway about what work was done. After hedge cutting has taken place, Cllr Goodman, will request that Ringway clear the ditch at the side of Bury to minimise future flooding.

25-103 To receive an update from the Communications Working Group

Pirton Finest and Pirton Parish Council Facebook pages were regularly updated, and emails were sent with the latest information regarding the Gladman planning application to support residents' comments to NHDC planning. 208 comments were eventually submitted. Cllr Goodman is happy to carry out similar communications in the event of the submission of a Blakeney planning application. Cllr Goodman sought the views of other councillors on additional community meetings. It was felt that it was important to keep up communication, but that another meeting was probably not needed at this stage.

Cllr Goodman has had offers of help to distribute the PPC newsletters.

PPC is hoping to widen audience engagement by creating an Instagram account. Cllr Goodman is considering whether someone could help with communication, perhaps a young person as part of their volunteering for the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

25-104 To discuss the re-listing of village Assets of Community Value

Cllr Burleigh had looked at previous applications for the Village Shop and Post Office, The Motte, The Fox, and the Village Hall. Cllr Rogers proposed relisting these AOCV. This was seconded by Cllr Rowe. All agreed. The names and addresses of the new owners of the shop and The Motte will need to be included on the application. The Clerk is to look for plans of where the buildings are located from previous applications.

25-105 To agree and sign the new Licence between PPC and Pirton Sports and Social Club Limited

Cllr Burleigh sought the views of solicitors to protect the interests of PPC. PSSC have also had discussions and made additional changes.

Cllr Rowe wondered if this could eventually become a tenancy, even if it is low risk. Cllr Burleigh said that the alternative was a licence or lease – the intention is to keep it as a licence.

It was decided to hold a small meeting with a few councillors on 18 September to look at the draft licence before holding a meeting between PSSC and PPC on 24 September to finalise the licence. If the venture is successful, the intention is that PSSC Ltd will begin to take responsibility for matters such as grass cutting and maintaining the hedges and ditches. PPC would like PSSC to provide an intended timetable for taking on these additional responsibilities. Cllr Rogers acknowledged that, if there is a financial issue in the first few years, they can seek help from PPC. Cllr Burleigh said that the contract can be renegotiated at any time, if necessary.

The licence will be signed at the next PPC meeting on 9 October, unless an EGM needs to be arranged to discuss matters further.

The Clerk is to circulate the draft licence from the lawyers as well as councillors' additional comments to PSSC and enquire about their availability for a meeting on 24 September.

25-106 To discuss the next issue of the Pirton Parish Council Newsletter

Cllr Maple suggested the following topics for the newsletter: the 20 mph zone, the community pavilion, proposed housing developments, the flooding works, and attracting

new Parish Councillors. Councillors agreed to write different sections of the newsletter copy. The aim would be to distribute the newsletter in November. Cllr Maple is to circulate a timetable outlining responsibilities and timelines.

25-107 To discuss how to attract new Parish Councillors and members of committees

Cllr Rowe acknowledged that people have busy lives and jobs, but that there is a longer-term need to attract the next generation of councillors. Councillors don't have to be elected; they can be co-opted. Cllr Goodman suggested appealing to passions for planning or the environment etc. She suggested that the commitment might not be as onerous as people might think, especially for committees – the work comes in peaks and troughs, and as little as one hour per week might be required. There was some discussion of whether the word “committee” puts people off and whether “working group” would be preferable. It was suggested that involvement could be on a project basis, allowing volunteers to involve themselves as much as they want and leave when they want.

The Instagram/communication project had been suggested earlier. It was suggested that the village environment might lend itself to community support – volunteers could be the eyes and ears for the PPC when out on a dog walk, or someone could help to organise the Community Action Afternoon/Day. Cllr Burleigh is to put something together with the ideas expressed. This would need to be published on the website, Facebook and Instagram.

25-108 To discuss the Hiscox insurance-renewal quotation

The Clerk is to enquire about a quote for the increase in coverage needed to cover the new pavilion for about £2,000,000 from January/February time. Cllr Rogers proposed that PPC will continue with Hiscox as insurers; Cllr Goodman seconded. All agreed.

25-109 To authorise the spending of up to £35k for the new pavilion as part of the kitchen and bar fit out costs

Cllr Maple had previously circulated a report on the costing of the kitchen and bar fit out. A provisional amount of £45,000 had been included in the original construction costs to cover the kitchen and bar fit out. This was removed to bring the costs in line with the funding available at the time, and it was intended that a simple installation would take place as finances allowed. Owing to an improved financial situation following extensive fund raising by PSSC and PPC, a design was commissioned for a commercial kitchen, which would allow large events such as weddings to be catered for at the pavilion. PSSC selected Colin Hill as the preferred designer out of the three they held discussions with. The work has been split into five packages, the cost of which is to be shared by PPC and PSSC.

As some of the work is best carried out at the construction stage, Parrott Construction has provided quotes for the fire-resisting shutters, bar-front stud wall and the kitchen ventilation. It was proposed that PPC pay £35,000 for these construction costs. PSSC will pay the overall deposit of 15% to allow the works to progress, and the additional costs totalling approximately £55,000.

Cllr Rogers asked if the money to be spent on the kitchen and bar fit out was covered by the contingency? Cllr Maple agreed that it was. Cllr Rogers said that she feels that this should be an outstanding building for the community and it would be shame if the kitchen let it down. She is acutely aware, however, that PPC is spending other people's money, so there is a need to get value for money.

Cllr Goodman agreed and asked what the total would be if the countertop convection oven, worktable and griddle were to be included in the kitchen from the start. She was told that there was no need to do this, as these items could be retrofitted.

Cllr Rogers proposed that £35,000 be spent on the construction elements of the kitchen and bar fit out; Cllr Goodman seconded this.

25-110 To authorise spending on equipment for the maintenance of the war memorial

There have been several volunteers to help maintain the war-memorial garden. Cllr Rogers is to coordinate the volunteers via a WhatsApp group. Cllr Rogers requested that spending of approximately £500 be authorised to purchase a battery-powered hedge cutter and a strimmer. Cllr Burleigh proposed this, and Cllr Goodman seconded.

25-111 To receive reports on the following:

25-112 Parish Paths Partnership (P3).

nothing to report

25-113 S106 Projects

nothing to report

25-114 Village Environment.

Cllr Rogers said that there had been some mention on Facebook that the bus stop on Great Green is looking shabby. She agreed that the books sometimes look untidy but said that the bus shelter had been repaired a couple of years ago. Cllr Rogers is to inspect the bus shelter and ask a carpenter to also take a look. The Clerk is to arrange for asset inspection and to add the bus shelter, pavilion, MUGA, and the pond and its railings to list of items to be inspected.

Cllr Maple has ordered a private property sign to attach to the fence behind the tennis courts.

25-115 Bury Trust

The cows have been back on the Bury for a few weeks after being taken away because of the lack of grazing caused by the dry summer. Ragwort has been spotted on the Bury, although most of it has been removed, and there has been a large growth in thistles despite the topping. The Bury Trust is to discuss ongoing maintenance of these at their next meeting. The concern is that thistle growth reduces the available grazing. Darren Simmons has been cutting the grass around the bench at the bottom of Toot Hill so that people can use it. The Trust is planning to have the Toot cut on October 9 ready for a raking party on October 12.

Historic England used the Bury and Toot Hill to hold interviews for a Fixed Term investigator on Wednesday 10 September. There was no surveying or equipment involved. The Bury Trust are holding a talk on Tuesday 11 November at the Methodist Chapel with speaker Kris Lockyear talking about the various archaeological surveys he has carried out recently on the Bury.

25-116 Village Hall.

Cllr Rowe has been acknowledged as the representative. He forwarded information about a grant from NHDC to them

25-117 To suggest items for the next Meeting of the Parish Council to be held on Thursday 9 October 2025 at Pirton Village Hall at 7.45 pm

- a. pond maintenance
- b. Community Action Day – organise date for spring
- c. Asset inspection
- d. Signing of licence between PPC and PSSC Ltd
- e. Agreeing and signing new Clerk's contract

Meeting closed at 21:59

Date of Next Meeting: **Thursday 9 October 2025 at Pirton Village Hall at 7.45 pm.**

Appendices

Appendix A – Monthly Finance Statement

Appendix B – New Pavilion Working Group Report

Appendix A – Monthly Finance Statement

Pirton Parish Council

A	Bank Reconciliation at 31/08/2025		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2025		162,414.66
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2025 - 31/08/2025		363,688.52
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2025 - 31/08/2025		526,103.18
	Cash in Hand 31/08/2025 (per Cash Book)		114,866.80
B	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 31/08/2025	0.00	
	Pirton Parish Council Unity Trust 31/08/2025	114,866.80	
			114,866.80
	Less unrepresented payments		
B			114,866.80
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
	Adjusted Bank Balance		114,866.80
	A = B Checks out OK		

Payments

Vouch e	Code	Date	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	VAT Type		Net
89	Stationery	11/09/2025	Clerk Office Software	Edward Roberts (Cl	Z	81.00		81.00
90	Room Hire	11/09/2025	Room Hire	Village Hall	Z	21.25		21.25
91	Sports Pavilion	11/09/2025	New Pavilion Constructio	Parrott Constructio	S	38,315.35	7,663.07	45,978.42
92	Sports Pavilion	11/09/2025	New Pavilion Constructio	RLP Surveyors	S	900.00	180.00	1,080.00
93	Street Cleaner	11/09/2025	Street Cleaning	Tony Smart	Z	183.15		183.15
94	Village Greens	11/09/2025	Village Greens Grass	Andrew Burton	Z	320.00		320.00
95	Water	18/09/2025	Allotments Water	Castle Water	Z	14.80		14.80
96	Salary	11/09/2025	Salary	Melisa Janine Budd	Z	658.04		658.04
97	Room (Office Expenses)	11/09/2025	Expenses	Melisa Janine Budd	Z	30.00		30.00
98	Telephone	11/09/2025	Expenses	Melisa Janine Budd	Z	20.00		20.00
99	Stationery	11/09/2025	Expenses	Melisa Janine Budd	S	27.22	5.45	32.67
100	Postage & Mileage	11/09/2025	Expenses	Melisa Janine Budd	Z	13.60		13.60
101	Tax	11/09/2025	Tax & Employers NI	HMRC Clerk's Tax	Z	164.60		164.60
102	Sports Pavilion	11/09/2025	New Pavilion Constructio	Simon Knight Archib	S	975.00	195.00	1,170.00
Total						41,724.01	8,043.52	49,767.53

Receipts

11 September 2025 (2025-2026)

RECEIPTS LIST

Vouch e	Code	Date	Receipt No	Description	Supplier	VAT Type		Net
69	Sports Pavilion	22/08/2025	Football Foundation Pavi	Football Foundation	Z	19,803.00		19,803.00
70	VAT Redaimed	27/08/2025	VAT Redaim	HMRC VAT	Z	16,771.11		16,771.11
71	Sports Pavilion	27/08/2025	Donation	E C	Z	100.00		100.00
72	Sports Pavilion	28/08/2025	Donation	John Souster	Z	1,000.00		1,000.00
73	Sports Pavilion	01/09/2025	Donation	J & Z Burton	Z	100.00		100.00
74	Sports Pavilion	05/09/2025	Donation	J Porter	Z	100.00		100.00
75	New Pavilion PWLB/Donor	08/09/2025	Donation	Owain Lister	Z	2,000.00		2,000.00
76	War Memorial	09/09/2025	War Memorial Maintenanc	Pirton Heritage Sup	Z	1,421.61		1,421.61
77	Precept	11/09/2025	Precept Second Paymen	North Herts District	Z	34,000.00		34,000.00
Total						75,295.72		75,295.72

PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES: 11 September 2025

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

New Pavilion Working Group report to PPC 11th September 2025

1. The Working Group has met formally 43 times to date.
2. It was agreed that Alan Scott should become a co-opted member of the working group.

Construction

3. Progress has been delayed to a reported 7 weeks behind schedule. Further to the previous 6-week delay, strong winds delayed the fitting of roof panels.
4. Parrotts are likely to register an Extension of Time. It is understood at this stage that the purpose of this is to register a delay to the contracted completion date, but not to seek additional costs.
5. Once the building is watertight the schedule to completion will be reconfirmed.
6. The next key milestones after roof completion are the commencement of the electrical first fix, and floor screeding.
7. Meetings are taking place every 2 weeks with the Architect (Simon Knight), and site meetings weekly with the Clerk of Works (Owain Lister).
8. Colour schemes and ironmongery have now been largely agreed, and flooring colours are now being discussed.
9. The positions for sockets and conduits will be finalised on 25th September, and a discussion on inclusion of AV equipment will be held on 11th September.

Costs and funding

10. There is still a need to raise c£25k more funding to cover the works associated with the kitchen and bar. £1.1k was received in August, from "brick" purchases.
11. Cash flow will need careful management, and some money will not be available until completion (5% of the FF grant, 5% of the NHDC grant, the RANDs grant), and VAT will need to be recovered quickly, but given PPC reserves this should be manageable.
12. A copy of the latest view on cashflow will be sent separately. The cashflow forecast is positive going forward except for -£4.3k in Jan 26, -£6.3k in Feb 26 and -£9.8k in March 26. These have changed as result of reduced construction invoicing due to the delayed roof work.
13. We have applied for the first £200k drawdown of the £400k PWLB loan. The second tranche will be in October. The application was successful and we can now draw down the £200k. We had expected to need the money in August but construction delays leading to lower construction invoices for the last few months have delayed the need for the drawdown.
14. Unfortunately, interest rates for the loan have increased to the highest level for a number of years, although the rate has dropped since the peak in early September. Based on the rate on the 8th September and additional £374 will be needed for the first repayment in this financial year. If the rate stays the same, the current annual £29k budget for repayments going forward will be c£750 short.
15. An application for the remaining Section 106 draw-down of £71.7k has been submitted. If successful this will improve the cashflow compared with the assumption that £25k is not drawn down until substantial completion.
16. The VAT reclaims for June and July were paid. There was some duplication and claims for items that are not applicable for reclaim, and a repayment should be made. A claim for August has been submitted.
17. The Football Foundation grant drawdown of £19.8k was received and £13.5k has been requested for August. Janine Budd has replaced Ted Roberts as the second approver to Simon Maple.
18. There are still opportunities to seek sponsorship for naming rights for rooms, and the pavilion. We are considering how to advertise for these.
19. The funding gap that was c£36k in April has reduced to c£16.5k, and there is c£15k of additional funding anticipated to date.

20. An assessment of contingency spend, value engineering and costs relating to the kitchen and bar fit out has been made and this will be covered as a separate PPC meeting agenda item.

Management Arrangements

21. An agreement is now required between PPC and PSSC for the day-to-day management of the new pavilion.
22. This will need to be in place before operations commence.
23. While the intention is for the PSSC to be a non-profit making organisation, how this will be achieved is not yet clear.
24. Legal feedback on the draft license has been produced for discussion as a separate PPC meeting agenda item.

Risks

25. A key risk now is the funding and management of the kitchen and bar fit out, and the potential for delay to the construction contract Practical Completion.
26. Inflation remains a risk, but this is hopefully reducing as we proceed through the build. We are currently at about 25% of the build cost.
27. There are always existential risks around severe weather, accidents, fire, damage, company bankruptcy etc.

Football Foundation commitments

28. A key commitment is to achieve 2* accreditation by the Football club. Communications have been ongoing with Hitchin Belles on the possibility of joining forces to help increase the amount of Girls' football in Pirton, but it is not clear if and when this can be achieved.
29. FF representatives visited the site on the 3rd September to see the progress, and for us to discuss a number of points including the accreditation. It was a positive meeting and they were pleased to see the progress.
30. A precis list of commitments/conditions has been produced, and will be managed going forward.

Communications

31. The "topping out" ceremony was held on 3rd September and a good attendance demonstrated the ongoing commitment to the project. We were lucky that there was a good weather window, following heavy rain and strong winds earlier in the day.

32. The PPC is requested to:
 - a. NOTE the contents of this update.
 - b. CONSIDER the revised draft license for day to day management.
 - c. PROVIDE any comments or direction on the matters contained in this update.

Simon Maple