

PRIORS HARDWICK VILLAGE MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 30 July 2026

at St Mary The Virgin Church, Priors Hardwick

Chair	Gill Kinnear
Secretary/Minutes	Sarah Lobley, with Minutes supported by AI from the recorded meeting
Present	Residents of Priors Hardwick, together with invited guests
Attendees	Gill Kinnear (GK), Sarah Lobley, Alan Kinnear, Eddie and Ann Ukleja, Tim and Jenny Hoban, Graeme Olver, Rolle Nieminen, Rob and Anita Barritt, Paul and Rosemary Hobday, Charles and Gail Holland (GH), Paul Sankey, Sue Talbot, Phil Jenkins, Nick Ratcliff, Lesley and Chris Russon (CR), Margaret Clarke, Ivan and Barbara Harvey, Jane Richards, Ian Mercer (IM), Councillor Christopher Kettle (CCK), Lucie Penruddock, Fiona Webb, Gill and Mike Weaving, Richard Cutt (RC), Ryan (The Firs), Derrin James (DJ), Nathalie and Chris Bull, Phil Van Dries, Isobel Davies.
Apologies	Candy and Diarmuid Kelly; Carolyn and Ian Bath; Christian Nessler; Cllr Jake Beavan; Cllr Natalie Gist; Jago Toner; Christopher Hodgson; Sylvia Sutherland; Joy Redfern; Mark Tredwell; Tonia Hicks; Stuart Hyde; Hugh and Emily Darbshire; Angela Darbshire.

1. Welcome and housekeeping

The Chair welcomed residents, County Councillor Christopher Kettle and Bharvik Parmar, a representative of the family that owns the Butcher's Arms. Residents were reminded that the meeting was being recorded to assist preparation of the minutes and were asked to state their names before speaking.

2. Apologies

The apologies listed above were received and accepted.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous Village Meeting had been circulated. No amendments were requested.

RESOLVED: The minutes were approved as a correct record. Proposed by Eddie Ukleja and seconded by Graham Olver.

4. Matters arising

Large yew tree on village land. GK arranged for three tree surgeons to inspect the large tree growing close to neighbouring properties. All advised that reducing it substantially would leave a poor aesthetic and recommended felling. Residents noted its proximity to buildings and drains, the loss of light and the likelihood that it was self-seeded. As the tree lies within the conservation area, the necessary consent would be required before work could proceed.

RESOLVED: By a clear majority, with no votes against recorded, the meeting supported felling the tree rather than reducing it to gutter height.

ACTION: Obtain the necessary conservation-area consent, proceed with an appropriate quotation, arrange stump grinding and investigate whether the timber could be offered to a cabinet maker or otherwise put to use.

5. The Butcher's Arms

The Chair explained the background to the premises-licence application. The previous licence had ended and a new application was therefore required. The Chair had not received separate notification and became aware of the application from the notice displayed at the premises.

The Chair, The Treasurer and Cllr Jake Beavan had met the owners. Concerns were raised about the application permitting licensable activities until 1.00 a.m., particularly the potential for late-night noise and disturbance in a small rural village. Cllr Beavan submitted a representation and the Chair subsequently made an additional representation following further comments from residents. Those who had submitted representations would be notified of the licensing hearing and could attend and speak. At the time of the meeting, 20th August 2026 was the provisional hearing date.

Bharvik Parmar outlined plans to refurbish the four guest cottages, reopen the restaurant and bar to the local community and create a tea-room/bakery area. A longer-term ambition was to host small, intimate weddings, with approximately 50 guests rather than large events. The representative confirmed that recently installed flooring was not the finished design and would be replaced.

Residents welcomed the prospect of the Butcher's Arms becoming a successful village business but expressed strong concern about blanket permission until 1.00 a.m. The prevailing view was that normal closing should be around 11.00 p.m., with occasional later hours sought separately for specific weddings or special events. Particular concerns included vehicle doors, people leaving late at night, amplified activity and the unsuitability of regular late-night events in such a quiet, rural location.

The owner's representative said the family had experience of operating and improving a number of bars and restaurants, noted the comments and agreed to discuss them with the other parties involved.

ACTION: Continue to represent residents' concerns through the licensing process and circulate confirmed hearing details when received.

6. County Councillor's report – Cllr Christopher Kettle

Welsh Road traffic measures. Cllr Kettle reported that proposed village gateway improvements had been costed, although no installation date was yet available. The design was expected to use white gateway fencing set back appropriately from the carriageway. A visual design and proposed locations would be shared when available.

HS2 and highways. Cllr Kettle continued to press HS2 contractors and officers for improvements on Welsh Road and would raise the unequal treatment of local roads at forthcoming meetings. Stoneton Lane bridge was reported to be progressing to plan, although previous delays elsewhere gave reason for caution. Problems with other bridges, including defective steelwork and repeated timetable changes, continued to be pursued.

Local government reorganisation. The Government's decision to reorganise Warwickshire into two unitary authorities was noted. Cllr Kettle highlighted the complexity of dividing county-wide services, especially adult and children's social care, fire and rescue, and highways. Shadow-authority elections were expected in May 2027, with full transition likely to take several years.

ACTION: Cllr Kettle to provide the Chair with the Welsh Road gateway design and locations once available.

7. Financial report

The Treasurer reported a quiet quarter. Income included £20 from gazebo hire and expenditure was approximately £1,400, including statutory insurance and expenditure connected with the War Memorial and other village commitments. The current account balance at the end of July was approximately £1,100, with the general reserve at approximately £3,400.

Playground funds comprised approximately £6,800 already held and a further grant of just over £10,800. The meeting was reminded that the grant was time-limited and must be used for an eligible project or returned. The combined sum available for a playground project was therefore approximately £17,600.

The full financial records remained available for inspection. No questions were raised.

8. Priors Sports and Social Club

Jane R gave an update on the Priors Sports and Social Club, now operating as a charity and held as a joint asset for Priors Hardwick and Priors Marston. Considerable work had been undertaken to clear and improve the site. Activities included walking football/all-weather training, ladies' rugby, tug of war, darts and pool, while the bar and sports activities were intended to support themselves through membership and usage income.

Annual grounds maintenance was estimated at approximately £6,000. The Club asked Priors Hardwick to consider making a contribution and intended to approach Priors Marston similarly. Discussion covered whether a contribution through the precept would be fair to residents who did not use the Club, possible alternatives such as membership and usage charges, and the historic contribution made by both villages. It was also noted that the Sports Club site was too distant to meet the need for a Priors Hardwick playground.

RESOLVED: No funding decision was taken. The matter will return as a high-priority agenda item at the October meeting, when residents will have had time to consider the request and further information can be provided.

ACTION: Place the Sports Club funding request on the October agenda with sufficient information to enable a vote.

9. Community Speedwatch

Warwickshire Police had reviewed Community Speedwatch policies and procedures and responsibility for the scheme had changed. A site risk assessment had now been undertaken. Volunteer training was expected in September, with roadside monitoring on Welsh Road intended to begin by the end of that month.

Recorded speeding motorists would receive warning letters under the scheme, with repeat offenders subject to progressively stronger action and possible police follow-up.

ACTION: Arrange volunteer training and begin Community Speed watch activity once authorized.

10. Church and community space project

Although proposals involving physical alterations to the listed church building had reached an impasse, the project remained active. Part of the grant funding would be used for a projector, screen and secure storage, enabling presentations, films, children's activities and wider community use. Repainting the far end wall with appropriate breathable paint was also being investigated.

The lack of running water and a toilet remained a priority. A portable toilet would be required for the September village event, and retaining or purchasing a suitable unit for larger services and events was being explored as an interim solution. A permanent accessible connection or facility remained a longer-term objective. Residents also suggested revisiting mobile or self-contained facilities previously considered.

The Bridges Group was interviewing for a part-time priest. It was hoped that an appointment might be made by September.

ACTION: Purchase the agreed presentation equipment from grant funds; progress suitable redecoration; investigate portable and longer-term toilet options; continue development of the wider community-space project.

11. District Councillors' report and South Warwickshire Local Plan

The District Councillors were unable to attend due to summer travel. Their report had appeared in the July/August parish magazine.

Residents were reminded that the Regulation 19 consultation on the South Warwickshire Local Plan ran from 21 July to 8 September 2026. The proposals included substantial development to the east of Southam over the period to 2050, with a minimum of approximately 3,122 dwellings and more than 200 hectares of development land, together with infrastructure, schools, transport and protected green spaces. Although not immediately within Priors Hardwick, the scale of development could affect the village and surrounding road network.

ACTION: Recirculate consultation information and encourage residents to review and respond before 8 September 2026. Details of the Southam information event on 5 August to be shared.

12. Planning

Weaver's Cottage – application 26/01214/4. The application concerned the change of use of land to residential, a single-storey side extension to provide a swimming pool and accessible ground-floor accommodation, replacement of a two-storey rear extension, an open carport, landscaping and associated works.

The applicant explained the personal and medical reasons for the proposals, including the need for accessible accommodation and regular hydrotherapy. The history and present use of the adjoining land were discussed, together with the limited area required for the development, continued agricultural status of the remaining land, drainage and water-pressure considerations, visual impact and the planning history of the site.

The Chair set out the four possible consultation responses: make no representation; support for stated planning reasons; object for stated planning reasons; or no objection. No votes were cast for making no representation. Twenty-four residents voted to support the application. The support would be expressed as support for the

limited change of land use necessary to enable the proposed buildings and facilities, while recognising that the remainder of the land would retain its agricultural status. Technical matters such as water pressure would remain for the planning authority and relevant bodies.

RESOLVED: By a clear majority, the Village Meeting supported planning application 26/01214/4. Twenty-four votes were recorded in support.

ACTION: Submit the Village Meeting's consultation response supporting the application and setting out the planning reasons agreed at the meeting.

Planning enforcement. The Chair reported that the District Council's enforcement team had increased capacity and that outstanding local cases were being pursued. Details could not be discussed publicly where this might prejudice an investigation, but there was evidence that action was progressing. A previous consultation response on planning enforcement had also been submitted on behalf of the village.

13. Village website, podcasts and technology

The new village photo gallery was attracting contributions and residents were encouraged to submit further images. The unused advertisements page had been replaced by a Community Recommendations section where residents could share details of trusted local tradespeople. The village gazebo remained available to hire for £20 per day.

July website activity was strong. The Community Recommendations page had approximately 260 views, the photo gallery approximately 247 views and the Butcher's Arms page approximately 221 views. Download traffic from the United States exceeded that from the United Kingdom during the month.

The current podcast featuring Nigel Rock's reflections on being a councillor had already attracted more than 200 listens. The previous Butcher's Arms podcast had reached approximately 600 listens. Residents were invited to suggest future subjects.

The first technology workshop, "Making the Most of Your iPhone", had taken place. The next session would focus on using artificial intelligence as a personal assistant. A small participation fee would support church maintenance.

ACTION: Continue to develop the gallery and recommendations pages, promote the gazebo, publish future podcasts and advertise the next technology workshop.

14. Any other business

No Man's Land. The very dry summer had limited the expected wildflower display. A working group would carry out further work early in the autumn.

Swift boxes. The meeting supported further investigation into purchasing swift boxes from village funds and identifying suitable locations.

Village walk. The monthly village walk had moved to the first Saturday of each month. The next walk would leave the church at 8.30 a.m. because of the warm weather.

Village event. A pizza evening and wider village event would be held on Friday 18 September 2026, with pizza, drinks and desserts. Further details would follow.

The Chair thanked the many residents who contribute to village life, including those who bake, arrange flowers, clean, help at coffee mornings, wind the church clock, mow, organise events and walks, and undertake many other less visible tasks.

Margaret conveyed greetings to the village from Leno, who remained interested in developments at the Butcher's Arms.

ACTION: Organise the No Man's Land working group; investigate swift-box costs and sites; continue arrangements for the 18 September village event.

15. Date of next meeting

The next Village Meeting will be held on Thursday 15 October 2026.

16. Close

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at approximately 9.18 p.m.

Summary of actions

Item	Lead	Action
Tree on village land	Chair / Village Meeting	Seek conservation-area consent, obtain quotation, arrange felling and stump grinding, and explore reuse of timber.
Butcher's Arms licence	Chair	Continue representation and circulate confirmed licensing-hearing details.
Welsh Road gateway	Cllr Christopher Kettle	Provide design and proposed locations when available.
Sports Club funding	Chair / Treasurer	Prepare the October agenda item and supporting information for a decision.
Community Speedwatch	Speed watch team	Complete volunteer training and begin authorised monitoring.
Church/community space	Project team	Purchase equipment, progress redecoration and investigate temporary and permanent toilet solutions.
Local Plan	Chair	Recirculate consultation and information-event details before 8 September.
Weaver's Cottage	Chair	Submit the Village Meeting's response supporting application 26/01214/FUL.
Website and technology	Website/podcast team	Continue website, podcast and workshop programme.
Environment and events	Relevant working groups	Progress No Man's Land work, swift boxes and the 18 September event.

Signed as a correct record: _____ Date: _____