

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Priston Parish Council held on Monday 16th May 2011 in the Village Hall, Priston.

1. Attendance and Apologies –

Councillor Hughes presided, Councillors Cross, Davies, Girdlestone, Hopwood, Lippiatt, Pattison, Whybrow and the Parish Clerk were present. Councillor Hughes welcomed village residents Mrs Anderson, Mr Bottle, Mrs Bowyer, Mrs Broomfield and Mr Wilkinson. Apologies received from the newly elected District Councillor David Veale who hoped to attend later.

2. Declaration of Acceptance of Office – Councillors –

Councillors Cross, Davies, Girdlestone, Hopwood, Lippiatt, Pattison and Whybrow having been elected to serve for the following four years as Parish Councillors signed the formal Declaration of Acceptance of Office which were witnessed by the Clerk.

3. Chairman's Report for the year ended 31st March 2010 –

Councillor Hughes, who had not been re-elected as Parish Councillor in the local elections held on 5th May read his annual report which, he commented, would be longer than originally intended as, due to the exceptional circumstances, had been extended.

Highways The retiring Chairman commenced by commenting on the ongoing problems experienced with potholes and road conditions in general. The support of the Highways Department in keeping the main route out of the village open during the previous winter had been appreciated as had the provision of signs to attempt to control speeding vehicles.

Telephone kiosk is in working order and the code to access the **defibrillator** had been distributed to all householders. Thanks conveyed to John Wilkinson for his regular monitoring of the equipment.

Thanks were extended to Councillor Cross for all her work on the **Parish Online** and also to Richard Bottle for his support in keeping the **Priston Website** updated and interesting.

After a wait of approximately 25 years, the Traffic Regulation Order had been completed on the **BOAT at Mill Lane**. **Grit Bins** are to be ordered for the village, bought by the Parish Council. The siting of these has yet to be finalised. The improvements to the **village green** had been completed and the Chairman again thanked District Councillor Clarke, Robert Davies and Bob Hunt for their contributions to the project.

Thanks were extended to Councillor Whybrow who looked after the **footpaths** on behalf of the Parish Council. Also noted that, following a survey, new gates are to be fitted on Pow's and Hopwood's farms and also at Wilmington. Work at Lippiatt's farm is to be investigated.

Solar Panels The meeting was advised that this had been discussed at a Parishes Cluster Group Meeting, chaired by Councillor Charles Gerrish. Councillor Hughes also advised he had been invited to a meeting of Dunkerton Parish Council, which had also been attended by a very large number of residents of Tunley who were very concerned that, if the siting of a Solar Farm in Priston parish received planning permission, approximately 30 homes would overlook the development.

Several planning applications had been considered during the year: 4 Wilmington, 2 Wilmington, 9 High Street, Applecot, The Old Coach House, Milking Parlour, 1 Woodlands, The Old Rectory, The Old Dog Inn, Rozel, Staddlestones and 36-37 Priston.

The Chairman continued referring to the recent local elections which resulted in a new Council being elected to serve the Parish. The next eighteen months may well prove very challenging for the Parish Council with the possibility of a Solar PV Farm and housing development in the village.

Councillor Hughes thanked District Councillor Clarke for his help in the last four years and commented that he was sorry that he had not stood for election. He extended a welcome to the newly elected Parish and District Councillors and also expressed thanks to the Parish Councillors who had served with him for the previous four years for their help and support but commenting that this has been one of the first years he could remember that not all councillors had agreed with regard to planning issues. Special thanks to Councillor Wilkinson for checking the defibrillator on a fortnightly basis and, although he had not stood for re-election, offering to continue to check the equipment. Concluding this section of his report, Councillor Hughes thanked Vice Chairman Councillor Hopwood, for his support through the past year and Mrs Hunt the Parish Clerk with whom he had also worked whilst Chairman and Secretary respectively of the Village Hall committee.

After completing his formal report on the proceeding year, Councillor Hughes spoke on matters which affected him personally and commenced by publicly thanking the Councillors and residents who had contacted him in the week following the elections. The messages he had received had been very much appreciated.

It was with sadness that Councillor Hughes accepted he was no longer a trustee of the Priston Church of England Educational Charity, a post which he had held since 1979. He had worked with at least six Rectors and many different Churchwardens.

Councillor Hughes thanked the village for nominating him for the award of the MBE for Services to the Community of Priston. The day on which he received the award in 2002 was one he would never forget, being given the opportunity to meet and speak with her Majesty the Queen at Buckingham Palace.

Councillor Hughes whilst wishing his successor an enjoyable term in office, commented that being Chairman of the Parish Council is not all a "bed of roses". There had been occasions when he has had to bear the brunt of ill feeling of residents on behalf of the Council.

Minute books from previous years and other items, the property of the Parish Council, would be deposited with the Clerk.

In conclusion Councillor Hughes extended thanks to all Councillors, past and present, for their support over the 35 years he had served as Councillor, the longest on record, and as Chairman for 18 years. He hoped he had been of some service to the Parish over the years and extended his best wishes to the new Council for the forthcoming term. The Chairman's full report would be placed on file for future reference.

Prior to the next agenda item, Councillor Hopwood, as Councillor Hughes' last Vice-Chairman addressed the meeting paying tribute to Councillor Hughes' achievements as Chairman of the Parish Council and presented him with a bottle of whisky and a book on the Kennet and Avon Canal as a gift from the Councillors. He felt sure that the wider community of Priston would want to express their thanks in due course. Councillor Hughes thanked Councillor Hopwood for his kind words and the Parish Council for their gift.

4. **Election of Chairman** – As retiring Chairman, Councillor Hughes requested nominations from the new Parish Council to fill the Office of Chairman for the coming year. Councillor Pattison was formally proposed by Councillor Hopwood and seconded Councillor Cross.
5. **Declaration of Acceptance of Office – Chairman** – The official Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed by Councillor Pattison and witnessed by the Clerk. Councillor Pattison, in thanking his fellow Councillors for nominating him to this Office, advised that he intended to share some of the duties including attendance at meetings held outside the parish.
6. **Election of Vice-Chairman** – Councillor Hopwood was proposed by Councillor Cross, seconded Councillor Lippiatt and agreed..
7. **Appointment of Clerk** – Councillor Pattison proposed, seconded Councillor Cross that Mrs Hunt be reappointed as Clerk.
8. **Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting** held on Monday 10th May 2010 were read by the Clerk. These were agreed and accepted as a true record of proceedings and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.
9. **Financial Report:** The Clerk presented and reported on the Parish Council's finances for the year ended 31st March 2011 advising the year had commenced with an opening balance of £1,790.76, which included £1,000 from the Ward Councillor's Initiative Fund which had been requested and received for the renovation of the Village Green. A precept of £3,200 had been received and VAT of £35.88 reclaimed in respect of transactions on behalf of the Parish Council. There was a balance at the bank at 31st March 2011 of £3,036.84, which included the previously mentioned £1,000 and £1,257.96 in the defibrillator account. Typed copies of the accounts were distributed to councillors and residents and the accounts would also be published on the Priston Website.
10. **Appointment of Footpath Representative** – Proposed Councillor Pattison, seconded Councillor Hopwood and agreed that Councillor Whybrow be appointed for the coming year.
11. **Appointment of Village Hall Representative** - Proposed Councillor Pattison, seconded Councillor Whybrow and agreed that Councillor Cross be appointed for the coming year.
12. **Appointment of Representative to Priston AED Project** - Proposed Councillor Pattison, seconded Councillor Hopwood and agreed that former Councillor John Wilkinson, who had indicated his willingness to carry on in this capacity, be appointed for the coming year.
13. **Appointment of Representative to Priston Church of England Educational Charity** - Proposed Councillor Pattison, seconded Councillor Lippiatt and agreed that Councillor Girdlestone be appointed for the coming year.
14. **Signing of Cheques** – Agreed that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman together with Councillor Cross be the three signatories for cheques. A bank mandate would be signed to enable the signature of Councillor Pattison to replace that of Councillor Hughes. The Clerk reminded the Council that two of the three signatures were needed on all cheques.
15. There being no further business for discussion at the Annual General Meeting, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.45pm and proceeded with the first meeting of the new term.