

PARISH NEWS

September 2025



Wormleighton - Priors Marston - Priors Hardwick

PRIORS HARDWICK WITH PRIORS MARSTON AND WORMLEIGHTON

part of The Bridges Group of Parishes www.thebridgesgroup.org.uk

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THE PARISH NEWS

If you want to contribute towards the cost of printing the Parish News in cash, please give it to the volunteer who delivers your magazine, anyone named in the box on page 2 or hand in at the Post Office in the Priors Hall. If you prefer to contribute electronically, you can use the QR code shown or, for direct transfers, bank details are as follows:-



Account name: Priors Marston PCC

Sort code 30-98-97

Account number 80353963.

Please reference your donation as 'Parish News'.

Many thanks

Helen, Editor. hlnmnzs@gmail.com

PARISH NEWS DEADLINES: Helen Menezes 07719 807915
hlnmnzs@gmail.com Hillside House, Keys Lane, Priors Marston, Southam, CV47 7SA. Deadline for inclusion, 15th of the month before (except for January and August magazines, which are combined with the December and July issues respectively).

PARISH NEWS PDF: You can read the Parish News in PDF format, by sending a request to the editor – hlnmnzs@gmail.com. You can also read the latest edition on the Priors Marston Parish Council website <http://www.priorsmarston.org>.

<p>Disclaimer: Please note that views expressed in articles in The Parish News are the views of the authors.</p>
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ST. LEONARD'S CHURCH, PRIORS MARSTON Flower Rota:

31 st Aug/7 th Sept	Anna Holland
14 th /21 st September	Rachel Ducker
28 th Sept/5 th Oct	Shirley Monkhouse

If you would like to help with cleaning, we meet on the first Saturday of every month at 10.00am in St Leonard's, to clean the church, enjoy coffee, biscuits and a chat.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, PRIORS HARDWICK Cleaning/Flower Rota

31 st Aug/7 th Sept	Nathalie Bull/Nathalie Bull
14 th /21 st September	Isabel Davies/Isabel Davies
28 th Sept/5 th Oct	Jenny Vendries/Jenny Vendries

* * * * *

Calling all bellringers, past, present and maybe future....

Our small band of church bellringers, at St Leonard's, Priors Marston, has been reduced even further due to ill health and people moving away from the village and we are in desperate need of more ringers to join us.

Are you a ringer? Have you rung in the past? Or perhaps you would like to learn?

There is a certain commitment involved. We try to meet at a mutually convenient time to practise and aim to ring for Sunday morning services as well as special occasions such as Easter and Christmas, as well as weddings by request.

If you are interested, please contact Elaine Forsyth or email hlnmnzs@gmail.com – or just drop in to see us in action next time you hear the bells being rung.

Wormleighton Harvest Lunch



Sunday 12th October 12:30pm for 1:00pm

Tickets £12 adults £8 children (5-16)

All profits go towards the upkeep of
St Peter's Church

For tickets please message:
treasurer.wormleightonpcc@gmail.com

BYO booze, raffle donations welcome

Tickets will be on sale until
3rd October 2025



The Priors PTA Christmas Fair

Saturday 6th December
Midday – 3pm

Local businesses wishing to have
a stall selling products - please
contact pta@thepriorsschool.co.uk
Pitches are £20!

Autumn at Priors Marston church~ 10.30 am

SEPTEMBER 21st

Celebrate the Season of Creation

OCTOBER 19th

Harvest festival

Followed by a Bring and Share lunch

OCTOBER 20th

School Harvest Festival

Followed by Coffee and Cake

NOVEMBER 2nd

Our patron Saint Leonard

Thank you to everybody!

Followed by refreshments

NOVEMBER 9th

Remembrance service

At the War Memorial

****10.45 ****



VILLAGE VOICES PODCAST

The Living History of Priors Hardwick

Real stories. Local voices. A rich village heritage.

Explore previous episodes of our on-demand podcast series – new episodes released each month. Available online, anytime

<https://priorshardwick.org.uk/podcasts-2>



PRIORS HARDWICK ARCHIVE

Browse our online collection of photos, documents, and artefacts

Help keep the history of the village alive – share your village photographs, memorabilia or stories

<https://priorshardwick.org.uk/priors-hardwick-archive>



Priors Marston Church

**Sunday 21 September
10.30am**

**Come and Celebrate
the Season of Creation
in words and music**



Garden of Peace
Isaiah 32:14-18

**PEACE
WITH CREATION**
SEASON OF CREATION 2025

Followed by refreshments

What are Listed Buildings?

These are buildings and scheduled monuments that are included on the National Heritage List. Listing might not always be welcomed by the property owner, due to the planning restrictions that may be placed on any maintenance and improvement work, but the listed structures are usually more than 30 years old and include buildings, walls, shops, mills, factories, churches, synagogues and many more such things.

Listing began in the 1940's, with the Town and Country Planning Act 1944 and covers everything of special historic interest. There are over 370,000 items listed on the register for England, which are divided into:

1. Scheduled monuments
2. Grade 1 items of exceptional historical importance (2.5%)
3. Grade 2* for those of particular importance and
4. Grade 2 for those of special interest, which is the vast majority at 91.7%

Mistakes can be made and there is the story of the Council Conservation Officer, who drove past a lovely Tudor building and, when he got back to the office, he noticed that it was not listed and immediately placed a listing order on it so the owner could not quickly pull it down.

Unfortunately, he wasted his time as the building, with full planning permission, had only been built three months before, so the process of de-listing at our expense commenced.

The 'List' origins go back to the Second World War, when it was crucial to list and note especially important historic buildings that should be left standing and repaired, rather than just demolished after the bombing that took place in the early 1940's. The process began in London and then spread to other parts of the country and, no doubt, without this process, there would be nothing of historic interest left in towns such as Coventry, where vast numbers of buildings were blitzed and then simply demolished. Listing saved at least some of them.

In Priors Marston, 31 interesting artifacts are listed, with Gable End being a Grade 2* and the rest Grade 2, including our local pub, The Hollybush, and a garden wall near to The Cedars. St Leonard's Church and various box tombs and headstones are also on the list.

Priors Hardwick has 23 items listed, of which three are scheduled areas of land where the medieval settlement of Priors Hardwick once stood before the village reduced in size to give way to sheep grazing. The canal bridges in the parish are on the list, together with the Church of St Mary and its box tombs and some headstones. Interestingly, the Butchers Arms which is reputed to be the oldest house in Priors Hardwick dating from the 1500's, and perhaps earlier, does not have a listing, but the 'K2 Telephone Box' close to it is Grade 2 listed.

Perhaps Priors Marston should use the opportunity to paint its telephone box on Shuckburgh Road bright purple and convert it into a nightclub before it is either removed or listed!

Wormleighton outdoes us all with Althrop House coming in at Grade 1 and the Church of St Peter and the Manor House both listed at Grade 2*. As with the listings in our other parishes, its canal bridges are listed, as is an area deemed to be the site of the medieval settlement of Wormington. Its Drinking fountain, trough, war memorial steps and railing are grade 2 listed, but the war memorials in both Priors Hardwick and Priors Marston are not protected.

The listing process does seem to be a little random and as our three parishes are all beautiful and historic villages 'on the scenic drive', perhaps the Parish Councils of each of the villages could get together to get some more consistency in the listing process and so preserve our environment as much as possible. Once it has gone it has gone!

Howard Tissiman

I have been asked to send you a poem in memory of Eric Bull 1923-2002, who lived at the top of Marston Hill. It was written by Monica Evans in 2012. Many people will remember him.

Shirley Monkhouse

The Man on the Hill

I remember him,
the man who lived lonely
on the top of Marston hill
in a house bereft of comfort,
bare, dilapidated, tumbling down.
He wrote messages on a board
at the bottom of his overgrown garden,
his thoughts on life, God, the world,
hay for sale, horses pastured.
Once he advertised for a wife,
a women to share his home;
but what woman would accept
such a life? There were no takers.
He was a solitary philosopher,
unheeded and ignored by most.
Thieves broke in one day
and stole his money.
He did not believe in banks
and so he kept his cash
hidden within the crumbling house.
They found it of course
and he was left destitute and broken.
One Christmas, some kind soul
left four cans of beer on his doorstep.
He wrote a touching thank-you
note upon his board proving that he was not
entirely forgotten by the villagers below.
His house has gone and in its place stands
A building large and luxurious
which dominates the old hill,
full of mod cons and affluence.
Outside, steep terraced gardens
march down the grassy slope.
Now there is no blackboard
at the bottom of the garden
but I remember him still
the lonely man who lived on the hill.

BENCH IN THE CHURCHYARD

This bench, given in memory of Jack Watson, is much used, but now needs some TLC before the winter to prevent serious damage.



If you feel you would like to sand it down and treat it, that would be welcomed by the many who enjoy restful moments or a chat together.

Contact: Malcolm on 07855 855063

Report from Your District Councillors – September 2025

Stratford on Avon District Council

The District Council wants to hear from you!

The government has decided to merge the functions of the District and County Councils into a Unitary Authority. Although central government will make the final decision as these changes are being considered, it is important that residents have a say in the future of their local councils. More information is available on the District Council's website – just click on the link if reading in electronic form: [Reshaping our Councils for the future of Warwickshire](#)

There are two alternatives under consideration: to merge all six local councils (Warwickshire County, Stratford-on-Avon, Rugby, North Warwickshire, Warwick, Nuneaton & Bedworth) into one across Warwickshire - or - to have two 'unitary' councils, which in our case would mean covering Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District areas with a new South Warwickshire council.

The [Deloitte report](#) (on SDC's website) evaluates the two proposals which were identified by Stratford-on-Avon Council in the "interim plan" in March and concludes that a ***two-unitary model*** emerges as the most advantageous structure for Warwickshire.

A public engagement exercise is running from Thursday 7 August to Sunday 14 September and we encourage all residents to put forward their views. Please have your say here: [Have your say - Shaping the future of our Councils](#). If you would like a paper copy, please call 01789 267575.

Whilst there are arguments both ways, on present knowledge, we believe that a South Warwickshire Council (estimated population 295,000) would be the best for our residents. Those in favour of a large whole Warwickshire (estimated population 617,000) solution, argue that it will be a difficult transition to split up the big spending services such as social care, fire, highways and education (even though some of these are already organised on a district area basis). It is our view that, as a principle, local government should be local, and the council tax payer will be financially and democratically better served by a smaller unitary council. At its simplest, there would appear to be lower council tax in the South Warwickshire proposal, and fewer remote services including better councillor representation ratios.

HS2

There will be A423 closures between Ladbroke and Southam during September and November. This relates to the construction of the bridge there and the connection to the road. The disruption, whilst regrettable, is less bad than it might have been due to the intervention of councillors and council officers in putting pressure on HS2 and the contractors, who had intended much longer closures. In detail, the 'estimated timings' are:

- Early September 2025 - Two-week road closure to join the bypass to the current road. Operation of bypass around north bridge approach road. 30mph speed limit in place.
- November 2025 -Weekend road closure to install safety barriers in the road on the south approach road, by layby to continue construction safely
- Summer 2026 - Three-to-four-week road closure for permanent tie-ins of new bridge
- We are told that other 'occasional' weekend closures or traffic management may be required.

The long-scheduled closure of the road between Wormleighton, Boddington and Priors Hardwick is still due for 'late summer' and will last, in part, for up to two years, but we expect that to be further delayed. There was intended be a shorter-term closure of the same section for two weeks in early August, but this was announced and then shelved. New timing is uncertain. Nigel continues to press for constructive meetings with HS2 and the contractors.

STOP PRESS:- A section of Wormleighton Road and Warwick Road between Wormleighton, Boddington and Priors Hardwick will be closed from 26 August to 23 September 2025.

Stoneton Lane will be closed from 26 August 2025 for approximately 2 years

More information can be found at <https://www.hs2.org.uk/work-items/notice-of-road-closures-wormleighton-road-warwick-road-and-stoneton-lane-boddington>

Postal Voters

Following changes introduced by the Elections Act 2022, voters are now required to reapply for their postal vote every three years.

All postal voters who completed a postal vote application form before 31 October 2023 will be required to renew their postal vote application by 31 January 2026. Postal votes will be limited to a maximum of three years, following which it will be necessary to make a new application.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council will be contacting around 17,000 registered postal voters in the District directly by email, where an email address is held, or by post informing them of the new rules and encouraging them to reapply as soon as possible ahead of the deadline. If voters do not reapply before the deadline, their postal vote will be cancelled.

The quickest and easiest way to reapply for a postal vote application is to apply online at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote

For more information, please visit: www.stratford.gov.uk/postal-votes

Five Year Housing Land Supply

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has released an interim update to its Five-Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS) position, reflecting recent changes to national planning policy and a significant increase in Local Housing Need (LHN).

Following the Government's revision of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and an updated methodology for calculating LHN introduced late last year, the District Council's annual housing requirement has risen from 730 to 1,126 homes per annum.

In response, the District Council has reassessed its housing land supply assumptions, particularly regarding delivery expectations from key sites.

Despite these adjustments, and some challenges from developers, the District Council believes that it continues to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, with the updated position showing a supply equivalent to 5.06 years. This ensures that the Core Strategy retains full weight in the determination of planning applications. The effect of the validity of the Core Strategy is important in ensuring that all applications conform with planning policy and prevent unsuitable developments.

Warm Homes

Despite the recent warmer weather, Stratford-on-Avon District Council is thinking ahead to the cooler months and is pleased to announce a new funding scheme available to residents to help keep homes warm and reduce the cost of energy bills.

The Warm Homes Local Grant (WHLG) is primarily funded by Stratford-on-Avon District Council, but is complemented by funding from the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The scheme will build on the success of the Home Upgrade Grant 2 scheme, which saw 98 properties occupied by lower income households upgraded. The WHLG funding aims to improve the warmth and comfort of more of the worst performing homes across the District, whilst also reducing energy bills, carbon emissions and levels of fuel poverty.

If you are eligible for the WHLG scheme, an assessor will visit your home to determine the best energy efficiency measures, which could be various types of insulation or clean heating sources. Any approved measures will be installed completely free of charge.

You could be eligible if you are a homeowner or a private rented tenant, and if you:

- Have a home [Energy Performance Certificate](#) (EPC) of D, E, F or G
- Have a combined annual household income under £36,000 (savings are not assessed) or receive means-tested benefits

Other eligibility criteria could be available, please contact Act on Energy.

The District Council is working with partners E.ON and Act on Energy to deliver WHLG and you can apply for the funding via the E.ON website: [Grant Finder | Check Your Eligibility for Home Efficiency Grants](#)

If you would like to know more about home energy improvement options or other funding schemes, you can visit the District Council's website: [Energy & Warmth | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)

You can contact Act on Energy directly via phone 0800 988 2881, or email advice@actonenergy.org.uk

Silver Award from Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has been awarded a Silver Award from the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS).

The prestigious award recognises employers who have actively demonstrated support for the Armed Forces community by implementing policies to help them.

To achieve the Silver Award, organisations must proactively demonstrate that the Armed Forces community is not unfairly disadvantaged as part of their recruitment policies.

They must also actively ensure their workforce is aware of their positive policies towards the defence community and understand issues for reservists, veterans, cadet force adult volunteers, and spouses and partners of those serving in the Armed Forces.

Community Safety

Meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner

Nigel and Natalie have met with the Police and Crime Commissioner to discuss ongoing ward concerns. The Commissioner wished to reassure residents that uniformed officers are not the only police officers and around half of the police force are not in uniform. Nevertheless, the Commissioner did acknowledge that Southam SNT are a small team working in a large geographical area and he would take our points to his weekly discussion with the Chief Constable.

Natalie Gist

natalie.gist@stratford-dc.gov.uk

Nigel Rock

nigel.rock@stratford-dc.gov.uk

* * * * *

Coffee & Chat!



Sadly, it has been decided that we cannot continue with Coffee and Chat. Because of changes in commitments and for health reasons, it is now difficult to maintain the necessary team.

Since October 2019, it has been lovely to meet and we have been able to make donations to local charities and support the Woodford Halse Foodbank.

With our love and best wishes to you all,
Anna and Shirley

PRIORS HARDWICK VILLAGE NEWS

PRIORS HARDWICK VILLAGE MEETING

The next Village Meeting will be held
at 7.30pm in the Church on
Thursday 23rd October

FOOD BANK

Non-perishable and 'in date' items may be left
in the telephone box, in Priors Hardwick.

Toiletries are also welcome.

Donations are taken to the Food Bank at Southam,
which is open on Mondays (except Bank Holidays)
between 11.00am and 1.00pm.

The Food Bank is run and regulated by
THE TRUSSELL TRUST

which provides emergency food and support to people in crisis.

ENQUIRIES ABOUT HS2 ACTIVITY

Freephone 08081 434 434

You speak to a real person!

USED POSTAGE STAMPS

The Royal National Institute of Blind People

Used stamps are collected in the phone box at Priors Hardwick, where you will find a
small box labelled for this purpose.

Please leave space of at least 0.5cm all around the stamp.

Stamps are very welcome singly or 'in bulk'.

There is a collection in the church at Priors Marston,
from which stamps will be collected and brought to Priors Hardwick.

The box is emptied every weekday morning.



Corner Cottage
Priors Hardwick
Warwickshire
CV47 7SN
Phone 07866 621855

Dear Friends and Supporters,

August 2025

Subject: Important Update – Closure of PET

It is with mixed emotions that we write to share important news about the future of **The Priors Education Trust (PET)**.

Our journey began in 1996, when the Local Education Authority made the decision to close **The Priors School**. What followed was nothing short of extraordinary.

Refusing to accept the closure of the village school, the community rallied together with determination, passion, and ingenuity. Against all odds, and through an incredible community-wide effort, we **raised circa £2 million** to keep the school open and operational. That achievement alone was monumental — but it was only the beginning.

The funding supported staff salaries, equipment, classroom resources, and the day-to-day operations that kept the heart of our villages beating. This is something we should all be immensely proud of.

In 2011, The Priors School became the first Free School to open in the country, securing £1 million in government funding to build the new facility we enjoy today and ensuring its long-term viability. Becoming a Free School also brought new restrictions, meaning the school could no longer run certain vital services, such as the nursery, the before-and-after school club (B&A Club), and the FOPS charity shop.

In response, **The Priors Education Trust (PET)** was formed from the original school charity, with a new mission: to take on these services and continue supporting the educational needs of the villages. Once again, our community rose to the occasion — helping us deliver nursery provision, wraparound childcare, and fundraising through the FOPS shop.

In 2020, the government changed the rules again and the school took back operational responsibility for the nursery and B&A Club. The FOPS shop closed shortly after, having served its purpose well.

PET then transitioned into a **grant-giving charity**, with its objectives updated to advancing education in the UK, particularly by supporting pupils of The Priors School and other local children.

Following a careful review of PET's records, we have compiled a full picture of the financial contribution PET has made over the years — and we're incredibly proud to share it with you.

Since 2011, **PET has awarded a total of £92,675.24 in grants**, the vast majority of which directly supported The Priors School and its pupils.

Financial Year	Total Grants Awarded
2011/12	£1,610
2012/13	£14,934
2013/14	£5,896
2014/15	£5,782
2015/16	£14,175
2016/17	£12,903
2017/18	£640
2018/19	£4,570
2019/20	£4,958
2020/21	£7,676
2021/22	£7,493
2022/23	£4,069
2023/24	£2,151
2024 to date	£5,818
Total	£92,675

This included supporting The Priors School during the COVID pandemic, helping it to operate smoothly through a challenging period when many other small schools struggled.

In addition to these direct grants, PET also contributed approximately **£108,000 over nine years** in “cross charges” to The Priors School — payments made for use of the building and shared staff time to support the nursery and B&A Club. While technically operational, these costs represented meaningful financial support to the school’s broader educational mission at the time.

If included, this brings **PET’s total financial contribution to over £200,000**.

Notably, only about **£5,000 of our grants went to causes outside The Priors School**, underscoring the **highly focused impact** PET has had on local children, families, and the local educational landscape.

A recent Charity Commission seminar noted the following: “A charity should have an end plan. Once it has achieved its aims, it should consider whether it is appropriate to continue operating or to wind up.”

We believe PET has now reached this point.

- We fulfilled the founding mission: **To keep a thriving school for the children of Priors Marston, Priors Hardwick and surrounding communities**.
- We evolved to meet changing needs and continued to deliver educational value.
- We provided over **£200,000 of support** to local education.
- The Priors School is now part of the **Warriner Multi Academy Trust** — which ensures long-term stability, resources, and protection for the future.

After very careful consideration, the Trustees have therefore decided to begin the process of winding up PET. Any remaining assets will, in accordance with our governing document, be transferred to charities whose purposes align with ours – in particular, those that advance the education of children in our community.

We will update you once this process is complete.

From the beginning, PET’s work has only been possible because of **you** — our friends, supporters, donors, volunteers, and neighbours. You gave your time, your energy, and your faith. You attended balls, bid at auctions, donated goods, manned the shop, cycled and ran marathons, dug deep into your pockets — and stood together in defence of a school worth saving.

You helped keep The Priors School alive.
You helped it grow.
You helped it thrive.

And now, with pride and gratitude, we close this chapter, knowing we achieved exactly what we set out to do.

Thank you — for everything.



Jane Richards

Chair of Trustees on behalf of

The Priors Education Trust - Trustees present and past

Caroline Wilson	Jess Ashenden	Lucy Pike	Pete Brown
David Adams	Jill Sutton	Margaret Clarke	Rebecca Phipps
Jane Richards	John Newton	Micky Broadhurst	Sarah Franklin

and our all-important Treasurer - Dot Brown

Priors Marston and Priors Hardwick School Trustees (pre 2011)

Brenda Edwards	John Newton	Rev Michael Greig
Brian James	John White	Rosemary Hobday
Carolyn Bath	Karen Perry	Simon Wallis
Carolyn Booth	Lizzie Watkins	Sue Benson
Chris Bradley	Margaret Clarke	Tim Higgs
Chris Scaife	Michael Carter	Tony Porter
David Adams	Nicky Michelmore	Wendy Sheldon
Diane Duke	Norma Parry	
Gary Murrell	Paul Stockport	Treasurers:
Jane Richards	Peter Brown	Sarah Bunney
Jenny Lawrence	Rev Geoff Morris	Sarah Mills
Jill Sutton	Rev Ken Phillips	

Company No. 07747639

Charity Commission Reg. No. 1145955

The Bridges Group Church Services

September 2025

BCP – Book of Common Prayer CW – Common Worship

THE BRIGES GROUP	7 th September Trinity 12 Green	14 th September Trinity 13 Green	21 st September Trinity 14 Green	28 th September Trinity 15 Green
PRIORS HARDWICK	Morning Worship 9.00am Lay Led	PATRONAL FESTIVAL 6.00pm Lay Led	BCP Holy Communion 9.00am GOLDEN WEDDING THANKSGIVING 11.00AM	
PRIORS MARSTON	Morning Worship 10.30am Lay Led	CW Holy Communion 10.30am	Morning Worship 10.30am Lay Led	
WORMLEIGHTON				Morning Worship 10.30am Lay Led
NAPTON	CW Holy Communion 10.30am	Morning Worship 10.30am Lay Led	CW Holy Communion 10.30am	Sung Evensong 5.00pm Lay Led
STOCKTON	Morning Worship 10.30am Lay Led	Holy Communion In the Methodist Tradition 10.30am		CW Holy Communion 10.30am
LOWER SHUCKBURGH				BCP Holy Communion 9.00am

The Bridges Group of Parishes

Notices

Programme for Children and Youth

Create & Play: Tuesday mornings from 9.30 - 10.45am (term-times) in Stockton Church - for further details, contact: Deborah Dutton on 01926 819016 or

deborahduttoncreative@gmail.com

Babies & Toddlers Group: Monday mornings from 9.30 – 11.00am (term-times) in Napton Village Hall - for further details, contact: Helen Eadon on 07811 010440

Messy Church –on 3rd Sundays of the month at 4.00pm, venues to be confirmed.

Mid-week programme for Adults - Home Bible Study Groups

The following groups meet for Bible study, prayer and fellowship to pray for our communities. 4 groups are in-person and 1 is online. If you would like to join, please contact the group leader below:

Every Tuesday online at 6.15pm on Zoom	Katie	07965 209075
Every Wednesday at 8.00pm in Stockton	Wendy	01926 812694
1 st & 3 rd Thursdays at 2.30pm in Stockton	Jan	01926 817991
Every Thursday at 8.00pm in Napton	Julia	01926 811476
Weekly (day varies) at 7.30pm in Napton	Angie	01926 812225

Social get-togethers

Knit & Natter: Mondays at 2.00pm in Stockton Church	Jan	01926 817991
Knit & Natter: Mondays at 2.00pm in Napton	Jayne	01926 813227

Parish Enquiries

For initial enquiries about baptisms, weddings, funerals and graveyard matters etc., please contact Susan, our Group Administrator, on 01926 812383 or email: admin@thebridgesgroup.org.uk. Please note that Susan works part-time, but she will get back to you as quickly as she can.

www.thebridgesgroup.org.uk

PRIORS MARSTON & HARDWICK WI

Wednesday 17th September 2025

7.30p.m.

Venue: The Priors Hall

Female Spies

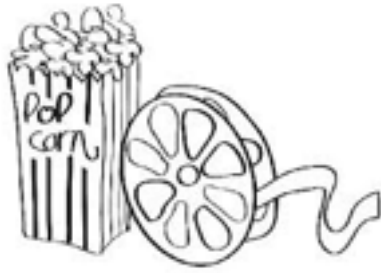
Dr Kate Vigurs, historian, author and researcher will be talking to us about the incredible work of the female spy.

=====

The First Lady Bus Driver, Jess Nash, came to talk to us at our July meeting. Jess was an absolute delight and kept us riveted with her stories of bus driving. In the 1970's, women were not allowed to drive buses, they could only be a clipper. Jess certainly bucked this trend when finally she was given a bus driving job. Driving ambulances for a few years stood her in good stead to take on a London bus, with much better skills than most of the men. After smaller village and small town buses, Jess made it to the dizzy heights of the London Routemaster buses, passing the skidpan test with flying colours. When Jess hung up her driver's hat, she became the first lady inspector. Her original driver's badge is in the London Transport Museum, as a lasting reminder of how things have changed.

Visitors and new members are always welcome.

Contact: Jane Cowen 07979 550202
 Fiona Spencer 01327 263423



**Film Nights
at
The Priors Hall**

**Friday 19 September
The Penguin Lessons**

Year of Release: 2025 Certificate 12A Running Time: 1 hr 50 mins

Doors Open at 7:00pm

Film starts at 7:30pm

Inspired by the true story of a disillusioned Englishman, who goes to work in a school in Argentina in 1976. Expecting an easy ride, he discovers a divided nation and a class of unteachable students. However, he finds his life transformed after he rescues a penguin from an oil-slicked beach.

Cast includes: Steve Coogan, Jonathan Pryce, Julia Fossi and Vivian El Jaber.

- Free tea, coffee and biscuits are served in the interval but please feel free to bring your own refreshments.
- There is no charge for admission, but there is a collection box for voluntary donations towards our costs.

If you have any questions or wish to receive e-mail updates

Contact The Priors Cinema Team at:

priorscinema@gmail.com

You can also call Lee Robinson Tel: 01327 263268



THE PRIORS HALL

New committee members are always welcome. If you are interested, please email Lee Robinson at priorscinema@gmail.com

The Priors Hall serves Priors Hardwick and Priors Marston. It is available for meetings and functions. Please contact Barbara Harvey, 01327 260709, info.thepriorsshall@gmail.com, to book, or for more information. The hire rate is £20.00 per hour, with a village rate of £15.00 per hour. Hiring for longer periods is possible, subject to availability - the rates depend on precisely what is required. Two local businesses are based in offices upstairs at the Hall, as well as hairdressing and post office downstairs.

Current activities include:-

- Lacey's His and Hers Hairdressing: Tuesday to Saturday, by appointment, 01327 263330 and 07733 102564.
- Post Office: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10.00 am - 1.00 pm and 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm, 01327 261743.
- Play Group: Wednesday mornings. eleanorwakeford@outlook.com
- Women's Institute: Meet on the third Wednesday of the month, 7.30 pm.
- Film Nights: Film nights are on the third Friday of the month, from September to May, at 7.30 pm. priorscinema@gmail.com Lee Robinson, 01327 263268.

Badminton, darts, short mat bowls and table tennis equipment are available for use. The hall committee is always pleased to hear from people with ideas for new activities and events.

Air Ambulance: A clothing bank is situated in the car park of The Priors Hall, for donations.

PRIORS MARSTON PARISH COUNCIL

VILLAGE COMMUNICATION

If you would like to be added to the village email list, to keep up to date with village news, or are new to Priors Marston and would like a copy of the Parish Plan, please email the Clerk, emma@priorsmarston.org

The Parish Council also has a Facebook page - please find us @Priors Marston parish council.

www.priorsmarston.org



priorsmarstonparishcouncil

* * * * *

PRIORS HARDWICK WEBSITE

You can keep up to date with what's going on in and around Priors Hardwick here:- <http://www.priorshardwick.org.uk>

* * * * *

FROM THE CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN

Our services

The Pet Service Anything more different from the wonderful Songs of Praise at the Pentecost Service would be hard to imagine! The first Sunday in July should provide decent weather! The forecast wasn't brilliant, but suggested outside on the Green might be possible, so we set up a few chairs, table and the keyboard, duly attached to the power, thanks to Ian and Debbie Mercer. 21 brave people attended, with a wide variety of dogs, one pony and one lamb – on a lead of course! The Darbishire family and the Tredwell family read and acted out the story of creation to the great delight of us all, in spite of the rain and sometimes a slight breeze as well! As we sang the first hymn, there was slight drizzle -and we managed - but as we progressed, the rain became more persistent. Part of the activity involved whipping some double cream whilst poems

involving the activity were read - about 2-3 minutes. Sadly, with rain dripping into the cream, the result was not quite as we expected, it thickened just a bit!! And for playing the keyboard in the rain, you need someone to hold the umbrella over the organist, someone to hold another umbrella over the music (which we didn't think of) and two hands to play the notes. We managed – just about. Our valiant ladies served refreshments on the green under the persistent drizzle, but as people began to seek the refuge of their cars and the rest of us retired to the shelter of the Lychgate, there was the most amazing crack of thunder, obviously right above us, with a second a few moments later and the heavens opened with 8.5mm of rain in about 20 minutes.

Very many huge thanks to thanks to all who took part, especially the Tredwell and Darbishire families, the ladies who prepared and served the refreshments - and cleared up afterwards - and our valiant, long-suffering organist, Dr Gerard Hyland. The keyboard recovered from the experience by the following Tuesday morning!

With people away on holiday during August, we followed our routine services throughout the month, but September is going to be interesting, with our Patronal Festival as always on the second Sunday Evening (even though the actual date is 8th September) and for this we are preparing no serious talk, but a poem describing the main events in the life of the Virgin Mary, interspersed with short well-known hymns for everyone to join in. The service will also include the Bellringers' hymn, which we learned for last year's Festival, where the Handbell ringers lead us, the organ joins in and we all sing at least one verse. We were delighted last year when this experiment turned out to be such a success.

Golden Wedding Celebration – Mr and Mrs Christopher Hodgson

We're delighted to be hosting this thanksgiving service in church on Sunday 21st September at 11.00am. Members of the family have chosen the content of the service and will be taking part and Dr Gerard Hyland will play the organ. Christopher has been an outstanding, leading member of our church and community over the past 20 years and everyone is invited to join the family for this joyful occasion. Refreshments will be served after the service.

The Church building

Project Enable We are delighted and most grateful to have received, from the Fete Committee, substantial grants towards the cost of improved lighting and heating for the community area in the church and a further, similar grant to be spent as we wish on other work required in the church – of which there is plenty.

The new facilities The Faculty was granted, and the trial holes both outside and inside the vestry were completed. Nothing untoward was reported by the archaeologist, but the very latest news (12.08.25) from the Structural Engineer is that it's probably possible, but definitely costly, to lower the vestry floor in order to permit a level entrance from the nave. A great deal of effort has been involved, behind the scenes, with research work

and applications for grants and Faculties and for this we are most grateful once more to Jenny Hoban and Christopher Hodgson.

The leaded windows Our architect, Bryan Martin is liaising with Stephen Fear, the glazier, with a view to replacing the broken section of the east window and repairing the masonry surrounding it. A second stage of the work will be to repair as necessary the remaining masonry. A Faculty will be required when all the details are to hand.

The Quinquennial Inspection Fortunately, this produced no surprises. Several of the lime trees need attention as do the Cedar and the Cyprus, but neither needs extensive work. Some of the headstones have become loose in the ground due to the drought, age or failure of the construction. Please refer to the list below if you can help us trace any family members (*). One further item which needs attention is the path, which leads from the Lychgate to the church porch. Some of the stone slabs are chipped and broken and the tarmac path is, in some places, seriously eroded. If anyone knows of any similar tarmacking work to be undertaken in the near future, in this area, we'd be most grateful for a tip-off!

Other ongoing work on the actual building is very much as we expected.

The Southam District Advertiser This did not seem to be a very popular publication and there were no offers of volunteers for delivery! We have heard nothing more from the owner.

Donations in the phone box These have continued encouragingly and the volunteers at the Food Bank are often very busy, both with incoming donations and preparation of food parcels for applicants. The size and contents of the parcels are pre-determined and carefully calculated to correspond to the size of the family concerned. These are all recorded. Our donations are weighed and recorded at each visit.

Used Stamps At the end of July, I sent off to RNIB one of their A4 self-addressed, post-paid envelopes, full of trimmed stamps and weighing, about half a kilo. And still stamps find their way to the phone box or to me, so even now, I'm well on the way to filling another envelope. Please keep them coming!!

To all those beginning a new stage in the world of education, be it learning or teaching or ancillary work, or just a change of employment we offer our very best wishes.

Margaret Clarke for the PCC

(*) If you can help us trace any remaining family members of the following, please could you let me know:

Richard and Ellen Haynes and their son Ralph;
Harriet Haynes;
Septimus (mentioned in the latest podcast!) and Lizzie Haynes;
? Luckuck family;
George, Hannah and Richard Green.

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robertholland679@gmail.com

FAMILY HISTORY ENQUIRIES
SHIRLEY MONKHOUSE: Tel/text 07870 685 124 &
s.a.monkhouse@hotmail.co.uk

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GARDEN JOTTINGS FROM BRIDGE NURSERY

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Am I always complaining about the weather? This year is turning out to be one of the driest for a very long time. The cracks in the garden are getting deeper and wider as the weeks without rain continue. I put my arm down one of them up to my elbow, then got nervous in case all the slugs were at the bottom. It was 50cm deep. Trees are shedding leaves already and a couple of shrubs have shrivelled and become brown and crispy mounds. Many other plants are much shorter than usual and flowering has finished earlier this year. Not all the plants are looking stressed though. Surprisingly the *Veronicastrum* and *Lysimachia* 'Firepower' (both normally wilt the moment it gets dry) are growing well.

This is the month when we all think of getting more bulbs for the garden for a colourful spring display, but unless we have significant rain, it won't be possible to dig holes to get them in the ground. The solution is to plant them in pots and plant them out later in the winter or even wait until existing bulbs appear so you know where the gaps are. Cuttings can be taken of tender shrubs and plants, such as pelargoniums and some of the shrubby salvias, to ensure you have 'spares' in case we have a bad winter. Don't forget to bring houseplants back inside before the end of the month.

Christine Dakin

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WEATHER JOTTINGS JULY 2025

The total rainfall in Priors Hardwick came to 46mm, which seems generous by comparison with the last four months, whose average was 20mm. The total rainfall so far this year is 247mm, which is now 2nd only to 2011, as the driest year this century, when the rainfall to the end of July came to 210mm. That year, the total for the year came to 396mm, the average for the last 5 months being about 35mm. Usually, the last months of the year are wetter than the first five.

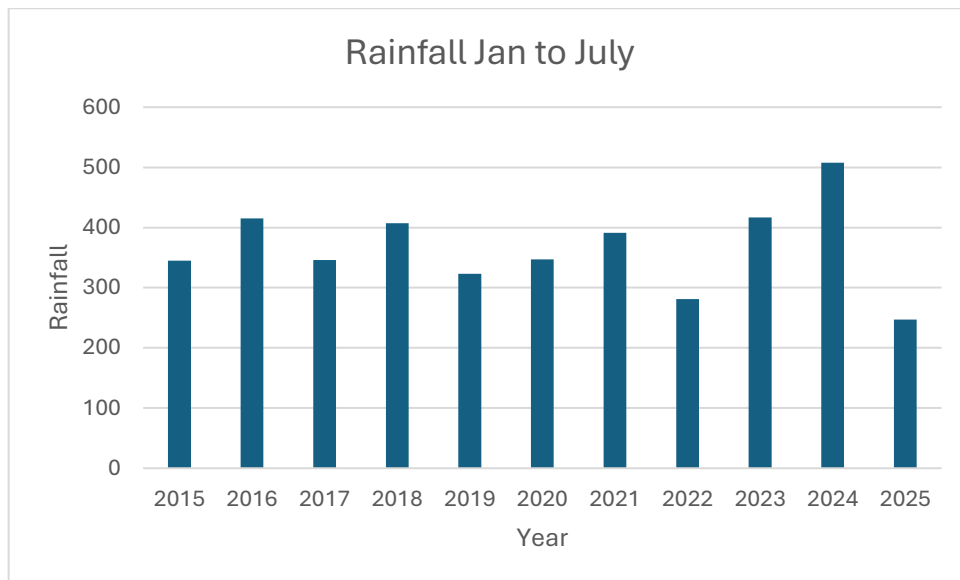
The first rain of the month came on Sunday 6th -and did it rain on that day? The day of the Pet Service on the Green! All was well, as a few chairs, table and keyboard were set up under a cloudy sky, but with no forecast of serious rain, so at 9.00am people with umbrellas; dogs, pony and lamb gathered and we began. As we progressed, so did the rainfall, but still, we managed to complete the service and a brief time for refreshments - under umbrellas. Then, as we gradually moved to the Lychgate or home, there was the most amazing crack of thunder, with a second a few moments later and the heavens opened with 8.5mm in about 20 minutes. We had 7mm of rain on Monday 7th and 2mm overnight, but a lovely day on Tuesday 8th.

However, it did rain here on St Swithin's Day - Tuesday 15th! It was a cool day, with only 16°C, the coolest day of the month. There was a little light rain in the late morning, but heavy rain briefly around 5.00pm, yielding 3mm, but, with the wind being very light, rainfall was mostly rather local. For the next week in Priors Hardwick, we had some rainfall on five days, totalling 10mm. Then, during the last 9 days of the month, we had light rainfall on two days, for which I recorded 'trace'.

Temperatures during the first half of the month were on the high side. I recorded 31°C on Tuesday 1st and 32°C on Friday 11th and for that day I added humidity – awful! But on Tuesday 1st, 35.9°C was recorded in the South-east. From Saturday 5th, the temperature was generally more bearable in the lower 20°C's, until the next heatwave on the weekend of 11th – ended by St Swithin! For the remainder of the month, the temperature remained in the lower 20°C's.

On Tuesday 8th, and again later, I saw a peacock butterfly, but it seemed smaller than those of years ago. In the early mornings, it began to feel quite autumnal towards the end of the month!

Margaret Clarke



* * * * *



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