

***Priors Marston Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 9th September 2025 at 7.30pm
At The Priors Hall***

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Cllr. Robyn May, Cllr. John Franklin, Cllr. Sarah Mills, County Cllr Chris Kettle, District Cllr. Nigel Rock

In Attendance: Emma Hooker (Clerk/RFO)

Meeting opened at 7.30pm

- 1. Apologies:** Cllr. Pete Dunkley & Cllr. Laura Lucas
- 2. Declarations of Interest:** None
- 3. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting 8th July**
Minutes approved by all present at the meeting as a true record and signed by Cllr Mills in Chairs absence.
- 4. Outstanding Actions Matters Arising & Correspondence**
Clerk received email from a parishioner enquiring the below issues:

Cleaning of village entrance signs

Action: Cllr Kettle to contact Jeff Hobday at Highways requesting that the signs be cleaned at the earliest opportunity.

Planters and bulbs at village entrances and greens

Decision: The Council noted that planters present an ongoing maintenance challenge. Highways have previously advised against them due to health and safety concerns. It was therefore agreed not to proceed with this suggestion. The Council also noted that the village already benefits from a good number of spring bulbs, and additional planting is not considered necessary at this time.

Concrete slabs under bench on green

Decision: As the village is within a conservation area, maintaining the natural appearance of the greens is a priority. The installation of concrete slabs was not considered in keeping with the rural character of the village and will not be pursued.

Tidying of hedge on Village Green

Action: The Clerk has sought clarification from the parishioner regarding which hedge this relates to and awaits further correspondence.

- **War Memorial Maintenance**

The Clerk reported ongoing difficulties in receiving communication from Boden & Ward, and that no date for the works had yet been provided. Since the last meeting, Priors Hardwick had recommended a stonemason, Mr M. Power, who will also be undertaking work on their own war memorial. The Clerk presented his quotation, which was only £30 higher than the previously agreed quote, and confirmed that he would be available to start within the next two weeks.

Decision: It was agreed to proceed with Mr M. Power for the works, and to notify Boden & Ward that their services would no longer be required.

- **Street Light Audit**

The Clerk is awaiting costings from WCC for the street light repair, as it has since been advised that a road closure will be required and the associated costs would need to be met by the Parish Council.

Decision: Item deferred pending further information.

- **Rights of way access update**

The Clerk reported that, following several years of chasing, the WCC Rights of Way Team have now confirmed a programme of repairs:

- **Shuckburgh Road Bridge:** Start 1st September, completion by 16th September
- **Hardwick Road Bridge:** Start 8th September, completion by 19th September
- **Grange Farm Bridge:** Start date to be advised

All three bridges will be repaired to upgraded specifications.

- **Blue path maintenance**

Clerk will ask Nigel Whitehead to repair some areas of the blue path namely on the pathway to the school. The paths have been treated for weeds since the last meeting.

- **Drainage – Schedule of works**

The PC stressed to Cllr Kettle the need to get a programme of works for inspection and clearing so to avoid the issues on Keys Lane last year being repeated. Cllr Kettle will request one and will ensure that this is not over looked. It was also reported that the road closed signs from July are still on Keys Lane and requested these are removed. Cllr Kettle advised this is Balfour Beattys property but will request these are removed.

- **Councilor emails**

Clerk advised the PC that NALC recommends all Cllrs have gov.uk email addresses. The PC did not want to pursue this at this time.

- **Parking on village green**

There has been a complaint to the PC by a parishioner regarding persistent parking on a village green by a resident. Parking on village greens unless with express permission of the PC is illegal and therefore the Clerk will write to the resident asking them to cease immediately as a first step.

5. Playground project update

Cllr Mills reported that funding of £35,000 has been secured from PET, and expressed thanks for their support. In addition, the sale of “The Pound” Land has raised £25,000, which will also be allocated to the project. Together with the previously agreed £15,000 from reserves, the project fund now stands at £75,000. The only detailed quotation received to date is £85,000 (net), with VAT payable but reclaimable. Further funding applications are being pursued with Sports England and HS2.

The first working group meeting is scheduled for 19th September, after which the next step will be to consult with the village on the preferred supplier proposals.

Resolution: The Council noted the update and agreed the next steps as outlined.

6. Defibrillator

The Clerk reported that the defibrillator located in the village phone box is now registered on The Circuit, the national online defibrillator network operated by the British Heart Foundation.

The Parish Council will now be seeking volunteers to act as Supporting Guardians for the defibrillator. The role of a Supporting Guardian is not medical but communication-based: if the defibrillator is activated, The Circuit will issue an email alert to nominated Guardians, who then post a message in the parish

WhatsApp group. This enables others to coordinate a response, such as providing CPR, meeting the ambulance, or offering support at the scene.

It was noted that Guardians are not required to be available at all times, as a small team of 3–4 volunteers will share the responsibility.

The next steps are to set up the WhatsApp responder group and to recruit additional Guardians. The Clerk will circulate details by email to the village and place a notice in the Parish Magazine.

The Council thanked Cllr Robyn May, who has agreed to be the first volunteer Supporting Guardian.

Resolution: The Council noted the update and approved the next steps to establish a Supporting Guardian team and WhatsApp responder group.

7. Update County Cllr. Chris Kettle

Summary of the Report

Following the resignation of the previous Leader, Cllr George Finch (Reform UK) has been elected as the new Leader of the Council, using the Chair's casting vote after a tied election with Cllr Roodhouse (LD). The Reform minority administration intends to focus on SEND, potholes, and safety.

HS2: Concerns were raised about the closure of the A423 between Southam and Ladbroke, which has already caused significant traffic problems in Ladbroke. Efforts continue with County officers and Sir Jeremy Wright MP to mitigate the impact.

Highways:

- From September 2025, parking enforcement will be introduced around schools, with Penalty Charge Notices issued for vehicles stopping in restricted areas.
- Richard Fenwick has been appointed as the new Director of Highways, recruited from Lincolnshire County Council.
- Structural damage has been identified at Hambridge, Knightcote, caused by overweight vehicles. A 4-tonne weight limit and road narrowing measures are being considered.

Devolution White Paper: No update at this stage.

Update District Cllr. Nigel Rock

Summary of the Report:

- Local Government Reorganisation: Government is consulting on proposals to merge District and County Councils into a Unitary Authority. Options are a single Warwickshire-wide authority or two authorities (North and South Warwickshire). Stratford DC favours the two-unitary model. Public consultation is open until 14 September.
- Housing Land Supply: Following changes to national planning rules, Stratford DC's housing land supply has fallen from 5.06 years to 2.74 years. This creates risk of speculative housing applications being approved outside settlements. Options under review include use of reserve sites, bringing empty homes back into use, and urging developers to build on existing permissions.
- Severn Trent: Meeting held with environmental groups, councillors, and the local MP on foul water discharges. Improved liaison between Severn Trent and the District Council has been requested.
- Community Climate Change Fund: Round Three remains open for applications, assessed quarterly.
- Warm Homes Local Grant: New funding scheme launched to improve energy efficiency in low-income households (insulation, heating upgrades). Eligible households may receive free installations.
- Employer Recognition Award: Stratford DC has received the Ministry of Defence's Silver Award for supporting members of the Armed Forces community.

8. Planning Matters

New and Pending

25/01457/LBC – Forge Cottage, Hardwick RD – Install damp proofing

No Objection

25/01420/FUL – Land and building rear of Japonica. - Conversion barn to holiday let - Objection

24/03294/FUL – Agricultural land adj. The Meadows, Southam Rd – Siting of Mobile home for Ag. Worker

Objection

Re submitted with changes – Temporary dwelling – No Objection

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

No Objection

25/01922/TREE – The Cedars – Leylandi crown reduction – 13/08

No representation

Decisions

25/01276/LBC Rose Cottage Internal alterations

Granted 14/08

25/01723/TREE Chapel End, Keys Lane – Silver Birch fell

Granted 22/08

25/01209/LBC Honesberie, Southam Rd – replacement damaged beams

Granted 04/09

25/01822/TREE – The Stables, Manor Farm Ct – 2 acers – prune.

Granted 04/09

9. Finance

Bank Balance (Current) as of 1st September £36,455.08

Receipts- £ 0.00

DD = £137.75

Ionos webmail £14.40

Yu Energy £123.35 (July & August)

Payments £2,027.86

Pete Brown Mowing (July & August) £480.00

Salaries/Expenses x (July & August) £1357.47

Grit bin Hellidon Rd £182.39

HSBC bank charges £8.00

Bank Balance (Reserves / Playground fund) as of 1st September £25,006.47

(Opening Balance £0.22)

Receipts

Wellers Law group for Sale of The Pound £25,000 26/8/25

Interest

£6.25

The meeting concluded at 8.50pm pm.

The next meeting of the Parish Council is as follows:

Tuesday November 11th

At The Priors Village Hall

7.30pm All Welcome