

# Pirton Parish Council



Minutes of Pirton Parish Council Meeting held in  
Pirton Village Hall on 14 November 2024 at 7.45 pm

[www.pirtonparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.pirtonparishcouncil.org.uk)

**Present:**

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

**In attendance:**

Mr Edward Roberts (Parish Clerk)



**24-135 To receive and accept apologies for absence.**

Apologies for absence had been received and accepted from Cllrs Burleigh and Parkin and District Cllr C Strong.

**24-136 Public Participation**

No members of the public were present.

**24-137 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 Goodman as a member of Wild About Pirton and Cllr Maple as a member of the PSSC.

**24-138 To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 10 October 2024 as a true and accurate record.**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10 October 2024, be approved as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be duly signed.

**24-139 To receive Bank Reconciliation and Financial Summary and to approve accounts for payment.**

- a. Bank account as at 31 October 2024: Unity Trust Account £85,227.28
- b. It was **RESOLVED** that payments totalling £6825.26 as detailed on the monthly Finance Statement ([Appendix A](#)) be made.

**24-140 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.

He reported that approval had been granted for the Council to apply for a £400k loan from the Public Works Loan Board. This was valid for 12 months and no drawdown would take place before April 2025.

The Local Government pay award meant that the Clerk had an increase of £0.63 per hour backdated to April. He had claimed the back pay with this month's salary.

The interim audit was scheduled for 20 November and the majority of the necessary documentation had been sent to the auditor. Work had been completed on the draft budget for next week’s budget meeting.

The light at the Recreation Ground had been reported as not working but HCC would not act as it was not on the Highway. The Clerk had written to the person who had previously helped to get the lights on the access track adopted, but was still waiting for a reply.

He had written to North Herts Council regarding their policy of removing litter bins that did not fit in with their latest criteria for provision and had been told that Pirton would be losing two bins. It is slightly unclear which ones these might be, but the bin at the Great Green bus stop would remain.

**24-141 To receive the New Pavilion Working Group report.**

Cllr Maple had circulated his report (Appendix C). The application for a grant had been submitted to the Football Foundation. Key risks remained inflation prior to pre-contracting, archaeology and ground conditions.

Subject to success with the Football Foundation application, the project is now fully funded as at the end of October. There are items that are not currently included in the cost plan, so fund raising will continue for the duration of the project.

It is proposed that a request to turn pledges into donations will be made during December. It is accepted as a risk that not all pledges may be honoured.

The Working Group had considered the cost and benefit of a Performance Bond to provide contractual protection during construction. The Working Group did not recommend proceeding with this. Cllr Rowe expressed concerns and would look into it further.

The licence between the Parish Council and the Sports & Social Club was now required. Cllr Burleigh would redraft and circulate prior to professional advice being taken.

The Council discussed the access footpath (Footpath 005) and agreed that as it crossed land almost certainly not owned by the Parish Council, there was little they could do to improve the surface.

Proposed by Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Goodman that a sum of £1064 (+VAT) be approved for the disconnection of the electricity supply to the storeroom at the Recreation Ground. **AGREED** by all present.

**24-142 To approve the sum of £1500 for Quantity Surveyor work associated with the new pavilion project.**

Cllr Maple explained the reason for this. Proposed by Cllr Rogers and seconded by Cllr Maple that a sum of £1500 be approved. **AGREED** by all present.

**24-143 To approve the sum of £12,000 (roughly 50%) for Stages 5 – 6 of the new pavilion project.**

Following a discussion over funding for the rest of the financial year, it was agreed that the project needed to keep moving forward. Proposed by Cllr Goodman and seconded by Cllr Rogers, that a sum of £12,000 be allocated for the Stages 5 and 6 work. **AGREED** by all present. Cllr Maple noted that he did not expect the bulk of this sum to be needed until March 2025.

**24-144 Planning.**

- a. To consider Planning Applications (as in Appendix A). Cllr Rowe ran through the draft responses previously circulated.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____
-------------------------------

- b. To receive an update on West Lane Farm. Cllr Rowe had circulated an email on the current position with regard to planning permission on the barns. He considered that it was unlikely that any action would be taken. He would write further and copy to District Cllr Strong. The Council authorised him to take this further and he was thanked by the Chairman for his diligent and persistent work on this.
- c. To receive an update on Wright's Farm. Nil

**24-145 To consider a grant application for the vicarage nature reserve.**

It was agreed that more detail on the exact nature of the expenditure on the nature reserve was needed before the Council could give due consideration to the application. The Clerk would write to the applicant.

**24-146 To receive an update on Pirton road safety issues, including speed limits.**

There was nothing new to report. The petition was now up to 75 and it was expected to reach the necessary 100 names.

**24-147 To receive an update from the Communications Working Group.**

Cllr Goodman had circulated her report. The pirton.org website had been updated and thanks were noted to Viv Tyler for her continued input and support.

The petition on Facebook regarding the flooding was going well. Cllr Topliff offered to take on the Instagram account.

**24-148 To discuss the problem of dog waste in the Saxon Rise area.**

The point was made that this concerned private ground over which the Parish Council had no jurisdiction. Cllr Goodman offered to liaise with residents over the placement of a bin.

**24-149 To suggest actions to remedy the inaccurate information provided on the Saxon Rise information board.**

Cllr Burleigh had circulated a summary of her actions so far. She was thanked for her efforts by the Chairman. It was agreed that there was really no additional action that could be taken. Cllr Topliff offered to liaise with the school to see if a letter writing campaign by the children might help.

**24-150 To agree a course of action for repairs to the railings and posts at Blacksmiths Pond.**

Cllr Rowe had inspected the posts again and reported that the paint was peeling as the post were constantly wet. It was agreed that the first action needed was to stop the pond from flooding.

**24-151 To discuss the problem of mud build-up in the gutters at Great Green.**

Cllr Rogers had written to the local MP, but had not received a satisfactory reply. It was considered that the mud at Great Green was symptomatic of the whole, including the flooding. It was suggested that perhaps residents could organise a working party, with assistance from some members of the Parish Council.

**24-152 To consider a response to the government consultation on remote and hybrid attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings.**

It was agreed that remote attendance should be the exception. The mechanics of hybrid meetings were not straightforward and the expense would be considerable. The practicalities of such meetings in a village hall would make them very difficult. It could also be considered as fundamentally undemocratic. The Clerk would submit a consolidated response from the Parish Council.

**24-153 To receive reports on the following:**

- a. Parish Paths Partnership (P3). Nil,
- b. S106 Projects. An update had been circulated confirming the figures available.

c. Village Environment. Cllr Goodman had included ditches in her Bury Trust report. It was agreed that it would be better to fix the problem, rather than just receiving a report on the current situation. Costs would be in the region of £430 + VAT to dig out the ditch, although some tree and rubbish removal would be needed beforehand. A working party was required.

d. Bury Trust. Cllr Goodman had circulated her report, covering a meeting with Historic England, Countryside Management grants, the annual Bury walk round and a meeting to discuss the ditch, thistles and the water trough.

e. Village Hall. Nil

**24-154 To suggest items for the next meeting of the Parish Council to be held on Thursday 12 December 2024 at Pirton Village Hall at 7.45pm.**

Nil

**Meeting Closed: 10.09 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 31/10/2024

Cash in Hand 01/04/2024		79,496.56
<b>ADD</b>		
Receipts 01/04/2024 - 31/10/2024		87,925.99
		167,422.55
<b>SUBTRACT</b>		
Payments 01/04/2024 - 31/10/2024		82,195.27
<b>A Cash in Hand 31/10/2024</b>		<b>85,227.28</b>
(per Cash Book)		
Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
Petty Cash	31/10/2024	0.00
Pirton Parish Council Unity Trust	31/10/2024	85,227.28
		<b>85,227.28</b>
Less unrepresented payments		85,227.28
Plus unrepresented receipts		
<b>B Adjusted Bank Balance</b>		<b>85,227.28</b>
<b>A = B Checks out OK</b>		

Signed: _____
Dated: _____

### Payments

Code	Date	Item		Net	VAT	Gross	
Bank Charges	31/10/2024	Bank Charges	Unity Trust Bank	Z	5.40	5.40	
Salary	14/11/2024	Salary	Edward Roberts (Clerk)	Z	894.74	894.74	
Tax	14/11/2024	Tax & Employers NI	HMRC Clerk's Tax	Z	223.60	223.60	
Employer's NI	14/11/2024	Tax & Employers NI	HMRC Clerk's Tax	Z	49.73	49.73	
Room (Office Expenses)	14/11/2024	Expenses	Edward Roberts (Clerk)	Z	30.00	30.00	
Telephone	14/11/2024	Expenses	Edward Roberts (Clerk)	Z	20.00	20.00	
Postage & Mileage	14/11/2024	Expenses	Edward Roberts (Clerk)	Z	29.70	29.70	
Stationery	14/11/2024	Expenses	Edward Roberts (Clerk)	S	21.68	4.34	26.02
Room Hire	14/11/2024	Room Hire	Village Hall	Z	21.25		21.25
Newsletter	14/11/2024	Newsletter Printing	Form IT	S	412.00	82.40	494.40
Website/IT	14/11/2024	Website Hosting	TEEC	S	165.99	33.20	199.19
The Royal British Legion	14/11/2024	Remembrance Wreath	Edward Roberts (Clerk)	Z	40.00		40.00
Village Greens	14/11/2024	Village Greens Grass	Andrew Burton	Z	320.00		320.00
Street Cleaner	14/11/2024	Street Cleaning	Tony Smart	Z	260.50		260.50
Parish Paths	14/11/2024	Parish Paths	Steve Kitchiner	Z	823.92		823.92
Grass Cutting Rec	14/11/2024	Rec Grass Cutting	A&B Gardening	S	187.50	37.50	225.00
Groundsman	14/11/2024	Groundsman Duties	Steve Kitchiner	Z	770.00		770.00
Sports Pavilion	14/11/2024	Pavilion Store Electricity Disconnection	UK Power Networks	S	1,064.01	212.80	1,276.81
Sports Pavilion	14/11/2024	Pavilion Store Asbestos Removal	Luton Environmental	S	750.00	150.00	900.00
Sports Pavilion	14/11/2024	New Pavilion Planning Application Service	Edward Roberts (Clerk)	S	203.33	11.67	215.00
					<b>6,293.35</b>	<b>531.91</b>	<b>6,825.26</b>

### Receipts

Code	Date	Description				
VAT Reclaimed	18/10/2024	VAT Reclaim	HMRC VAT	Z	5,458.86	5,458.86
New Pavilion	31/10/2024	New Pavilion Planning Application Service	Pirton Sports and Social Club (PSSC)	Z	203.33	203.33
					<b>5,662.19</b>	<b>5,662.19</b>

Signed: _____
Dated: _____

Appendix B – Planning Applications

	Reference	Detail
i	<b>20/02156/FPH</b>	<p>30 Shillington Road, Pirton</p> <p><i>Single storey rear extension. Removal of two garage doors and replace with windows and insertion of two rooflights to existing garage to facilitate garage conversion into art studio. Alterations to fenestration of main dwelling and garage. Erection of detached shed in side garden</i></p> <p>Comments to Andrew Hunter by 8 November 2024 (extended to 15 November)</p> <p><b>No objections but a number of comments</b></p>
ii	<b>20/02235/FPH</b>	<p>18 Bunyan Close, Pirton</p> <p><i>Single storey front extension.</i></p> <p>Comments to Andrew Hunter by 9 November 2024 (extended to 15 November)</p> <p><b>No objections</b></p>
iii	<b>24/02341/FPH</b>	<p>The Lodge, Shillington Road, Pirton</p> <p><i>Two storey rear extension including first floor side balcony platform, dormer windows and rooflights. External cladding</i></p> <p>Comments to Andrew Hunter by 20 November 2024</p>

**Planning Decisions** (for information only)

	Reference	Detail
i	<b>24/01585/FP</b>	<p>Pirton Sports &amp; Social Club, Walnut Tree Road, Pirton</p> <p><i>Installation of two 4m high metal fences</i></p> <p>Permission granted 23 October 2024</p>
ii	<b>24/02074/PNQ</b>	<p>West Lane Farm, West Lane, Pirton</p> <p><i>Conversion of existing barn into four dwelling houses</i></p> <p>Prior approval granted 6 November 2024</p>

Signed: _____ Dated: _____
-------------------------------



## Appendix C - New Pavilion Working Group Report

**New Pavilion Working Group report to PPC 14 November 2024**

1. The Working Group has met formally 34 times to date.

**Costs and funding**

2. The Pavilion cost and funding plan dated 21.9.24 showed a funding gap of £42k after changes to reflect the tender price, an increase in the proposed Football Foundation (FF) grant from £400k to £480k, and various other changes including a reduction in the contingency.
3. On requesting permission from the FF to submit the grant application on the 11<sup>th</sup> October, the FF told us that they were including the £42k funding gap, making the grant £522k, if we are successful.
4. We have been answering a number of questions relating to the FF application, but believe that the application is proceeding as expected, with a decision due by the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025.
5. There will be conditions to be satisfied if we are successful with the FF grant. One of these will be relating to land tenure. For grants over £100k the FF normally seek a legal first charge over the freehold. However, for parish councils, if we are unable to charge the premises to the FF, they will place a restriction on the title to the premises at the Land Registry, which would prevent us selling or letting the premises without FF knowledge or consent, presumably for a period of time (maybe 10 years).
6. The FF have assumed VE savings of £4.2k. We are targeting £5-12k of VE savings, but there are also cost "headwinds" that we have to manage.
7. The main option for VE savings is thought to be through reducing the entrance ramp retaining wall as a result of ground levelling, and a potential reduction in external paving.
8. Key risks remaining are: Inflation pre contacting, Archaeology, and ground conditions. Electricity supply had been identified as a risk, but a quote has now been received from UKPN for moving the supply from the old to new pavilion (£4,133 ex VAT). An allowance of £6k was made in the tendered price for this, so it is no longer considered a risk.
9. Following a virtual meeting with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government Borrowing, approval to borrow £400k for the construction of a new pavilion was received on 30<sup>th</sup> October, in time for the FF date of 31<sup>st</sup> October to close this out.
10. We therefore had a fully funded cost plan as at the 30<sup>th</sup> October subject to success with our FF grant application. However, things don't remain static, and some additional costs have materialized, for example asbestos removal (£750) and disconnection of the 3-phase electricity supply to the storage shed (£1064) and an additional up to £1k for the Quantity Surveyors to engage with VE discussions (£1k) – these figures excluding VAT. There have also been further donations received. Accounts will be kept for changes from the funded baseline.
11. There are also a number of items that weren't part of our cost and funding plan, and these will also need to be dealt with in due course, so it will be important to continue fund raising for the next year or so. Those elements are – Access road resurfacing (£30k?), Car park surfacing (£20k?), Kitchen and bar fit out (£15-20k?).
12. In November 2023, the PPC budget meeting approved a budget of £27k per annum for the new pavilion, which would support the repayment of the £400k loan over 30 years based on the expected interest rate at the time (5.37%). The expectation was that rates would fall before we needed to draw down the money. Rates moved up and down, but on 17<sup>th</sup> September had dropped to a low of 5.17% in line with our expectations. However, the Autumn budget on the 30<sup>th</sup> October has caused a significant increase in rates, up to 5.91% on the 6<sup>th</sup> November. They have eased back to 5.79% on 12<sup>th</sup> November, but if this was to be the rate that applies, the annual cost would be £28,259, exceeding our budget by £1,259 pa. This should be discussed at the next budget meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November, although given that we won't need to draw down the loan for some months, it may appropriate to make any changes, if necessary, at the budget meeting in November 2025 when the actual interest rate for the loan will be known.
13. It is proposed to request that pledges are turned into donations during December. There is a risk that not all pledges will be honoured.

**Charity Formation**

- 14. The Clerk had written to HMRC to seek confirmation that the building of the new pavilion would be zero rated for VAT if contracted by a charity. A response has been received, but gives no confirmation – “The VAT Written Enquiries Team (VWET) is an advisory service only, and as such are unable to provide a definitive response to queries about individual supplies. It is ultimately the responsibility of the supplier to establish the correct VAT liability of any given supply.”

**Contracting for construction**

- 15. The FF have advised that following a grant decision by 16<sup>th</sup> January there will need to be an offer letter sent (with conditions) and acceptance by the PPC. They are suggesting therefore, that we need to delay our intended contract date for construction by 2-4 weeks (from 17<sup>th</sup> January).
- 16. The PPC EGM planned for the 16<sup>th</sup> January to consider entering into the construction contract will not be required, and the decision can either be made at the PPC meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> February, or at an EGM on a suitable date.
- 17. A benefit of the delay is that ground conditions may be better for the foundation construction. The downsides are that it increases inflation risk and makes completion before Christmas 2025 more risky.
- 18. Negotiations with the preferred bidder will be required pre contact to confirm value engineering options, and final price.
- 19. The Working Group have considered the cost and benefit of a Performance Bond to provide contractual protection to the PPC during construction. The Group does not recommend proceeding with this.

**Building**

- 20. Simon Knight had submitted the responses to 3 planning conditions (Drainage design, archaeology and swift boxes). He had also submitted for Building Regulations approval for the design.
- 21. Parrott’s provided a Construction Management Plan, which was submitted to NHDC by Simon Knight to seek agreement in line with the planning conditions. We need approval of this before construction commences.
- 22. If the Archaeology report is accepted, we will need to dig two trenches (one 15x2m, and one 5x2m) which will be monitored for archaeology before we can commence construction. The aim is to do this in November/December. NHDC have asked for CVs and agreement from the museum that they will accept any items that are discovered. We have yet to receive responses on these two points from our archaeology consultants – Minerva.
- 23. The fees for the next stages of the projects (RIBA stages 5 and 6) are estimated to cost c£42k. To allow us to proceed to the contract award and beyond it is recommended that financial authority is approved:
  - £500 for RLP Quantity Surveyors – Drafting contracts and commencement on site.
  - £1k For RLP QS to engage with VE discussions
  - £12k towards the total stage 5 and 6 fees to allow drawing amendments and preparation of the pre-construction and construction packs.

Approval for these elements are separate PPC meeting agenda items.
- 24. Once we start construction the governance arrangements will need to vary. There will be regular site meetings between the contractor, architect, and QS. We propose that Owain Lister acts as Clerk of Works to monitor progress and any issues. Any variations will need to be agreed and signed off promptly, and under the latest Financial Regulations this can be done, in writing, by the Parish Clerk. Any financial implications will be from the agreed contingency, but unlike the current arrangements, financial authority for each variation will not be approved at a PPC meeting, but by the Clerk through delegated authority.
- 25. Contract payment sums will be approved by the QS (and Clerk of Works) and these will be approved at PPC meetings.

**Management Arrangements**

Signed: _____
Dated: _____

- 26. A license is now required between PPC and PSSC for the day-to-day management of the pavilion.
- 27. A draft was circulated to both PSSC and PPC. Comments need taking into account and then a legal check is required.

**Storage**

- 28. The asbestos was removed from the storage building.
- 29. UKPN visited to assess the requirement to remove the 3-phase electrical supply from the storage building. A quote has now been received (£1,064 ex VAT) for this work, which involves joining the cables into and out of the storage shed to maintain the supply to the pavilion, and isolate the storage building allowing it to be demolished. Authority is requested for this cost.
- 30. The supply from the pavilion to the storage building for power and lights has been isolated at the pavilion, but it is proposed to retain this underground cable to provide the supply for the construction works (subject to agreement of Parrott's).
- 31. The roof of the garage has now been removed, along with the garage door as the first step towards demolition.

**Pedestrian Access**

- 32. Concerns have been raised regarding the pedestrian access to the Recreation Ground particularly during busy events, such as the recent fireworks display. For busy events pedestrians are routed via footpath 5 leaving the access road for vehicles. Where the footpath drops down to cross the triangle of ground just past the relatively new fence, the surface is muddy, and this, combined with the drop in level, creates the risk of people slipping/tripping, particularly when it is dark. PPC is requested to consider what may be done to reduce this risk.
- 33. Pedestrian access will also be an issue during construction when there will be heavy lorries entering and leaving the site.

**Telecoms**

- 34. A company has been surveying the Recreation Ground as a site for a new telecoms mast. They had suggested a meeting to discuss issues, particularly for crane access. They have not responded to an email regarding a meeting.
- 35. PSSC has requested that BT remove the land line telephone cables (due 15<sup>th</sup> November), and that Open Reach quote for the removal of the telegraph poles at the Recreation Ground to avoid conflict with the construction of the new pavilion.

**Website**

- 36. A lot has changed with the project in recent months, and it is recommended that the website is updated to reflect the latest information.
- 37. 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. APPROVE spend of £1064 (ex VAT) for the disconnection of the electricity supply to the storage building.
  - d. AGREE that a Performance Bond should not be pursued for the Construction Contract.
  - e. UPDATE the website to reflect the latest project information.

Simon Maple

Signed: _____ Dated: _____
-------------------------------