

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 23rd March 2015 in the Village Hall, Priston.

1. Attendance and Apologies –

Councillor Pattison, as Chairman of the Parish Council, presided with the Parish Clerk in attendance. Parish Councillors and the electors of the parish attending the meeting were welcomed. A Register of Attendance was circulated for signature. There were no apologies.

2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 24th March 2014, having been distributed by email to Councillors, published on the Priston Website and Parish Council Noticeboard, were accepted, agreed as a true record of proceedings and signed by the Chairman. Agreed there were no appropriate Matters Arising.

3. Chairman's Report – Councillor Pattison commenced his report by advising that the major challenge in the year had been beginning the process to develop a Priston Village Design Statement. Meetings had been held and a Working Party selected. The cost of developing the Village Design Statement had involved a small increase in the annual precept.

The Chairman continued by advising that responses had been sent to Planning Services on applications in respect of three properties within the parish and also three in adjacent parishes. The Parish Council had proposed a change to BANES the Housing Development Boundary to BANES to preserve the open aspect of the area between the apple store at Church Farm and the Village Hall.

At the Parish Council's request the District Council had agreed there should be a formal 20mph limit through the village.

Concluding his report, the Chairman thanked Mr Bottle and Mr Wilkinson for looking after the Priston Website and the Defibrillator and Councillor Cross and Mr Cross for carrying out a survey of the road drainage of the village.

Councillor Pattison's full report had been placed on file and published on the Priston Website.

4. Financial Report of the Parish Council – The Clerk reported briefly on the Parish Council's finances advising the year at 1st April 2014 had commenced with an opening balance of £3,095.41 in the Parish Council's general account and a balance of £275.74 in the PRIDE/Defibrillator account. Fundraising and donations had paid a total of £593.07 into the Defibrillator account during the year. A precept of £5,460 had been received and VAT of £60.36 reclaimed in respect of transactions during the previous financial year. There will be a balance in excess of £4,000 in the Parish Council's general account at 31st March 2015 although figures had not yet been finalised. A typed version of this report has been placed on file and published on the Priston Website. A detailed financial report would be presented at the Annual General Meeting.

5. Report of Priston Village Hall –

Mr Cross, the Treasurer of the Village Hall Committee, reported that the Hall continues to be widely used and is obviously appreciated by the community.

Income from all sources was £7,267 with an improved contribution from MayDay and the Annual Village Social. Expenditure was £6,101 which was lower than the previous year.

A copy of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Village Hall had been appended to the Minute Book.

6. Reports of Village Organisations – The Chairman invited representatives of all village organisations to report on their activities in the past year and plans for the coming year. Thanks were expressed for the very interesting and informative reports, copies of which had been included in the Minute Book and also published on the Priston Website.

After closing the formal business of the meeting, the Chairman welcomed the Kennet and Avon Handbell Ringers who performed some very enjoyable sets of bell ringing and their leader explained the various sequences and answered questions from the interested audience.

REPORTS TO PRISTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - 23 MARCH 2015

1. **Priston Parish Council**
2. **St Luke & St Andrew's Church Priston**
3. **Bell Ringers**
4. **Cricket Club**
5. **Festival**
6. **History Group**
7. **Kids' Club**
8. **The Link**
9. **Jubilee Morris**
10. **PAGE**
11. **Village Hall**
12. **Priston Web**

1. PRISTON PARISH COUNCIL - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Village Design Statement - The major challenge this year has been beginning the process to develop a Priston Village Design Statement, which will, if successful, give greater authority to our community over planning matters. The Council held a public meeting in November, at which there was general support for the idea, and a second in February at which a Working Party was selected which now has the task of working with BANES and with the support of the Parish Council to develop a VDS.

Finance - the cost of developing our Village Design Statement has led to a further small increase in the Precept this year, which has been accepted by BANES.

Planning - Responses on the following applications have been sent:

Parcel 5856 High Street Priston which now has full planning permission.

5, Sarabeth Drive, Tunley

Land at the junction of Priston Lane and Tunley Hill

Village Farm

Priston Manor House

Tunley Farm, Camerton

The Council have proposed to BANES that, to preserve the open aspect of this area of the village, there should be a change to the Housing Development Boundary to exclude the garden between the apple store at Church Farm and the Village Hall.

Highways and footpaths - At the Parish Council's request BANES have agreed that there should be a formal 20mph limit through Priston Village, and this is expected later this year, sadly with the legal requirement of more signs.

With the assistance of our District Councillor David Veale we are still negotiating with Highways for a solution to reduce the flooding by the dairy on Farmborough Lane. We have thankfully not had the floods of last winter, so the drainage arrangements at the bottom of the village have yet to be tested.

Also thank you to Niels and Clare Cross for carrying out a survey of the road drainage of the village, which was forwarded to BANES Highway Department.

With the demise of the Parish Ranger scheme, thanks to PAGE for agreeing to extend their excellent litter-picking to help keep gullies and ditches clear to help reduce flooding.

Defibrillator - Thanks to John Wilkinson for his continuing support to this project, including the arrangements for continuing training.

Priston Website - Once again thanks to Richard Bottle for his efforts on our behalf, and for his assistance with:

Broadband - BT and BANES "Connecting Devon & Somerset" now predict that we will get "fibre to the cabinet" for Priston village (not the Mill) by about October 2015. This should give us the ability to get much faster broadband, though not superfast.

Doug Pattison

Chairman, Priston Parish Council

2. ST LUKE & ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, PRISTON

Thank you for inviting me to give what is intended to be a brief report of St Luke and St Andrew's Church, Priston

The church of which I am grateful to be Rector is geographically and emotionally the centre of the village, although that may well be contested by the Ring O Bells. As you are all aware, the church has been at the centre of village life for 800 year or more, and I hope it will continue to be for many years to come.

We continue to celebrate together weekly worship and the great festivals of the Christian Calendar: Christmas, Easter, Harvest & Wassail, and also those significant rites of passage: weddings, christenings and funerals. Villagers will be aware from the ringing of bells on Saturdays that the church is busy with weddings throughout the summer months and we have some 8-9 couples tying the knot in Priston in 2015 (including both Charlotte and Edward Haines this year.)

The church is a centre of village life in other respects as well: we are delighted to be a venue for the Priston Festival and have hosted some marvellous concerts and talks in September last year. As a church we are very open to providing the building for other cultural activities and since the autumn of last year we have a fully functioning sound and hearing aid loop system in place.

We are grateful to the village for continued financial support. As I wrote in my October letter, the Church costs around £24,000 a year to maintain and run and we do not receive any state or regional support to find this sum. I would like to thank the community for their generosity in helping find that sum. I am grateful too to our Church Fundraising Group for organising 12th Night this year, the Boules evening last summer and could we ever forget the night at Priston Mill last November with the Victorian Knicker Lady? Forthcoming events will be a Grand Commemorative Dinner to mark the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo on 21st June this year.

As a Church we are committed to help the less advantaged in our own society, and this year we will be making charitable donations to Send A Cow; The Genesis Trust and to our Link Parish in Uganda. Through our own trust, administered by the redoubtable Bill Drake Brockman we are able to make modest grants to village youngsters to assist with educational expenses. More details from BDB.

In church terms, you may not be aware that St Luke and St Andrew's Priston is part of the Benefice of Timsbury which includes Timsbury, Camerton, Dunkerton and Priston. As many others have felt over the years, whilst all parishes are jewels in their own way, Priston is a little gem, and I am honoured to be Rector.

Revd Martin Blewett

3. BELLRINGERS REPORT

The Bellringers continue to ring for most Sunday morning services.

One peal was rung by a visiting band on 17th May.

The quarterly meeting of the Bath branch of the Diocesan Association of Change Ringers was held at Priston on 11th October.

We rang for 6 weddings between March 2014 and March 2015.

A band of ringers from Charlestown and Birmingham, USA, rang a quarter peal.

A tower open day was held on 4th October, visitors were able to see the bells rung, visit the clock room, see the bells and go on to the tower roof. It was very popular and we are planning another one in the autumn.

As usual we rang the new year in, and were joined by friends to welcome the new year with mince pies and champagne!

Early in 2015 we had a problem with the second bell, but thanks to the prompt help of Tim Hughes (who maintains the bells)and Matthew Higby (a local bell hanger)we only missed a couple of weeks ringing. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Priston ringers for their support and dedication. We are privileged to have such a beautiful peal of bells in our church.

Jill Wilkinson, Captain of Ringers

4. PRISTON CRICKET CLUB

Priston Cricket Club begins its 32nd season in April. We have come a long way since our first 4 games in 1984, when we had no home ground. This season we have 27 matches, most of which are at our picturesque ground behind the Church.

Over the years we have always remained faithful to our original ideal of nurturing local players; residence in the Parish is still the main qualification for membership. Our numbers are small, but with an age range between 12 and 85, newcomers are encouraged to slot in, regardless of ability. Josh Sutton begins his second season as skipper - our youngest ever captain at 20.

The Club is fortunate to enjoy wide support in the village, and social members are encouraged for a modest fee to sample the finest cricket tea in the area, watching our exclusively 'friendly' matches.

Sadly, this year the Club could not continue its custom of several years of helping to provide entertainment at the village Social, for lack of members available on the night. But a 5th pantomime is threatened for 2016. So watch out....!

Paul Barclay

5. PRISTON FESTIVAL

- We are now in our 8th year
- The Festival has gradually increased scale and quality over the years. The pattern this year will be similar to last year.
- The Festival wouldn't be possible without the huge amount of help and support from the village. The village can take pride in the comments from visitor surveys on friendly village atmosphere of the Festival.
- Over the years, the Festival has helped to provide assets which can be used by village eg stage lights/curtains. The occasional film nights have also been a v worthwhile addition to village life. The Festival has undoubtedly helped increase the profile of Priston overall across the region.
- The Committee was were very grateful for Robin's work over the years as Treasurer. Robin has recently retired from the role and and we have welcomed Jocelyn Nichols as the new Treasurer.

- We look forward to continuation of support from the village.
- There is a great gig featuring Scott Cook and Jez Hellard on 25 April, tickets can be purchased online or from Committee members.

Richard Bottle

6. THE HISTORY GROUP

The History Group was formed to explore something of Priston's own history and some of the talks that were given are now on the Priston web, alongside the very important Farm Survey of 1991 which was carried out by Avon County under the auspices of English Heritage.

The group also sponsored the Bath & Camerton Archaeological Society geophysical survey of Town Hill field and they will be returning to look at Goosemead field this April. There may possibly be a talk later this year on the findings.

Clare Cross

7. KIDS' CLUB

There are no plans per se. It is a fluid weekly get together where we determine what the worldly / relevant event is for that week and we focus our attentions to that effect. The last Thursday of the month we hold the kids club at the pub; Darren Littlewood and Alan Thomas kindly open the pub an hour early and prepare a simple sit down, kid friendly meal.

Nicola Slee

8. THE LINK

The Link has had a good year – our 38th! Though our advertising is slightly down, our readership is up. We are now sending out 10+ 'electronic Links' each month as well as 100 paper copies. We think our readership is about 400. As well as the communities of Priston, Nailwell and Inglesbatch we send copies to diverse destinations such as the police, the Somerset Guardian, ex-pat Pristonians as far afield as Argyll and Brittany, and to assorted Priston visitors, who like what they see and ask to have The Link so they know what's going on here.

While The Link has never aimed to make a profit we do remain solvent, thanks to the careful housekeeping of our Treasurer, Perry Perriton, and are therefore pleased to be able to offer, on occasions, small monetary prizes, whether for competitions in the magazine or, as recently, as one of the awards for a Kids' Logo Design for the Village Design Statement.

We do not charge for villagers' one-off advertisements (e.g. lawnmower for sale or a one-off charity event); however we do charge outsiders for similar advertisements. We also like a donation from charities which use our pages a lot. We are not a charity, and still have to make ends meet!

We have newly forged links, sorry for pun, with our Community Police (Glyn Samways and Rob Hendra). They will be contributing articles/advice from now on.

We are very grateful to Priston Parish Council, Priston Parochial Church Council and Priston Village Hall for their continued financial support.

Of course my main thanks go to Sue Hunter-Jones and Perry Perriton, because without them there would be no Link!

I'd like to acknowledge the close relationship between The Link and the Priston Web, embodied in Richard Bottle. We work closely together and certainly The Link would be much the poorer without his interest and collaboration.

I'd also like to thank our son Henry Anderson for volunteering in late 2013 to digitize the back numbers of The Link. This involved scanning 423 issues. Bearing in mind that the original Links, when incorporating Farmborough and Englishcombe, ran to well over 30 pages per issue, this was a formidable task – approximately 10,620 pages. We now have a fascinating picture of Somerset life over nearly 40 years – all on a memory stick.

Aylet Anderson

9. PRISTON JUBILEE MORRIS

We have had a busy time during the past year! We not only entertain at village social events, new year's day, wassail, mayday, festival and carol procession but dance out in the summer on most Monday evenings with other local morris sides (as we call a team) at hostleries in the highways and byways of Somerset and South Glos, We also go the occasional weekend festival of a folkie nature. We have also danced at events we have been hired for such as village fetes and weddings. Our objectives are to dance, make music and most of all have fun.

As many of you know we are a small side dancing in the style of Cotswold Morris and we practice in the hall on Monday evenings throughout the winter months.

That's the good new's. The not so good? - an aging population with all the aches and pains and more serious health conditions that affect the older person! We do have some concern about the long term future of the side.

I wonder how many of you would be sorry to see the demise of the morris. In my view, the community would be all the poorer. So revive and refresh it We need new members, especially from within the village to help ensure that the side to continues.

As a mixed side we would welcome men, women and families to come along and have a go. The best time to come along is in the autumn to the practice sessions in the hall (Mondays 8:00 till 9:30) so that the dances can be learnt ready to be performed the following summer.

John Wilkinson

10. PAGE – PRISTON ACTION GROUP FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

As you know PAGE is a very informal group of villagers interested in various things relating to the environment.

Over the last few years we have not met on a regular basis, but we have continued to do things as and when we think of them.

- The bulk oil buying continues. About 30 households are now involved. Peter placed the largest order ever a month ago involving 18 households, saving £300 and a lot of tanker miles.
- Quite a lot of villagers have enjoyed taking part in occasional litter-picking forays. We have now formalised arrangements so that we shall do litter picking and ditch/sign monitoring on four Saturday mornings a year. The next one will be on 16 May. I should say that some villagers do this anyway without any prompting from me!
- We have an informal email group to pass on information and ideas, and this information is also displayed on the village website, and even Facebook.

And quite a few schemes have evolved in ad hoc fashion. I don't know how far to go back, but:

- In 2010 a group of about 6 households got together to make use of the new feed-in tariff scheme to put up solar panels. I know the panels are not attractive, but they are an alternative to fossil fuels. They are efficient, the array on our roof has generated 15.5 megawatts of clean energy.
- Last year John Marsden gave PAGE his apple crusher and press on long-term loan, and John Wybrow continues to let people pick his surplus apples every autumn
- And some of us, including some of the village children – which we really appreciated removed old plastic tree guards from the spinney near the sewage works. A job which was well overdue, but very satisfying.
- Doug and Peter are going to test a thermal imaging scanner some time this week with a view to checking for heat leaks in houses in the village.
- Louise and I planted native daffodils and wild flowers on the small triangle. We are trying to be very patient here. It is not a TV-style makeover!
- On a sadder note, the Church Farm Hen group folded after 5 successful years. As well as giving three or four households delicious eggs, it was a great bonding exercise. We have decided to stop because of various reasons, one of which is growing number of dogs in the village, worrying and attacking the hens which we wanted to allow to roam free.

As I said, PAGE is a very informal group. The idea is to pass on information and ideas in order to benefit the environment, and any proposals for future activities, including talks in the village hall, are most welcome.

Penny Rogers

11. PRISTON VILLAGE HALL

(Reports extracted from AGM held February 2015)

Chairman's Report: The hall continues to be a great asset to the village and is well used by both regulars and private users. There had been no major projects but probably the biggest improvement has been the planting in the car park, which has been much admired. May Day was again a great success with record profits, and the support of the whole village was again remarkable. We have purchased the stalls from Timsbury Hall and the 6 stalls are housed in Church Farm barn. Minor maintenance work involved painting, electrical improvements, lighting, and car park wall repairs. Other small purchases include 4 small tables, a wheel chair ramp for the kitchen door, a set of white crockery, [thanks to Corston Hall], which enables us to offer hall users 80 matching plates, side plates and bowls. Mrs Pattison also thanked all the committee members for great support during the year and especially Mrs Anderson, Mr Cross, Mrs Cross and Mrs Ostgaard for such a first class job as Bookings Manager.

Treasurer's Report: Assets: Cash and Bank Balances as at 31.12.2014 were £8818, (£7652) i.e. an increase of £1166. Income: Overall was £7267 (£8399), i.e. a decrease of £1132. The Social at £582 up from £446; Mayday at £3305 was up from £2288; donations of £65 were down from £1893. Lettings at £2902 were down from £3207; the Village Hall share of the marquee was down to £60 from £95; the electricity meter at £340 was down from £461 and interest on the account was up at £13 from £9. Expenditure: Overall was £6101 (£6703), i.e. a reduction of £602. Cleaning with minor purchases cost £1197 down from £1390; insurance was £515 up [because of taking out Trustee Indemnity] from £456; repairs and major purchases were £2140, up from £819; redecoration at £1158 was down from £1502. Electricity was £682 as against £729; water was £283 up from £243; licences were £126, up from £113; There were no donations this year as against £50 last year and the car park project as completed was £0. Summary: Mr Cross considered the overall financial situation to be very satisfactory, as assets have increased again, largely due to the excellent results of May Day. He expected income in 2015 to be similar to or lower than 2014 but also expected costs to be lower than in 2014, so saw no reason why the situation should not continue to be satisfactory. However he felt that there was a long term need to build up assets, given the potential for significant expenditure on some roof repairs within the next few years.

12. PRISTON WEB

- The Priston Web has been operating since 2002. It is operated on behalf of the Parish Council by Richard Bottle. It is an important means by which the Parish Council communicates with the village – all Council agendas and minutes and significant documents are published on the website.
- The Priston Web normally has between 100-150 repeat visitors each month, who on average make about 4 visits per month. This supports the view that it is a helpful means of communication for the village.
- The Priston Web is always happy to support local organisations and initiatives. It provides a web presence for the majority of village organisations. Recent additions have included the Village Design Statement Working Group and the Saturday Café.
- The Priston Web works closely with The Link. The two channels complement each other well and it is intended that this cooperation will continue for the future. More recently the Facebook page for Priston set up by Louise Callan has been a useful mechanism for alerting people to additions to the Priston Web.
- Any suggestions or contributions should be provided to Richard Bottle at web@priston.org.uk

Richard Bottle