

PRIORS HARDWICK VILLAGE MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21st January 2021

At 7.30.pm by Zoom

Present

Mrs C Kelly, Chairman

Mrs M Clarke, Secretary

Mrs C Bath, Treasurer

District Councillor Nigel Rock,

Emma Banks; Richard Cutt; Simon Darbshire; Isabel Davies; Lyn England; John Eustace; Tonia Hicks; Paul and Rosemary Hobday; Christopher Hodgson; Stuart Hyde; Libby Jameson; Gill Kinnear; James Mayne; Ian Mercer; Denise Reece; Alan Towler; Thierry Stortenbeker; Sue Talbot; Eddie & Ann Ukleja

Mrs Kelly welcomed everyone to the meeting

1. Apologies were received from:

Rob Albury; Barbara Harvey; Gabrielle Hodgson; Derrin James; Diarmaid Kelly; Joy Redfern; Sylvia Sutherland.

2. The Minutes of the meeting held on 24th September having been circulated, were taken as read. It was proposed by Mr Towler, seconded by Mrs Talbot and agreed nem.con that these were a correct record of the meeting.

3. Highways

Parking on verges The situation had been resolved.

Flooding The corner below Hardwick Hill had flooded once since repairs had been completed, but following subsequent heavy rain there had been no problem. Flood warning signs were kept inside both entrances to Hardwick Hill and were available as and when required.

Speeding Signs These had been erected before Christmas. One, on the Boddington Road, had already been knocked over by the hedge-trimmer. Mrs Kelly had reported this. Most of the road surface signs had been restored, and the remainder would be completed in the new financial year.

St Mary's Close The road had been resurfaced on 24th November. Delivery vans etc were continuing to drive over the substantial curb when entering the Close, due to cars parked outside the bungalows, and it was suggested that the curb be removed. Mrs Kelly had consulted Patch Byrne who had advised that cars should not to be parked there. Mr Cutt agreed with this statement and suggested that yellow lines might be added to the road outside the bungalows. Mrs Kelly would pursue this matter, but Mrs Clarke added that the current tenant of Number 2 was disabled, (as had been the previous tenant) and was not able to walk further than the boundary of her property and therefore needed her car near to the bungalow. (The six bungalows are let to aged and disabled people).

Boulders on grass verges Mrs Kelly reminded residents that the first metre of all verges belongs to the Highways Department, and thus the siting of these stones is illegal. If any vehicle were to suffer damage as a result of their presence the property owner could be held responsible.

4. Finance

Mrs Bath reported that there was currently £2409 in the current account, plus £5,500 on reserve consisting of £4,500 for the Community Area and £1,000 to cover legal fees for the transfer of land.

The Precept for 2021-22 The Precept for the preceding two years had been set at £3,100 and £2,800, which had included purchase of SmartWater property marking equipment for every property and the appropriate signage, and also £1,000 for legal fees (which had so far not been required). Mrs Bath thus proposed that for the coming year the precept be set at £2,000. In addition we receive around £600 p.a from the District Council for services and refuse disposal

The total annual expenditure is about £2,000, and therefore a precept of £2,000 would cover normal expenditure and also provide a 'buffer' against any unexpected expenditure. There was currently £2,409 in the current account, but this sum varied widely through the year since the Precept was paid in two instalments and a few of the outgoings involved relatively large sums. Mrs Bath pointed out that thanks to many volunteers who keep the village tidy our Precept is very low compared with that at Priors Marston. Mr Cutt enquired if the village would be eligible to apply for funds from the Community Structure Grant scheme. Cllr Rock replied that this was a relatively new scheme and there wasn't a lot of money 'in the pot'. However we would be eligible to apply. Mr Cutt suggested that if a Community Forum were to be established, this might add more weight to any request for funds for the current church/village project. Mrs Bath's proposal that the Precept for 2021 – 22 be set at £2,000 was seconded by Mr Hodgson, Mrs Jameson and Mr Towler and agreed unanimously.

5. Councillor Rock's report

Covid 19 Cllr Rock reported that until recently infection levels in the District had been relatively low, but that there was currently concern about an increase among those over 60. It was hoped that this was just beginning to ease. Testing centres were now available locally, but these were only for those not showing symptoms and requiring clearance for work in essential services etc

Mr Cutt enquired if any cases had been reported in the village, to which the response was that one person was recovering from a very mild infection.

Cllr Rock thanked warmly all those who had been so generous with their good will wishes during his illness and recovery during the latter part of 2020.

Grants The District Council was holding funds available for a variety of grants.

Green Bin Tax The scheme would begin in the new financial year and applications were invited before the end of February at a cost of £40 per bin – reduced to £35 for early applications. A sticker would be supplied for each bin. The new scheme would be on a three-weekly rota, but with green bins collected fortnightly all year round.

Police PC Officer Matthew Simms would be leaving the local team – but remaining local in the Crime Prevention Squad. He would be replaced by Jamie Chiltern. Our current PC Inspector would also be leaving to join the Crime Squad.

The Core Strategy relating to the supply of housing in the county as advised by the government, is now becoming a joint exercise with Warwick District Council.

Parking in Wood Street car park, Southam There had been a proposal at the recent Town Council meeting to introduce charges for parking, but for the time being this had been fended off.

Gipsy and Traveller Policy Cllr Rock informed the meeting that the District Council – covering an area of 400 square miles - was being asked to provide up to 70 sites for travellers throughout the district by 2035. Mr Cutt asked if such sites would be restricted to council owned land but Cllr Rock responded that the District Council itself didn't own any land. Travellers often camped spontaneously and inappropriately on public land and the District Council's difficulty was in finding sites where they could be appropriately relocated. One difficult situation was where such people buy a rural site legally, but then, without planning permission, proceed to make it into a permanent camp site.

6. No Man's Land

Mrs Kelly thanked all who had assisted in the tidying up of the laurels, the hedges, trees and ditch, and provision for wild life.

Mr Taylor had, at the end of 2020, cleared the plot and made a gravelled vehicular access across No Man's Land. This had resulted in considerable damage to the area alongside the plot. At the time his employees had assured Mrs Kelly that Mr Taylor did not intend any further activity, but at the beginning of 2021 a temporary surface had been applied.

Due to the renewed lockdowns, the District Council had given a blanket permission for all permissions which expired during lockdown and in the summer of 2020. Mr Taylor therefore has until next May to begin the development. Mrs Kelly had been in constant touch with the District Council who, including the solicitors, are aware of our concerns regarding discharging the conditions.

Ms Banks whose property adjoins the eastern boundary of the plot had sought to buy the plot from Mr Taylor, but he wasn't willing to sell, and had put a Caution on the plot confirming his right of access, stating that he has used it regularly for the past 50 years.

Mr Cutt added that his property would also be affected but in view of the lack of formal ownership of No Man's Land he felt it might be best to co-operate with Mr Taylor to avoid further acrimony and achieve the best possible compromise situation.

Lino's land Mrs Kelly had now secured an agreement with the County Council, thanks to Mr Stedeford. In order to be able to own the land the Village needs two trustees one of whom is the Chairman of the Village Meeting. Mr Stedeford had thus arranged for the person holding the post of Head of Paid Services at the County Council to formally assume the position of the second trustee, and thus the conveyance of the land could go ahead.

Plot adjacent to Chinnery's Mr James had emailed his apologies for missing the meeting and had included an update on progress with the proposed house: all pre-construction drawings, calculations and specifications were at final draft stage, a contractor had been appointed and 'with a fair wind' work could begin on site by the middle of February with a 9 month build programme.

7. Census Sunday 21st March 2021

Mrs Kelly had attended a virtual conference. She reported that this would be a digital census but paper copies would be available. It was likely that all who had no digital record of their driving licence would automatically receive a paper copy.

8. The Website

Mr Towler reported that the website now included the Churchyard Mowing Rota, for people to check for appointments and for weeks still needing a volunteer. This was linked to the 'Church' web page.

The recently established Classified Ads page had been well used, with updates notified to members when new ads are posted, as well as find instructions on how to place an advert.

News and Planning pages. Mr Towler makes every effort to keep these up to date. He heartily recommended checking there from time to time for COVID or green bin related news.

There were now three mailing lists:

1.The original one for information sent out to the whole village at the beginning of the first lockdown, which had to be moved this away from Yahoo Groups to a new system called groups.io This list was still in operation, but about a dozen people hadn't (to date) carried across.(Please contact Mr Towler if you have

stopped receiving the mails unexpectedly). At the time of the meeting only Mrs Kelly, Mrs Bath and Mr Towler himself had access to this list, which had always been “one-way”. (99 members)

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2.The [PriorsHelp] list where anyone can send messages related to COVID issues. (61 members)

3. The new [PriorsAds] to which only Mr Towler has access when he adds a new advert and advises other members. (12 members)

Mr Towler suggested that for the sake of convenience, the freedom of access currently used in the second list might be applied to the original list – in effect combining the two lists.

The meeting agreed unanimously – provided that this facility was used responsibly.

The Banjo Enclosure TV Programme This was regarding the investigation into a large banjo-shaped outline which was thought to be of significant historical interest, in a field near Wormleighton. This had been included in a TV presentation by the Buckinghamshire group of HS2 and it had been a matter of great disappointment that the programme was being shown at the same time as the current village meeting. Mr Towler was going to record the programme and endeavour to produce a video for which he could send a link to village residents.

Mrs Kelly voiced the thanks of the meeting to Mr Towler for all his work.

9. Church – Survey from the PCC

Following the decisions reached at the last meeting regarding the opinions of residents about the future character of the village, Mr Hodgson, on behalf of the PCC, had devised and distributed a survey to all properties in the village, seeking views as to how the village might make more use of the church building. The response to the survey had been good and Mr Hodgson had analysed those received so far. He would distribute the result via email on Friday 21st. He advised also that there was still time to submit further responses if anyone so wished.

10. HS2

SOCOTEC Traffic

Mrs Kelly reported that the flow of works traffic through the village had now ceased apart from an occasional lone van, and two vehicles noted earlier on the day of the meeting; but complaints about other works traffic had persisted.

Landscaping work The project was now behind schedule, and landscaping work near the T junction had not yet begun. Mrs Kelly was also making efforts to discover the details of plans for trees which were going to be planted to alleviate the visual impact of the line.

Cllr Rock referred to impending local road closures, which, if imposed contemporaneously would have a significant impact on travel to and from the village.

11. A.O.B.

The Byfield Surgery

Mr Eustace referred to the history of the planning application for a new surgery for the Byfield Medical Centre. The new application was due for consideration by the Planning Committee two weeks after the current meeting. Mr Eustace urged all those who use the surgery to submit their letters of support for the application, the closure date for which was 25th January. He also asked if Mrs Kelly would submit a letter on behalf of the village. As Mrs Kelly did not use the Byfield surgery she sought the approval of the

meeting for this and agreed to sign a letter drafted by Mr Eustace. The meeting agreed and the letter was sent.

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Covid 19 Vaccinations

Cllr Rock noted that many advertisements were being publicised about the main vaccination centre in Birmingham and some people had received an invitation. He advised that it was not imperative to take up this invitation, as invitations would be offered to everyone, in due course, from their local surgery.

Sad news

Mrs Clarke reported that since the last meeting we had lost by death three very longstanding members of the village, who had all made a significant contribution to the life of the village: On 15th October Alan Parker, aged 96; on 4th November, Muriel Clements aged 96 and on 29th December Beryl Pile aged 94.

Thanks

The meeting wished to record its thanks to Ivan Harvey who had repaired and replaced the armrest of the seat adjacent to the Lych Gate.

The date of the next meeting would be Thursday 15th April at 7.30pm hopefully in the church.

This would be the AGM and Mrs Kelly announced her firm decision to stand down as chairman. She had fulfilled this post since 2014, and felt that with improvements made during those years the future should be much less complicated than the past had been. Mrs Kelly urged people to consider carefully this new appointment.

There being no further business the meeting closed several minutes before the 21st minute of the 21st hour of the 21st day of January 2021!

planned timing for commencement of construction work for Cassie and Sholto's new house, but I'm afraid my timing does not now work. So, for those who may be interested, a brief update:

All pre-construction drawings, calculations and specifications are at final draft stage, a contractor has been appointed and with a fair wind they will be on site by the middle of February with a 9 month build program.

Please record my apology for absence.