

**Priors Marston Parish Council
Annual General Meeting
Thursday 24h May 2018
The Priors Hall, Shuckburgh Road, Priors Marston**

DRAFT MINUTES

In attendance: Cllr John Appleton (Chair) Cllr Viv Nind, Cllr Laura Lucas, Cllr Nick Fulford, Cllr Bob Stevens, Cllr Chris Williams and Emma Hooker (Clerk)
Thirteen members of the public attended the meeting.

1. **Apologies:** Cllr John Franklin

2. **Welcome from the Chair**

John Appleton welcomed everyone to the AGM and opened the meeting

3. **Declaration of Interests**

No declarations declared.

4. **Approval of the minutes of the last AGM, held on Friday 26th May 2017**

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair

5. **Annual Report of the year 2018**

The Clerk presented the village annual report for 2018

Priors Marston Parish Council consists of the following councilors: - John Appleton (Chair), John Franklin, Laura Lucas, Vivien Nind and Nick Fulford – There are no vacancies at this time.

Emma Hooker is the Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.

In the last year the Parish Council has: -

- ✓ Maintained and repaired the playground, including monthly safety checks and an annual independent ROSPA safety inspection. This year has seen a considerable investment into the Playground due to repairs after serious vandalism and maintenance to maintain high safety standards as recommended in the ROSPA report.
- ✓ Formed a Parish Plan Steering Group of 9 villagers, supported by the Clerk to develop a new and fit for purpose Parish Plan. We held a well attended Parish Plan Open evening to hear the views of the Village and recently produced and handed out a questionnaire to the whole village which will form the basis of the Plan
- ✓ Replaced 9 additional streetlights with new LED technology (7 last year) to comply with current environmental standards bringing the total to 21 new streetlights. The village has 22 streetlights in total and we will continue to replace the old technology.
- ✓ Reviewed and commented on 31 planning applications and attended a number of Stratford District Council (SDC) planning committee meetings
- ✓ Upheld the high standard of maintenance and cleanliness of the village
- ✓ Arranged for all white road markings to be refreshed, this has been done with

- only one area outstanding
- ✓ Updated and cleaned various village road signs.
- ✓ Damaged verges repaired by Highways and keep in continual contact with Highways on ways of improving verges and green areas within village
- ✓ Continue to develop a new website which is now fit for purpose and holds all legal documents, agendas and minutes to comply with the Transparency Code.
- ✓ Email distribution list as an effective communication tool
- ✓ Applied and was successful in securing the Holly Bush Inn as a Village Asset

The Parish Council has a duty to protect and enhance our village and its surrounding environment wherever possible. The National Planning Policy Framework requires Priors Marston to have a village plan to help shape future development. Priors Marston has been confirmed as a Category 4 local service village and as such will be expected to provide some additional houses. The Parish Council will monitor this very closely now the SDC core strategy has been adopted.

In the coming 12 months we aim to: -

- ✓ Review the condition of village footpaths and rights of way
- ✓ Continue to work towards a new Parish Plan
- ✓ Develop a maintenance plan for all village assets
- ✓ Continually update the village website and Facebook page
- ✓ Provide regular updates on the village notice board and in The Parish News as well as the new email list

Chair welcomed questions in relation to the Report.

A member of the public asked for further information on the registration of the Holy Bush Inn as a Village Asset.

Chair explained this gives some protection for the village over the use of the premises and giving the Council control over any future residential development.

A member of the Public asked what the timetable for developing the Parish Plan is.

Cllr Fulford who is a member of the Steering Group explained currently there are sub groups working on the plan and will report back to the group by the end of June. No precise date as a deadline however working towards late this year for final sign off by Stratford District Council.

6. Accounts for year to 31st March 2017

The Clerk presented the accounts for the Parish Council and are attached to the file set of minutes and forms part of them. They are also available on the Parish Council website for inspection.

The Clerk welcomed any questions in relation to the Finance Report

A member of the public asked if anyone was caught in relation to the vandalism in the playground for which there had been significant costs to the Parish,

Clerk confirmed that the offenders were not known.

7. District Council – Cllr Chris Williams Annual Report

The District Council is enjoying the security that the adoption of its approved Core Strategy brings to everyone living in the district. The big issue within this Core Strategy was the number of houses that can be built between now and 2031. A year ago we all worked to a figure of 15,500 properties but we have now received strong indications from central government that all districts and boroughs will need to revisit this figure since it is not providing sufficient homes for the demand that exists for new housing. I believe that at some time in the next three years there will have to be a revised Core Strategy accommodating the government demands. Figures of an increase of some 8,000 houses are currently being discussed.

In addition to our own Core Strategy, we have received a request from Birmingham City Council, in the north of the district, for land sufficient to some 5,000 houses. The problem here is that the only land that might be available is Green Belt land. I am relieved that it is not in our area.

Policy Issues – Currently, the Council is considering the Stratford-on-Avon Area Transport Strategy. This document plans the strategy for the future. I must stress that this Strategy refers only to Stratford-upon-Avon and not to the whole district. The policy being considered contains many contentious proposals which, I believe, will not be accepted by full Council.

This year the District Council decided that the Council Tax would increase by 1%. This is lower than most other authorities and it is one-third of the 3% permitted by government without holding a referendum. This increase equates to £1.36 per year which is less than 3p extra for a property in Band D. As with most other local authorities Stratford is facing significant financial pressures through a reduction in government funding. Fortunately, due to healthy financial reserves, not only is the council able to set a low tax increase but also at the same time spend some of its reserves on helping the homeless together with investing in the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations and a major event in November commemorating the end of the First World War.

At a full meeting of the District Council on Wednesday 16th May 2018, the Council elected a new Leader since Cllr Chris Saint has had to resign due to health issues. Cllr Tony Jefferson is now the new Leader and the Chair of the Council is now Cllr Chris Kettle.

8. County Council - Cllr Bob Stevens – Annual Report

This time last year we had just had the County council elections and the Article 50 for Brexit had been signed. The County Council elections produced a large Conservative majority, unlike the following months snap general election, and we are now less than a year from leaving the European Union. The County Council are still facing significant reductions in the government grant and the cap on Council tax, whilst welcome to tax payers, is putting additional strain on non-essential services. However the Council is up

for the challenge and our finances are in a well balanced state. A recent proposal to replace government grant with the areas business rate has temporally been postponed so the present system will continue.

Warwickshire has become a popular place to live and the economy continues to be healthy. Both Coventry and Birmingham are experiencing an industrial revival with much government money being invested into their infrastructure. Last month, together with a group of fellow councillors, I met with Andy Street the West Midlands mayor. As it was a private meeting I cannot divulge the content but suffice to say the prospect of Warwickshire joining the West Midlands Combined Authority is still a distant dream but is unlikely in the short term. Statistics show that unemployment across the County is low, the economy is booming and inward investment is high with a continued growth in new businesses start-ups. This has led to more housing as Warwickshire is taking the overspill from Birmingham and Coventry.

The government is investing through Local Enterprise partnerships to improve the infrastructure. The Coventry Warwickshire LEP is one such partnership and major funding is available through the LEP. In my opinion the jury is still out on the Regional authorities but I have always been a supporter of any partnership working between Coventry and Warwickshire and Warwickshire needs to push towards a unitary authority

Locally this last year has been dominated by the large number of housing developments that are taking place. With the population growth comes the extra strain on the infrastructure. Roads are becoming impossible at peak periods, our schools, especially secondary provision becoming overcrowded and medical facilities stretched. Developer contribution (£106) monies have been spent on improved traffic calming measures and also promised for school expansion. In some cases money has been made available for communities to enhance their local facilities via CIL.

Coming soon will be the additional disruption caused by HS2 construction and associated traffic. An idea of this will be experienced when a trial cutting, some 18 metres deep is constructed near Wormleighton later this year. At a briefing last week we were advised that locally construction work will not start until mid 2019 with a view to completing it by end of 2022 when the track is handed over to HS2 for them to construct the railway line. There will be considerable disruption during that period in particular around Hunningham, Codemasters and the A46 at Stoneleigh. The Fosse will be their preferred access route until they can use the line of the track. Where major

road diversions are planned the new road will be constructed before the existing road is closed wherever possible. The contractors Kier and Balfour Beatty are keen to work with the 46 parishes along the routes and will be holding Public briefing meetings in conjunction with local councils starting later this year. They estimate along the whole of phase 1 there will be about 10,000 construction workers and additional office staff. At this moment in time only 50% of the planning process is complete and the interface with the public utility services continues to cause concern. The planning will complete in November when a more accurate cost and scale of disruption known.

Adult and children services are the biggest drain on the County council finances. Each year statistics show that life expectancy is increasing but the cost of care is also increasing. Standards in care homes are continuously monitored and the numbers who are not able to look after themselves without assistance rises each year. People are encouraged to stay in their own home for as long as possible and demand for affordable warden supervised homes outstrips the supply. Adult social care continues to be the responsibility of the County council and the government grant decreases although extra 3 % on Council tax which is ring fenced for Adult care is permitted.

The recent integration of Health and Adult services at government level has yet to make its effect felt but hopefully will lead to better cooperation between these two services with respect to Adult care.

The pressure on Children safeguarding and protection continues to grow. One of the biggest concerns is cyber-crime and the use of mobile phone to corrupt/influence teenagers. The incidences of child abuse in Warwickshire are presently low but with incidents occurring in adjacent authorities there is no place for complacency. The Multi Agency safeguarding hub (MASH) set up last year is establishing its reputation for protecting children.

Overall Warwickshire schools continue to be of a high standard and over 75% of the secondary schools are now academies. Primary schools are now either becoming Free Schools like yours or joining a Multi academy trust (MAT) either with another secondary school or as part of a trust run by the Coventry Diocese.(DMAT). Whereas I support acadamisation of bigger schools I am not convinced that MAT's which cross education authority boundaries will be sustainable in the long term, In the Feldon Division Southam College, now part of the Stowe valley MAT continues to be high performing and this years Pupil admission number of 270 has been reached. Local

pupils from the present catchment area are assured a place at the college for the foreseeable future.

The Warwickshire fire service has had a busy year and is expecting a home office inspection later this year. Standards expected of the Fire Service have been significantly raised since the recent national incidents in particular at Grenfell Tower block and some school fires. We have budgeted for implementing any recommendations in this year's budget. Police and ambulance are not controlled by the County Council although WCC works closely with both these services and moves towards a combined "Blue light Service" are presently active but there is a long way to go.. The County Council is responsible for Public Health together with Public Health England. As your councillor I try to attend as many of your Parish meetings as I can and I have also been kept occupied representing residents throughout the Feldon division in particular over education, flooding and traffic issues.

The council has received a £1.4 million grant from the government to repair the potholes and other highway deterioration caused primarily by the recent bad weather. This will be used across the county for both specific pothole repairs and in some instances small sections of road repairing where pothole repairing would not be cost effective. Balfour Beatty are slowly rescheduling the repairs and other road works now the bad weather appears to be behind us. (Flooding permitting!)

I am pleased to say that I have been able to obtain small grants for village organisations and some minor highway improvements. As the county Councils Armed forces champion I have been actively involved in supporting military veterans and the counties commitment to the armed forces covenant. I also chair the WCC pension fund investment committee which oversees where the funds are invested to gain maximum return for the fund within ethical guidelines. To conform with Government legislation, the fund is also combining with 11 other authorities to reduce costs and increase returns. The value of the combined fund, called "Border to Coast" and based in Leeds, is in the region of £45 Billion.

Questions from the Public in regard to the Annual Reports from Cllr Stevens

Chair asked Cllr Stevens what the Police Precept was for the forthcoming year

Cllr Stevens said it should be on everyone's council tax bill but believes in the region of 11 million pounds and this had gone up from previous year.

Member of the Public asked if the HS2 route remained the same
Cllr Stevens confirmed it had

9. Parish Council Meetings 2018

Parish Council Meetings will be held on the second Monday of the month, bi-monthly at 7.30. As follows: -

- Monday 9th July 2018
- Monday 10th September 2018
- Monday 12th November 2018

The meeting was closed to the public at 8.40pm

10. Election of Chairperson for the Forthcoming 12 months

Cllr Appleton proposed Cllr Fulford to become Chair and this was seconded by Cllr Nind. Therefore Cllr Fulford is duly elected as Chairperson of Priors Marston Parish Council for the forthcoming 12 months. Cllr Fulford thanked Cllr Appleton for his chairmanship over the previous 12 months.

The meeting was closed at 8.55pm