

PRIORS MARSTON PARISH PLAN

2019



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Priors Marston lies to the east of Warwickshire, adjacent to the Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire borders. With a population approaching 600, it is a rural community that enjoys a largely unspoilt environment. For a parish of our size we enjoy good facilities. These include a Parish Church, a Primary School, a Village Hall with a part-time Post Office and sports facilities including football and cricket pitches and two hard tennis courts.

In 2005, a Parish Plan was adopted, copies of which can be found on the village website at www.priorsmarston.org and in autumn 2017 it was agreed that it needed to be updated.

Following a well-attended Parish meeting, a detailed Parish Survey was conducted early in 2018 and the full report of the survey is available on the village website. The results of the survey form the backbone of this plan and a summary of actions can be found at the back of this document. Possibly the most significant result of the survey has been that 98% of the respondents believe that the preservation of the rural landscape should be central to all future planning issues.



Priors Marston lies within Stratford-on Avon District Council and planning decisions are governed by its Core Strategy. Part of that strategy relates to future employment and housing development within the District and our Parish Plan will provide information about local views and priorities to help inform planning decisions. Because of the requirement for additional housing, a significant part of our plan relates to development within the Parish.



The primary objective of the 2019 plan is to look forward as to how we can make improvements to our community. Since 2005 the village has seen more than a dozen new homes built, including a significant number of affordable homes. Improvements have been made to the Church and the school is now a state funded Free School. We have avoided the construction of industrial scale wind turbines which would have impacted on the rural landscape that most believe is so important to us, but we still await the impact of the construction of HS2.

To some extent, the Parish is in a state of flux, with significant issues being faced by the Church, the Sports Club and the Holly Bush pub. Without support, their future is uncertain.

A Parish Plan can only be a statement of intent. Implementation must be a community initiative and I would encourage everyone to do all they can to bring our plan to life.

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed their time and effort to the development of this plan.

Richard Sadler

Chairman, Priors Marston Parish Plan Committee
December 2018

2.0. THE ROLE OF THE PARISH PLAN

The Priors Marston Parish Plan (adopted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council in 2005) needed updating to reflect the current views of parishioners. It was agreed to have a Parish Plan rather than a Neighbourhood Plan. Although the latter has greater weight with regard to planning matters, it is more expensive to produce and can take 3 years to produce. For a parish the size of Priors Marston, this seemed inappropriate; a decision that was made following officer recommendation at the District Council.



Stratford-on-Avon District Council is required to have a Core Strategy. Having regard to national planning policy, it sets out a strategy for the distribution of new residential development during the period to 2031. For the purposes of directing future housing development, a number of villages, including Priors Marston, are categorised as ‘Local Service Villages’. Development will take place through small-scale schemes on unidentified but suitable sites within their Built-Up Area Boundaries (where defined) or otherwise within their physical confines. A number of District Council documents, including the Built-up Area Boundary and Conservation Area can be found on the Parish website www.priorsmarston.org

As part of this planning framework a Site Allocations Plan will define a Built-Up Area Boundary for Priors Marston. Within this boundary, small-scale residential development will be acceptable in principle, subject to other requirements being met. Development may also include small-scale community-led schemes that meet community needs. Dwellings provided through such schemes will contribute to the overall housing requirement for the District.

Priors Marston is currently identified as a Category 4 Local Service Village. This guideline states that no more than about 8% of the 400 homes allocated to all Category 4 villages should be built in any one village, during the period 2011 to 2031. However, this figure should not be interpreted as a rigid ‘target’ to be met.

This Parish Plan is the work of a committee of nine parishioners chaired by Richard Sadler and funded by the Parish Council. It is an official document that must be taken into account as a material planning consideration by the District Council for issues such as housing and planning.

At the heart of the Priors Marston Parish Plan is a survey that was conducted in February 2018. There were three elements:

- A confidential household survey (1 per household)
- A confidential individual survey (completed by everyone over 16)
- A volunteering form

Around 250 questionnaire packs were distributed. 178 household questionnaires were completed (a response rate of over 70%) and 325 individual forms were completed by those aged 16 and over, an average of 1.83 per household.

The forms were analysed by an independent data processing house and the high response determined that the findings are statistically reliable. The survey report was published on the village website and the report forms the basis of the Parish Plan.

Additional guidance has come from the Housing Needs Survey, published in November 2015 by Warwickshire Rural Community Council.

The Plan contains a number of actions that need to be taken. These are included within the body of the plan as well as being summarised in the appendix.

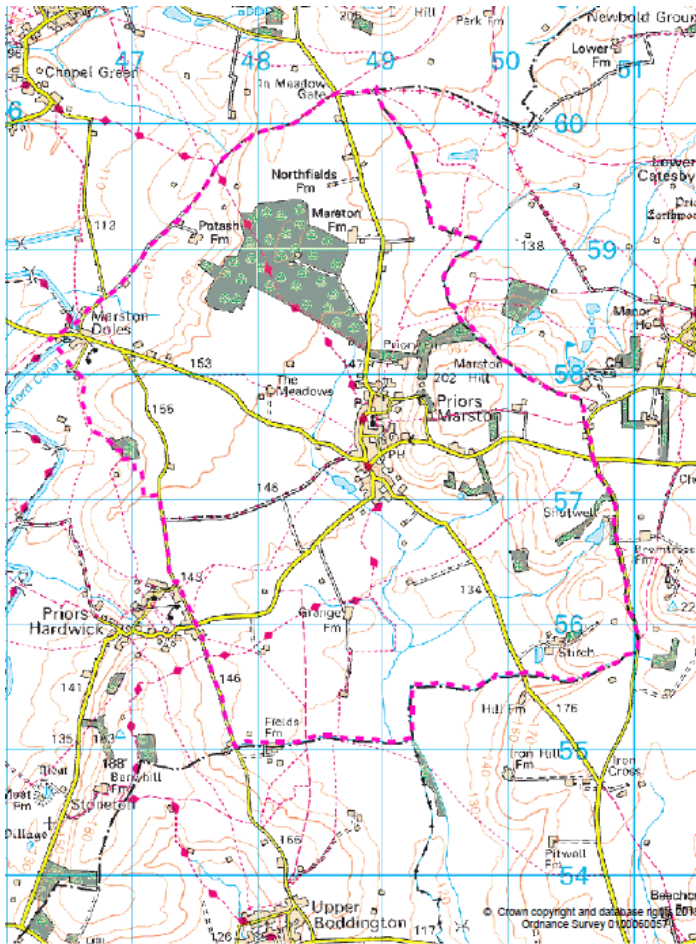
3.0 THE PARISH OF PRIORS MARSTON

Priors Marston is a small Warwickshire village on the eastern edge of the county in the District of Stratford-on-Avon. It has easy access to the motorway network being located between the M1 and M40 and central to the main towns of Leamington Spa, Coventry, Daventry, Northampton and Banbury.

The village lies within a Special Landscape Area and a large part of the village centre is designated as a Conservation Area within both the adopted Stratford-on-Avon Local Plan and the Local Plan Review. (See Appendix for Conservation Area map.)

The village still resembles its traditional form of residential and agricultural development, even though over the years the built area within the village has intensified.

There are a few properties outside the main village, many of which are farming related, as well as the small settlement of Marston Doles on the border of the parish adjacent to the Oxford Canal. The canal forms one of the parish borders at Marston Doles where there is a lock and disused wharf. Completed in 1790, the canal links the River Thames with the Grand Union Canal and for many years was an important commercial thoroughfare transporting coal, stone, agricultural products and other goods from the Midlands to London. The canal is probably busier now than ever, with leisure rather than commercial traffic and there is a major hub in nearby Napton.



Priors Marston Parish Council - Boundary

Priors Marston is approached by no less than six routes: Hardwick Road and Byfield Road from the south, Hellidon Road descending from Charwelton via Marston Hill to the east, with Shuckburgh Road from the north and Southam Road from the west. Keys Lane, a narrow road at the northern end of the village, winds its way down Marston Hill and enters the village at its north-eastern tip.

The overall ambience of the village is attractive with large expanses of village green and grass verges and rich foliage in the form of hedgerows, shrubs and trees that do much to enhance the overall quality and ambience.

Sir Nicholas Pevsner described Priors Marston in his 'Buildings of England' series as 'one of the most rewarding villages in this part of the country'.

The population has grown somewhat over recent years. The 2001 census records a population of 506 increasing to 579 in 2011.

3.1 History

The name Priors Marston is from the Anglo Saxon 'merse' meaning marsh, with 'ton' meaning town. The Priors being added by the Benedictine Priory of Coventry when the manorship was endowed to them. The village is mentioned in the Domesday survey as part of Priors Hardwick but in 1236 was listed as a separate place.

After the dissolution of Coventry Priory in 1539 the manorship passed through several hands until it was granted to Robert, Lord Spencer in 1602. About a third of the parish was owned by the Spencers but was let to tenants. The Spencers are still Lord of the Manor.





According to the 1837 Census about 30% of the population was directly employed in agriculture with about twice that number working in the immediate area on other rural jobs such as iron ore extraction, brickmaking, blacksmithing, building etc. Sixty years later, with the continuing impact of the Industrial Revolution and the crisis in farming, the number of labourers working on

the land declined and this altered the Parish structure both in housing and population. The figure for the census of 1831 was 655 rising to 739 in 1851. By 1891 the population was recorded at 554 with a continuing decline to a low of 386 in 1951. Since then with new building, enlargements and barn type conversions, the number of dwellings has risen from 100 to over 200. It is interesting to note that only 6 houses were built between 1919 and 1950 and there were numerous demolitions. As recently as the 1960's there were 13 working farms in the parish.

The original water supply for the village was from a series of wells, but in about 1910 a piped system from spring fed tanks on the hill was installed. A mains supply came in 1948. Electricity arrived in 1934. Mains drainage was provided in 1962, all of which made the village expansion possible but has resulted in a drainage system that is no longer adequate for the expanded village size and frequently results in flooding.



Mains gas finally came in the 90s although not all houses are connected.

Survey Highlight

- Around 80% of respondents want to maintain the village's rural character and ambiance
- Between 76-84% support maintaining and preserving our wildlife, views, rural character, heritage and history.

3.2 Then and Now

Although much has changed in the wider world, many of the buildings in Priors Marston have remained the same.



The main industry in Priors Marston was a brickyard, located on the Hellidon Road. Operational until 1972, it had 2 kilns and a quarry for the clay. There was also a steam flour mill leaving the village on the Southam Road. There have also been other craft industries including Edward Gardiner, a maker of arts and craft chairs and Blencowe Churchill, a well-known clock maker.



Another illustrious inhabitant of the village was Josiah Key, locksmith to Queen Anne and several of his locks still adorn Hampton Court Palace. His residence was of course Keys House in Keys Lane. Along with Blencowe Churchill, he is buried in the churchyard.





See Appendix for archive photo credits

3.3 Key Landscape Features

The landscape at Priors Marston is characterised by the abundance of trees and shrubs that line roads, paths and define borders, edges and gardens. Wide grassed verges are a key component in the landscape. There are three main greens which reflect the development of the village through the ages.



The Northern Green extended to the east up Keys Lane and Vicarage Lane, linking to the churchyard in front of The Orchard. On a Spencer Estate plan of about 1750, this is shown as 'The Common'.

As the village developed further south, another open space or Green was established running from where the telephone box now stands to the east as far as Westwood House, back to the churchyard wall to the

north side where the remnants of the Village Pound still exist. This was where stray livestock would be kept until claimed by the owners who would have to pay a fine. Up to about 100 years ago, village workshops and a smithy stood where the Holly Bush car park is now situated.



The newest green runs south from the Holloway (Shuckburgh Road) to the Byfield Road junction and was formed in the early 16th century when some of the existing houses



were built. Here again it is a different shape but is the most recognisable as a green. Recent investigation of land off Keys Lane has indicated a site of archaeological interest.

Survey Highlight:

- The overwhelming majority - 98% would like to see the preservation of the local landscape included in the Parish Plan
- 97% want the preservation of views around the village and 96% the preservation and restoration of key habitats and wildlife diversity.

What People Think:

'Priors Marston is a beautiful English village'

Stratford-on-District's Core Strategy Policy CS.25 'Healthy Communities' provides protection for local green spaces, stating 'development proposals that would result in the loss of public or private open space, including allotments, without suitable replacement, will be resisted unless:

- it can be demonstrated that there is an absence of need or it is surplus to requirements, and
- it does not make a valuable contribution to the amenity and character of the area.

Action:

- **Parish Council to seek to ensure protection and preservation of the village landscape when planning applications are considered**

3.4 Footpaths

There is an interesting history of footpaths and roads through the Parish from very early times. We are set on the ancient Ridgeway track and Iron Age trading route linking Nadbury Camp, Edghill to Borough Hill, Daventry.

The Salt Road dating from at least the Roman occupation, links Droitwich to Northampton and was used to carry salt for meat preservation and general trading and runs across the centre of the Parish.





The Jurassic Way, dating from prehistory, stretches from the Severn to the Humber and was used by hunters and traders generally following the Jurassic ridge and is only half a mile away at the top of the hill. The Welsh Drovers Road enters the Parish running north to south and forms the boundary with Priors Hardwick. It was used for several hundred years prior to the railways to drive livestock from the Welsh farms and others to London markets. Drovers would often use the rich

pastures around Priors Marston to fatten and shoe their cattle before continuing their journey to the London markets.

The main coaching route from Warwick to London ran through the village on its way to Towcester and was such an important link that a High Constable was stationed here to deter highwaymen.



The field footpath and bridleway network we have today has been established for several hundred years and was originally brought into use to get to places of work and adjacent villages. The Paths and Bridleways are today used for recreational purposes.

There is a distinctive blue brick path in the village, built to enable Richard Masters to walk from his house in Byfield Road to the

Moravian Chapel in Keys Lane without getting his shoes dirty!



Survey Highlight

- Over a quarter of residents use local footpaths daily, with the majority of respondents (61%) indicating that the network of footpaths and bridleways is important.
- Those that encountered problems identified unchecked vegetation (59%) and poor underfoot conditions (53%). Particular areas identified as a problem are the path from the top of School Lane to Hill Farm and the path by Priory Farm.

What People Want:

'Better maintained footpaths and pavements. Stop vehicles parking across footpaths and pavements'

*'A map of all local footpaths would be of value'
'Stop vehicles parking on footpaths'*

'Stiles across footpaths could be replaced with metal gates. (Kissing gates) this would enable elderly people and people with mobility problems to enjoy more exercise and countryside'

Action:

- **Encourage formation of a volunteer group that can meet on a regular basis to help maintain footpaths**
- **Encourage landowners with footpaths transiting their property to replace stiles with 'kissing gates' where appropriate to enable better access.**
- **Encourage volunteers to explore the creation of a map of local footpaths including waymarks**

4.0 HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT

All planning applications are determined in accordance with the Stratford-on-Avon Council's Core Strategy, together with the views of the local community which form an integral element in any decision-making.

The strongest findings from our Parish Survey show that around 90% of respondents want to preserve the character of Priors Marston. As housing can easily and quickly change the character of a village, this is clearly an important issue for the parish, particularly given the obligation to accept some new development under our status as a Category 4 Village.

4.1 Existing Housing Stock

The village includes a wide variety of different types and styles of building, from traditional Hornton Stone cottages, farm houses and houses many of which are listed, through to more recent brick-built structures that are not always in sympathy with earlier examples.

There are several houses dating from the mid 17th century: The Old Manor, Westview House and The Orchards, still with thatched roofs. Court Leet Manor (dated 1663), The Chestnuts Farmhouse (dated 1659), Keys House (dated 1660), Low House (dated 1664), The Hermitage (dated 1618), Falcon House, The Cedars and The Old Vicarage (initially built around 1600).



All these houses have had alterations, extensions and general remodelling, whilst retaining their original appearance. A further number of houses were built about the middle of the 1700s, perhaps prompted by the Enclosure Act of 1758 which so radically altered farming methods.



Half of the homes are pre 20th Century with the bulk of the remainder being built post 1945. Around 40 buildings are Grade II listed.

Survey Highlights

- Just over half of respondents live in detached properties. 51% have 4 or more bedrooms, well above the average for rural villages.



4.2 Housing Needs

There is a recognition of the need for some additional housing in the Parish. Partly to satisfy local demand but also to meet our obligations as a Category 4 Local Service Village to which

we are already making a significant contribution. (Category 4 is the smallest village categorised by Stratford-on-Avon Council and Priors Marston sits there as a result of having a school.)

Survey Highlights:

- 57% favoured more starter and new family homes to buy on the open market
- An almost unanimous desire for the rural character of the village to be maintained.
- The strong preference is for either single property plots or small developments of between 2 to 5 properties.
- 59% would like to see some retirement properties.
- Almost 90% would prefer to see redundant buildings redeveloped.
- There is strong opposition to larger developments (more than 5 properties) and most believe expansion on the edge of the village would spoil the village environment. Very strong desire for all new developments to have off street parking, and the same level of desire to maintain our green spaces.

What People Want:

'Sensitively designed housing'

'Small residential developments within the envelope of the built environment'

The survey reflects the strong feeling within the community that the conversion of redundant buildings followed by single properties in controlled locations and then small groups of two to five properties are strongly preferred to larger groups of six or more properties with a majority stating that there was no need for expansion on the edge of the village.

Action:

- **Parish Council to ensure that their response to all planning applications is consistent with the Priors Marston Parish Plan**
- **Parish Council to inform parish of significant planning applications such as wind turbines or developments of more than 5 houses using agreed communication channels**
- **Parish Council to keep track of the number of new houses built from April 2011**



4.3 New Development

Aside from housing development, the survey asked people's attitudes towards other forms of development.

Survey Highlights:

- Over 90% believe that rural businesses should be encouraged. Small enterprises, and promotion of leisure and tourism would be welcomed.
- No support for large scale agricultural installations
- There is little enthusiasm for small scale industrial workshops.
- Nearly 90% would like to see a village shop.

What People Want:

'Any business as long as they use premises that do not ruin the beauty & character of the village - jobs for the village would be good.'

Action:

- **Parish Council to ensure that their response to all planning applications is consistent with the Priors Marston Parish Plan**

4.4 Affordable Housing

In November 2015 a housing needs survey was undertaken by Warwickshire Rural Community Council (WRCC). The key findings of this survey identified the need for five new homes with two and three bedrooms in Priors Marston for people with a local connection. As a consequence of the Survey, the Parish Council has confirmed in principle its support for an affordable housing development.

Action:

- **Parish Council to ensure that genuine and appropriate local demand exists prior to supporting any new Affordable Housing scheme**

4.5 Design Guidelines

The buildings in the village comprise a wide variety of style and materials, all of which combine to give it a special character. As most of the village is designated as a Conservation Area, the design requirements are necessarily more stringent than elsewhere and therefore, developments within that area will be expected to enhance and improve the area.



By the overwhelming response of both the 2005 and 2018 survey, the people of Priors Marston have declared that it is their wish to retain the present distinctive character and overall setting of the village. In particular, the community wishes to retain the views and open spaces within the village, the Village Green, the verges and footpaths, its trees and its buildings.

Over 90% want new builds and extensions to use traditional building materials and consider as important the design, height and size of all new builds and extensions. To this end, the Parish Plan encourages the use of materials as set out in Section 4.6 and supports the Stratford-on-Avon Council's Draft Development Requirements Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD):

'Local distinctiveness is about valuing the uniqueness of a particular location and creating a design that strengthens its common features as opposed to destroying or diluting them. Good design adds cohesion to a place. Individual features can be the extraordinary or even the ordinary and every day; both contribute to defining a particular place. Places with a strong local distinctiveness have a sense of place'.

The following criteria are strongly encouraged to maintain the character of the village:

- The design and usage of materials in any alteration or extension should be at least equal to or better than that of the main structure
- No encroachment beyond the building line should take place
- All planning permission given should seek, by condition if possible, to protect the existing roads, footpaths, verges, trees, hedges or the like and to reinstate the same
- Additional planting of trees, shrubs and hedges to maintain the borders in keeping with the village landscape setting

Action:

- **Parish Council to ensure that their response to all planning applications is consistent with the Priors Marston Parish Plan.**

4.6 Building Materials

The following materials are recommended to preserve the character of buildings in the parish:



Walls: Hornton Stone, red brick with blue brick damp course and cills

Roofs: Thatch, Slate, Red clay tiles

Windows: Natural timber

Doors: Natural timber

Roof lights: Encourage dormer windows on front elevations only

Eaves: Dentilated brick

Verges: Projecting header or stretcher

These types of works may be carried out under Permitted Development Rights in some circumstances and would not require planning permission.



Sadly, there are a number of developments in the parish that do not conform to these guidelines; most notable is the cladding on houses in Bradshaw Close that are clad with composite material coloured to match Cotswold stone as opposed to the local Hornton Stone. In the past the District Council has approved some planning applications which have led to the use of materials not in keeping with the

village vernacular. It is important for preserving the character of the village to avoid any future repetition.

Action:

- **The Parish Council will ensure their responses to all planning applications are consistent with the Priors Marston Parish Plan.**

5.0 VILLAGE ASSETS

Priors Marston has a church, a primary school, a playground, a village hall that incorporates a sub post office, a pub and a sports and social club. Some of these facilities are shared with neighbouring Priors Hardwick.

5.1 St. Leonard's Church

Despite being a relatively small village, in the 19th century Priors Marston had three chapels. The original Wesleyan chapel, at Chapel End was built in 1822 and became a Primitive Methodist church in 1858 when a new Wesleyan chapel was built in Holly Bush Lane. This closed in 1932. The Moravian church was founded in Priors Marston in 1806 with the chapel in Keys Lane built in 1864.

St Leonard's church is Grade II listed and has origins dating back to the 13th Century with a complete list of incumbents from 1313 when a William de Bourton was appointed parish priest. The Tower was rebuilt in the 17th Century and accommodates six ringable bells, five of which were cast in 1721 by the notable Bagley family at their foundry in nearby Chacombe.



In the churchyard there are two magnificent Cedars of Lebanon planted at the beginning of the 19th Century to commemorate the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo. It also contains many old graves, the oldest dating back to 1601. Nowadays Priors Marston is part of The Bridges group of parishes that includes Lower Shuckburgh, Napton, Priors Hardwick, Stockton and Wormleighton.

The survey highlights that 27% of residents use the church at least once a year. It is open daily and available to everyone, whether they come in search of worship, solace or history. In recent years an open area has been created at the rear of the church for meetings and functions and toilet and kitchen facilities have also been added.



There are different groups for children of various ages including a holiday club for 7 to 10 year olds called Epic Explorers.



By far the biggest physical challenge facing St Leonard`s is the repair of the tower and high-level stonework. Following a formal survey, Historic England has come to the conclusion that the church is so significant and the condition of its high-level stonework so parlous that it has been placed on the national register and classified as "Heritage at Risk". If it is not addressed the churchyard will have to be closed to avoid serious or even fatal injuries.

The current professionally assessed cost of these high-level repairs is £232,000. To raise this sum requires input from a wide variety of donors but mainly from the village as the Church of England will not provide any funds to repair the church

building. The PCC is continuing to search for alternative funding having unsuccessfully made a second application for Heritage Lottery funding. A programme of community-building and educational activities, for example lectures on history, art and concerts have been put in place to help with fund raising.



In response to the previous Parish Plan, which amongst other things identified the need for more community building space, the PCC undertook over 7 years a project to provide flexible use space in the church building. It is now ready to address this much larger project but as one to be shared with and integral to the whole village community.

Action:

- **Church Parochial Council to increase awareness of the problems facing the church and organise a series of events and community engagement projects to help fund church repairs.**

5.2 The Priors School

The Priors School was built in 1847 on land owned by the fourth Earl Spencer. Two years later he entrusted the land and school to the community forever, so long as it was used for educational purposes. For nearly 150 years it continued as a Church of England and state primary school until



the County Council announced that it would close in August 1996. Threatened by closure, the community was galvanised into action. An educational charity was formed that adopted the school and with the support of Earl Spencer the communities exercised their right under the ancient trust deed and took possession of the land and buildings.

The school generated enormous support both locally and nationally. When it reopened in September 1996 with 12 pupils, the press turned out to record the event. This brought donations and enrolments from people who saw the story and resulted in a series of community fund raising events that enabled the school to continue.



The school exists at the heart of the community with which it seeks to maximise links and to enrich both the education of its children and the life of the village.

In 2011, after fourteen years as an independent school administered as a charity, the Priors School became the country's first Free School. It also has a nursery school, a kindergarten and provides pre

and after-school care. The school has been growing over the last few years and with around 80 children enrolled is almost at its capacity.

5.3 Playground

The parish has an excellent playground designed and installed by volunteers. It is attached to the Priors School and is available for use by all outside school hours.

The land for the playground belongs to the school, but the equipment is provided and maintained by the Parish Council.



5.4 The Priors Hall



The first village hall was opened in 1956 and was replaced in 1999 by a new hall funded by loans and grants from the Millennium Commission and Stratford-on-Avon District Council. The Priors Hall is a registered charity run by a committee of volunteers and jointly serves the villages of Priors Marston and Priors Hardwick.

It provides a wide range of facilities such as:

- A venue for social occasions and entertainment e.g. parties, weddings, fund raising events, film shows and concerts
- Space for fitness classes and sports including badminton, table tennis, volleyball, darts and carpet bowls
- A place for meetings or clubs
- Office premises for local businesses
- A sub-post office open on two days per week

- A hairdressing salon
- A Polling Station
- A book swap facility

The current hall is now nearly 20 years old and there will be a need for increased spending on maintenance in the near future. It would also benefit from improved kitchen facilities and the addition of a space to accommodate smaller group meetings.

Action:

- **Village Hall Committee to encourage people to take an interest in the management of the Hall and to come forward with ideas for its future development.**
- **Village Hall Committee in conjunction with Parish Council to explore possibility of installing electric vehicle charge points**

5.5 The Sports and Social Club

The club is a private members club with membership open to all by subscription. It was formed in the 1950s as a development of the village football team with the aim of providing sports and social facilities for Priors Marston and Priors Hardwick.

Funds were accumulated, and with the help of loans, the club purchased the eight-acre site which it currently occupies in Byfield Road in the late 1970s.

Over the following few years a pavilion was built to provide changing rooms and social facilities for the village football and cricket teams. There are two hard tennis courts with floodlights.



In recent years, the club has faced a number of challenges. These include a decline in use by village sports teams including football and cricket although the football pitch is used by teams based outside the village. The wooden pavilion is nearly 40 years old and suffers from the ravages of time. Several break-ins over recent years has resulted in the installation of security gates with access restricted to members. This measure, whilst understandable, has resulted in resentment from people who would like open access and particularly a facility for children to kick a ball and exercise.

Access to the ground is also difficult due to a lack of footpaths and a dangerous corner when approached from the village.

The result of these challenges is that the future of the club is in question. Despite its use as a venue for dog shows and a relatively healthy tennis section the financial pressures are considerable.

What People Want:

'Safer route to sports club (footpath/pavement)'

'Sports clubhouse in urgent need of replacement or renovation to encourage more use'

'Allow sports club for everyone to use - no gates'

'The sports ground should be made openly available to village children to play whether members or not, there is currently no open space where kids can run around, kick or throw a ball etc. This village really needs one'

Action:

- **Sports Club Committee to further explore the future of the Sports Club and help develop a sustainable plan**
- **Sports Club Committee in conjunction with Parish Council to Investigate with County Council the opportunity to extend a footpath to the Sports Club as this might encourage wider use.**

5.6 The Holly Bush

There have, at various times been three pubs in Priors Marston, the oldest being The Falcon,



located on the corner of Holly Bush Lane and Hellidon Road. A former coaching inn on the route from Warwick to London, it closed for business in 1996. The Roebuck, on the Southam Road, was closed well before then, with at one time a clientele that included drovers wishing to visit ladies of ill repute who could apparently be found there!

The remaining pub is The Holly Bush, originally built in the late 15th century with mid 19th century addition and 20th century alterations. Initially it was a farmhouse and the car park

was a centre for small businesses including a blacksmith and other small traders. It had a small shop and began to brew and sell beer. Eventually it began to buy beer in from Leamington, but it was not until after the Second World War that it became fully licensed.

It is now owned by Heineken and like many pubs in rural communities is under financial pressure. It has recently been officially listed as a Village Asset with Stratford-on-Avon District Council. Like many rural pubs, the Holly Bush will only survive if it is supported by the community.

6.0 SHOPPING

Historically there were a number of different businesses in the village with many being located in houses as opposed to purpose-built buildings. A Warwickshire directory of 1872 and Whites Warwickshire of 1874 list a baker, 3 tailors, 3 butchers, 1 surgeon, 3 carpenters, 2 bootmakers, 2 malsters, 1 couper, 4 carriers, 1 wharfinger, 1 saddler, 1 basket maker and a corn miller. There were also petrol pumps. After these all closed, there remained a Co-Op store in School Lane until the late 1980s.

There is no longer a shop in the Parish; the nearest being in Napton and Byfield. Southam, Banbury, Daventry and Napton are the most frequented shopping destinations with the greatest percentage shopping regularly in Southam.

Whilst there is strong demand for a village shop, it would be necessary for the economics of such a venture to work. Such strong demand may result in someone exploring this option

Survey Highlight:

- The most commonly requested additional facility (by far!) was a village shop cited by 90% of respondents
- 44% of respondents felt they would benefit from the provision of a central drop off site in the Parish for deliveries from Amazon, etc.

What People Want:

'Village shop selling newspapers, local produce & basic groceries would be a welcome addition'

'Some shopping opportunities. I realise the village may not be able to sustain a full-time shop but it would be useful if some basic items could be ordered/purchased maybe at the pub'

7.0 UTILITIES

Whilst there is general satisfaction with the provision of most facilities in the Parish, the exception is mobile networks with 54% rating it as poor and only 16% rating it as good.

Survey Highlights:

- While 86% supported making houses more energy efficient in the future, 73% preferred this on public buildings to 65% on residential. 64% supports air or ground source heat pumps.
- 62% of respondents are opposed to commercial wind farms in local fields and wind turbines on residential buildings.

Action:

- **Parish Council to comment on planning applications for commercial activities outside the Parish that might impact Priors Marston when notified of these applications. (Commercial wind farms for example.)**
- **As the UK moves from diesel and petrol to electric powered vehicles, the Parish Council should encourage the provision of electric charging points in new planning applications.**

8.0 DRAINAGE & FLOODING

There are approximately twice as many houses in the village since mains drainage was installed so it is not surprising that flooding has been an issue for several years.

Survey Highlights:

Flooding was identified as a significant issue with the Holloway and around the War Memorial being the main problem areas. 85% of respondents felt it important that Council/Environment Agency take measures to prevent a recurrence as a high priority

What People Think:

'After heavy rain all the drains block up with debris'

'The Holloway always floods! always has!'

'There are long standing flooding issues in the village in several areas'

Action:

- **Parish Council to continue to engage with Warwickshire County Council about possible solutions to flooding issues.**
- **Parish Council to encourage County Council to monitor the condition and maintenance of drains.**

9.0 COMMUNICATION

Communication within the parish is served by a well-read Parish Magazine, a website, a Facebook page and noticeboard. There is also a Village Directory and an email database.

Survey Highlight:

- 57% of households have high speed broadband with 7% having no internet connection.
- A large majority, 81% would like to know more about how the Parish Council spends the money raised by council tax and 94% would like to be advised about significant planning matters in the Parish.

What People Want:

'Making the village website into more of a community resource, online notice board etc'

'Parish News is easily the best form of communication'

'More village meetings to get people together and mix'

Minutes from Parish Council meetings contain information about finance and spending and are posted on the Parish Council website and noticeboard.

10.0 TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC



There is no public transport service in the parish, so people must rely on private vehicles.

The Parish participates in Southam Town Council Volunteer Transport Scheme that provides essential journeys for people without means of transport to appointments with GPs and other medical providers.

Survey Highlights:

- 43% of respondents identified locations where parking could be considered a danger. The main areas were around the School, Hardwick Road, Shuckburgh Road, Hollybush Lane and Byfield Road.
- Although the majority (63%) of respondents were not concerned by damage caused by parking, there were a significant number of comments about parking causing damage to grass verges throughout the Parish.

- Despite these concerns only 20% would be actively in favour of statutory parking restrictions. 53% would not support statutory parking restrictions.

10.1 Speeding

- Most felt that speeding traffic is an issue on all approaches to Priors Marston and that the 30mph limit is widely ignored.
- The only speed control measure receiving majority support was electronic signage.
- 32 respondents would be willing to take part in a community speed watch scheme.

10.2 Condition and Maintenance of Roads

- Although most people were satisfied with the general condition and maintenance of roads within the Parish there were a substantial number of comments about the presence of potholes.

What People Think:

*'A great increase in recent times especially vans delivering goods'
'Throughout village parking is causing significant damage to grass verges'*

'Village greens & other green areas damaged by inconsiderate parking'

'It is helpful if people don't park on the grass verges to avoid traffic issues & damage'

'Traffic increase due to HS2 is a concern'

Actions:

- **Parish Council to explore formation of a volunteer 'Speed Watch Group' to monitor vehicle traffic.**
- **Parish Council to continue to ensure that grass verges and areas of Village Green are protected and that potholes are reported to Highways.**

10.3 HS2

Construction of HS2, which will run close by the parish is due to start shortly.

Survey Highlights:

- The impact of work on HS2 on the area was of significant concern with 83% very or fairly concerned about the environment impact
- 78% were concerned about the increase of construction traffic and 74% about the impact of increased noise levels

What People Think:

'Traffic increase due to HS2 is a concern'

Action:

- **Parish Council to communicate information to residents of HS2 activity when notified and ensure that Highways monitor compliance by construction traffic to agreed routes**

11.0 ACTIVITIES

A high percentage of nursery and primary school children in the village attend the Priors School. The closest secondary school is Southam College.

Survey Highlights:

- Whilst there are considered to be sufficient activities in the village for young children up to the age of 6, children aged 7-12 and adults, over half of respondents felt that there were not sufficient activities for teenagers and the elderly.
- Suggestions for additional activities were sports/non-church youth clubs for teenagers and a lunch club for the elderly.

What People Want:

'Club for the elderly, to help and advise'

*'It would be nice to have additional clubs/groups after school hours that aren't school associated
e.g. cubs'*

Action:

Parish Council to ascertain demand and possible provision of organised activities for teenagers and the retired

12.0 SAFETY AND SECURITY

There has been a recent increase in antisocial behaviour including a number of instances of vandalism (school playground and bus shelter) as well as some burglaries. The survey also highlighted issues of dog mess (59 survey comments) and dog barking (41% of residents affected).

Survey Highlight

- 97% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the Parish is a safe place to live however 39% had experienced crime. A large majority (83%) would like to see a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme reintroduced and 44 people volunteered to be part of it.
- There is a high awareness of the defibrillator in the telephone box (93%), however only 25% would know how to use it



What People Think:

'Lack of visible police presence, no Neighbourhood Watch'

Action:

- **Parish Council will encourage and support the formation of a volunteer Neighbourhood Watch Scheme**
- **Parish Council will facilitate a defibrillator training session possibly incorporating CPR training**

13. SUMMARY

The village survey, in providing data for the new Parish Plan, has identified some strong views on several important issues.

Perhaps the strongest, is that the rural character of the parish should be preserved combined with strong opposition to edge of village developments of six or more houses. The need for new housing is recognised, but the strong preference is for smaller developments that place less pressure on village infrastructure such as drainage.

The survey also identifies that an important part of the rural character is the network of footpaths that run through the parish and the need to ensure that they are properly maintained so that they can be enjoyed by all.

This Parish Plan is a document recording the views of current parishioners and the actions to be taken as a result. The actions listed in the plan are listed in the appendix along with timings and priorities and will be monitored by the PC to ensure actions are delivered. An important additional action is to review the plan in line with the 5 yearly review envisaged for the Core Strategy to ensure that it remains relevant and up to date.

Whilst engaging with stakeholders associated with village assets such as the Sports Club, the Church and the pub it has become evident that for various reasons their very survival is at

risk. This may seem alarmist, but if they are not supported or if complimentary use cannot be found, then realistically they may not survive for the benefit of parishioners.

Priors Marston is a wonderful place to live but times change. Compared with, say 50 years



ago, there are far fewer families who can claim to have lived and worked in the parish for generations. Inevitably this has an impact on the sense of community that we want to be part of. But unless people support village assets and form community groups such as a Neighbourhood Watch and a group to help maintain footpaths as just two examples, Priors Marston may well lose much of the character that has made it the special place that it is.

14. SUMMARY ACTIONS

See separate document

15. APPENDIX

Many thanks for those that have helped to produce this Parish Plan. In particular:

Photography: Natalie Wallis. **Editor:** Nick Fulford

Committee: David Adams, Diana Cripps, Pete Dunkley, John Franklin*, Nick Fulford*, Robert Holland, Lee Robinson, Richard Sadler, Natalie Wallis and Emma Hooker (Parish Clerk)

*Members of Priors Marston Parish Council

Helpers: JP Wright and Sally, Alan Evans, Sue Benson, Simon Brown, Diana Cripps, John Franklin, Nick Fulford, Richard Sadler and Natalie Wallis

Stratford-on-Avon District Council: Simon Purfield, Fiona Blundell and John Gordon as well as Chris Williams

Archive Photography

Thanks to Warwickshire County Record Office for use of archive photography:

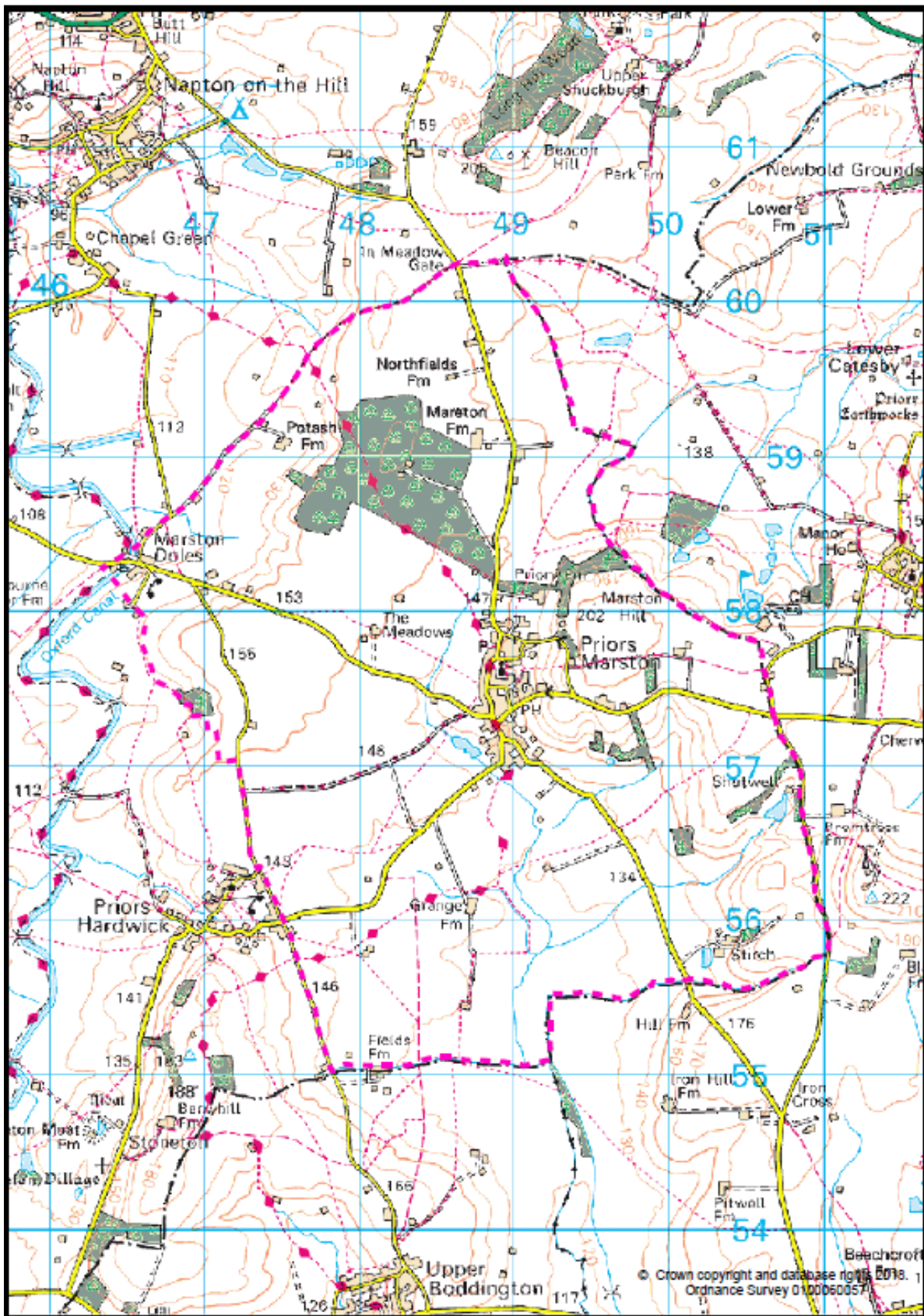
Falcon Inn, Priors Marston PH220/128

Priors Marston, Hill View School and Monument PH352/119/13

Large detached house and cottage in Priors Marston 1950s PH(N)888/380 by Victor Long, Rugby

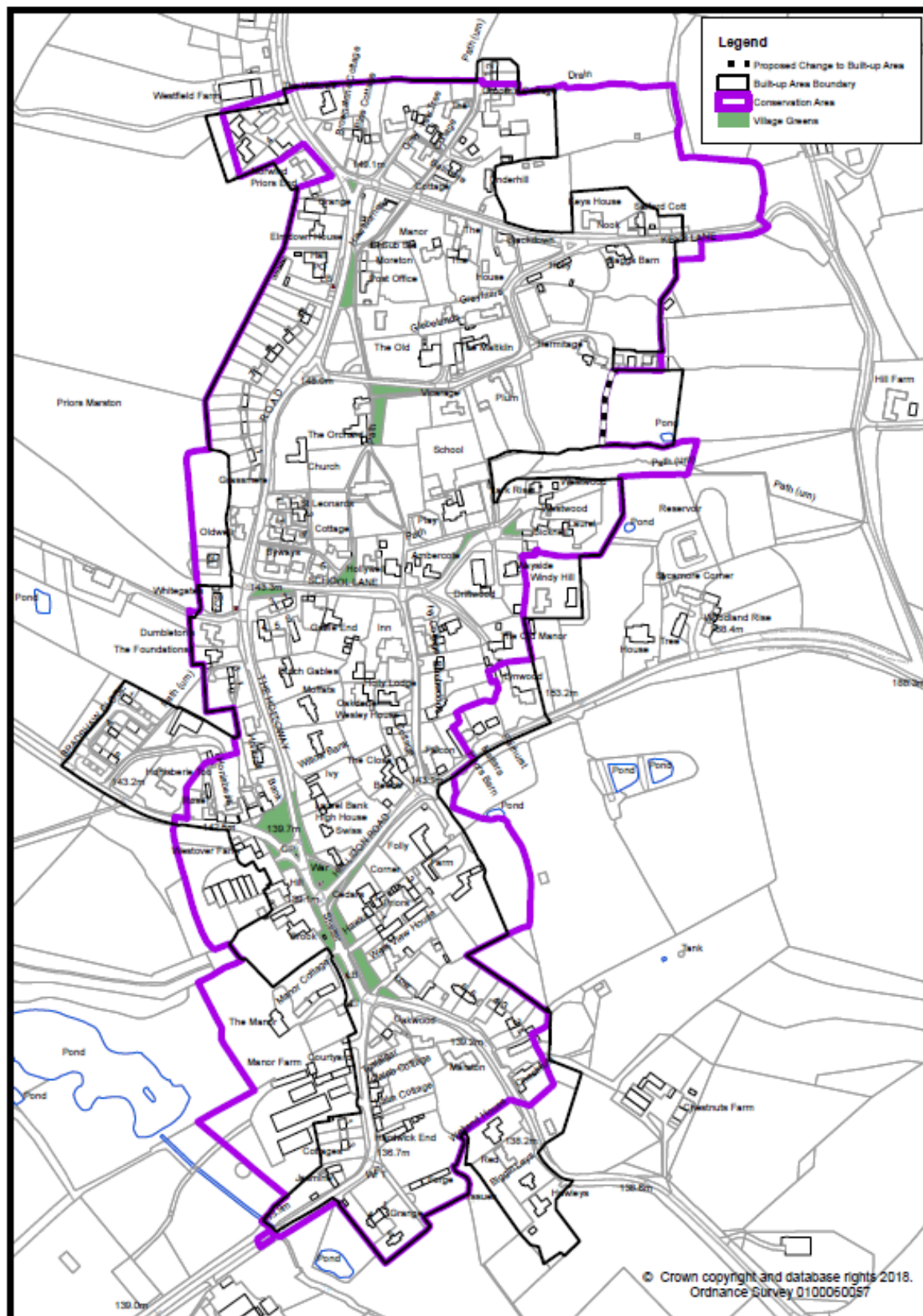
Cottages at a road junction in Priors Marston 1950s PH(N)888/385 by Victor Long, Rugby

Priors Marston Parish Boundary



Priors Marston Parish Council - Boundary

Builtup Area Boundary, Conservation Area and Village Greens



Village Plan