

***Priors Marston Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 8th July 2025 at 7.30pm
At The Priors Hall***

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Cllr. Laura Lucas, Cllr. Robyn May, Cllr. John Franklin, Cllr. Sarah Mills, County Cllr Chris Kettle.

In Attendance: Emma Hooker (Clerk/RFO)

Meeting opened at 7.40pm

- 1. Apologies:** Cllr. Pete Dunkley & District Cllr. Nigel Rock
- 2. Declarations of Interest:** None
- 3. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting (Annual) 13th May 2025**
Minutes approved by all present at the meeting as a true record and signed by Chair.
- 4. Outstanding Actions & Matters Arising**

- **Playground Project**

Progress to date:

- Initial meetings with 5 playground equipment suppliers- Wicksteed, Playscapes, ESP, Kompan, Proludic to get an outline indication of potential cost;
- Site visits of 2 local playgrounds whose equipment has been updated recently with advice from their councillors on specific pieces of equipment and the tender and installation process;
- First stage village consultation with the circulation of a questionnaire to gain insight of local views and specific requirements;
- Research of several potential funding streams to cover the shortfall between available PC funds and the total playground cost, with the identification of only 3 with the remit to fund such a project - PET, Sports England and HS2
- Recruitment of 3 further people to the playground working group who will represent the PTA, playgroup and wider village views.

Next steps:

- Agree the amount the PC can contribute from reserves towards the project;
- Submit grant applications;
- Organise a further village consultation event with contributions from suppliers with examples of potential layouts and samples
- Hold first Playground Working Group meeting (September)
- Prepare the tender document once funding is in place;
- Appoint a supplier and enjoy the new playground for the next 25 years!

It was agreed that we should be in a position to part fund the project by approximately 40k net in the future. Further funding will obviously still need to be sourced to achieve the approximately £80k net budget.

It was agreed that the Clerk should contact The Priors School and Priors Hardwick Village Meeting Chair to discuss any funding streams open to them that would be prepared to contribute towards the project. The PWLB (Public Works Loan) board is also open to the PC if we require it and will welcome any contributions from the villagers.

- **War Memorial Maintenance**

The PC have received a quote and an estimate from two companies (Boden & Ward and IMI) It was resolved to accept the quote from Boden & Ward to clean and biocide the war memorial and repaint lettering to all plaques. The quote is £2650.00 inc. VAT.

IMI Estimate was £2220.00 but did not include the re painting of lettering. Boden & Ward have come recommended and are more specialist. We will request this work is completed before November if possible.

- **Street Light Audit**

Following on from the PC audit of the street lights it was agreed to instruct WCC to repair the new LED light located on Hellidon Road.

5.Update County Cllr. Chris Kettle

The County Council has seen a significant change in political balance following the elections on 1st May with the largest party now Reform.

There continues to be limited policy direction from the new Cabinet and so we still look to see what changes are being proposed. However the scope for significant change is limited in a number of areas because areas such as adult and family social care, together 87% of the budget, and education is proscribed in national legislation and therefore must still be delivered.

Areas of more discretion include highway expenditure, fire and rescue, although WFRS is subject to national inspection, and support for the local economy.

Clearly the change in leadership may well have implications for the direction of travel in relation to the Government's aspirations for unitary authorities.

Most recently the Leader of WCC has retired from that role on health grounds and so temporarily the Deputy Leader is acting as Leader until an election for Leader can be carried out at the next full Council in July. The acting leader is now George Finch and the press has made much of his age being 18.

Some of you may be aware of a recently reported difference of opinion between the Chief Executive and the interim, former deputy, Leader of the Council. It is important to understand that officers and, in particular, senior officers have delegated authority over a wide range of issues. To change those authorities requires a decision of Council and is not within the remit of any individual councillor, or minority party. Comments made to the press from national members of the party, about the suppression of democracy, are inappropriate. The Government had deferred until later the very significant challenges about the SEND programmes and funding indicating that the current methodology will be extended for a further year specifically it provides little medium-term clarity about SEND deficits beyond confirming the extension of the Statutory Override until 2027/28.

Councils are promised reform via a Schools White Paper and more about support with deficits and financial pressures via the Local Government Finance Settlement expected in November.

HS2

We watch with interest the impact of a new management team at HS2.

We have had no material update on the closure of Stoneton Lane other than it will regrettably be going ahead. The Claydon bridge is nearing completion

which will require road closures to allow the new bridge to be tied into the network of local roads.

Division issues

I attended the planning application Regulatory meeting last week to consider the two planning applications for the Biffa site IVC site at Ufton.

After presentations were made the committee raised questions, replicated my and the Parish's concerns, about smell and flies and, to the frustration of Biffa's head of planning, have deferred the decision on both applications until after a site visit has been arranged and further investigation of the issue of smell and flies.

Highways

Following the departure of Scott Tomkins, as Director of Highways, last year, the role was filled by David Ayton Hill, Director of Economy and Place since Scott's departure on an interim basis. The Council has now appointed a permanent replacement Richard Fenwick from the beginning of this month. Richard was recruited from Lincolnshire County Council.

I have already had a number of Teams meeting with Richard to discuss the local infrastructure. Shail Chohan, remains as head of County Highways.

6. Planning Matters

New and Pending

- 24/03294/FUL – Agricultural land adj. The Meadows, Southam Rd – Siting of Mobile home for Ag. Worker – Object 25/02
- Re submitted with changes – Temporary dwelling.
- 24/03230/FUL – Priory Farm, Shuck Road – Change of use barn to 3 holiday lets – No Objection
- 25/00492/FUL - Chestnut Bank Field – Agricultural barn 16/05
- DISCN/00276/25 – discharge of conditions – materials . Cosy Nook Cottage

Decisions

25/00357/FUL – 6 Westfield barns – Single storey rear ext. GRANTED 28/05

25/00730/TREE – Malt Kiln, Vicarage Lane – Fell Pendula – No Rep. GRANTED 22/04

25/00897/TREE – Magnolia House, School Lane – Conifer Fell – GRANTED 13/05

25/00906/TREE – Craig Cottage, School Lane – Pollard Ash 12/05- GRANTED 28/05

7.Finance May/June 2025 Bank Balance as of 1st July 2025 £38,620.69

Receipts- £ 743.81

SDC CiL (Plum Tree Cottage) £743.81

DD = £182.78

Ionos webmail £6.00 / £39.60

Yu Energy £137.18 (May & June)

Payments £3880.02

Zurich Insurance Annual Fee £789.62

Grineaux Accounts End of year £348.00

Pete Brown Mowing x 2 £480.00

Internal Auditor Fee £200.00

Salaries/Expenses (May & June) £1290.20

Nigel Whitehead playground maintenance £130.00

The Priors Hall (Post Office Contribution) £100.00

Community Heartbeat Defibrillator batteries £526.20

HSBC bank charges x 2 months £16.00

8. AOB

- **Footpaths/Right of Way issues**

The Bridge located off The Shuckburgh Road is still out of order, despite the PC requesting works to be done via WCC footpath Team for several years now. Clerk to ask Nigel Whitehead for cost of repair.

The Bridge across to Honesberie on Hardwick Road is also in disrepair and will need maintenance soon.

The "Sledging Hill" is overgrown. Clerk will contact landowner to request they clear it asap.

The Blue paths are needing some maintenance and clearing of foliage and weeds, especially on The Green, and Shuckburgh Road. Clerk will ask Nigel Whitehead to quote for this.

The meeting concluded at 8.40pm pm.

The next meeting of the Parish Council is as follows:

Tuesday September 9th

At The Priors Village Hall

7.30pm All Welcome