

Priors Hardwick Parish Meeting

Annual General Meeting

Date: 30th April 2026

Time: 19.30

Location: The Church of St. Mary, Priors Hardwick

1. Welcome and Introductions

Meeting opened by Christopher Hodgson as Acting Chair at 19.30.

Attendees:

Gill Kinnear (GK), Carolyn Bath (CB), Nick Ratcliff, Sarah Lobley, Candy Kelly, Ian Bath, Rob and Anita Barritt, Alan Kinnear, Christopher Hodgson (CH), Paul and Rosemary Hobday (RH), Catalina Medina Nuñez, Ann and Eddie Ukleja, Sue Talbot, Richard Cutt, Paul and Sue Sankey, Gail Holland, Councillor Nigel Rock, Jake Beavan, Isobel Davies, Ivan and Barbara Harvey, Jane Richards, Derrin James, Nathalie Bull, Councillor Christopher Kettle, Martyn and Andrea Eustace

Apologies

Hugh and Emily Darbshire, Tim and Jenny Hoban, Ian Mercer, Simon and Angela Darbshire, Margaret Clarke, Rolle Nieminen, Libby Jamieson and James, Sylvia Sutherland, Mark Tredwell, Charles Holland, Steve and Fiona Webb, Simon and Angela Darbshire, Councillor Natalie Gist, Tonia Hicks, Stuart Hyde, Joy Redfern

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th January 2026 were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record.

Proposed by: Gail Holland

Seconded by: Eddie Ukleja

3. Matters Arising

Tree on the Green

CH requested an update re the tree on the green. GK has spoken to a tree surgeon from Stockton, who advised that it is a complex job and would need a cherry picker to complete tree works. GK obtaining further quotes.

Grass Cutting

CH asked for additional volunteers for grass cutting around the bus shelter. Continued thanks to Alan Kinnear for maintaining this area. Additional volunteers would be very welcomed and appreciated.

4. Finance Report - Annual Governance and Accountability Return for year ended 31/03/26 Presented by Carolyn Bath (Treasurer)

4.1 Annual Internal Audit Report

- Clean audit with no issues raised.
- Report received and noted.

4.2 Governance & Controls

- Financial management, risk assessment and compliance processes reviewed.
- Public inspection period confirmed: 3 June – 14 July.
- Annual Governance statement approved.

Proposed by: Carolyn Bath

Seconded by: Sue Talbot

4.3 Accounts Summary

- Total Income: £22,505
 - Precept: £2,500
 - Village Fête: ~£6,000
 - Grants: £12,000
- Total Expenditure: £13,976
- Surplus: £8,529
- Bank Balance: £22,636
(includes £10,000 ring-fenced playground fund)
- Playground / Community Reserve: £6,801
- Additional HS2 Action Group funds (~£4,000) are held separately but could potentially contribute to future community projects.

The accounts were approved.

Proposed: Carolyn Bath

Seconded: Candy Kelly

4.4 External Review Exemption

It was agreed that the Parish Meeting should remain exempt from external review (criteria met).

Proposed: Carolyn Bath

Seconded: Ann Ukleja

5. Election of Committee Members

Outgoing committee stood down.

Chair:

Gill Kinnear was re-elected as Chair.

Proposed: Nick Ratcliff

Seconded: Rosemary Hobday

Secretary:

Sarah Lobley was appointed as Secretary.

Proposed: Carolyn Bath

Seconded: Eddie Ukleja

Treasurer:

Tim Hoban was appointed as Treasurer by the Chair following Carolyn Bath's decision to stand down after 13 years of service.

Quarterly Meeting

6. Chair address

Thanks and Acknowledgements

- Thanks were expressed to Emily Darbishire for her work as Secretary.
- Thanks to Carolyn Bath for her excellent service as Treasurer for the last 13 years of service.
- Thanks to Nigel Rock for his long-standing support as our District Councillor. The village has valued his time, persistence and patience as a committed public servant and wish him the best in his retirement.

7. Butcher's Arms Update

- Representatives were unable to attend.
- Renovations are ongoing and it is now unlikely the pub will reopen in time for the village picnic.
- Plans remain positive based on recent updates.

8. War Memorial & Village Picnic

- **Date:** Saturday, May 2nd, 2026
- **Timings:**
 - Gather from 11:00
 - Service at 11:15
 - Picnic from approximately 12:00
- **Activities will include:**
 - Bugler and cadets
 - Exhibitions and memorabilia
 - Children's competition (peace theme)

The restoration of the War Memorial was praised, with significant improvements noted. Thanks to Steve Webb for his support regarding the War Memorial restoration. Thanks to Eddie Ukleja and Alan Kinnear for completing the finishing touches.

9. Councillor Reports

District (Councillor Natalie Gist)

- Report circulated.
- Ongoing support for residents highlighted.
- Jake Beavan attended as Liberal Democrat representative.
- Councillor Gist provided a tribute to Nigel Rock to wish him well in his retirement.

County (Councillor Christopher Kettle)

- Tribute paid to Nigel Rock's service
- Updates included:
 - HS2 developments - CK and GK invited to a HS2 site visit. HS2 appears to be on schedule with the building of the overbridge and footbridge. Concerns raised about the delivery route for the stone required to raise the height of the bridge over the Oxford canal. Approximately, 60 trucks per day will be required to deliver stone from June 2026 for 18 months. These trucks will be routed from Banbury through Wormleighton to the site each day. Signage is being considered as well as additional passing points. NR encouraged villagers to continue to raise issues and keep flagging issues on the public highways. Candy advised that haulage roads are closing which is why they will now need to bring the stone down the main public highways. Reason for haulage roads closing is unclear.
 - Upcoming and ongoing road closures
 - Road safety measures – village gateways being considered at Boddington end of Welsh Road crossroads. CB advised that the traffic survey was done on the Southam side of the cross roads and that is where speed issues were mainly occurring. CK advised that he will relook at this in conjunction with the village.
- District recycling success (highest nationally)

10. HS2 & Highways Update

HS2 Works

- See above.
- Construction progressing broadly on schedule.
- **Key concern:**
 - Up to **60 lorry movements per day (120 journeys)** expected for approximately 18 months from June.

Issues Raised

- Road safety
- Visibility and signage
- Impact on road conditions
- Poor communication from HS2

Actions

- Continued engagement with HS2 and local councillors
- Request for mitigation measures

11. Speeding & Road Safety

Key Findings

- High levels of speeding, particularly along Welsh Road
- Poor visibility of signage and worn road markings noted

Agreed Actions

- Establish a **Community Speed Monitoring Group**
 - Approximately 5 volunteers required
 - Purchase of handheld radar device (~£200)
- Work in partnership with Police and Warwickshire County Council

Potential Measures

- Village gateway features
- “Dragon’s teeth” road markings
- Improved 30mph transition signage
- Cleaning and refreshing existing signage and road markings

Additional Note:

Changing a Give Way to a Stop sign would require a formal legal process and is likely to be costly

12. Project Enable (Community Space)

- Project continues but is currently stalled due to permission constraints
- Grant applications have been submitted; outcome uncertain
- Efforts to secure funding and approvals will continue
- RH extended thanks to CH and the PCC for their hard work re moving Project Enable forward.

13. Planning

Hardwick Hill Application

- Single-storey extension
- **Decision:** No objection (approved by show of hands)

Other Updates

- Enforcement activity ongoing at The Leys
- Planning application 26/00367/LBC for Internal alterations (part retrospective) for Birkrigg, Church End was refused. The owners have agreed to work with the planners on an acceptable schedule of works moving forward on this Listed building in a Conservation Area.
- Further planning applications expected (including a revised swimming pool proposal)

14. Fessey Fund

- Current balance: £285
- Purpose: to support ‘the deserving poor of the village, with priority given to the elderly and infirm’
- The fund is currently being allowed to accrue until a need arises within the terms of the trust
- Update: Tim Hoban appointed as trustee (replacing Carolyn Bath)

15. Website Update

- April has been the busiest month to date

Highlights:

- Butcher's Arms podcast: 550+ listens (~100 from USA)
- Archive and news pages remain the most visited
- New **Photo Gallery** launched – residents encouraged to contribute
- The Village Market section is likely to be retired due to low usage
- Suggestions for replacement features are welcome
- GK expressed thanks to Jenny and Tim for their continued hard work re the website

16. Upcoming Events

- **Hardwick Hill Open Gardens – 31 May**
 - Volunteers and cake donations warmly welcomed

17. Any Other Business

Residents were reminded:

- Dogs should be kept on leads where appropriate
- Dog waste must be cleared up

18. Actions Summary

- Obtain further quotes for tree work on the Green
- Recruit volunteers for the Speed Monitoring Group
- Continue engagement with HS2 and highways authorities
- Progress Project Enable funding and permissions
- Submit planning response (Hardwick Hill)
- Consider replacement for Village Market on the website

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 20.50.

Next Village Parish Meeting: Thursday, 30th July 2026.