

Pirton Parish Council



Minutes of Pirton Parish Council Meeting held in
Pirton Village Hall on 13 March 2025 at 7.45 pm

www.pirtonparishcouncil.org.uk

Present:

Cllr J Rogers (Chair), Cllr D Burleigh, Cllr A Goodman, Cllr S Maple, Cllr M Parkin, Cllr N Topliff

In attendance:

Mr Edward Roberts (Parish Clerk)

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### 24-219 To receive and accept apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence had been received and accepted from Cllr N Rowe. County and District Cllr D Barnard and District Cllr C Strong.

### 24-220 Public Participation

No members of the public attended. District Cllr C Strong had emailed a couple of points, including the community governance report that had gone to full council. It suggested that the number of councillors for Pirton be reduced from 9 to 7. Pirton Parish Council objects to this and will formulate a full response. There will now be a full consultation. The garden waste annual subscription has gone up to £55 from 1 April and new parking machines are being installed in the towns.

### 24-221 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 Cllrs Burleigh and Goodman as members of Wild About Pirton, Cllrs Burleigh and Parkin as members of the Wrights Farm Working Group and Cllr Maple as a member of the PSSC and the Tennis Club.

### 24-222 To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 13 February 2025 as a true and accurate record.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13 February 2025, be approved as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be duly signed.

### 24-223 To receive Bank Reconciliation and Financial Summary and to approve accounts for payment.

- a. Bank account as at 28 February 2025: Unity Trust Account £143,367.29
- b. It was **RESOLVED** that payments totalling £5419.83 as detailed on the monthly Finance Statement (Appendix A) be made.

### 24-224 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 for the various Cost Centres.

The Clerk reported that a VAT reclaim had been submitted in the sum of £2065.28 for the period October 2024 to February 2025. The year end internal audit would take place on 16 April. Using various monies from the Council and other sources, a number of benches will be placed on Hambridge Way and in other locations around the village. The installation will be at no charge to the Parish Council.

The hedge along the eastern boundary of the Recreation Ground has been cut back by Parish Council contractors and work is to start on the fence for Lea Sports. The actual fencing work is being assisted by a grant from the Football Foundation and will not be charged to Parish Council funds.

The two new storage containers at the Recreation Ground paid for by the Parish Council are now covered by the Council's insurers and the demolished storage shed has been removed from the policy.

A letter regarding the future VAT reclaims during construction of the new pavilion has been sent to HMRC. A pre-application email and documents were received from Waldon Telecom on 19 February regarding the proposed mast and cabinets at the Recreation Ground. The Parish Council has asked for a meeting and explained the problems that any such works would cause with the new pavilion build. Cllr Burleigh will attempt to contact the company by telephone.

The responsibilities for the fencing between the Little Lane allotments and the houses backing onto the land from Davis Crescent have once again been questioned by North Herts Council. The matter is ongoing, but a satisfactory resolution is hoped for.

The non-functioning light at the Recreation Ground car park remains as a reported item on the Herts County Council website. There is no indication of a time frame to fix it.

**24-225 To receive the New Pavilion Working Group report.**

Cllr Maple had circulated the report (Appendix C). The construction contract should be signed by the Parish Council in the next few days. A successful ground breaking ceremony was held on 12 March and was well attended. Foreman Laws solicitors have been engaged to advise on the draft licence for the management of the new pavilion.

The Clerk confirmed that the Council's insurers were aware of the construction work to be undertaken and had asked merely to be informed when the building was nearing completion.

A letter is to be sent to all residents living close to the building site informing them of working hours and activities on site.

**24-226 To agree to clean and repaint the tennis courts (MUGA) at the Recreation Ground at a cost not to exceed £6000 + VAT.**

Cllr Maple briefed on the requirements, explained the quotes received and the need to check that the companies concerned aligned with the SAPCA Code of Practice for the construction and maintenance of tennis courts. The quotes received varied in price up to almost £7000.

In light of the above and to avoid any undue delay in making the courts fit for the season, it was proposed by Cllr Burleigh and seconded by Cllr Rogers that a sum not to exceed £7000 be agreed for the repainting of the courts. This was **AGREED** by all present.

**24-227 To agree the quote for electrical work at the MUGA in the sum of £210.00 + VAT for repairs to the tennis court supply.**

Cllr Maple explained the reasons for the repair work, including the necessity for the defibrillator cabinet to be on a dedicated supply. Proposed by Cllr Burleigh, seconded by Cllr Goodman and **AGREED** by all present that £210 + VAT be spent on the electrical work.

**24-228 Planning.**

- a. To consider Planning Applications (as in Appendix A). Cllr Burleigh spoke on the S73 application for Oughtonhead Pumping Station and the extension for 4 Apostles Close. Draft responses had been prepared and would be forwarded by the Clerk.
- b. To receive an update on West Lane Farm. Nil. On the land to the East of 2 West Lane itself, North Herts planning enforcement are now involved. The council is reviewing the previously issued lawful use certificate for a caravan on the site. The council continues to review the position on the site from a planning perspective.
- c. To receive an update on Wright's Farm. Cllr Burleigh had submitted a Freedom of information request to Herts County Council asking about loss of income, security and upkeep costs and planning expenses on the site. From January 2018 to December 2024, loss of income was £5000 per year, security and upkeep a total of £57,000 and planning expenses £133,000.

**24-229 To receive an update on Pirton road safety issues, including speed limits.**

County and District Cllr Barnard had tried to chase Highways over the implementation of the 20mph limit and associated drainage works on West lane. The update received merely reiterated the previous responses, with drainage investigations to take place in April. Cllr Rogers offered to contact the local MP over the lack of progress.

**24-230 To receive an update from the Communications Working Group.**

Cllr Goodman noted that there was little to report, although updates had been posted and she would liaise with Cllr Maple over the Parish Council website.

**24-231 To consider the content and publication date of the next newsletter.**

Cllr Maple ran through the timetable for delivery of the next newsletter between 26 April and 3 May. He outlined the topics to be included and asked for volunteers to contribute. Copy was to be received by 7 April.

**24-232 To agree the date of the Annual Parish Meeting (22 May 2025).**

Proposed by Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Goodman, that the Annual Parish Meeting be held on Thursday 22 May 2025. **AGREED** by all present.

**24-233 To discuss the planting of a hedge at Chipping Green.**

The main problem, as stated in previous discussions, was the presence of the large tree on the green. The shade from the tree would largely prevent or slow the growth of any hedging plants. The actual location was awkward, with planting close to the existing fence preventing access for maintenance. It appeared that at the present time, any hedging project on Chipping Green was not viable, despite being a good idea.

**24-234 To receive an update for repairs to the railings and posts at Blacksmiths Pond.**

With the constant flooding and poor weather there was nothing to report on this item.

**24-235 To receive reports on the following:**

- a. Parish Paths Partnership (P3). Nil
- b. S106 Projects. Nil
- c. Village Environment. A Saxon Rise resident had raised the state of the footpath down into the village. Although bark chips had previously been laid, the path was extremely muddy and some remedial work was really needed. Cllr Burleigh still had a supply of paving slabs and these could be made available. It was thought that perhaps a group of residents from Saxon Rise could organise collection and lay these in the worst area. The work to dig out the ditch on Walnut Tree Road was scheduled for 18 March.

- d. Bury Trust. Cllr Goodman reported that Toot Hill had been strimmed and raked. Historic England had been contacted regarding the digging that had taken place.
- e. Village Hall. Cllr Parkin had circulated the minutes from the village hall committee meeting.
- f. Play Areas. Nil. Cllr Rogers was to speak to the groundsman again regarding inspections.

**24-236 To suggest items for the next meeting of the Parish Council to be held on Thursday 10 April 2025 at Pirton Village Hall at 7.45pm.**

- a. A response was needed to the governance review. It was agreed that 9 councillors would be more beneficial than 7. Cllr Burleigh would look at a response with the assistance of Cllr Rogers.

**Meeting Closed: 9.24 pm.**

Appendices

Appendix A – Monthly Finance Statement

Appendix B – Planning Applications

Appendix C – New Pavilion Working Group Report

Appendix A – Monthly Finance Statement

Pirton Parish Council

Bank Reconciliation at 28/02/2025

|                                   |            |            |                   |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|
| Cash in Hand 01/04/2024           |            |            | 79,496.56         |
| <b>ADD</b>                        |            |            |                   |
| Receipts 01/04/2024 - 28/02/2025  |            |            | 161,965.65        |
|                                   |            |            | 241,462.21        |
| <b>SUBTRACT</b>                   |            |            |                   |
| Payments 01/04/2024 - 28/02/2025  |            |            | 98,094.92         |
| <b>A Cash in Hand 28/02/2025</b>  |            |            | <b>143,367.29</b> |
| (per Cash Book)                   |            |            |                   |
| Cash in hand per Bank Statements  |            |            |                   |
| Petty Cash                        | 28/02/2025 | 0.00       |                   |
| Pirton Parish Council Unity Trust | 28/02/2025 | 143,367.29 |                   |
|                                   |            |            | <b>143,367.29</b> |
| Less unrepresented payments       |            |            |                   |
|                                   |            |            | 143,367.29        |
| Plus unrepresented receipts       |            |            |                   |
| <b>B Adjusted Bank Balance</b>    |            |            | <b>143,367.29</b> |
| <b>A = B Checks out OK</b>        |            |            |                   |

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

## Payments

| Code                   | Date       |                              | Supplier                            |   | Net             | VAT           | Gross           |
|------------------------|------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Water                  | 20/02/2025 | Allotments Water             | Castle Water                        | Z | 8.37            |               | 8.37            |
| Bank Charges           | 28/02/2025 | Bank Charges                 | Unity Trust Bank                    | Z | 6.00            |               | 6.00            |
| Room Hire              | 13/03/2025 | Room Hire                    | Village Hall                        | Z | 21.25           |               | 21.25           |
| Salary                 | 13/03/2025 | Salary                       | Edward Roberts (Clerk)              | Z | 697.00          |               | 697.00          |
| Room (Office Expenses) | 13/03/2025 | Expenses                     | Edward Roberts (Clerk)              | Z | 30.00           |               | 30.00           |
| Telephone              | 13/03/2025 | Expenses                     | Edward Roberts (Clerk)              | Z | 20.00           |               | 20.00           |
| Postage & Mileage      | 13/03/2025 | Expenses                     | Edward Roberts (Clerk)              | Z | 8.10            |               | 8.10            |
| Tax                    | 13/03/2025 | Tax & Employers NI           | HMRC Clerk's Tax                    | Z | 174.20          |               | 174.20          |
| Employer's NI          | 13/03/2025 | Tax & Employers NI           | HMRC Clerk's Tax                    | Z | 15.62           |               | 15.62           |
| Dog Bins               | 13/03/2025 | Dog Waste Bins Emptying      | North Herts District Council (NHDC) | S | 1,827.41        | 365.48        | 2,192.89        |
| Street Cleaner         | 13/03/2025 | Street Cleaning              | Tony Smart                          | Z | 208.40          |               | 208.40          |
| Maintenance            | 13/03/2025 | Rec Ground Hedging and Trees | A&B Gardening                       | S | 1,580.00        | 316.00        | 1,896.00        |
| NHDC Inspections       | 13/03/2025 | Playground Inspections       | North Herts District Council (NHDC) | S | 100.00          | 20.00         | 120.00          |
| Sports Pavilion        | 13/03/2025 | Expenses                     | Edward Roberts (Clerk)              | Z | 22.00           |               | 22.00           |
| <b>Total</b>           |            |                              |                                     |   | <b>4,718.35</b> | <b>701.48</b> | <b>5,419.83</b> |

## Receipts

| Code                   | Date       |          | Supplier                             |   | VAT Type         |                  |
|------------------------|------------|----------|--------------------------------------|---|------------------|------------------|
| New Pavilion Donations | 18/02/2025 | Donation | N Sully                              | Z | 150.00           | 150.00           |
| New Pavilion Donations | 18/02/2025 | Donation | D Styles                             | Z | 200.00           | 200.00           |
| New Pavilion Donations | 24/02/2025 | Donation | Michael Anstey                       | Z | 100.00           | 100.00           |
| Donations              | 04/03/2025 | Donation | Anonymous Donor                      | Z | 100.00           | 100.00           |
| New Pavilion Donations | 05/03/2025 | Donation | David Thomas                         | Z | 100.00           | 100.00           |
| New Pavilion Donations | 05/03/2025 | Donation | Pirton Sports and Social Club (PSSC) | Z | 21,500.00        | 21,500.00        |
| <b>Total</b>           |            |          |                                      |   | <b>22,150.00</b> | <b>22,150.00</b> |

## Appendix B – Planning Applications

|   | Reference           | Detail                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| i | <b>25/00412/S73</b> | <p>Oughtonhead Pumping Station, Hitchin Road, Pirton</p> <p><i>Section 73 Application : Variation to wording of Condition 3 of planning permission reference number 21/02768/FP granted on 30.06.2022 for Upgrade of existing pumping station to provide nitrate removal plant and equipment including change of use of land for operational purposes and all associated works.</i></p> <p>Comments to Tom Rea by 21 March 2025</p> <p><b>Object to the modification of Condition 3 on safety grounds.</b></p> |
|   | <b>25/00316/FPH</b> | <p>4 Apostles Close, Pirton</p> <p><i>Single storey side extension including raised garage roof and repositioning of AC unit</i></p> <p>Comments to William Thompson by 22 March 2025</p> <p><b>No objections, but note any adverse effects to residential amenity by the raised garage roof.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

## Planning Decisions (for information only)

|    | Reference  | Detail |
|----|------------|--------|
| i  | <b>Nil</b> |        |
| ii |            |        |



## Appendix C - New Pavilion Working Group Report

**New Pavilion Working Group report to PPC 13 March 2025**

1. The Working Group has met formally 37 times to date.

**Contracting for construction**

2. A kick off meeting was held with the contractor, QS, Architect and engineers on 4<sup>th</sup> March.
3. The Letter of Intent had been signed by both PPC and Parrott's Construction.
4. The contract should be available for signing shortly.
5. Parrott's take site possession on the 17<sup>th</sup> March, but have helpfully marked the position of the new pavilion, and delivered Heras Fencing for securing the site.
6. A ground breaking ceremony is scheduled for 5pm on 12<sup>th</sup> March.

**Costs and funding**

7. There is still a need to raise more funds to cover potentially deferred items, but we have a year to do this.
8. 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.
9. Most of the pledges have been paid (thank you to all who have done that). There are 4 that haven't been to date, 2 of which have been discussed with the donors and the expectation is that they will be paid over the next few months.

**Management Arrangements**

10. An agreement is now required between PPC and PSSC for the day-to-day management of the new pavilion.
11. This will need to be in place before operations commence.
12. PPC are sending the draft licence to Foreman Laws for advice on its suitability.
13. The PSSC will be seeing advice on organisation options shortly.

**Schedule**

14. Parrotts will issue a detailed construction programme shortly (and detailed cash flow) but based on the letter of intent on 14<sup>th</sup> Feb, and their programme submitted with the tender, the switch from old to new pavilion will be around mid-December. Phase 2 works including demolition will then complete around the end of January/mid Feb. Christmas of course now comes into the schedule.

**Risks**

15. Key risks are now seen as ground conditions, inflation and there is a risk around our management after the Parish Clerk retires. A new clerk will take time to settle into the role without the work associated with the new pavilion project. We will need somebody to get up to speed with the project very rapidly to avoid cash flow issues in particular. There is also the risk that there may be a gap, or an interim before a new Clerk is in post.
16. Confirmation is requested that PPC's insurers have been advised of the construction works.

**Communications**

17. The web site needs to be updated.
18. Under the terms of the FF grant there are obligations that we need to meet regarding publicity.
19. Social media will be used to advise that there will be limited parking available during the construction.

20. Pirton School will be asked if they would like to provide a time capsule that can be buried under the new building.
21. The street light in the Recreation Ground car park has not been working for some time. Risks would be reduced if this is working during construction, and it may not be easy to access it once the site huts are in place. It is requested that this is chased again.
22. The Spring newsletter can be used to provide an update.

**Related matter**

23. Although nothing to do with the Pavilion project, there is a project being carried out by the Football Club to install fencing on the Eastern boundary of the Recreation Ground to prevent loss/puncture of footballs.
24. The Parish Council has become involved because the project has received a grant from the Football Foundation towards these works. As the Council own the recreation ground, the FF have made the PPC the senior partner in the project, providing the grant to the Council (to be used to pay for the agreed works).
25. Details will be sent to Councilors separately.
26. 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. CONFIRM that PPC's insurers have been advised of the construction works.
  - d. CHASE (again) the repair of the faulty street light in the Recreation Ground car park.

Simon Maple