

## Priors Hardwick Village Meeting

4<sup>th</sup> January 2024

### Present:

Gill Kinnear (GK), Chairman

Carolyn Bath (CB), Treasurer

Emily Darbishire (ED), Secretary

District Councillor Nigel Rock (NR)

Rob & Anita Barritt; Chris Bull; Margaret Clarke; Richard Cutts (RC); Hugh Darbishire; Ivan & Barbara Harvey; Tonia Hicks; Christopher Hodgson (CH); Stuart Hyde; Charles & Gail Holland (GH); Tim Hoban; Paul & Rosemary Hobday; Derrin James; James & Libby Jameson; Diarmuid (DK) and Candy Kelly (CK); Alan Kinnear; Chris Russell; Lesley Russon; Sue Talbot; Eddie, Ann and Becky Ukleja

1. **Apologies:** Rob Albury; Isobel Davies; Simon Darbishire; Ian Mercer; Jago Toner; Sylvia Sutherland
  
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting on October 26<sup>th</sup> 2023.** Amendments – Libby Jameson and John Eustace missed from the list of attendees.
  - i. Proposed by Christopher Hodgson
  - ii. Seconded by Libby Jameson
  
3. **Matters Arising:**
  - a. Project Enable update from CH. Thank you to the Hobdays for removing the pews, and to Helen Stamper for storing them in her barn. The plasterer is starting in January. A church shed is to be installed in the church yard, then we will look for a painter and think about flooring. It is the PCC that is commissioning all of this, they have funds at the moment but at some point will look for additional funds.
  - b. Village defibrillator update (GK) - it has arrived and now waiting for it to be fitted. CK raised that it needs to be registered so that emergency services know we have one in the village.
  - c. Village Notice board – HS2 has ordered this, it will replace the current notice board and be slightly smaller than the current one and made of oak. Hoping to be installed at the end of January. GK hopes that someone may be able to refurbish the old one and re-situate it elsewhere in the village as a general information board.
  
4. **Finance:** Nothing unusual has happened since the last meeting.

- a. Precept for next year collected from council tax - £2500 in the current year, approx £30 per household. Proposal to keep pre-set the same:
  - i. Proposed by Carolyn Bath
  - ii. Seconded by Christopher Hodgson
- b. Balances:
  - i. Current: £3431.18
  - ii. General Reserves: £5790.84
  - iii. Fete Reserves: £4516.95
  - iv. Total: £13,868.97

**5. Councillor Updates:**

- a. Budget – No cuts to services are anticipated. The budget will be out for public consultation, expected to commence on 19<sup>th</sup> January, and comments are welcomed.
- b. Cost of Living Support – There is wide ranging help and support available from the District Council if they are worried about the cost of living. Customer Services – 01789 267575
- c. Community Safety – There have been a series of reports of break-ins, key and car thefts in villages recently. Currently the future operations of WCC Fire & Rescue service is being debated – the District Councillors have asked for a full presentation.
- d. Christmas Trees – Will be collected for recycling between 8-19<sup>th</sup> January.
- e. Questions arising – DK asked how many policemen are in the area and how big is the area, NR explained that there is 1 constable and a high change over, but things seem to be picking up. We also have a rural crime team who are pretty good and reactive. The Southam beat is a huge area spanning from Shuckburgh/ Bishops Itchington / Harbury.

**6. Clarification of role, remit and process of the Village Meeting particularly in response to Planning applications:**

- a. GK encouraged by attendance at the meeting. The Village Meeting is seen as the legal entity and discussion is open and valued. GK felt there was a need to re-establish why we have the meeting and how it links to planning. She has spoken with the CEO of WALK, the Monitoring Officer for SDC and Natalie Gist, and what we have been doing is correct. The Chair is to reflect the feeling of the meeting in the consultee response with regards to planning. These consultee responses should be routed in planning guidance from the village plan and the core strategy of SDC. GK proposed that it is this that we focus on in the meeting, the planning portal also enables anyone who feels strongly to comment. Ultimately it is the planning professionals who make decisions, and GK would like the Village Meeting to be an environment where villagers can make their point and then take a vote.
- b. There were two planning applications at the last meeting , both of which were discussed and voted on. The Chair's role is to reflect the views of those who attend the Meeting in any Consultee Response. GK took into consideration the views of those who made apologies, however going forward there will be a return to using the meeting as reflecting the feeling of the village.
- c. Stuart Hyde and Paul Hobday can be called and can chair a meeting in the absence of the Chair.

- d. SH raised whether a vote will be taken on all planning applications. GK – No, if it involves a building or an extension then yes but felling or pruning of trees is usually dealt with by SPD. NR commented that trees are entirely a technical decision. CK commented that along with SH, she used to talk to neighbours either side and the planning officer for minor applications if in line with guidance rules. If she felt there were any major differences, she would email village to gauge response first.
  - e. RC thanked GK for the research she has done, his only comment being that councillors make decisions not planning officers. RC expressed concern regarding those sending apologies to the meeting and sending an email with their views, he felt they should send a representative. NR commented that the Priors Hardwick village meeting is fantastically well attended meeting, other parishes don't have such an engaged community. He commented that you are free to write your own standing order, and as such a proxy would be a halfway house in his opinion. GK asked the room if this was something they would like to see, she personally wouldn't want to be inundated and it de-values the meeting. CB commented that proxies concern her, as the spirit of the village is to come to the meeting, and a proxy is no different to email. GK suggested that we would need a form, and then to nominate someone to cast the vote on your behalf. Only to be used in a very certain set of circumstances. A vote was held to gauge the mood of the meeting, with 3 people believing a proxy vote was a good idea, and the majority disagreeing. GK summed up by saying that she hoped the discussion had been helpful, and she was keen to avoid feelings that the process hadn't been fair or transparent.
7. **HS2 Update** – CK – Still not sure when the road at Wormleighton will be closed. Building of the London Station has been delayed and Birmingham has been stopped. Concern over the state of the roads and verges, once Stoneton Road is closed it will push more cars onto the road to Boddington which already has bad ruts.
8. **Discussion of possible village social events and social committee/ use of open space in the church:**
- a. GK suggested that a small group get together to suggest ideas for events along Leisure Drive once the road is closed, such as a soapbox derby/ street food/ music to be held before the 2025 Village Fete. If anyone would like to be involved please email the chairman so that a Whatsapp group can be set up.
  - b. Ideas for the back of the church – CB – Heating? GK – exploration has started but needs more work. GH suggested that a fabric structure that could be taken down may help to 'tent' the space and keep it warmer in the winter.
9. **AOB** – St Mary's Close and No Man's Land – RC commented that the gravel track that had been removed has now grown back in and people are parking there again and getting stuck etc. The village would like to remind people to stop parking on No Man's Land.

**10. Date of next meeting & AGM – Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm**

**The meeting was closed at 8.43pm.**