

Priors Marston Parish Council
Annual General Meeting
Friday 27th May 2016, 19.30
The Priors Hall, Shuckburgh Road, Priors Marston

DRAFT MINUTES

In attendance: John Appleton (Chair), John Frabklin, Viv Nind, Laura Booth, Helen Keeves, Cllr Stevens, Cllr Williams

Members of the public: Anna & Robert Holland, Rosemary Lucas, Krystina Mundy, Carol Hinton, Jonathan Church, Nick Fulford

1. **Apologies:** Mike Smith
2. **Welcome from the Chair**

John Franklin introduced the Parish Council and opened the meeting

3. **Declaration of Interests**
None

4. **Approval of the minutes of the last AGM, held on Friday 25th May 2015**
Approved – Proposed LB, Seconded VN

5. **Chairman's Summary of the year**
John Appleton presented the village annual report for 2016

Priors Marston Parish Council consists of the following councillors:- John Appleton, John Franklin, Laura Lucas, Vivien Nind. At time of publication there is a vacant position for a Parish Councillor.

It is with regret that Elton James has resigned from the Parish Council. We thank him for dedication and hard work and wish him well for the future.

In the last year the Parish Council has:-

- ✓ Maintained and repaired the playground, including monthly safety checks and an annual independent ROSPA safety inspection
- ✓ Replaced 3 additional streetlights with new LED technology to comply with current environmental standards bringing the total to 5 new streetlights. The village has 22 streetlights in total and we will continue to replace the old technology. A further 5 replacements are scheduled for 2016
- ✓ Reviewed and commented on 38 planning applications and attended a number of Stratford District Council (SDC) planning committee meetings
- ✓ Upheld the high standard of maintenance and cleanliness of the village
- ✓ Installed a village defibrillator, located in the red telephone box on the Shuckburgh Road. We conduct weekly service checks to ensure the defibrillator is ready for use if required.
- ✓ Completed a Housing Needs Survey, which has reviewed the requirements of the village. This is particularly important given the housing allocation to be imposed

- on villages by Stratford District Council's core strategy.
- ✓ Cleaned the village drain on The Holloway. Despite contractors spending a week clearing many tons of debris from the drains, flooding in the Holloway continues to cause problems. Further work is clearly needed.
- ✓ Re-instated the kerbing in school lane. This continues to be monitored for effectiveness.
- ✓ Updated and cleaned various village road signs.
- ✓ Started a weekly bin service so all the village bins are now emptied by Stratford District Council. Dog owners can now deposit dog faeces in the village bins provided. We continue to work with Pete and thank him for his dedication in keeping the village clean and tidy.

The Parish Council has a duty to protect and enhance our village and its surrounding environment wherever possible. The National Planning Policy Framework requires Priors Marston to have a village plan to help shape future development. Our intention is to update our parish plan following publication of SDC's core strategy. This has however encountered delays so the parish plan has yet to be updated but it is our intention to update it as soon as the core strategy is finalised. Our current parish plan is still valid, but would undoubtedly be strengthened by being updated.

In the coming months we plan to:-

- ✓ Update the emergency plan for the village
- ✓ Re-instate SLOW on the road signs on the Southam road entry to the village as they have become worn
- ✓ Review the condition of village footpaths and rights of way
- ✓ Develop a maintenance plan for village benches
- ✓ Re-instate damaged verges
- ✓ Continue to monitor any wind turbine planning applications
- ✓ Continually update the village website and facebook page
- ✓ Provide regular updates on the village notice board and in The Parish News

6. Accounts for year to 31st March 2016

John Franklin presented the accounts for the Parish Council and are attached to the file set of minutes and forms part of them.

7. District Council – Cllr Chris Williams

During the past year there has been little legislation that would have a direct impact upon Priors Marston. The District Council has ceased its cooperation with Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire since both these authorities are moving in the direction which would not prove advantageous to Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

Our annual budget which was set in March included a provision that Council Tax will rise by some £5 per year for a Band D property. In normal circumstances, Local Authorities are prohibited from increasing their precept above 2% without holding a Referendum. However, this year the government has allowed Stratford District Council dispensation to raise its Council tax on the basis that we have not

increased Council tax for the last five years and it was felt that a 2% increase on the low taxation figure of £127 for a Band D house would not have the same impact that in Nuneaton where a Band D house is currently taxed at £450. This dispensation is for this year only but still means that SDC's taxation is the lowest taxed authority in Warwickshire.

The never ending story of the Core Strategy now looks likely to have reached a conclusion in that the Government Inspector has supported the clarifications he requested when the Public Examination was made last year. The District Council Cabinet approved the Core Strategy with the recommendation that the full Council should adopt it at their full Council Meeting in July. The new figure for the housing allocation for South Warwickshire is 15,500 houses to be built in the next 15 years. He is quite content that the development at Gaydon/Lighthorne Heath should proceed and also that a new settlement will be allowed at Long Marston. The Inspector rejected any proposals that Wellesbourne Airfield should be developed for housing but he increased the amount of potential new housing to be allowed in Southam. This could mean an additional 1,500 will be built over the next 15 years. He supported the District Council's proposal that we should allocate 2,000 houses to be built within the Local Centre settlement criteria. Priors Marston is still recognised as a Category 4 village which is expected only to have to cope with an expansion of some 25 housing units over the next fifteen years. Any small development over this period will be limited to 8% of this total which, in effect, means that it is unlikely that there is any prospect of estate development being allowed.

At the end of March the Management Structure within Stratford District Council was reorganised with the position of Chief Executive being made redundant and his position being filled by two existing Officers. This reorganisation is scheduled to save SDC some £100,000 per annum and these proposals were incorporated in the budget calculations.

Bob will bring you up to date with developments regarding the HS2 where the District Council is working closely with the County Council to mitigate any proposals made with regard to the construction of the route.

In conclusion, I must complement the Parish Council on their commitment to Priors Marston. It is a pleasure working with all the Parish Councillors and I trust that the culture will continue. I am sorry that Helen Keeves is leaving shortly and I wish her every success with her new career in accountancy.

8. County Council - Cllr Bob Stevens

Last year has, for me, been both eventful and illuminating. Eventful as the new shape of local government is beginning to be clarified and illuminating as I was privileged to have been chairman of the County Council. This means that as well as looking after the interests of the Feldon residents, and Priors Marston in particular, I was Civic Head of Warwickshire County council representing the County on many Civic occasions.

This time last year when I spoke to you as recorded in the minutes I was cabinet member for Health, Children's services and HS2. The integration of the NHS and the county council's Social services were at the top of my agenda. I was working with the police to establish a combined office to deal with children and adult safeguarding known as a MASH, working towards the introduction of health centres, and still opposing the HS railway and in particular the effect on this village and surrounding area. The MASH is now opened, NHS England are coming round to the realisation that all this development needs more health facilities and HS2 is regrettably becoming more of a reality. However the face of local Government is changing as the government embarks on its programme of devolution of power from the centre. Unfortunately, like all politicians they don't actually want to lose control, so they are clinging onto the financial controls. They are giving local government more responsibility but less money.

Local Council income comes from 3 sources government grants, Council tax and Charges for Council services. Government grant is being reduced year on Year, Council Tax increase, quite correctly, is frozen at 2% except the 2% exceptionally allocated for adult care. We are reluctant to increase charges. The government are phasing out their grant and by 2020 local Government will be relying on Business rates to replace this income. However the government have stipulated controls on business rates and at present promising businesses their rates will be reduced.

The thrust behind the success of devolution is to get more involvement by local residents, that is, more volunteers to run their communities. Libraries have already gone that way and thanks to developer contributions and other fund raising activities generally been a success. Schools are to become academies reducing LA education staff but placing more responsibility on volunteer governors.

On the subject of schools, although primary provision is predicted to be satisfactory secondary provision is over capacity as once again admissions to Southam are likely to exceed their PAN of 270. A possible merger of the Blue light services particularly Police and fire services, is also under consideration. The merger of Health and social services is also under trial in Greater Manchester together with the introduction of combined Authorities and another layer of beaurocracy lead by a politically elected Mayor. I am an advocate of unitary local authorities but advise caution over jumping into bed with a West Midlands combined authority which in our case would be Birmingham and the Mets dominated. They have no understanding of rural/village affairs indeed they don't even respect the role of parish councils. Priors Marston would gain nothing. I am opposing WCC's enthusiasm for joining this organisation. Indeed I spoke and voted against it.

As I mentioned at the beginning I have spent the last year as Chairman of the County Council. Before the 1974 Local Government act which introduced District Councils and abolished Rural District Councils the chairman of a County council was both the civic

and political head of the county Council and as such a prestigious post with political Authority. Since the 1974 act and the introduction of a political leader at the County council the role is seen as purely Civic and non- As such I have carried out a variety of duties which vary from welcoming Royalty when they officially visit Warwickshire to officiating at Citizenship ceremonies when British Citizenship is legally conferred on those who meet the required criteria. I also attended VE and VJ ceremonies across the county meeting many veterans of both those wars. Particularly moving was meeting some of the veterans of Japanese prison camps ages 95 to 105. I have attended many Civic Church services across the County supporting the local mayors and council chairs from Atherstone to Shipston; I held my own service in the Feldon division at Harbury where nearly 200 people from across Warwickshire joined me.

I have enjoyed this past year and have tried to resolve the problems you have faced in the village particularly with respect to highway matters. There are inevitably going to be more vehicles on our roads with the increase in Housing in Southam and our neighbouring villages. This construction work traffic will be exacerbated as HS2 begins construction possibly as early as next year. Speeding is an enforcement matter and the police resources are stretched. To meet the police face to face and challenge them directly I would advise attendance at the community forum, the next one is on June 15th.

I have finished my year as chairman and return to a normal Council role. I enjoy attending your parish council meetings and congratulate the team for the way they are making most use of the resources available to them for the good of the village

9. Parish Council Meetings 2016/2017

Parish Council Meetings will be held on the second Monday of the month, bi-monthly at 7.30. As follows:- 11th July 2016, 12th September 2016, 7th November 2016, 9th January 2017, 13th March 2017, 8th May 2017, 10th July 2017, 11th September 2017, 13th November 2017. The meeting dates will continue to be advertised on the village notice board.

AGM Friday 26th May 2017

10. AOB

Village Grass cutting has very much existed on a custom and practice basis, some residents are happy to cut community grass, others no so able. Need to review areas with Pete Brown.

The meeting closed at 20.30