

Pirton Parish Council

Parish Clerk:

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Naomi Reynard,  
Senior Planning Officer,  
Ben Glover,  
Senior Planning Officer,  
NHDC  
Gernon Road  
Letchworth Garden City  
5 June 2026

Dear Naomi and Ben

**RE: Sec. 106 Gladman and Blakeney Homes Developments  
25/01696/OP and 25/02064/OP**

Thank you both for your considered replies to our requests for Section 106 funds for Pirton.

The Pirton Parish Council met on 1 June and, after a very full discussion, members are preparing as much of the documentation you have asked for as we can. We hope to come back to you both shortly.

In the meantime, this letter is to address some issues that you raise that require a more general explanation.

We are at a loss about calculating the contribution of, say, 50 dwellings to the overall cost of, for example, a new children's play area. Hitherto, we have been assured that NHDC would do this calculation if we provided an overall cost. This assurance goes back to the days of the outline planning application for what is now Comice Meadows. If you have any guidance for us, we would be most grateful.

First of all, may we emphasise that some of the requests we have made should, in fact, be addressed within the developments themselves. The prime example is that of the children's playground(s) and other active recreational facilities, although we have made this point in our emails to you previously. With a combined influx of over 500 individuals from the two developments, recreational facilities as they are now simply cannot cope. And equally to the point, the Pirton Parish Council has no more land left on which to develop new facilities to address the needs of what will then be a village of over 2000 residents.

It is HCC and NHDC policy to address issues of health and well-being in all new development proposals. This cannot be addressed by the Pirton Parish Council alone, not even with the developers' Sec. 106 contributions. We do not have the land on which to extend children's play areas or to construct a new "MUGA" without impinging on facilities already enjoyed and already inadequate for those who enjoy team games such as football and cricket. There is insufficient room now for another football pitch, let alone for other activities that we are asked about such as bowls, pétanque, outdoor exercise equipment for older residents or a skateboard park for young people.

So, yes, we need to improve and extend the playground at the Recreation Ground. We are obtaining details and quotes on costs, as you request. We also require a second MUGA; the one we have is in constant use by primarily the tennis club, and that leaves little time to promote or meet the demands for new sports such as pickleball, which enthusiasts are seeking to introduce. This is the situation now and will be more acute with another 500 residents looking for sporting opportunities. We are obtaining quotes for you. The young people of the village have approached us for a small skate-boarding park. Where would that go? We are obtaining costs and estimates. And if we can go ahead with some of these projects, it will be at the expense of the football pitches, already inadequate in number to properly address the interest in girls' and women's football. Land needs to be found for this expansion, and it should be found within the proposed developments. We emphasise – there is no other land available.

To give some figures – in 2018 at the time of the Neighbourhood Plan there were 520 dwellings for approximately 1300 people. By the 2021 census there were 577 dwellings for 1452 people. The village has

experienced further development since the census so the figures for dwellings will be over 600. Another 180 dwellings will increase the housing stock by nearly 30% in cautious terms and increase the population of Pirton to over 2200 people. And we have no more land on which to build facilities.

For light relief: Dog Poo Bins.

We do not understand why you think this provision is not a responsibility of the Parish Council. We have purchased a number of bins and we pay NHDC to empty them. For example, when Comice Meadows was completed, the nearest bin from the footpath exit on to Hambridge Way was 100 yards away. We were requested to provide a bin on the corner of this exit, as many dog owners were simply bagging up the poo and leaving it on the ground. There is no doubt in our minds that the same will happen, particularly with the Gladman development. The residents of the Blakeney Homes development may rely in part on existing bins on the Recreation Ground and on Hambridge Way. Those owned by the Parish Council will soon overflow and cause additional expense to the Parish Council to have them emptied. National statistics suggest that 80% of new residents will have at least one dog. That's a lot of poo. The alternative would be for NHDC to make it a planning condition that dog poo bins are provided.

The Village Hall.

We are liaising with the Village Hall Committee and hope to come back to you on this shortly. You ask how we know the current hall is at capacity. We are not sure what evidence you require. It is the only facility in the village with a stage. It seats 120 people in the main hall. Since it was built in 1933 the population has increased significantly, so that in the event of an important public meeting, not all residents can attend, even standing. Likewise, attendance at performances of various types (amateur dramatics, Choir, *etc*). With a population likely to increase to over 2000 as a result of these proposed developments, the pressure will be worse. The hall and its rooms are effectively fully booked most of the time – even the Parish Council cannot rely on booking a room at short notice, which prohibits the development of new activities, and, for some current activities such as table tennis, the expansion of those activities.

The Recreation Ground: Parking and Access.

You will not be surprised that we do not accept the policy argument in relation to vehicular access, particularly in relation to the Gladman proposal, although we naturally approve of the policy to encourage more sustainable modes of transport (walking) rather than car use. The reality is that people drive from Comice Meadows, particularly in winter or if a lot of sporting gear is being carried. In the winter, not only is Hambridge Way very muddy and virtually unusable, the link Footpath to the Recreation Ground, Footpath 13, is a quagmire and dangerous. The Gladman site is even further away. We may have more sympathy with the idea that residents of the Blakeney Homes site can just nip “next door”. In the meantime, usage will increase, whether we like it or not, and funds to keep the access safe and to provide more parking on site rather than on the roads will still be necessary.

Highways and Public Footpaths.

We understand that the Authority with statutory responsibility for Highways and public footpaths is Herts County Council. We are aware that HCC Highways has requested Sec. 106 contributions for a number of road and public footpath improvements – though not, as we understand it, to Footpath 1, the Baulk, which is more or less impassable in the winter. Parents are having to drive their children to the primary school/bus stop in the winter because it is so muddy. We have provided some concrete slabs which residents have put down to provide stepping stones, but this is nowhere near ideal and possibly dangerous. We would welcome more information from NHDC and HCC on these issues. Cllr Burleigh has written to HCC and others on the issue of Highways improvements generally and on HCC's request for Sec. 106 funds, but has not received a reply from anyone. Please also see comments on Footpath 13 above.

Thank you again for your patience and assistance over these issues.

With kind regards,



Diane Burleigh  
Vice Chairman, Pirton Parish Council



Jill Rogers  
Chairman, Pirton Parish Council