

Village Meeting Minutes – Priors Hardwick

Date: July 24th 2025 at 7pm
In the Church of St.Mary, Priors Hardwick

In attendance:

Chair - Gill Kinnear (GK)

Treasurer – Carolyn Bath (CB)

Secretary – Emily Darbishire (ED)

County Councillor - Chris Kettle (CK) District Councillor – Nigel Rock

Rob & Anita Barritt; Ian Bath; Margaret Clarke; Simon Darbishire; Isobel Davies; Barbara Harvey; Tim & Jenny Hoban; Gail Holland; Paul & Rosemary Hobday; Callum James; Derrin James; Candy Kelly; Alan Kinnear; Miriam Price; Lucie Penruddock; Adam Lowenthal; Jane Richards; Paul Sankey; Eddie & Ann Uklaja; Sue Talbot; Jago Toner; Belinda Tredwell; Alex Williams; Steve Webb;

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Chair welcomed attendees, thanked everyone involved in the recent village fete and social events (including the open garden at Candy Kelly's), and explained the meeting would be recorded to trial AI-assisted minute taking. Attendees were asked to speak clearly and state names for recording clarity.

2. Apologies for Absence

Received from: Sylvia Sutherland, Lesley Russon, Christopher Hodgson, Sarah Loble and Rolle Niemenim, Elizabeth Jameson, Tonia and Stuart Hyde, Charles Holland, Ian Mercer, Ivan Harvey; Hugh Darbishire.

3. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting (April 8, 2025)

- Minutes approved without amendments.

- Proposed by Barbara Harvey, seconded by Gail Holland.

4. Butcher's Arms Update

Presenters: Adam Lowenthal and Alex Williams

- Shared their personal stories and admiration of the local community.
- Outlined a vision for the Butcher's Arms as a welcoming local pub and restaurant with high-quality, unpretentious food.
- Plans include removing the flat-roof extension, creating a daytime brasserie/café space, improving the garden, and possibly adding boutique accommodation.
- Emphasis on community spirit, local sourcing, and professional but warm service.
- Village response was very positive. Speakers received encouragement and verbal support from attendees.

5. Finance and Fete Funds

Presenter: Carolyn Bath

- Current balance: £10,000 (from 2023 and 2025 fetes).
- Proposed allocations:
 - £500 each to: Katherine House Hospice, Myton Hospice, Air Ambulance (£1500 total).
 - £600 from tea/cake proceeds to the Church (no conditions).
 - £600 for a commercial grade 6x3m gazebo for village events and private hire.
 - Up to £2,500 for some levelling/repair of the Village Green to improve usability.
 - £2,800 for upgrading lighting and heating in the Church community area.
 - Restoration of the War Memorial: estimated cost £1550 with grant support being explored.
- Proposal approved unanimously in principle.

6. War Memorial Restoration

Presenter: Steve Webb

- Professional assessment confirms need for cleaning, algae removal, joint repointing, re-inscribing lettering, and step/base repair.
- Martin Power (ex-Commonwealth War Graves) has quoted £5500 incl. VAT.
- Grant applications planned via War Memorial Trust and Royal Warwickshire Fusiliers.
- Village supports further exploration of funding and work.

7. Village Green Repairs

- Surface currently uneven with dips and ant hills.
- Aim is to make it more accessible for events (e.g. fete, wheelchair access).
- Budget placeholder of £2,500 pending quote. Likely to be much less.
- Supported in principle.

8. Church Community Area Improvements

- Proposal for new lighting and efficient infrared heating panels to enhance usability.
- Quote from Uri Ben Tovim/ Elektra Priors Marston: £2800.
- Supported by attendees.

9. Councillor Updates

Both reports were circulated to the Village in full before the meeting.

County Councillor Christopher Kettle:

- Re-elected May 2025. Available to assist on education, highways, flooding.
- Highlighted SEND funding shortfalls and risk of council insolvency due to overspending.
- Discussed HS2 delays, disruptions, and poor coordination.
- Encouraged residents to report potholes and speed issues (working with Jeff Hobday).

District Councillor Nigel Rock:

- Echoed HS2 concerns. Little confidence in timeline adherence.
- Mentioned devolution/local government reform potentially affecting parish status.
- Parish Council status discussed as a future agenda item.

10. HS2 Update

Speakers: Gill, Candy

- Concerns about lack of coordination in road closures (e.g., Southam-Banbury road, Stoneton Lane).
- Police not yet informed of access/control concerns for closed roads (e.g., fly tipping, traveller encampments).
- Candy highlighted go-slow on HS2 project and limited faith in EKFB.
- New Construction Commissioner appointed (Robert Herger), CK is meeting with him on 1st September.
- Residents encouraged to log complaints officially with HS2.

11. Planning Matters

- **Woodbine Cottage:** No objections filed; the bedroom and office are now in the ancillary accommodation.
- **The Gables:** Rooflight application withdrawn.
- **Land off Welsh Road:** Planning Inspector upheld structure but limited usage to agriculture. Boundary clarity and gate style (rural) reinforced.
- Nigel explained that local authority is now responsible for enforcing revised use conditions.

12. Village Matters

No Man's Land (Joy):

- Working party to be organised for summer strimming/clearing.
- Children's tyre swing area to be preserved.
- Yellow rattle seed to be added to support wildflowers.

Defibrillator Group (Jenny):

- WhatsApp alert system in place for emergencies.
- Refresher training to be offered.
- Partnership forming with Priors Marston.
- Villagers encouraged to get involved. Nigel shared his story of survival thanks to defibrillator.

IT & Archive (Tim):

- Village archive now live on website with growing engagement.
- Podcast on Butcher's Arms listened to 400+ times.
- US engagement increasing, possibly from schools.
- Mowing rota now live with form submission. Site costs remain £70/year.

Church Updates:

- Trial holes in vestry completed; awaiting structural report.
- Chancel window damage identified as urgent.
- Project ENABLE progressing.

13. Meeting Close

- Chair thanked all speakers and attendees.
- Next meeting to possibly include presentation on pros/cons of Parish Council status.
- Keep 15th May 2027 free for the Fete!

The meeting closed at 9pm.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 23rd October at 7pm.