

PRIDDY PARISH

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
held at the Village Hall on Wednesday 4th May at 7:00pm

Present: Cllr Kate Greet (Chairman of Priddy Parish Council) and fifty-six parishioners
In attendance: William Newton Newey (Clerk)

1 **Apologies for absence**

Mrs Mandy Hutfield

2 **Acceptance of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13th May 2015 as a true record.**

The minutes were signed.

3 **Matters Arising from the Minutes of the previous meeting not otherwise included on the agenda**

There were no matters arising

4 Reports from the Parish Council, Parish and Village Organisations

a) Cllr Greet made a report on behalf of the Parish Council:

At the uncontested elections for the PC last year, our previous Chairman and Vice Chairman, Alan Hutfield and Rachel Thompson stood down from the council and were replaced by Tina Bath and Judith Coles as councillors, with Barry Wilkinson being voted Vice Chairman and myself as Chairman. Simon Eastham moved away from the parish and we welcomed Robin Maine back onto the council as a co-optee, which left us with one vacancy. Our long-standing Clerk, Alan Butcher, decided he would like to seize this opportunity and so retired from his post. This has given us a full complement of enthusiastic councillors in our team. To replace Alan we advertised for a new Clerk and were delighted to find William Newton-Newey, who has given us outstanding support and service since joining us in September.

Priddy Parish Council has continued to address many challenges and initiatives and we welcome feedback from parishioners on all that we do. I'd like to summarise our achievements over the past year and then invite anyone who wishes to, to raise any matters of interest to the parish afterwards.

The first decision we took was to purchase the flagpole for the Lower Green, following the positive response to the survey about it. We also have 2 flags at the moment, which Alan raises on the appropriate days. He has had one or two problems with the pole as you may know but coped valiantly with them and it's now in excellent order. Thanks to Dean Collier, Richard Houlton and Tom Owen for helping to rectify the damage caused by my namesake Storm Katie! It seems a while now, but a year ago the New Inn was still on the market and we met with David Plaister, the agent, to establish whether a community bid to purchase would be feasible once it was clear that the planning inspectorate would not allow a change of use. He was able to tell us that it was on the point of being sold and we were thrilled when we finally learned that the purchaser was Russell Sage of Higher Eastwater. (Presentation later.)

One of our major responsibilities is to comment on planning applications made to Mendip District Council, which is no easy task. We have to be very aware of the National Planning Policy Framework and Mendip's own local plan so that we know what is permissible and what is not. As Priddy is designated an 'other' parish it essentially means there is very limited scope for development unless an exceptional case can be made. This year the council felt this applied to Jake Baynes' application to convert the stone barn in his paddock on Wells Road and supported him all the way through an onerous appeal process.

We have opposed planning applications where councillors agree the development would not be appropriate or desirable. Decisions are not always straightforward or easy but councillors take their role very seriously and endeavour to reflect the views of the parishioners they have consulted faithfully and equitably.

You will be aware that previously planning permission had been granted on appeal for a new dwelling adjacent to New House on the Green and there has been an ongoing issue with the access to this. We are pleased to report that negotiations for the new dwelling to share the existing access with New House are proceeding well and an amendment to the easement

concerned is being drafted at no cost to the council. Our membership of the Open Spaces Society has helped us move towards this solution, and we value their support and advice on such matters.

Several appeals to form a new Sheep Fair committee were made this year without success and so it became clear that the event had to be suspended indefinitely without the need for the referendum due this February. No committee, no Fair! Chris held several meetings with various interested parties and initiated a Rural Crafts Fair alongside the Implements Sale. (Presentation later)

Tamsin Smith kindly conducted a survey of several young people in the parish about how best to use the funding the council has had for some time specifically for youth projects. Several ideas were mooted but the favourite was a bus shelter on the Green near the notice board. As this needed replacing, Charley Roberts-Arnold came up with the nifty idea of combining both and also submitted a very reasonable tender to undertake the project. It should be coming along soon, and we will repair the old noticeboard and move it to a new location negotiated with the residents of Nordrach to replace the old one there. A survey of the residents of Charterhouse established that they would prefer to receive information by e-mail rather than have their own board.

Sadly the small Priddy Parish Plan Group led by Jude did not have the capacity to deal with the demands of re-drafting a new Plan and Village Design Statement, so when appeals for more members failed that idea fell into abeyance. However, the council still feels it would be prudent to update the current documents as they are over 15 years' old, and would love to hear from anyone who might be interested in setting up a new team. There are grants available and support is already promised from Community Council Somerset to conduct a housing needs survey.

In November Milou Productions came to the village for a fortnight to film key scenes for 'Another Mother's Son', which is due for release in the autumn. Although there was some occasional disruption to our daily life, there were also exciting scenes to witness and a chance for the school children to visit the set and question the cast and crew. The arrival of the company made us realise we did not have a policy about commercial use of the Green such as filming so we have developed one and gratefully received a small donation from Milou too. We were prompted by this to update our policy for local and non-profit making users of the Green too, to ensure it is always adequately protected.

A small group of volunteers, including our MP James Heapey, spent a couple of mornings litter picking as part of the Clean for the Queen initiative in March. Many thanks to all of them. Priddy Friendly Society organised the Beacon at Deer Leap for the start of the Queen's 90th Birthday celebrations.

Somerset Association of Local Councils provided some excellent training on Web site design and the use of social media, and William has seized on the possibility of designing a whole parish web site with great enthusiasm. He is also providing regular updates and information to those on the parish email distribution list: if anyone is not already on it they should give him their details. (Presentation later.) Opinions are also sought on whether the council should continue to produce and distribute the twice-yearly Newsletter as postage costs have risen quite steeply. We only manage to deliver half by hand as so many parishioners live out of the village itself.

There will be a presentation on the little that has been happening with Broadband in the parish from Barry.

The Council's finances are in good order and William has drawn up the annual accounts for audit.

The PARC Committee is now very ably chaired by Jude and its members are very keen to progress a number of projects in the parish. Jude also looks after the Defibrillator, making sure the light and battery are working.

Ruud Mantingh has joined the PARC committee as Rights of Way Officer and has been assessing and checking paths around the parish. He can be contacted with any information or queries.

Dark Lane has finally been resurfaced by D Gibbons contractors and is now a very pleasant footpath and bridleway once again.

Folk Festival kindly gave a grant to the council to enable coppicing work at Coxtan End Lane, which was ably managed by Glenda Collier. We welcome any feedback about whether to do more here. It is linked with Glenda's Wildflower project around the parish where a group of volunteers have been researching and planting native wildflower seeds. As well as in this area

and the churchyard, Glenda is overseeing some work at Priddy Pond. She's an extremely busy lady and has sadly decided that she can no longer commit to being a full member of PARC so we are looking for someone else to join. Anyone interested should let William know.

Somerset Highways informed us that the council could take over responsibility for maintaining cast iron fingerposts in the parish and we are still researching the financial implications of this. There are three, especially the one at Nordrach which are in desperate need of repair but we already have some quotes to consider.

You will have seen the smart new signpost to the Hall, church and school as you came in, which was also funded by the Folk Festival. Many thanks to them for their ongoing support for the parish.

PARC is currently considering how best to protect various areas from erosion, starting with the Nine Barrows Triangle area and verge, which has been strengthened and re-seeded. We are also looking at Pincross, the Lower Green and Church Farm verges.

Albert Thompson continues to research the history of the area around Pincross with a view to the council making the best use of it in future.

Tina is researching interactive mapping and possible signs at The Mineries following the fire recently.

Alan Hutfield has very kindly continued to manage the home heating fuel purchasing consortium for members of the Parish. It has been extremely successful so anyone not already in it should get in touch with him. We are very grateful for this.

My thanks to my fellow councillors and our clerk for their time and support during the year. It's a very hard working team, who give a lot of time voluntarily and undertake many tasks and projects with enthusiasm and commitment. Everyone is passionate about doing the very best for Priddy Parish now and in the future.

Our next meeting is the Annual Parish Council Meeting on 18th May at 7:30pm when we will elect our officers for the year and review our Code of Conduct and Standing Orders.

We encourage members of the public to attend our meetings and to ask about items on the agenda during the public forum. If there is anything anyone feels very strongly about or has a particular interest in, we'd like them to raise it with us and they may then be invited to contribute at the relevant meetings too.

- b) Reports from Priddy Folk Festival, Priddy Pre School, Priddy Village Hall, Mendip Community Orchestra, Ladies Keep Fit, Priddy Bowls Club, Priddy History Group, Priddy Friendly Society and Priddy Cricket Club had been reproduced in a small booklet and were on display in the Hall.

5. Any Other Business

- a) Mr James Head raised concern about the increasing volume of traffic through the village. The situation was exacerbated by the speed at which drivers travelled on the roads which had no footpaths and were narrow and winding. He was also concerned about damage to walls and verges and the creep of tarmac as unofficial passing places were infilled by the Highways Authority.

Mr Head said that there were many options for traffic calming, such as speed humps and road markings as well as vertical speed limit signs.

The subject of parking in Pelting Drove was also raised.

Cllr Greet said that the Parish Council would discuss this matter at one of its meetings.

- b) Mr Dean Collier told the meeting that Priddy Folk Festival was celebrating its 25th Anniversary and that it had become a well-respected festival with an enviable line up of performers. He was also pleased to report that the Festival was able to return funds to the Parish. Mr Collier said that the Festival would always welcome more volunteers and, in particular, was looking for a Treasurer and somebody to deal with Customer Communications.
- c) Mrs Jo Rosseff raised a concern about the footpath from Pelting Drove to Durston Drove. She felt that it had become constricted and was inappropriately fenced with barbed wire. The footpath had been diverted some years ago to become part of the West Mendip Way and Mrs Rosseff wondered if the original route could be restored as it was very pleasant and provided a loop for a circular walk in the village.

Mr Mantingh said that the issue of the footpath had been reported and the regulations stated that a footpath had to be 1.5m wide. It was agreed to ask the PARC Committee to discuss the issue.

The meeting was then adjourned whilst Cheese and Wine Refreshments were served and those present were invited to join in informal conversations.

6 **Presentations**

- a) Broadband – Cllr Barry Wilkinson spoke about the slow progress of broadband initiatives and promised to circulate and email giving the latest position in terms of contracts or services.
- b) New Parish Website – the Clerk made a brief presentation about the re-design on the Parish Council’s website to make it a facility for the whole community.
- c) Rural Crafts Fair – Mr Ruud Matingh made report on the event held in 2015 and preparations for a similar event in 2016. The small working group led by Cllr Dyke would welcome comments, suggestions and offers of help.
- d) Restoration of the New Inn – Mr Russell Sage made a presentation of his vision for the restoration of the New Inn. He wanted to recreate the ethos of a Village Inn, with the possible addition of a micro-brewery and bakery. Mr Sage continued to welcome comments and suggestions from the local community, who he hoped would “buy in” to ethos of the project. He hoped that local craftsmen would be involved in the restoration of the New Inn.

7 **Date of Next Parish Meeting**

Wednesday 26th April, 2017

The meeting closed at 9:15pm

Signed
(Chairman)

26th April, 2017

William Newton Newey
10th May, 2016
parish.clerk@priddyparish.org

Initialled