

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Priston Parish Council Held at 7 pm on Monday 12th May 2025 in the village hall

Present: Cllrs Peter Hopwood, Bruce Clarke, Helen Burns, Guy Davies, Robert Davies, Jocelyn Nichols (Clerk)
B&NES Councillor Fiona Gourley and 4 parishioners

1. **Election of Chairman:** Cllr Clarke was proposed by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Burns. Cllr Clarke was elected unanimously to the position.
2. **Declaration of Acceptance of Office – Chairman:** Cllr Clarke accepted the position and signed the Acceptance of Office.
3. **Election of Vice-Chairman:** Cllr Burns was proposed by Cllr Clarke, seconded by Cllr Davies. Agreed unanimously.
4. **Appointment of Internal Auditor and finance representatives:** Patrick Dawson has agreed to continue as auditor. Cllr Hopwood agreed to continue as a signatory on the bank account, along with the Chair and Vice Chair.
5. **Appointment of Planning Representatives:** Cllr Hopwood, Cllr G Davies and Cllr R Davies agreed to continue as our planning representatives. Agreed unanimously.
6. **Appointment of Footpath Representative:** Cllr Burns agreed to continue this role for the coming year. Agreed unanimously.
7. **Appointment of Village Hall Representative:** Cllr G Davies agreed to continue. Agreed unanimously.
8. **Appointment of Roads and Highways Representative:** Cllr Lippiatt agreed to continue in this role, and it was agreed unanimously.
9. **Appointment of Representative to Priston AED Project:** Cllr Hopwood has agreed to continue to manage our defibrillators.
10. **Appointment of Climate and Ecological Emergency Representative:** Cllr Keppel-Palmer agreed to continue with this role. Agreed unanimously.
11. **Appointment of Flooding Representative:** Aylet Anderson will continue as our flooding rep.
12. **Matters raised by parish residents:** None
13. **Apologies:**, Councillors John Lippiatt and Nick Keppel-Palmer, B&NES Councillor Matt McCabe

14. **Minutes:** The minutes of the ordinary meeting on 10th March 2025, and the extraordinary meeting on 31st March 2025 were approved and signed
15. **Matters Arising:**
 - a) The dog mess situation has still not improved.
Action: the Clerk purchase a bin, and email Matt and Fiona about a ward grant. The bin will be placed on the bridleway, by the cricket club lower gate.
 - b) The Bendalls were thanked for using their digger to clear some large debris blocking the culvert at Conegre Dip.
Action: the Clerk will email Matt and Fiona about the promised screen and stream improvements to Priston Lane.
 - c) **Action: The Clerk will purchase a key box to access the hall in emergencies, after checking if Helen has a spare one. It will be erected near, but not on, the hall.**
 - d) **Action: Bruce and the clerk will write to Matt and Fiona about the large pothole up Priston (Watery) Lane.**
 - e) Fiona reminded the meeting about the Local Plan meeting at Camerton Hall on Saturday 17th May, and Robert and Guy are attending. She had been very impressed with the presentation by Peter and Helen on resilience at the Annual Parish meeting, and wished to share this good practice with other councils.
 - f) There had been a complaint about the discussion at the extraordinary meeting about Church Farm houses. The Council had not made any decision as a result of the discussion, but had clarified their previous decision on the application with Planning. All were reminded it is illegal to make decisions on planning responses when interested parties are present, and the Chair and Clerk could be prosecuted for a criminal offence.
16. **Financial Report for the financial year 1st April to 31st May 2025:** The Parish Council started the year in April with £11,152.57 in the bank including the £4384 precept. and on 1 May there was £10,402.82 including £2,477.42 CIL money. The expenditure was £749.75. The Clerk is paid on point 17 of the NALC payscale, for 8 hours a week. The auditor had expressed concern that we are spending over our precept, so he was pleased we have made budget savings. He also suggested that we list planned expenditure for the CIL money, as well as the general budget.
Action: Peter and Helen will estimate Emergency Plan costs for the next meeting.
The asset register was approved, it was agreed that we will write off the cost of the old computer for next year.
The auditor has suggested that we should modernise our backup system.
Action: Clerk to see how other parishes manage this and liaise with Richard.
17. **To consider, approve and sign the 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement :** The internal auditor has completed the audit report. After all agreeing the statement, and the certificate of exemption, the chair and the clerk signed the Annual Governance Statement which will be published on the website.
18. **To consider, approve and sign the 2024/25 Accounting Statement:** Receipts and payments for 2023/24 and 2024/25 were considered and approved. The chair and clerk signed the Accounting Statement which will be published on the website.
19. **To consider and approve 2025 Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Assessment:** Councillors have read and approved the updated documents.

Action: Next time we update our insurance, the clerk will ensure volunteers are adequately covered.

20. **To review and sign the 2025 Councillors' Register of Interests:** Councillors reviewed and signed these.
21. **To agree dates for public access to accounts:** These were agreed as Monday 3rd June 2025 to Friday 14th July 2025.
22. **Roads and Highways:** No issues reported.
23. **Planning: Action: at the request of the Auditor, the new procedure notes for planning applications should stress that those with an interest in applications should withdraw from any discussion of our response.**

Roger Bendall explained his Planning Application 25/01489/FUL New Farm Priston, then he left the meeting.

After discussion it was agreed Priston Parish Council response is:

This application refers to the Dog Agility Arena located adjacent to the farm buildings at New Farm, Marksbury Lane, Priston. It proposes additional lighting (10 lights) around the arena with the lights on poles and shielded by baffle screens preventing light spill onto the adjacent hedges and land.

Priston Parish Council has previously supported applications for this site and the development of the dog agility facility. The first application (21/01722/FUL) included lighting to which we objected and it was refused. The second application (22/01158/FUL) did not include lighting and was permitted.

When the facility was built lights were installed from the outset contrary to the planning permission. These lights (or very similar lights) have remained in use up to 5 evenings a week ever since. Despite objections from the Priston Parish Council and Dunkerton Parish Council and requests for enforcement action by B&NES they continue to be used.

Priston Parish Council **OBJECTS** to the additional lighting proposed.

Priston Parish Council continues to support the Dog Agility arena.

Justification for our decision: The lighting illuminates the field as a bright green patch of land in an otherwise completely dark valley. This will still be the case even when the screens are fitted as the object of the lights is to illuminate the arena. The ecology of the valley has already been adversely altered and our parishioners wish to see it restored to its previous state. They want to see the dark valley restored.

Additional Comments: If the arena is to continue to be used then either it must be restricted to use in daylight hours (which may not be practical) or it could be housed inside a barn or similar structure. Moving the arena indoors would have several advantages.

- a) No or very little light pollution of the valley
- b) No restriction on the hours of use
- c) Protection of the equipment and users from the weather
- d) Better facility for the dogs and owners

2 Hill View has changed it's application at B&NES request, to be an annexe to the house with no kitchen.

24. **Flooding:** All are reminded that forecast storms might cause flooding if drains are blocked, so it is good practice to check and clear your drains.

Any residents not receiving the Loop should contact Aylet with a phone number and email address.

25. **To report on the Climate and Ecological Emergency:** No report
26. **To report on footpaths:** Aylet is writing to Tim Haynes at B&NES as the completed drainage works at Inglesbatch have left a cattle grid type of manhole cover by the gate, which horses will not cross, causing problems for their riders.
27. **To report on external meetings and agree attendance at future meetings:** The recent Parish Liaison attended by the Chair and Clerk included an interesting tour of the new recycling centre at Keynsham.
Bathavon Forum at 6pm on 25 June will be attended by Robert and the Clerk.
28. **Any other Business:** None
29. **Date of next Meeting** –Monday 7th July 2025 7pm in the village hall.

Signed:Date:

JN 13/5/25