

PRIORS HARDWICK VILLAGE MEETING
Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting held on Thursday 19th October 2017
at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church

Present:

Mrs C Kelly, Chairman
Mrs C Bath, Treasurer
Mrs M Clarke, Secretary
County Councillor Bob Stevens
District Councillor Chris Williams

Ms M Alvarez; Miss E England; Mr I Harvey; Mr P Hobday; Mr and Mrs C Hodgson; Mrs L Jameson; Mrs. N Nichols; Mr G Olver; Rev C Parkes; Mrs S Sutherland; Mrs S Talbot; Mr P Towler.

Mrs Kelly welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced Rev Celia Parkes our new Assistant Priest, living in the vicarage at Priors Marston

1. Apologies were received from:

Mr H Darbishire, Mr S Darbishire; Mr J Eustace; Mrs B Harvey Mrs R Hobday; Mr and Mrs A Hone; Mr I Mercer; Mrs D Nichols; Mr and Mrs E Pile; Ms J Redfern; Mrs H Stamper; Mr and Mrs L Wareham; Mrs J Wilkin

2. The Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 20TH July 2017 had been circulated.

With reference to item 9 HS2: 'Site for the play area', shortly after the last meeting Miriam Price, the owner of Elmers Farm had joined Mr Hodgson's committee, and the minutes were amended to include this. With the amendments, it was proposed by Mr Hodgson, seconded by Mrs Bath and agreed nem/con. that the minutes were a correct record of the meeting.

3. Matters Arising

Trees Mrs Sutherland had made efforts to contact the appropriate person at the County Council, regarding the tree adjacent to her property which was coming into contact with telephone cables, but so far without success.

Highways

1. Mrs Sutherland reported a deep and potentially dangerous rut at the edge of the road at Lower End, on the corner opposite the drive to Hill House. Mrs Kelly would inform Patch Byrne by email with photographs.
2. Mrs Jameson enquired about repairs to 'Hollow Lane'. Mrs Kelly replied that this would be a major project to include a means of drainage as well as a new road surface. It was on Patch Byrne's list.
Mrs Clarke enquired regarding Mrs Jameson's reference to Hollow Lane, which had been used on communications to Mrs Jameson's address, rather than Hollow Meadow Lane. Mrs Kelly would make enquiries.

Drains

The drains had been cleaned at the beginning of September, but shortly after, following a night of moderately heavy rain (18mm) the drains outside and opposite Orchard House had only just avoided overflowing.
Mrs Kelly would inform Patch Byrne.

Emergency procedure With reference to potential flooding, Mrs Kelly reminded the meeting that the Snow and Flooding Warden was Mr Hugh Darbishire. The village does have an emergency procedure and Mrs Kelly has information of village residents with appropriate skills and/or equipment who would be available to assist in case of need.

4. Financial Report

Mrs Bath reported that the audit had been completed and the accounts signed off. The notice of the completion was on the Village Website. There had been no unexpected movement in the accounts which showed balances of £3,148 in the Current account and £726 in the Deposit account.

School Transport

Mrs Bath had also been asked to speak on the County Council's recent consultation and resulting decision on the provision of school transport. Here, there would be no change regarding transport to Southam College. However regarding transport to Napton, our local County Council primary school, about five miles away, the regulation that transport would not be provided if there was another primary school nearer to the applicant's address would apply. In our case this would be The Priors School, which being a Free School was not under the management of the County Council. Cllr Stevens would look into this situation.

At the time of the meeting there were no children in Priors Hardwick requiring transport to St Lawrence School, Napton

Mrs Bath also reported the County Council's decision to cease the provision of attendants on transport for primary school children unless a child with a Statement of Educational Needs was among the passengers. The meeting recorded its concern at this decision.

5. District Councillor Williams' Report

Cllr Williams had sent his report prior to the meeting and a copy is kept with these minutes

Administration

The District Council was expecting a financial shortfall due to central government policy, which could result in a tax increase.

There had been a change of personnel in the Cabinet.

Court successes

The District Council had been successful in prosecuting a couple in Long Itchington who had concealed the use of a garage as a residential dwelling, and a company in the West Midlands for fly-tipping.

Cash Windfall

Thanks to a legal agreement the District Council had received £1m from Orbit who had recently sold derelict garage sites across the district. Cllr Williams confirmed that this had not applied in Prior Hardwick or Priors Marston. The Council would be looking to invest the funds in affordable housing.

Policy – Housing in Rural Areas

The council was active in providing evaluation to ensure that housing in rural areas meets the standards set by the council. In Priors Hardwick an evaluation by the Council could be carried out free of charge on request. To qualify for new housing an applicant would be required to demonstrate a need for down-sizing, or additional accommodation for family members. However, any new building would remain the property of the Council, may not be in the immediate vicinity and the people downsizing would have no preference on the waiting list for a smaller property.

6. County Councillor Bob Stevens' Report

Cllr Stevens had sent his report prior to the meeting and a copy is kept with these minutes.

General

The summer had been exceptionally quiet both locally and nationally. The County Council was still concerned about its budget and the required reductions, and how and where savings could be made. The total County Council budget was £350m -£400m

Children's Centres

These were introduced 10 years ago for the use of children under five. Since then the government has introduced 30 hrs per week of free nursery provision and Public Health Services have been transferred to the local authorities, resulting in a change in the role of Children's Centres. Thus the council had conducted a public consultation to which it had received over 2000 replies. The results of the consultation would be referred to the Cabinet in mid November, when a decision would be made.

There had also been a home to school transport consultation on which Mrs Bath had reported under item 4 of the minutes.

Highway Matters

There had been massive disruption on local roads during the summer due to the many housing developments in the Feldon Division. Cllr Stevens was regularly in touch with the Highways Department regarding the closure of roads. Environmental and geological surveys related to HS2 were also taking place locally and Cllr Stevens was regularly in contact with Patch Byrne and his line manager.

Schools

Southam College is now an Academy and no longer under CC control – but Cllr Stevens remains a governor. GCSE and A level results this year were again very good and above the national average. The Multi Academy Trust was settling well with its finances in a healthy state. In view of the local housing developments Cllr Stevens was convinced that a new secondary school would be required. Primary school places at the current time were adequate and The Priors School, also not under CC control, was well subscribed.

Grants

This year's grants were now closed, but it was expected that they would be available again next year.

Community Forum

The Police & Crime Commissioner, Philip Secombe addressed the meeting. Speeding is again the major concern in our area. The Community Police Team is again re-organising.

The Community Forum was poorly attended and the debate continues about its future.

WCC Personnel and General Matters

Changes in personnel included a new Head of Education – Mrs Chris Malone, who would take up her post at the beginning of November.

Other matters did not affect Priors Hardwick.

Galanos House At the time of the meeting there had been no news regarding the application for a Guinness Book of Records record for forming a human poppy on the field at Southam College.

7. Planning Updates

Doe Bank Manor

After work lasting 10 – 12 years this new development in Hollow Meadow Lane had recently been put on the market, including a building comprising a tack room and three stables. However, the Enforcement Officer has inspected the site regarding the erection of the stables mentioned in the sales brochure and will make a decision on whether they have been built illegally or come under Permitted Development, with the Senior Planner in the next few weeks.

No Man's Land and Grove Cottage

Following the last meeting, Mrs Kelly had written to The Land Registry seeking further information regarding the basis for their decision on the size of the plot awarded to Grove Cottage. The Land Registry then had invited Mrs Kelly, on behalf of the village, to make a new application.

Mr Mercer and Mr Olver had very kindly agreed to make the new application.

Mr Olver congratulated Mrs Kelly on the enormous amount of research she had completed, so that the full history of No Man's Land was to hand. The current application required the complete history of the plot during the past 25 years. All previous attempts to register the plot had failed.

The new application was almost complete and would soon be submitted.

Regarding the allotment plot adjacent to No Man's Land, it had now come to light that the developer who had bought it at auction had done so 'with an option' and at the current time it was not clear if the sale had actually been completed.

8. HS2 and the Community Fund

Mr Hodgson presented his report a copy of which is kept with these minutes.

Mr Hodgson and Miriam Price had had a site meeting with John Hutchings and Bob Michelmore (who lives in Priors Marston) of Playscape Designs, who, it was hoped, would be able to advise on the plan and equipment for the site. Advice was also being sought from Irvin Klegerman of Wornleighton who has recent and considerable experience in such applications. Once complete the application would be reviewed by Groundwork, the agency employed to ensure that applications are couched in the best possible terms to achieve the desired result.

It was recognised that English Heritage would also need to be consulted regarding the siting within the ancient monument.

The application was currently nearing completion but could only be submitted once the work on HS2 had actually begun.

Funding Nathalie Bull had, with others, completed the Wolf Run challenge and had raised £765 towards the target sum of £3,000 from village fund raising. Other funding was envisaged as: £25500 from the HS2 Community Fund (85%) and £1,500 (5%) from the Village Meeting –total £30,000

Regarding the progress of HS2 itself, there was little news in view of current interest in BREXIT.

Mrs Kelly reported that our link person with HS2 – Lydia Smith had resigned and to date no replacement had been announced.

9. Fessey Charity Report

Mrs Harvey reported that small amounts of interest continue to come into the account.

10. Ken Phillips' Memorial Service

Rev Canon Ken Phillips who died in Hellifield, N.Yorkshire had been vicar of Priors Hardwick with Priors Marston and Wornleighton from 1985 until his retirement in 2002. He had been a much loved and respected member of the community. Since many local people had been unable to attend his funeral, the parishes were organising a memorial service in St Leonard's Church, Priors Marston on Sunday 26th November at 4.30pm

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11. Priors Hall Update

In the absence of Mrs Harvey, Mrs Clarke gave a summary of the AGM which had been held on Friday 22nd September. As usual, attendance was very disappointing indeed, but it was gratifying to note that of the 6 trustees, three are resident in Priors Hardwick. There are also four people from Priors Marston who make up the Committee

Mrs Clarke summarised the report for 2016-17. An amazing amount of maintenance had been completed including the updating of licences for various activities and annual inspections where necessary. The trustees continually review spending on utilities.

Four of the five first floor offices are let to local businesses, the ground floor 'committee room' is used by a local hairdresser, and the Post Office continues to provide village residents with a wide range of services. During the year 2016-17 There were over 250 bookings for the Hall by 12 different local organisations

The Priors Hall Committee organises monthly Film Nights (except during the summer) but attendance by local residents is disappointing. However, visitors attend from a wide range of other locations.

Suggestions on the running and activities at The Priors Hall are always welcome.

The Hall's finances are in a healthy state.

A Full copy of the minutes of the AGM is kept with these minutes.

Following this report it was agreed that we ask The Priors Hall Trustees to send the full text of the AGM to the Priors Hardwick website.

The meeting recorded a vote of thanks to the Trustees and Committee members of The Priors Hall

12. Village Directory

At the time of the meeting the data was being processed in preparation for printing.

13. Village Website

Mr Alan Towler had very kindly taken over the website and he thanked Mr Hodgson for all his work.

Mr Towler had updated the website, and was already adding the information and announcements which Mrs Kelly sends round the village.

He was in the process of establishing pages for our joint ventures with Priors Marston – The Sport & Social Club, The School and The Priors Hall.

Mr Towler invited people to send to him any items for distribution, or suggestions for the website.

The very useful link to the Planning Department at the District Council was noted.

Mrs Kelly would put a message around the village to alert people that the website had now been updated.

14. A.O.B.

Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator

Mrs Kelly advised the meeting that Miss England had now resigned as NHW Co-ordinator and thanked Miss England for all her work over many, many years.

Byfield Medical Centre

Many people in Priors Hardwick are registered with the Byfield Medical Centre, as one of the nearest to the village.

Mrs Kelly read a letter from the surgery explaining that, in view of the significant increases in their patient numbers, the present building was no longer large enough and the present site offered no opportunities for expansion. Unless a new site and funding was found, the centre would have to close its list to new patients. Applications for funding to NHS England for a new surgery had been made but to no avail.

The Byfield Medical Centre had entered into discussions with a local land owner who had agreed that should planning permission be given for 90 houses on his plot of land, he would give an acre of land for the building of a new surgery and a substantial sum of money from the sale of the houses toward the building of a new surgery.

Fliers had now been delivered round the village inviting residents to support the planning application and details of how this was to be done by email were given.

Members of the meeting were encouraged to support the application.

15. The Date of the Next Meeting would be Thursday 18th January.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.40pm