

Minutes of the Priston Parish Council Meeting Held at 7 pm on Monday 22nd January 2024 in the village hall

Present: Cllrs Peter Hopwood (Chair), Bruce Clarke, Helen Burns, Nick Keppel-Palmer, Guy Davies, John Lippiatt, Jocelyn Nichols (Clerk)

1. **Matters raised by parish residents:** Two large tree branches have fallen onto the road from the Manor house, narrowly missing Mill House and Fonthill Cottage. **Action: John will speak to David Franklin to ensure the trees are checked for safety.**
Peter has the old minute books going back to the beginning of the council, and once parishioners have seen and photographed important pages for the website, they will be taken to Taunton for storage by B&NES.
2. **Apologies:** Farah Downing and B&NES Councillors Fiona Gourley and Matt McCabe
3. **Minutes:** The Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 13th November 2023 were approved and signed.
4. **Matters Arising:** Peter and Helen are attending some emergency planning training to help with our emergency plan.
5. **Financial Report for the year ending 31st March 2024:** The Parish Council had £11,212.02 in the bank on 4 January. The expenditure since the last report was £1,723.09 including paying for the defibrillator training, and village hall hire for the year. The expected expenditure to the end of the financial year was discussed, and we should end the year with about £8,200 carry forward.
It was agreed the clerk will move to point 16 on the NALC pay scales next financial year.
The draft budget was discussed and it was agreed that we should ask for the maximum increase to the precept of 4.99%, making a total of £7,829.
Patrick Dawson, who has audited Southstoke and Monkton Combe parishes, has agreed to audit our accounts in April/May.
6. **The community infrastructure levy (CIL) fund.** Disbursement of funds discussed. General guidance: A. It should be used to strengthen village infrastructures. B. Parishioners should be consulted on proposed expenditure, especially the least vocal and those who are vulnerable.
The following minimum selection criteria for any proposal was also agreed:
 - a. Must be proportionate to the funds available.
 - b. Should be thoroughly thought through and costed, before being presented.
 - c. Be of benefit to as many residents as possible
 - d. Give priority to projects where alternative sources of funds are not available.
 - e. Be justifiable to the CIL Monitoring Officer for B&NES – annual report required.

If a parish has a 'Neighbourhood Plan', any B&NES CIL money receivable would be 25% instead of 15%. It was therefore agreed to investigate whether the cost and effort of producing such a plan is justifiable.
Action: Nick will look into this and report back.

The Link article about CIL has resulted in several requests for financial support including: the Cricket Club have asked for a new portaloo. This would be useful for all players and spectators including visiting teams (there were 100 people at one match last year). The field is also used by the community for family fun days and other events. The cost would be £1400 plus VAT. **Action: Clerk to check this expenditure would be acceptable to the CIL officer, and councillors to canvass parishioners' opinions.**

The Village Hall Committee has many ideas to improve energy efficiency in the hall, and possibly apply for other grants. They will discuss these and come back to the council with costed proposals for using some of the CIL money. Ideas include insulating the walls, double glazing the windows, making more of a garden in the car park, a cupboard with gym equipment, and acoustic baffles in the ceiling. All agreed the hall is an essential village asset which must be maintained and protected for community use.

7. **Roads and Highways:** We are all encouraged to continue reporting potholes on 'Fix My Street'. Some potholes have been identified for repair by Highways. **Action: John L to order a ton of grit for use by the gritter. Guy will provide a map for John and Peter to highlight areas to be gritted when necessary.**
8. **Planning:** The Mead Cottage application has been withdrawn. Peter, Bruce and Guy will meet to discuss the parish approach to planning applications and ensure that any parish responses are discussed at meetings which are open to the public.
Bruce is communicating with the enforcement officer about the lighting at the Batch and New Farm and will update the council with any progress.
9. **Flooding:** The recent floods were discussed, and we are lucky that so many parishioners promptly cleared blocked drains. **Action: Clerk to ask Highways if we could have a runnel instead of a pipe to clear water at the bottom of the hill by the bridge.**
10. **To report on the Climate and Ecological Emergency:** A B&NES meeting about a UKSPF fund had been attended by Bruce, Peter Brooks, Penny Rogers and the clerk, and the parish can apply for one grant with a short application deadline of 16 February. Peter and Penny have been working on their idea to make cycling from Priston to Timsbury easier by upgrading the bridleway, and report having received verbal support from the landowner. B&NES footpath Officer, Eddie Proctor will meet them to walk the route. The council voted 4 to 1 to put the application in for a grant to upgrade this bridleway, though there was some concern that walkers and riders would not wish cyclists to share the route. It was therefore also agreed that full consultation with parishioners will be carried out before the Parish Council consider signing off on any upgrading of the bridleway – in the event of the grant application being successful. (*Reason: prior consultation with parishioners not carried out, due to short grant application deadline.*)
Nick is arranging for an EV charging company to visit and discuss car charging points.
11. **To report on footpaths:** Helen has discussed improvements needed to 2 paths with Eddie Proctor, and will be meeting him to progress further.
12. To report on external meetings and agree attendance at future meetings: Guy and the clerk will attend the Parish Liaison on Wednesday 28 February in Keynsham.
13. Date of next Meeting –Monday 11th March 2024 7pm in the village hall.

Signed:Date: