

2021 Priston Annual Parish Meeting

Via Zoom

March 29th 2021

Minutes

1. Apologies

B&NES councillors Neil Butters and Matt McCabe

2. Previous Minutes 11 April 2019 – Accepted as a true record

3. Matters Arising – None

4. Chair's Report

Due to COVID no Annual Parish Meeting was held last year, and this report covers 2 years.

Parish Council - The Council has remained the same, and meetings have continued thanks to Zoom.

Parish Clerk – Louise Callan resigned as Parish Clerk, and was replaced by Jocelyn Nichols in July last year.

Priston Cricket Field – We have just found out that the field is for sale, with a deadline of 24 April 2021 for purchase by the village, prior to being offered on the open market. As you will understand, this is very early days, but I am supporting a plan, put forward by an anonymous "white knight" from the village, that will secure use of the field for the village in perpetuity.

Planning – The Piggeries, Marksbury lane – An application to convert the ruins at the Piggery into a home was supported, and has been approved.

Fonthill Cottage. The application for an extension and a garage with a new drive was supported, and has now been approved.

Church Farm. An application to build 3 detached houses on the site of the barns was objected to for a number of reasons, including being outside the Housing Development Boundary and not following the Priston Village Design Statement.

4 Hill View. The Parish Council objected to the application to convert the garage and shed to form accommodation for occasional visits by relatives and Air B & B tenants. The application has been withdrawn.

New Farm. An application to build a dog training facility was supported with some reservations, but has been withdrawn.

Highways and footpaths – The road outside the dairy has been resurfaced. Watery Lane continues to suffer, and is waiting for dry weather to repair the culvert and pothole. B&NES "Fix my Street" app is proving very useful.

A number of stiles have been replaced with kissing-gates, and horse gates put on bridleways.

The Parish Council has recommended that the change to the footpath past the sewage works requested by the landowner be approved. The Priston Lane triangle has been seeded and planted with a rowan, and is looking more presentable. A number of our finger posts have been refurbished by Penny Rogers and her team of volunteers.

Emergency Planning and PEG – The Parish Emergency Guidance was re-visited, and it was decided instead to create a WhatsApp group – the Priston Emergency Group or PEG – designed to alert villagers to a local emergency.

Defibrillator – A third defibrillator has been provided by an anonymous donor, and placed at Pressbarrow Farm, and a further one has been installed at Wilmington, with funds raised locally. Many thanks to John Wilkinson for his continuing support to this project.

COVID – A year ago the Parish Council set up the Coronavirus Action Team – Priston, or CAT-P to ensure that advice and support was available to our vulnerable villagers during the

lockdown. In the event most support was quietly supplied by neighbours, but I am very grateful to my team for the good advice they continue to provide.

Priston Website - Once again thanks to Richard Bottle for maintaining the website, and for redesigning the interface to meet Government accessibility requirements.

Climate Emergency – in January the Parish Council followed B&NES lead and declared a climate and ecological emergency. Penny and Peter Brooks, the organisers of PAGE, have been asked to take the lead for the Council, and have had a first meeting, and an event for the whole village is planned for 9th October.

Thanks - Finally thank you to our Parish Clerk Jocelyn Nichols, and all of our Councillors for their good work and support over the past year.

5. Parish Council Financial Report

The current account balance stands at £7,492. The year end is 31st March, so with some outstanding invoices to be paid, we will finish the year with at least £4,800 in the bank. The precept has been kept at £6,700 for the coming year, as we did not want to increase our portion of the council tax during these difficult times. Notable item of expenditure in the last year has been improvements to the triangle at Priston Lane. With our normal running costs we have spent £4,625 plus £588 VAT - £5,213 so far this year.

6. Parish Organisations

Church – The church has tried to stay open as much as possible during the pandemic, and grateful thanks go to Maggie for opening the church every day for private prayer. Also thanks to Bob Copperman there has been a booking system created. The village have provided financial support to go towards the stipend of over £20,000 a year, with £9,000 gratefully received on gift day, also Charlie Samler was thanked for collecting Christmas trees and donating the payments for the service to the church. Aylet and Richard were also thanked for providing publicity and technical support. We are looking forward to the church being able to open for spiritual sustenance.

An area of the churchyard is being set aside for rewilding with the support of Avon Wildlife Trust. This project is being led by Kate Rigby and Fran Baldero.

Village Hall – There has been a change of personnel on the committee and previous members were thanked for their dedicated service, especially Gail for chairing for so long. Maggie was thanked for organising bookings, and hopefully these can recommence from 17 May. There will be no May day this year, but it is hoped that a party will be held for villagers. We have been protected from the financial loss of the past year by a government grant.

PAGE – Thanks to all who partake in activities such as the litter picks. B&NES are really great at collecting the rubbish and also dealing with reported fly-tipping. There has been some information sharing, but our big project for 2020 – planting 220 trees – was delayed due to Covid. We hope to reach the target in 2021/22 and Louise is leading the project. Last year we planted at least 40 trees and some hedging. Richard posts pictures of trees planted on the website. We look forward to working with the parish council following the declaration of a climate and ecological emergency. It was suggested that the Duchy of Cornwall are interested in planting trees on their land, and John Lippiatt has asked them for hopefully 200 trees this Autumn. Doug and John will talk to Nick Mould from the Duchy about possible tree planting in Priston. Concern was raised over the amount of ivy growing up some trees, Penny will check whether this damages the trees.

Link and Loop – The new treasurer has set up online banking. Apart from 8 hard copies the Link is provided digitally to 190 readers, some from outside the village. Thanks to all for the articles, and please keep writing them.

The Loop started as a flood warning system and database of Priston residents, but is now used for much more and the 98th message was sent recently. Richard was thanked for all the technical support. If you send a message for the loop please ensure you have all the details correct. It is a very useful service and thanks to Aylet for running it.

Website - The first Covid lockdown provided the opportunity to focus on redesigning the Priston Website (www.priston.org.uk), which was first established in 2002, and is managed by Richard Bottle on behalf of the Parish Council.

- As a result, the website was substantially redesigned over a period of about 3 months last year to meet Government accessibility requirements, and to be easier to use on the different screen sizes now provided by mobile phones, tablets and PCs.
- During the pandemic, the aim has been to provide useful and authoritative information on Covid-19, and links to resources to help people cope with the periods of lockdown and other restrictions.
- Support has also been provided to the Parish Council, the pub, and the church in terms of helping them communicate with the community.
- Use of the website has grown during the pandemic. Over the last 28 days 161 repeat users (ie devices) conducted 425 sessions. 50% of sessions are conducted via desktop, 41% by mobile, 9% by tablet.
- The website performs an important role in enabling the Parish Council to discharge its legal responsibilities regarding the publication of agendas, minutes and other information, It also provides a large number of village organisations with a web presence. The Priston Web also hosts useful information about the village and its history, and includes a large collection of photos documenting village life over the last 20 years.
- Suggestions and contributions are always welcome. If you have an initiative or an event you would like to publicise please get in touch with Richard Bottle at web@priston.org.uk.

Festival - We are very sorry to say that Priston Music Festival 2021, which was to be 17 - 19 September, is cancelled. After some consideration and discussion around the situation regarding the Covid-19 virus and restrictions the committee decided that staging a festival this year is not safe or appropriate. It does not seem sensible to run an event which brings quite a large crowd right into the heart of our small village community. The COVID risks remain much too unknown and possibly high. We note that the beloved Priddy Folk Festival is also cancelled. And no doubt others local to here will be too. These are sad times for live music and small village-based festivals. We wish you all a safe and happy Spring and Summer. Maybe next year...

Saturday Café - The Saturday Cafe was obviously closed for much of last year, although we managed to open for a few weeks in September, with our customers seated outside, and social distancing rules adhered to. There was then a general consensus that, with the numbers of new COVID cases on the increase, the cafe should close it's doors once again.

Our very willing team of cafe volunteers have not been idle though. Far from it! We know how the cafe is a lifeline for some of the older residents of Priston, and how much they like cake. So we regrouped as the Cake Angels and have taken it in turns to deliver cakes each Saturday morning to 8 households. This has been well received, and has been an opportunity to make contact and check all is well with each cake recipient. I don't think we thought we would be making cakes for as many weeks as we have though!

We have had information from ACRE confirming that community cafes can resume in village halls from 17th May so we plan to resume the cafe from Saturday 22nd May. This will of course be with the 'rule of 6' applied and social distancing in place, and outside if the weather is fine. It will be good to get back and serve the community again, and to raise some funds for charities, who have been struggling over the past 12 months.

Defibrillator – Training courses have not been able to run over the last year, but Sunday 4th July has been booked for training with a new instructor. Please contact John Wilkinson if you are interested. Vicky has offered to provide one to one tuition if required in the meantime.

John would be interested to hear from anyone who would like to take over management of the defibrillators.

We were then treated to a very interesting presentation by **Gillian Sanders, Planning Liaison Manager, Wessex Water, about the Priston sewage system**. Recent changes to regulations mean that Wessex Water are responsible for any shared pipes. Gillian was asked about microplastics as most treatment plants do not remove them and recent research shows that a biofilm of bacteria can build up and be released into rivers. Scientists and environmentalists are working to reduce this issue. If residents wish to report shared sewers they can do this on the website asset map. Several villagers remember the reed beds being in operation which seemed to reduce the smells, and when the works are jet washed a few houses experience toilet issues. Gillian will investigate and report back.

Some graffiti has been reported on the road sign outside the manor house.

JN 30/3/21

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