

***Priors Marston Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday 11th November 2025 at 7.30pm
At The Priors Hall***

DRAFT MINUTES

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

In Attendance: Emma Hooker (Clerk/RFO)
1 member of the public (HT)

Meeting opened at 7.42 pm

1. Apologies: Cllr. Sarah Mills & Cllr. Laura Lucas

2. Declarations of Interest: None

3. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting 9th September

Minutes approved by all present at the meeting as a true record and signed by Cllr May in Chairs absence.

4. Outstanding Actions Matters Arising/Correspondence/Questions

HT raised ongoing concerns about the blocked drain on Keys Lane, which remains unresolved despite gully cleaning in 2024. Water continues to flow down the lane, posing a risk in icy weather. Cllr Kettle reported that there are 63 gulleys in the area—11 cleaned every 6 months and the remainder on a 2-year cycle, all last cleaned in 2024. The blocked drain on Keys Lane has been assessed as low priority by Highways as it is not considered to have a severe impact on people or property. HT disputed this, citing a parishioner who has experienced property impact and safety issues due to ice. Cllr Kettle asked that the parishioner contact him directly with details so he can investigate further. **Action:** HT to ask the parishioner to email Chris K with relevant information.

• War Memorial

The restoration work has been completed by M. Powers & Sons Stonemasons. The Parish Council agreed that the quality of the workmanship was excellent, and feedback from parishioners has been very positive. The Remembrance Service held on 11th November was well attended and respectfully observed

- **Streetlight (Hellidon Road)**

The costs have still not been received from WCC *Decision:* Item deferred pending further information.

- **Defibrillator**

There has been a good response for volunteers to become Defibrillator Guardians and register on *The Circuit*. Five Guardians will be registered, including the Clerk. Parishioner Jan Southam, a qualified first responder and registered Guardian, has kindly offered to provide defibrillator and basic first aid training for the village free of charge, with voluntary donations on the day in support of the Air Ambulance. The training session will be organised in the new year. Action: Clerk

- **Police SNT Village Visits**

Saturday 6th December at 10am outside the Priors Hall. All welcome to go along and chat to the SNT with any concerns.

5. Playground project update

Clerk updated the PC:

First Working Group meeting was held on 19th September. The working group consists of local parents and Cllr Mills and the Clerk. Anyone else interested in being involved in any way is welcome to contact the Clerk for more information.

The Actions from the Group were as follows:

- Arrange a workshop for the Priors School children organized by the PTA. To include activity sheets and opportunities for the children to express their ideas.
- Community Grant application – Cllr Mills to apply.
- To arrange community consultation possibly with potential suppliers in the new year.

PET have asked the PC to consider a concrete table tennis table to be included in the design to appeal to older children. This would be kindly funded by PET.

It will be discussed at the next working group meeting however ultimately it will be down to the design and space for it without neglecting any other equipment.

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

6. Update County Cllr. Chris Kettle

Summary of the Report:

Council Extraordinary Meeting – 14 October

The Council met to discuss its response to the Government's consultation on unitary authorities. Three motions were approved:

1. Support for the retention and creation of parish and town councils.
2. Agreement that full constituent membership of the West Midlands Combined Authority is the best devolution arrangement for Warwickshire.
3. Support for a single unitary council for Warwickshire as the most effective model of local governance.

Financial Case:

- A single unitary authority is significantly more cost-effective than two.
 - Over 5 years:
 - Single unitary: £57.1m net benefit.
 - Two unitaries: £11m additional cost.
 - Difference: £68.1m.
 - Transition costs: £22.3m for a single unitary (30% lower).
 - Disaggregation costs: £0 for single unitary vs £8.6m per year for two.
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HS2

- The B4451 will close from 11–14 November (daytime only) to enable a new water supply connection near Southam Rugby Club.
 - Some vegetation will be removed, but the original hedgerow will remain intact.
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Highways

- Keys Lane drainage gulleys were jetted and repaired last winter; most gulleys are on a 2+ year cleaning cycle.
 - Some highway patching took place recently.
 - Concerns raised about the extended diversion during works on The Holloway — considered unnecessarily long.
 - New chevrons installed on the B4451 (funded from the councillor's delegated budget); further pavement improvements due in spring.
 - Officers exploring funding for a third gateway sign on Ufton Hill.
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Severn Trent

- Concerns raised over diversion routes and full road closures during works on the B4451.
 - Severn Trent admitted one diversion was unsuitable and removed signage but offered no alternative.
 - A written explanation has been requested for why a full closure was necessary when past bursts were managed with traffic lights.
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Hambridge

- Repairs completed, but the bridge was damaged again after an HGV ignored closure signs.
 - The bridge is closed again pending more substantial repairs; “Road Narrows” and reduced weight limit signs will be installed before reopening.
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Budget 2026/27

- Budget planning for 2026/27 will begin soon.
 - 2025/26 forecast: minor overall overspend, though social care and education costs are significantly over budget.
 - The SEND deficit remains a major issue — expected to reach £150 million by year-end.
 - The Government’s “statutory override” temporarily offsets this but future SEND funding decisions are awaited.
 - Council tax cannot be used for education, which is funded through the central DSG grant.
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Flooding

- WCC continues to support flood alleviation in **Long Itchington**, despite it being beyond statutory duties.
- Drainage improvements completed on **Station Road, Fenny Compton**.

Update District Cllr Nigel Rock

Summary of Report:

Planning and Housing

- Five-Year Housing Land Supply:
Stratford District Council lost its five-year housing land supply following an appeal judgement, triggering the need for a strategic response to increase housing permissions.

- An action plan (in Cabinet papers, 6 Oct 2025) sets out steps to restore supply.
 - A new advisory group of councillors will help identify the “least worst” sites for development.
 - **GreenBelt&GreyBelt**
Much of northern Stratford is Green Belt. The government’s proposed “grey belt” policy (to free up some Green Belt land) is seen as confusing and unhelpful.
 - **Staffing**
Like many councils, Stratford faces recruitment pressures due to national shortages of planning professionals.
 - BBC *Panorama* (20 Oct) featured this issue.
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Community Grant Scheme 2025

- Stratford-on-Avon District Council has launched a £350,000 Community Grant Fund to mark the 80th anniversaries of VE and VJ Days.
 - The fund supports capital projects to improve or create community facilities — e.g. halls, parks, play areas, or memorial spaces.
 - Two funding levels:
 - Small Grants: £5,000–£20,000
 - Large Grants: £20,001–£100,000
 - Information sessions: 12–14 November.
 - Application deadlines:
 - 31 January 2025 (Small Grants)
 - 27 February 2025 (Large Grants)
 - Contact: socialinclusion@stratford-dc.gov.uk
 - Details: [Community Grant Scheme 2025 | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)
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Community

October marked Domestic Abuse Awareness Month. Support services are listed on the SDC website, and councillors Nigel and [the report’s author] can be contacted confidentially for help.

- More info: *Domestic Abuse | Stratford-on-Avon District Council*
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District Statistics (2014–2025 Overview)

Population

- Increased by 19.74% (2014–2024) — 8th highest growth in England & Wales (national average 7.74%).
- Over 65s: 25% of population (UK average 19%).

Housing

- Housing stock: more detached homes, fewer flats than Warwickshire or national averages.
 - Bungalows only 10%, despite an ageing population.
 - House prices:
 - Median down £25,000 from Sept 2023.
 - Still 19% above Warwickshire and 21% above England medians.
 - Price-to-earnings ratio: 9.07 (now slightly below Wychavon).
 - Private rents: average £1,069/month, third highest in the West Midlands.
 - Vacant dwellings: approx. 2,287 (Oct 2024).
 - New homes: 1,011 added in 2023/24 — 138% of target, ranking 15th of 164 districts nationally, though the Council still failed the 5-year supply test.
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Crime

- Total recorded crimes (to July 2025): 10,108 — up 2,204 from the previous year.
 - Increase partly due to data reporting changes.
 - Crime rate: 69 per 1,000 people (Warwickshire: 56).
 - Most common offences:
 - *Violent/sexual offences*: 22.6 per 1,000 (below national and county averages).
 - *Vehicle crime*: 5.43 per 1,000 (slightly above Warwickshire and England averages).
 - Highest vehicle crime area: Harbury, possibly linked to JLR site boundary.
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Employment and Fuel Poverty

- Employment: 15% of residents aged 16–64 classed as economically inactive; 1,685 unemployment benefit claimants (July 2025).
 - Fuel Poverty: 14.9% of households (West Midlands: 17%; England: 11.4%).
 - Highest rates (25%) in Ladbroke & Priors Ward, due to lack of mains gas and lower rural incomes.
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7. 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.

- 25/00492/FUL - Chestnut Bank Field – Agricultural barn 16/05 No Objection
- 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
- 25/02402/TREE – Brownstone Cottage, Hellidon Rd – Laburnum Fell , Apple – Crown –NO Rep
- 25/02609/TREE – Grange Cottages, Hardwick Road – Pollard Poplar to 9 mtrs – No Rep
- 25/02638/TPO – Woodland Rise, Hellidon Road – 30 Sycamores reduce by 4 mtrs. –No Rep

Decisions

- 24/03230/FUL – Priory Farm, Shuck Road – Change of use barn to 3 holiday lets – No Objection GRANTED. 18/09
- 25/01922/TREE – The Cedars – Leylandi crown reduction – 13/08 No rep GRANTED
- 25/01838/TPO – The Cedars, The Green – Leylandi – crown reduction – GRANTED
- 25/021021/FUL – 2 Priors Court, Installation of flue GRANTED 27/10
- 25/02135/TREE – Hillside House, Apple fell – GRANTED 02/10
- 25/01263/VARY – Honesberie Too Southam Road – Variation of conditions GRANTED 28/10

8. Finance

Bank Balance (Current) as of 1st November £40,513.76

Receipts- £ 9280.00 – Precept SDC

DD = £191.72

Ionos Webmail £58.92 - £7.20

YU Energy £64.67

YU Energy £60.93

Payments £5029.60

Pete Brown £480.00 x 2

Salary Exp. £1165.60 x 2

HMRC £63.20

M Power stone mason £3320.80

Bank Balance (Reserves / Playground fund) as of 1st November £25,069.13
Interest
£31.42

The meeting concluded at 8.55pm

The next meeting of the Parish Council is as follows:

Tuesday January 20th
At The Priors Village Hall

7.30pm All Welcome