

***Priors Marston Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 14th January 2025 at 7.30pm
At The Priors Hall***

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Cllr. Laura Lucas, Cllr. Pete Dunkley, Cllr. Robyn May,
Cllr. John Franklin, County Cllr Chris Kettle, District Cllr. Nigel Rock

In Attendance: Emma Hooker (Clerk/RFO)

Meeting opened at 7.35pm

- 1. Apologies:** Cllr. Sarah Mills
- 2. Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Robyn May (Planning application24/02201/FUL)
- 3. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting held on 12th November 2024**
Minutes approved by all present at the meeting as a true record and signed by Chair.
- 4. Outstanding Actions & Matters Arising**

- **Drains / Jetting**

The drainage issue on Keys Lane has been resolved by several separate visits on site by the highways team. Alongside this the following roads have all had their drains jetted: Byfield Road, School Lane, Shuckburgh Road and Southam Road. Thank you to Cllr Kettle who used part of his discretionary budget to pay for the works.

- **Rural Crimes team Community Meeting**

Clerk has arranged for the team to visit the village prior to the annual village meeting held in May. This will be advertised nearer the time.

- **Right of Way footpath maintenance**

Clerk reported to Right of way team at WCC, back in November 2022 and again in June 2024 problems with the right of way footpath across the land (Mundy's) towards Barn Roden. A bridge has collapsed making it un useable and has been this way since 2022. Diversions are in place; however, it is the PC's belief that after nearly 3 years this should be resolved. Clerk has reported it again in January 2025 with an assurance that the site will be visited this week.

Another right of way issue has been reported adjacent to The Meadows, on Southam Road. There is no diversion in place, and it has become impassable due to fallen trees and building debris.

Clerk will report back after the Rights of Way teams have investigated.

5. Budget Approval and Precept

The Council approved the 2025/2026 budget and agreed to keep the precept amount of £18,560.00 for the forthcoming year.

6. Playground Project

Update from Clerk on the playground project was given to all present.

Cllr Sarah Mills is the Cllr leading the project, and alongside the Clerk have visited 4 suppliers on site in December to discuss the site and what options are available.

Sarah and the Clerk are meeting next week with Cllrs and Clerks from Bishops Itchington and Fenny Compton who have recently had new playgrounds using some of the preferred suppliers. This will give helpful insight on the tender process and get advice.

A consultation questionnaire has been sent out to the parish, via email, notice board, parish magazine and usual social media channels. The Priors School have also been engaged and have sent the questionnaire out to their parents who may not reside in the village. To date we have only had 16 responses, so Clerk will send another reminder out as we would like more responses before we go to the next stage.

Funding is also being researched by the Council.

7. Update District Cllr – Nigel Rock

The 'English Devolution White Paper' was presented to Parliament by the Deputy Prime Minister on 16 December 2024. (see link: [English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK](#)) The main thrust of the paper is to establish Mayoral authorities across England wherever possible, but it is clear many rural areas, including ours, do not fit easily with this approach.

Local government in Warwickshire currently has two main tiers:- of the County Council (education, social care, highways etc) and District Councils (benefits, planning, refuse collection etc) Councils. Plus across south Warwickshire we have a third tier of Parish Councils. The Devolution White Paper proposes the abolition of District and Borough Councils and the formation of 'unitary authorities' over a larger geographical area.

There will be no public consultation on these proposals. In recent days before this magazine item was written there has been intense activity at Council level. This was summarised by the BBC here: [Warwickshire council leaders urge less 'haste' over devolution - BBC News](#)

The leaders of Stratford, Warwick, North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth Councils have written to government ministers '*to urgently enter meaningful, collaborative, and constructive discussions with the existing principal authorities within the County of Warwickshire to help properly consider the options that exist.*': [Statement from the Leaders of North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton](#)

[and Bedworth Borough Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)

There are currently a number of proposals being discussed for Stratford District and the wider county area and how this might look going forward which may or may not have taken greater shape by the time that this piece is published. Whilst it is difficult to say at this early stage what the future of local government looks like for our District, *it is clear that we will be doing our utmost to protect the valuable assets and finances raised by and for the people of Stratford District to be kept and used by, for and in Stratford District.*

South Warwickshire Local Plan

This is a matter that is now open for public consultation and will run until 7 March. is here: [South Warwickshire Local Plan - Preferred Options 2025](#). There is also further information for residents here: [South Warwickshire Local Plan](#)

The Preferred Options Consultation includes more sites than are required for the District and therefore not all sites will be included going forward. The Plan will run until 2050 and development at the chosen sites will be phased. We will be responding as District Councillors specifically with regard to the three sites in our ward and we urge residents to do the same so that all residents' views are clear.

There will be public consultation events, both online and in person which will be available for residents to attend and details of those nearby are below.

Date and day	In person/Online	Location/ Time
Thursday 16 th January	Online	6pm-7:30pm MS Teams
Saturday 25 th January	In Person	Royal Priors Shopping Centre, Royal Leamington Spa 10am - 4pm
Friday 31 st January	Online	2pm-4pm MS Teams
Thursday 6 th February	In Person	Newbold Leisure Centre, Leamington Spa 1pm - 7pm
Wednesday 12 th February	Online	10am - 12pm MS Teams
Tuesday 18 th February	In Person	Southam Library, Southam 10am - 4pm
Monday 24 th February	Online	6pm-7:30pm MS Teams

We know that some people are not 'on line' so if you want to see the documents and need help, please call in at the drop in sessions.

If you require further information, please feel free to contact the team as follows:

The SWLP Team, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6HX. swlp@stratford-dc.gov.uk 01789 267575

Community Climate Change and Nature Fund – Phase Two

Phase Two of the fund opened on Friday 10 January 2025. The application window will be open until **Monday 10 February 2025**. Phase Two has a total budget of £55,863 available to successful applicants. **Phase Two has changed slightly following feedback from Phase One:**

- Sports Clubs are now eligible to apply for the Fund.
- Projects which will result in the enhancement of biodiversity will now be eligible as well.
- The name of the Fund has been changed to Community Climate and Nature Fund, to reflect the above change.

You can apply using the resource on Stratford on Avon District Council's website here: [Stratford-on-Avon Community Climate Change Fund | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#). Please submit your application via: climate.emergency@stratford-dc.gov.uk.

Policing and Community Safety **Appointment of the New Chief Constable**

As a member of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel representing Stratford District, Natalie attended the Confirmation Hearing for the appointment of the new Chief Constable on Monday 16 December. After a robust question and answer session, the Police and Crime Panel resolved to confirm the appointment of Alex Franklin-Smith as the new Chief Constable for Warwickshire. Further information including the webcast of the meeting together with a BBC article may be found here:

[Information and Documents – Warwickshire County Council](#)

[Warwickshire Police appoints new chief constable - BBC News](#)

Independent Review into Policing of Fox-Hunting Related Activities in Warwickshire

[There has been a lot of interest locally and nationally in relation to the Warwickshire Hunt. The Independent Review was published on the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Website on 8 January 2025 and may be viewed here: Independent Review into Policing of Hunting-Related Activities in Warwickshire Published - Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire](#)

[In addition, the Chief Constable has also published the now obsolete civil protocol, which is available on the Warwickshire Police website.](#)

Severn Trent and HS2 Diversions

The works to improve the supply pipework around Napton continue, resulting in excessive and confusing signage. Similarly, the diversions around Priors Hardwick and Boddington have timing and routing effects that have involved Nigel in many meetings and calls trying to improve matters, working with the organisations concerned, the County authorities, and in the case of HS2, MPs both sides of the county boundary. We will continue to seek more consideration for local communities.

Update – County Cllr Chris Kettle

The County Council has been invited to respond to two major consultations, one being into the future of local Government and the second to the future management of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

The Government announced in early December its intention to remove one tier of local Government creating new unitary authorities, representing a minimum of 500,000 residents, so merging the roles of County and District and Borough Councils. Warwickshire has some 600,000 residents and has two District and three Borough Councils. The unitary authorities would then become part of a wider area combined authority. Warwickshire is currently an associate, not a full, member of the West Midlands Combined Authority.

The purpose behind the merger is both to reduce costs but also to create a single authority for the delivery of local services.

Warwickshire County Council is likely to indicate that it is interested in exploring this proposal.

LGPS

The Government is also consulting on an overhaul of the management of the LGPS. Following a previous reorganisation in 2016 of the LGPS, which required the 86 local pension administering authorities to pool their investments, Warwickshire, along with 10 other authorities in 2018 founded and merged their investment fund management into the Border to Coast Pension Partnership ('B2C') based in Leeds. The aim of the B2C pool, and other Pools, was both to improve investment performance and reduce costs. B2C, one of the largest pools now manage some £52 bn of funds on behalf of 1.1 million scheme members and 3,100 local government employers.

There are eight LGPS pools in England and Wales. Each pool has a different model, including standalone investment management companies, outsourced models, and joint committee models.

B2C with a partner / shareholder model and is FCA regulated has the most formal structure of all the pools, with some others no more than investment co-operatives.

The Government wishes to improve Fund performance further and reduce and has indicated a wish to direct pension funds to invest pensioners funds in "local" schemes. Funds, which are held in Trust for scheme members are already invested to maximise the return to members, and thereby reduce the cost to local employers.

There is a risk that any proposal to require Funds to invest in local schemes that are not necessarily in a position to generate the required returns risks inflating employers pension contributions and thereby the cost to local tax payers.

Flooding

Following heavy rainfall last week, there was widespread flooding across the county impacting Warwickshire communities. Emergency services and partners are calling on the public to take care when driving or walking near flood water. WFRS's fire control received 45 emergency calls since midnight and our firefighters have rescued 12 people from flood-related incidents. A number of these incidents could have been avoided if people had not driven through flood water.

Flood advice and support is available for Warwickshire residents and businesses at <https://www.warwickshireresilienceforum.org/risks/flooding/#respond>

You can check which rivers have flood alerts or flood warnings in place by visiting <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/>

If you see flooding of public drains and roads please report it to <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/reportit> You should also call the Environment Agency Floodline on 0345 988 1188 if you see flooding from collapsed or badly damaged riverbanks, or unusual changes in river flow.

Division issues

Local Roads

I have funded from my discretionary budget the resurfacing of the pavement in Bishops Itchington and drainage jetting in Priors Marston, Fenny Compton and Harbury. In Priors Marston, drains have now been jetted in Byfield Road, School Lane, Shuckborough Road and Southam Road. Further work has been done in Keys Kane.

Further funding is still available for specific areas that meet WCC Highways criteria
HS2

The HS2 saga continues with a new proposed road closure, announced without approval from WCC, and also no explanation of the need or impact, on the A425. Following correspondence EKFB withdrew the proposal but will now be submitting a new application later in the spring. It is regrettable that EKFB seem to prefer closing roads at considerable public inconvenience rather than employing tree surgeons who have the equipment to minimise public disruption by felling trees or dismembering trees off-road rather than on the highway.

The Wormleighton / Priors' Hardwick and Priors Marston area is still worrying.

Harbury PC funded TROs.

I challenged the senior officer on the reasons for the continuing delay and he responded as follows:

“Why simple works can take months to deliver.

Our contractor delivers all of our highway's maintenance construction. All of the works which are delivered are ordered and valued against a tendered set of rates. There are over 2000 rates in total.

Our contract specification has been written to give WCC a balanced approach to service delivery and the cost of that service. In order to get value, the contract specification allows the contractor to plan, and programme works, rather than

WCC dictating delivery timescales. The only exception is the repair of safety defects, where we stipulate 2hr, next day, 5-day or 30-day repair timescales.

Allowing the contractor to plan and programme the works enables them to resource the contract as efficiently as possible, so that all gangs and crews are undertaking works at all times, which in turn offers WCC best value. The contractor is taking on all the financial risk, as they cannot deviate from the tendered rates.

The downside of this is that gangs and crews employed or subcontracted have a 3-6month work load already planned and programmed for them. As new works are added, these are put to the back of the 3-6month queue.

There is some scope for re-prioritisation of work along the way, but that is always at the expense of delaying another job already planned, and is generally done where risk exists e.g drainage works being accelerated if there has been property flooding from the highway.

This is not to say we have no control over how the contractor plans works. We work very closely with our contractor to agree programmes of work up to 12 months ahead for our larger works.

For residents seeing this, I can understand why it's a difficult message, as the jobs are often low in complexity, and on the face of it easy to deliver."

Schools.

Parents have one more day to apply for their child's 2025 Reception or Junior School place. Submit your application by 15 January to: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/primaryplace

I am meeting shortly with senior officers at WCC to discuss the performance of schools and their exclusion policies.

WCC Cllrs Highways Budget

I am regularly asked and have agreed with officers to fund improvements to the highway network and still have available funds for small scale road interventions in the Division.

Cold weather alert ❄️ (X and Facebook)

The Met Office has issued a weather warning for snow and ice, and temperatures are expected to drop. As they do, road conditions can become unpredictable.

Stay safe on your journeys with these simple tips:

 **Slow Down:** Wet, icy, or frosty roads mean longer stopping distances. Reduce your speed and give yourself extra time to react.

 **Check Your Tyres:** Ensure they have enough tread for good grip in wintry conditions.

 **Be Visible:** Use your headlights in low light and make sure all your lights are working properly.

 **Plan Ahead:** Allow extra time for your journey and avoid sudden manoeuvres. Stay safe, drive carefully, and look out for one another on the roads this winter.

For information visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/keepwarm

Tips to keep warm (X and Facebook)

Low indoor temperatures can have a serious impact on your health, especially if you have a medical condition or are older. Here are a few tips to keep warm:

- try to heat rooms you spend a lot of time in, such as the living room or bedroom, to at least 18°C
- try to reduce draughts; you can fit draft excluders around doors cheaply
- keep your bedroom windows closed at night
- wear several layers of thinner clothing; this could keep you warmer than one thicker layer

For more information visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/keepwarm

Fire safety – portable heaters (X and Facebook)

With the cold weather setting in, portable heaters can be a lifesaver. However, they can also be a fire hazard if not used correctly.

Here are some tips to stay safe:

- Placement is key: Keep your heater away from flammable materials like curtains, furniture, and bedding.
- Safety features matter: Choose a heater with tip-over and overheating protection.
- Never leave it unattended: Turn it off and unplug it when you leave the room or go to bed.
- Direct plug-in: Avoid using extension cords or power strips.
- Regular checks: Inspect your heater for damage and keep it clean.
- Smoke alarms are essential: Make sure they're working properly.

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/home-fire-safety-tips/safe-home-heating/2

Be better prepared for extreme cold weather (X and Facebook)

Take a few minutes to learn how to keep your home running smoothly in cold weather. Find out how to prevent pipes from freezing, and more top tips at

www.warwickshireresilienceforum.org/risks/extreme-cold-weather/

#BetterPrepared

Warwickshire Firefighters and Foster Carers recognised in New Year's Honours List 2025 (X and Facebook)

Warwickshire Firefighters Rachel Streeting and Claire Wooldridge and foster carers Safeena Mohammed and Kasim Sharifi are among eleven extraordinary Warwickshire people recognised in the King's New Year's Honours list for 2025.

Find out more: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5867/warwickshire-firefighters-and-foster-carers-recognised-in-new-year-s-honours-list-2025

Winter flu vaccination (X and Facebook)

Flu is very infectious and easily spread to other people. It's important to get your winter flu vaccination if you're eligible. Getting vaccinated every year will top up your protection and reduce your risk of getting severe symptoms.

Check your eligibility via www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/keep-warm-keep-well/

#FluVaccine #GetWinterStrong #FightFlu #Winterillnesses

Energy bill support available this winter (X and Facebook)

The Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme is distributing funding from the Department for Work and Pensions' Household Support Fund to support people who may be struggling with energy bills this winter.

Learn more: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5860/energy-bill-support-available-this-winter

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service helping patients to return home safely from hospital (X and Facebook)

Find out how Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service is helping hospital patients to return home safely with their Hospital to Home service:

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5863/warwickshire-fire-and-rescue-service-helping-patients-to-return-home-safely-from-hospital

Warwickshire welcomes new Safe Accommodation Strategy for victim-survivors of Domestic Abuse (X and Facebook)

In line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Warwickshire County Council and its partners has launched its Safe Accommodation Strategy.

The strategy highlights the provision in Warwickshire to provide a safe haven for victim-survivors over the next three years.

Find out more: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5865/warwickshire-welcomes-new-safe-accommodation-strategy-for-victim-survivors-of-domestic-abuse

Visit Judges' House ceremony venue in Warwick (X and Facebook)

Warwickshire County Council's Registration Service is inviting prospective couples to attend the next open day at Judges' House in Warwick on Saturday 1 February between 11am and 1pm.

Find out more: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5845/visit-judges-house-ceremony-venue-in-warwick-ready-to-celebrate-life-s-special-occasions

8. Planning Matters

New and Pending

24/01917/FUL – Haremeadow, Marston Doles – Proposed agricultural barn and temp workers dwelling – 19/09

24/02470/LBC – Church Cottage Replacement of porch, windows and door – No Objection

24/02201/FUL – The Chestnuts, Byfield Rd – Retrospective 1.8 mtr fence – No Objection

24/02999/REM – Chestnut Bank, Shuckburgh rd – Demolition of existing buildings and one new self-build with detached garage – 16/01

Decisions

24/00356/FUL – demolition of barn for four new dwellings – The Meadows, Southam Rd (22/3) GRANTED 13/1

24/02454/LDE – Spring Hill Farm - additional ground floor first floor accommodation 19/11 Granted 04/12

24/02621/LBC – Rose Cottage Southam Rd – Internal alterations to access attic room 22/11 Granted 05/12

24/02879/TREE – Baggs Barn, Keys Lane - T1 whitebeam fell Granted 03/12

24/02266/FUL – Corner Cottage, Hollybush Lane – Change use outbuildings into annex – Granted 20/12

Enforcement Case Q is still live with SDC and Cllr Pete Dunkley and John Franklin will work with Cllr Rock to put forward the complaint letter.

9. Finance September / October 2024

Bank Balance as of 1st January 2025 £37,611.30

Receipts- £1020.00

SDC CIL Payment £1020.00

DD = £192.14

Ionos £6.00/£31.20

Yu Energy £72.54 / £82.40

Payments £1906.19

Nigel Whitehead Maintenance £135.00

Pete Brown Mowing £200.00/£200.00

Chem Culture moss treatment £29.99

Staff Salary £750.80/£574.40

HSBC bank charge £8.00/£8.00

10.AOB

Village design statement.

Cllr Rock has asked Joanne Bozdoganli at SDC to contact the Clerk to discuss the option of producing a village design statement to work along the Parish Plan. This will focus on keeping the character of the village focus when objecting to planning applications. Discussion took place on how relevant this will be for us, but was agreed for Clerk to discuss further with SDC for guidance and further detail.

The meeting concluded at 8.30 pm.

The next meeting of the Parish Council is as follows:

Tuesday 11th March 2025

At The Priors Village Hall

7.30pm All Welcome