



Pirton Parish Council

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Annual Report 2025 - 2026



Pirton Parish Council Annual Report gives
a review of the activities of the Council
and the financial report for the year
ending 31st March 2026.

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www.pirtonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Chairman's Report

The highlight of my year, and I am sure that of many others was the opening of the New Pavilion at the Recreation Ground. It took many years of hard work, challenges and hurdles which were all worth while when Pirton Pavilion was opened in April. The New Pavilion Working Group, a working group of the Parish Council worked tirelessly to achieve this. I would like to thank each and every one of them. The pavilion was paid for by grants, community fund raising and a slight increase in our precept to cover the repayments on a loan taken out by the Parish Council. Thank you to everyone who lives in the village, and we now have a community asset for many years to come. I hope we all enjoy it and make new memories there.

The New Pavilion has taken much of our time, but we have continued with the usual business of the Parish Council. All planning applications are commented on as we try to ensure any development is appropriate for the village to develop. Councillors sit on various village committees including the Bury Trust, Village Hall committee and Rands Trust. There is an Environment Committee where we hope to maintain and develop our village environment, so it continues to be a lovely place to live. We held another Village Community Action Day where some of you came to help tidy, paint or litter pick around the village. Thank you to everyone who came along.

All our Parish Councillors have worked hard this past year to maintain our Village, but we have been working under pressure. We have capacity for 9 Councillors, but we now have just 5 Councillors. There needs to be more people from the village coming forward to help continue this work, by either becoming Councillors or joining a working group. Please think about this important and rewarding work.

I would also like to thank other people in the village who support the Council. Our Parish Clerk Janine does a fantastic job keeping our records straight and providing advice on standing orders. Tony, our street cleaner who keeps our environment clean and tidy. Steve, our Tree Warden who works to make sure our footpaths are clear and trees are healthy. Looking after our village is really a team effort.

Councillor Amanda Goodman resigned for personal reasons earlier in the year. She was a hard-working Councillor with a particular interest in the environment. I miss her at our meetings and her wise counsel. Thank-you Amanda for all your contribution as a Parish Councillor over the past few years.

Finally, I would like to thank all our Parish Councillors for their hard work and support for the past year. Without them we would not have a voice in the area or advocates for our village. I hope you all appreciate their work and please thank them when you see them.

Jill Rogers

Parish Council Round-up

New Pavilion Working Group report to PPC 14th May 2026

1. The Working Group has met formally 51 times to date. An additional meeting has been arranged for the 16th June.

Construction

2. The major outstanding issues were: Disabled access; Showers; Door stops; Access Road.
 - The proposal for disabled car parking access is to create two spaces by the changing room entrance, which is on the level. Quotes will be sought for two options – a grid system with gravel infill, and a block system. There are also difficulties for mobility scooter and other wheeled devices to get from the access road/footpath to the pavilion paving. It is proposed to compact the stones to create an easier access along the footpath and across to the new disabled car parking spaces.
 - Shower drainage in the two small changing rooms is not working correctly, water pools across the floor. The proposed solution is to fit a shower tray in the officials' room, but the other room is accessible so the only solution appears to be to dig up the floor and create an appropriate slope. Quotes have been received for this work, totaling c£5k.
 - The External doors (main entrance, toilet corridor and changing room corridor) do not have restraints, or fastenings to keep them open. Parrotts will install stops to these doors, and the kitchen and cellar doors.
 - The access road remedial works are due for completion by 12th May.
3. Minor faults are being dealt with by Parrotts within the defect liability period.
4. Despite the frustrations of these issues, there is very positive feedback from users, and villagers.
5. Operation and Maintenance documentation has not yet been fully provided and this is causing problems with planning required maintenance.
6. It is proposed to fit kick plates to the bottom of doors to prevent paintwork damage.
7. A fire risk assessment report has been received, but not yet discussed by the working group. It will be forwarded to PPC Councillors.

Costs and funding

8. Donations totaling £2135 were received in April, and £1035 so far in May. We received a refund of £1253.20 gross from Foreman Laws for the FF title change. We are now fully funded for the planned costs, but note the potential for additional costs outlined above.
9. The donations over the last few months and refunds etc have created a notional funding surplus, but as noted there are other costs to be considered.
10. We have not yet received the final account for the construction, so the cashflow cannot be meaningfully updated. Once this is received, we will know whether we can instruct works for the disabled access and showers.
11. Simon Knight had written accepting that issues with the showers, and doors to the changing room toilets were design issues, and offered to waive his final fee of £975 net of VAT. It is proposed to respond with thanks but saying that we are still considering how to deal with additional costs relating to design and construction issues.
12. We have not yet achieved release of the last 5% of the Football Foundation grant and this could affect the cashflow, but the conditions for EICR and building control sign off have been signed off and there appears to be good news (to be confirmed) on the 2* football accreditation. It is possible that the 5% will not be released until disabled access is resolved (or at least firm plans for this).
13. The VAT reclaims have been submitted and paid to date. A claim for £38.455k for the pavilion costs was paid in April.

14. A building sign has been ordered from the Football Foundation (no cost) to be fitted to the front of the building with the name "Pirton Pavilion" and the FF pentagon logo.
15. Further signage is required, for which financial authority was approved at the last PPC meeting:
 - A sign for the lounge
 - A board recognizing the formal opening, and key contributors
 - A board outlining some history including the old pavilion opening plaque.
 - The mock-up of the bricks.
16. A sign for the front of the pavilion with the Football Foundation logo, and the name "Pirton Pavilion" is on order from the Football Foundation, at their cost.
17. Once the details are finalised a decision will be required on the format for the "bricks". With the number now exceeding 200, a cost of £4-5k is anticipated which will require funding.

Risks

18. There are cost risks relating to external works, and the additional works outlined above.
19. There is a risk that we don't receive agreement from the FF to drawdown the remaining 5% of their grant.

Football Foundation commitments

20. A key commitment is to achieve 2* accreditation by the Football club. This was a commitment to the FF for opening the new pavilion. It is now planned to meet the commitment in September. The FF did not seek to delay the opening but are considering whether they will release the final 5% of the grant (c£24k) before 2* accreditation is achieved.
21. A meeting will be arranged between the football club and Steve Maker of Herts FA to seek to move the accreditation forward.
22. The Site Development Plan (provided as part of the FF grant application) will need to be kept up to date, including the Income and Expenditure forecast, and Community Engagement. Also, monthly booking data is required. This could be provided through ClubSpark or some other method. Investment in pitches and football outcomes will be expected in line with the project plan.
23. The FF pointed out that the PPC needs to be "across things".

Access Road

24. The access road is in a very poor state. Parrotts were planning to carry out remedial works by 12th May. As a single track there are difficulties when there is significant traffic – when football matches are on, and for events.
25. There are now two planning applications that could have an impact on access arrangements to the Recreation Ground. However, neither are approved, and timescales are not confirmed if approval is granted.
26. Any actions to seek to influence a satisfactory outcome should be considered. Formal backing of the points made in PSSC's submission would be helpful.

Communications

27. Alistair Strathern MP visited on the 12th May.
28. The FF are keen that a press release should be issued for the opening.
29. 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.

Cllr Simon Maple
New Pavilion Working Group

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Planning Working Group Report 2025-2026

The Planning Working Group for this period was Jill Rogers, Diane Burleigh and Nick Rowe. The majority of planning applications over this period were for modest house extensions, changes to windows and doors, changes to materials, and a couple of modest garage conversions.

In each case we look at the details and measure them against the Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan and Policies, the Local Development Plan and the NHDC Conservation Area Management Plan for Pirton. We are always particularly concerned that neighbours are not adversely affected by the scale of any building work; that issues such as roof-lights do not overly impinge on neighbours or interfere with nocturnal wildlife; and that parking is in line with our policies to ensure that our problems with on-street parking are not exacerbated. Design and materials are important, so that buildings conform to good architectural standards using materials that reflect and contribute to the character of the village. On-site biodiversity net gain, where appropriate, is a concern also.

There were two applications of major significance which have taken a lot of the Working Group's time. Neither of these applications is yet determined by NHDC. Once again we thank the community who attended a special meeting to discuss these applications and to give a steer to the Parish Council for their response. Of course, these are an application for outline permission for up to 130 dwellings on land south east of Howell Road, the applicants being Gladman; and land adjacent to 10 Hambridge Way, another outline application by Blakeney Homes for up to 50 dwellings.

Both applications are for sites outside of the Pirton Development Boundary, and for more than the 30 dwellings, which is the maximum Pirton supports for any single development. Of the two, Gladman seems to be the more speculative. We continue to look closely at any new documentation produced by the developers and comment on them.

The Working Group also follows consultations to changes to planning legislation and the National Planning Policy Framework, and to comment on consultations as necessary. The Working Group will be monitoring the development of a new Local Development Plan to ensure that Pirton is not adversely affected by any new NHDC Policies.

Cllr Diane Burleigh

Environment Committee Report 2025-2026

As such, the Committee has not formally met, such issues falling within Council Meeting Agendas. The members for this year were Amanda Goodman, (now resigned); Diane Burleigh; Jill Rogers and Nick Rowe.

The Parish Council works closely with Wild About Pirton, who we thank for organising litter-picking, tree-planting, and other nature-based initiatives, and evening talks. We also support the Bury Trust in the work they do to protect and enhance The Bury and Toot Hill, and thank them and all the volunteers they enlist to look after that area and improve its biodiversity.

The PPC has worked hard to establish good relations with Anglian Water, and we thank Anglian Water for the immense work undertaken to improve the drainage system throughout the village – no flooding in West Lane this year. However, more work needs to be done to prevent Blacksmiths Pond from overflowing every winter. Having cleared the drain from the pond to the watercourse/ditch in Walnut Tree Road, we are pressing Anglian Water to clear the ditch too, as the water from the pond still is not flowing away as it should.

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We thank Tony Smart for keeping the village litter free and tidy; and Andy Burton for keeping the grass on the Greens under control. Also, thanks to Steve Kitchener for his advice on tree matters.

Inappropriate parking remains an issue, and we have frequently urged residents not to park on the village green, pavements and verges.

We also organised and hosted the Village Community Action Day, when benches were cleaned and varnished; play areas tidied up and litter picked. Our thanks to all the community for their efforts.

The PPC purchased a new dog poo bin. There are now more dog poo bins than waste bins in the village. The lack of waste bins, particularly near the village shop, is continuing to cause concern.

Cllr Diane Burleigh

District Council Report from District Cllr Claire Strong

The 2025/26 civic year started with my hip operation and then getting back to normal.

At the council we are awaiting the government's decision on the number of unitary councils Hertfordshire will have - 1,2,3,4 or 5 and once that is announced officers and members can start working on the new structures and new organisations. NHDC council debated and decided on 2. If everything goes ahead then in 2027 we will have elections for a shadow new authority that will be in place for a year and then move to the new authority for 4 years.

Work is going on in the background to develop / update a new local plan with around 8-10,000 additional homes to be built in the district. At the moment the council does not have a 5 year land supply as the delivery of homes on sites allocated in the current plan have been slow to come forward with planning applications. A call for new sites has been completed and officers will work through them and put forward options to members later in the year.

The new waste contract came into force and the three weekly collection routine introduced with not too many issues. Many residents use the app to help with reminders of which bin to use. Recycling is up, which is good news, but there is still more work to do on looking at the residual purple waste bin contents and seeing if more can go to recycling.

In Pirton it has been fantastic to see the idea of a new pavilion become a reality. I attended the ground breaking to topping out to opening and what a facility it is for the village. The "committee" should feel proud of everything they achieved and I've been happy to support them in any way I could.

As always I am available to residents for any concerns and I try not to miss parish council meetings to support the Pirton Councillors.

Cllr Claire Strong

Financial Report - Janine Budd, Clerk and RFO

The council finances are in a strong position, despite significant expenditure on the new pavilion project. The New Pavilion Working Group ensured that claims for grants from the Football Foundation were submitted regularly, and the Clerk submitted VAT claims monthly in order for sufficient funds to be available to cover the costs of construction. VAT reclaimed totalled £191,362.05, with the majority of this resulting from spending on the Pavilion, but also from other costs. The Parish Council applied for, and received, two Public Works Loan Board loans totalling £400,000.00. Repayment of these loans has already begun and will continue for the next 30 years. Donations of £87,217.57 were received for the Pavilion Project. This exceeded all expectations and has ensured that the project is fully funded, pending receipt of the final 5% of the Football Foundation grant. Grants received from the Football Foundation so far total £419,908.00.

April Skies Accounting has continued to act as our internal auditor for 2025-26. To mitigate the risks of a new Clerk and increased spending on the Pavilion project, two interim audits were conducted in January and March 2026 and all was found to be in good order. The end of year audit is to be conducted in June.

Income on the balance sheet shows a 964% increase over the previous year at £1,322,132.67. This is predominantly the result of the Football Foundation grants, the PWLB loans, fundraising for the Pavilion, and S106 funding of £184,725.00. A donation of £1,422.00 was received from Pirton Heritage Support Group with the request that the Parish Council be responsible for maintenance of the War Memorial in the future. An amount of £1,088.00 that was earmarked for room hire and waste management at the recreation ground was diverted to the Pavilion project pot.

Council expenses showed an increase of 1,423% at £1,409,241.11. This is due mainly to construction costs related to the Pavilion of £1,363,310.80. The cost of accounting software increased as a result of the increase in the precept. The cost of insurance and internal audits also increased because of the construction of the Pavilion.

Village maintenance costs have increased slightly in comparison with the previous year. The cost of grass cutting and strimming of the recreation ground and village green areas has increased by £1,510.00. The construction of fencing behind the tennis courts cost £930.00. The grass cutting and strimming contract has been renewed for three years at the previous cost. The contract for grass cutting at the recreation ground has been renewed for two years at the previous cost. Playground repairs accounted for costs of £3,828.00.

Salary costs were slightly reduced from last year, given the retirement of the previous Clerk at the end of April and the Parish Council being without a Clerk for a couple of months. However, this was off-set by the need to pay a pension contribution for the new Clerk, when it was not required for the previous Clerk, and by paying consultancy fees for the previous Clerk to carry out some work beyond his retirement. Office expenses were reduced a little. Councillors receive no remuneration for their work and no expenses were claimed by them. Subscriptions to professional bodies and publications were increased slightly from previous years. The Council awarded grants of £200 to Essex & Herts Air Ambulance and £200 to BHECCS (Beds and Herts Emergency Critical Care Team). The Council also supported the Royal British Legion, providing a wreath for Remembrance Day.

Parish Council finances are subject to local accountability and annual audit. An independent Internal Auditor (AprilSkies) verifies the Council's financial procedures. The annual accounts will be approved at the Parish Council meeting to be held on 11 June 2026. The Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2026 will be placed on the Parish Council notice board and website, and will be examined by the External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn.

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Income and Expenditure 2025-2026

Pirton Parish Council Income & Expenditure 2025-26

Balance Brought Forward:	£124,417.22
General Fund	
Income	
Precept	67,168.13
Rental Income	368.00
Donations	87,217.57
Football Foundation grants	431,296.00
Other grants	18,331.87
PWLB loan	400,00.00
S106 funding	184,724.93
Tennis Club	3,327.94
Miscellaneous	5,378.61
Income sub-total	1,197,813.05
Expenditure	
Clerk's salary	10,623.74
Loan repayments	7433.39
Office expenses	913.16
Council expenses	4,624.73
Village Maintenance	6,926.22
Recreation ground	8035.00
Play areas	3,827.91
Allotments	233.42
Subscriptions	867.62
Website/IT	1,415.17
New Pavilion construction	1,363,310.80
Expenditure sub-total	1,408,211.16

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Contact Details

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