Future Hardwick – interim summary as at September 2020

This initiative started in late 2019 and had an initial consultation evening in February 2020; this is documented on the 'Have Your Say' webpage [www.priorshardwick.org.uk/haveyoursay.php]. At this point the COVID pandemic prevented the planned follow-up and effectively stalled further progress. In April, by the village email, people were asked if they had any further thoughts or feedback arising from the COVID situation and these (very few) comments are also added to the 'Have Your Say' repository on the website.

The group had originally proposed 5 areas or 'themes'; the web page and this summary are presented along those lines. Bear in mind most of the individual comments were made prior to the COVID pandemic so some may seem out of alignment with the "new normal".

Housing

Footpaths, hedgerows and open spaces

Infrastructure and utilities

Community health, education and wellbeing

Local Business

Originally, the group would consolidate all comments and then make a presentation to the village meeting. However the second consultation could not occur. This interim report is a 'holding position' to present the feedback as currently gathered, and to allow the village meeting to give direction if it wishes.

1. Housing

There was a recurring theme in support of affordable housing (for starters or retirement/downsizing). Conversely there was 1 comment *against* any new development.

There was a comment about integration/knowledge of newcomers especially when they are in rented or "annex" type accommodation and so less "obvious".

2. Footpaths, hedgerows and open spaces

Several recurring themes, firstly about the protection and preservation of green space, in terms of preventing development but also to make improvements and to protect from motor vehicle damage - both driving and parking (AirBNB hosts were highlighted, and delivery vans). A suggestion was to in fact make verges more suitable for parking and less prone to damage.

Secondly regarding light pollution – bright lights and "on all night" lights, contrary to the existing Village Design Statement.

Thirdly about the protection and promotion of footpaths – signage, maintenance of stiles and gates, and possible improvements e.g. access for larger dogs.

Concerns re hedge cutting – that flail cutting is non-selective and prevents the growth of possibly desirable sapling/tree growth, and the debris left behind.

3. Infrastructure and utilities

A major theme was regarding "green" topics – composting service, solar panels or renewable heating in the church.

Road edges could do with filling in to prevent potholes causing suspension and wheel damage.

Does drainage generally need a review, could we access a service map for future reference?

Can we rethink the community area and use the HS2 funding for another useful purpose, e.g. redeveloping the church somehow?

4. Community health, education and wellbeing

Several recurring themes, firstly redeveloping the church to allow its use more flexibly (i.e. to replace the fixed pews).

Secondly to engage with the Butchers Arms to aim to integrate this somehow more closely with the village community.

How about a community garden/allotment to help alleviate the peaks and troughs of courgette overproduction?

Various suggestions for inclusive groups – board games, knit and natter, coffee mornings, dinner club/fish and chips night, walking groups, a village event in the non-fete years.

A couple of suggestions for a defibrillator.

Reconstitute Neighbourhood Watch.

And finally - bonfires.

5. Local Business

Suggestion to promote local businesses and lodgings providers on the village website.

A local or mobile shop including zero waste (this is now available with a limited range at Napton PO).

To have a local business hub where people could work "from home", with fast internet, and to promote possible interaction and synergies (church or Priors Hall?)

For the Butchers Arms to be more welcoming of local (wet, dirty and/or casual) traffic say on weekend daytimes (this was in fact being promoted right before COVID).

To institute a local currency to promote bartering and use of local services.

Next Steps

In theory we still need at least one more round of input from the village, as per the original thinking and also to reflect on COVID experiences. How best to achieve this?

How will we maintain momentum, we could perhaps do with a timescale to be held accountable?

Will the village need to change its legal status to progress anything of significance, one example being the holding of community land, also for any conclusion to carry weight?

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