

***Priors Marston Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 11th January 2021 at 7.30pm
Priors Hall, Shuckburgh Road.***

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Cllr. Pete Dunkley (Acting Chair) Cllr. John Franklin, Cllr. Robyn May
County Cllr Chris Kettle,

In Attendance: Emma Hooker (Clerk)

3 Members of the public were also present.

Meeting was opened at 7.35pm.

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Laura Lucas (Chair), Cllr. David Evans, Cllr Nigel Rock
2. **Declarations of Interest:** None
3. **Approval of the minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 9th Nov 2021**
Minutes were approved by all present at the meeting, as a true record and Signed by the Acting Chair.
4. **Matters Arising / Outstanding Actions**

Community Meetings

The first meeting of 2022 has been scheduled for February 2022 and all participants invited (to be held at The Holly bush Inn) The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss and plan for annual village meeting in September (date tbc) Clerk and Cllr Evans will attend and chair first meeting and further meetings will be organised and chaired by each village group in turn.

The Pound

Several attempts have been made to get a District Valuer from SDC to come along and value this piece of land to no avail. It was resolved to contact a local land agent for further advice.

Traffic Calming

Action points from the meeting in November have been resolved

1 – Police speed watch in the village – Police attended the village on 11/11/21 the report showed the average speed was 27MPH and most vehicles were doing 25-30MPH. The lowest was 21MPH and the highest was 34MPH. They will attend again in the near future.

2 – Community Volunteer Speeding Action Group – Unfortunately only 3 volunteers came forward so not enough at this time for the Police to organise training etc. If anyone does want to volunteer please contact the clerk for further information.

3 – Highways to improve signage – Highways have agreed to re paint the SLOW signs on entering the village

6. District Cllr Nigel Rock Update

Covid Rates. We face a very serious situation with Covid infections. The current 7 day rate per 100,000 for the district is 1,551, a month earlier the figure was 545. The area around Southam had rates significantly higher than Stratford and Warwickshire at just over 2000 cases per 100,000 population. There has also been a similar increase in the rates for the over 60s at 756 per 100,000, whereas a week earlier this figure was less than half this at 344 per 100,000. The effect on the health service is showing, with ambulance and A&E wait times at hospitals lengthening. At University Hospital Coventry 28% Patients waited more than 30 minutes to be handed over to A&E staff (20 Dec to 26 Dec). At Warwick the figure was 17%. Waiting times at A&E for more than 4 hours were at 29% at Coventry and 34% at Warwick.

There is better news in relation to the boosters/third vaccinations within the District. So far 88,807 such vaccinations have been delivered. This means that the vaccination rate in this age group is above 80%, this is one of the highest rates in the country. Even better still, the rate in and around Southam is 90%, which is perhaps as well given the high infection rates. We can only hope with this protection and great caution, communities will be impacted to the minimum possible.

The government has declared that public services are at risk and yet the law forces Parish, District and County council to meet face to face to conduct business, despite recent experience showing this could be readily done remotely. The problem is the definition of the 'place' for council meetings. Last year a court case failed in defining a 'virtual place' as qualifying as a meeting place. So we are stuck with it after the emergency regulations expired in May. The District has restricted their face to face meeting to the statutory committees and discouraged attendance by the public and officers who are not essential. Attendees are asked to take lateral flow tests (LFTs) before attending, now LFTs are in short supply.

I continue to be frustrated by the legal situation and have written to our MP to ask for parliament to rectify this crazy situation. I would encourage others to do so. It appears that Omicron variant transmission may occur over longer distances and may sustain in the atmosphere for longer.

I deem it responsible to not attend meetings in person unless essential that I do so. Of course, for parish councils I will send in written reports and respond to any enquiries that are made of me.

Covid Grants

Before Christmas, the Government announced a scheme for businesses in order to support the hospitality and leisure sectors in England with one-off grants of up to £6,000 per premise. I am informed that there will have to be a separate application process for this support. The District Council will process these grants as soon as possible and the scheme will be open to applications until the end of February 2022 and the final payments will need to be made by 31 March 2022

Merger

On 13 December Warwick and Stratford District Councils decided to trigger a merger process. The votes were 26 to 3 at SDC (2 abstentions) and 23 to 12 at WDC (5 abstentions). The consideration was quite complex with various pros and cons. I gather some councillors at WDC felt there was not yet enough information to support the proposal. Other reservations were expressed at SDC in the debate. I voted in favour of the plan because, all things considered, I believe it is in the best interests of residents although I do recognise the difficulties and uncertainties in the decision. Among these, the potential loss of community connection with the District and through the councillors is a concern, so I have been investigating that aspect.

A key issue is the number of electors per councillor should the new large council come into being. At the moment this is around 2700 electors per councillor, but a paper by consultants suggested this could rise to 3600 after the merger. I have been working, cross party, on a research study which shows that such a dilution is unreasonable and well out of step with all other district councils. (Of 181 District Councils in England only 11 have more than 2800 and two councils above 3000 electors per councillor.) Like the merger itself, it is the Secretary of State that will finally decide these things but we can only make a case for common sense to prevail.

HS2

HS2 contractors have announced that they are to close the Kineton Road just south of Southam towards Deppers Bridge for about two weeks during January. This is to build a reinforced crossing for construction vehicles. The reason given for the closure is that the gas and water mains at the side of the road are shallower than originally thought. I, and other councillors, have had difficult meetings with the contractors in an attempt to explore alternatives to a full road closure. We consider we have not had a full explanation of what other ideas were considered. The details are still the subject of negotiations with the County Council about the diversion routes, particularly for HGVs.

7. County Cllr Chris Kettle Update

Covid update -Before Christmas this ward was running at 412 / 100,000 cases. Whilst case numbers continue to rise across the County, generally we are not seeing these translate into hospitalisation, serious illness, or deaths. Our priority remains to support the hospitals, the NHS, and to ensure that public services are maintained. At this point in time, it looks ok.

The most recent data from WCC shows that the Ward is now running at 1,572 cases per 100,000 and Division infection rates per 100,000 are currently 2,072.

Highways Patch Byrne has now retired and his place has been taken by Mr Hobday who has already started and I know is picking up the reins where Patch finished. The Parish Council wish to thank Patch for all his support to the village over the years.

Education Children mental health and wellbeing grant funding. Warwickshire County Council is inviting education settings in the county to apply for grant funding to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. The application window is open now. To find out more and how to apply visit: <http://ow.ly/Akhc50HkWA3>

SEND in Warwickshire Quick fire facts 86,995 children educated in Warwickshire's state-funded schools 3,112 have an EHCP and 10,552 require SEN Support 247 state-funded schools, 10 are special schools educating 1,678 pupils SEND Funding Age-Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) funding - Schools get a set amount of funding for every pupil (regardless of whether they have SEND) to cover the main costs of educating that child/young person. It is called age-weighted pupil unit (AWPU) Notional £6,000 - This is an amount of money each school gets annually and is sometimes called their 'delegated' SEND budget. This is based on a formula that should match the proportion of children with SEN they have compared to other schools. It is to fund the special educational provision for children on SEN Support and a proportion of funding for children with EHCPs

8. Highways

Byfield Road – Potential footpath.

Highways have visited the site along with Cllr Dunkley, Evans and the Clerk since the last meeting to discuss the plans. The work required can be done however until the WCC adopt or own this land they cannot proceed. Cllr Kettle will take this on to the relevant person at WCC for further guidance on how this can be achieved and how the costs will be covered.

9. Planning Matters

New and Pending Decisions

21/03940/FUL Land adjacent Holly bush Cottage – New log store, shed and garden wall – PMPC Object to wall only within this application.

21/03121/FUL – The Meadows, Southam Rd – New Equestrian Barn – PMPC No Objection

21/03640/LBC – Rose Cottage, Southam Road – Internal alterations – PMPC No Objection

Decisions

DISCN/00542/21 – land rear of Japonica – discharge of conditions – stone sample has been requested to be delivered onto site. 15/10 GRANTED

21/03857 – Oakdene, Hollybush Lane – Several tree pruning works - GRANTED

21/03355/AGNOT – Little Pinum, Shuckburgh Rd – A New Barn for storage of hay and vehicles – 22/10 No Objection. WITHDRAWN

21/03687/TREE – Honesberie, Southam Rd – T1 Apple fell, T2 Pear fell, T3 pear fell. GRANTED

21/02034/LBC 21/01578/FUL – Hollybush Inn . Erection of 2 sail canopies and various outside lighting – 29/06 – Objection –APPROVED 11/11 at Committee

21/02858/LBC – 7 Priors Court – Remove wall new glass pane door other interior alterations – Granted 4/11

21/02949/TREE – Birchwood, School Lane – Tree work on several trees Granted 09/11

Planning enforcement to be contacted regarding matters relating to the application Priory House 19/016351 and works not on application also post meeting note to contact enforcement on the hedge removal (The Meadows Southam Rd) to establish if this has been agreed within planning application pending.

10 Finances November/December 2021

Bank Balance as of January 2022 £25,275.90

Receipts = £ 5188.76

HMRC VAT rebate £814.44

SDC CIL money £3913.93

Priors Hardwick VILF £460.39

DD = £1913.30

1&1 Internet £37.20

Public works loan £1876.10

Cheque Payments = £3205.46

Staff Wages Oct/Nov £955.75

Pete Brown Mowing Oct/Nov/Dec £600.00

Eon (July-Sep) £174.23

Eon (Oct-Nov) £126.60

British legion wreath £17.00

Xmas lights maintenance £11.88

Parish Notice Board Company £1320.00

The Council agreed the Budget for 2022/23

The Council agreed for the Precept to remain at £18,560

11. AOB

Street light shield, which was fitted at the Council's request to the streetlight off School Lane is not satisfactory and clerk will escalate this week WCC,

The meeting concluded at 8.45pm

The next meeting of the Parish Council is as follows:

Tuesday

At The Priors Village Hall 7.30pm All Welcome