Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of Priston Parish Council
Held at 8pm on Monday 26th October 2026 in the Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Bruce Clarke, Helen Burns, Robert Davies, Peter Hopwood and John Lippiatt, Rebecca Landon (Clerk) and two parishioners

1. **Apologies:** Cllrs Nick Keppel-Palmer and Guy Davies

   The Chair thanked all Cllrs and residents for coming, and shared procedure for meetings.

2. **B&NES draft Local Plan**

   A proposed response from Cllr R Davies for the draft Local Plan consultation was read out to the council (see Appendix A), as were comments from Cllr G Davies.

   Parish Council response: *Priston Parish Council (PCC) agreed to submit the proposed response.*

   Action: Cllr R Davies to submit the agreed upon response to the B&NES consultation.

Signed:…… Date: …….

RL 30.10.26

Appendix A: Proposed response to the draft Local Plan

A possible response from Priston PC to the Draft Local Plan Consultation

Policy 1.1 Spatial Strategy

Priston and its surrounding network of lanes has in recent years increasingly served as a rat run for drivers trying to avoid congestion on the various routes into Bath and Bristol. This network consists of single lanes with occasional passing places, numerous blind bends, junctions and other hazards. Several of these routes are subject to serious flooding risks. As there are hardly any pavements, pedestrians are at considerable risk from passing traffic. Speed limits within the village are generally ignored as there is no enforcement.

The development proposals in this Plan will certainly increase the volume of through traffic on our lanes from a level which is already unacceptable. The Plan has not recognised nor taken any account of this harm and is therefore unsound through lack of justification, because relevant evidence has been ignored even though it is recognised that the large developments in the Somer Valley, Farmborough and Timsbury will increase traffic and congestion on the A and B roads.

The developments in Timsbury and Farmborough (600 houses) will put further stress on the congested and hazardous junction on the A39. The proposed traffic lights (£850,000) will mitigate the hazard but probably not the congestion. Motorists heading to Bath will increasingly choose the country lane some 300 metres

to the south of the proposed junction and follow the lanes through Priston, Inglesbatch and Englishcombe. Alternatively, they may choose to take the B3115, but instead of facing the heavy congestion on the A367, could turn off at Tunley and follow the lanes through Priston to pick up the main road at Rush Hill.

Development in Farrington Gurney (500 houses) and Bishop Sutton (300) will result in traffic converging at Marksbury. Those motorists destined for Bath will increasingly choose to take the lane from Marksbury through Priston rather than face increased congestion at the Corston junction.

Development in Peasedown, Radstock and the rest of the Somer Valley to the extent of 4900 houses will put an intolerable strain on the A367 which already suffers peak time traffic queues several miles long. As these pressures increase, motorists will find alternative ways through, most likely following the road to Camerton, Timsbury and picking up the network of lanes through Priston.

There is no evidence that the indicated concentration on active travel modes will have a significant effect on these problems as none of the above journeys are practical in terms of walking or cycling. Improved bus services, if they were assured, would undoubtedly help, but as the Transport Topic Paper makes clear, most journeys within our area will still be by car.

Para 1.21 to 1.24

It is claimed that the Draft Local Plan reflects local evidence relating to housing needs as well as national policy. The Plan is unsound through lack of justification because local evidence as to local need forwarded in the previous iteration of the Plan has been ignored. This evidence, flawed though it may be, at least attempts to assess need in terms of demographic data and projections. This local evidence resulted in a far lower target for housing because it was based on how the term ‘need’ is normally interpreted rather than on an arbitrary, simplistic and unjustifiable formula.

Most of the problems with this Plan have their origin in this excessive housing target, way beyond what the District needs, which creates unsustainable expansion of our local communities, loss of hard won Green Belt, and all kinds of problems for local residents. B&NES attempt to moderate the housing requirement on the grounds of the harm it will create is laudable but does not go nearly far enough. Paragraph 11b of the NPPF should be deployed to justify a much lower requirement.

Rural Areas Para 5.2

This paragraph states the Local Plan seeks to support growth in a way that reflects the character, aspirations and capacity of individual communities. Priston is a village washed over by the Green Belt and as such has benefitted from the protections offered by the Green Belt. Recent changes to the NPPF have redefined the significant features of the Green Belt such that villages like Priston (as well as large parts of NE Somerset) which do not contribute to keeping towns apart, prevent urban sprawl or protect heritage settlements would, if challenged by developers, be considered Grey Belt. This evidence has been ignored in the Plan which makes it unsound through lack of justification. Particularly during the medium term until a Local Plan is approved and when there remains an ‘unmet housing need’, villages like Priston become a target for development which would not previously been countenanced. This is a fundamental change in the way planning works within the Green Belt and managing that must surely be one of the most important features of a Local Plan.