Parish Council News

Update from our County Councillor, Ian Parry: Cllr Parry attended the Parish Council meeting on the 8th October and updated us on various issues:

The Parish Council are concerned about the state of the former Wedgwood Memorial College. The buildings went into private ownership in January 2021 and this is when the regular security patrols paid for by Stoke City Council stopped. The buildings soon slipped into disrepair with regular visits from vandals, urban explorers and metal thieves. The Parish Council, unfortunately, have no power to act.

Cllr Parry has been trying for some time to start a dialogue with the owners with a view to hasten the development of the site. He reports that he has had no response to his correspondence. The site is up for sale again so the hope is that the new owners will be more communicative.

Cllr Parry is looking to assist us with various other issues in the village: the ongoing saga of potholes on Lakewood Drive (the road is unadopted and in private ownership), road safety concerns on Station Road and at the junction of Park Drive & Tittensor Road, parking issues at school drop off and pick up times and flooding on Station Road.

Responsibilities of the Parish Council: Residents sometimes express frustration on social media at the seeming lack of action by the Parish Council on issues around the village. It is important that everyone understands what the Parish Council are responsible for. The precept can only be spent where the Parish Council have a specific power to do so.

If the Parish Council took action, for instance, paying for tree works on the Green by Orchard Place this would be double taxation: i.e. you have already paid a proportion of your Council Tax to the County Council for this function. If the Parish Council undertakes the works, you're paying twice. Here's a quick overview of some of the responsibilities of the Parish Council plus those of our District and County Council and other organisations:

Parish Council - responsible for:	Parish Council - NOT responsible for:
Submitting a response to Stafford Borough Council re Planning Applications	*Maintenance of the roads, including potholes
The Village Green (including trees)	*Footpath maintenance
The WW1 War Memorial	*Flooding and surface water issues
The Multi-Use Games Area at Barlaston Park	*Clearing of gutters and gullies
Various Planters/benches around the village	*Tree maintenance (other than those on the Village Green)
Undertaking Grass Cutting on behalf of the County Council	*Libraries
Defibrillators and their maintenance	*Mud on the roads
Noticeboards	**Removal of Fly Tipping
Sole Trustee of Barlaston Village Hall	The Canal
Supporting key initiatives	Maintenance of the Cemetery
	Speeding
	Public Transport
	Health Services
	Land and assets owned by Homes Plus

*Staffordshire County Council **Stafford Borough Council

Downs Car Park: We've received reports that the carpark is a hive of activity during the night with gatherings of youngsters in cars and people sleeping in vehicles overnight. If you have any concerns or see anti-social behaviour/criminal activity taking place, please report it to the Police (999 in an emergency or 101 for non-emergencies). The Parish Council have a CCTV camera which isn't monitored 24/7 – footage can, however, be released to the Police on request.

Speeding on Wedgwood Drive: This area is reported to be a hotspot in the village by the Speedwatch group. It's easy to blame speeding on people using the village as a rat run from the A34 to the A50 but the group have reported that a significant proportion of offenders turn onto Barlaston Park. Please take care on the roads in our village; the limits are there for a reason.

Grant applications: The Parish Council were delighted to hear a presentation from Stone Community First Responders during the Public Open Forum session of the October meeting. The group gave an overview of their activities in the village (within their 5-mile response area). Barlaston no longer has a group of its own so we are all thankful that we still have cover. The group submitted a grant funding request and the Parish Council resolved to award them £500 towards the cost of a new vehicle.

Are you part of a group in Barlaston that needs a little extra funding? The Parish Council has some grant funding left for the 2024/25 financial year. Download an application form from our website or speak to the Parish Clerk for more information.

Villager of the Year Award: It was resolved at the meeting to delay this until the new year. The Parish Council would like to bring the award in line with our financial year and make a regular date to present the award at the Annual Parish Meeting which takes place in May each year.

Remembrance Sunday: As we gather as a community at the village War Memorial on the 10th November we thought you may be interested in the history of our grade II listed War Memorial:

> "The aftermath of the First World War saw the biggest single wave of public commemoration ever with tens of thousands of memorials erected across England. This was the result of both the huge impact on communities of the loss of three quarters of a million British lives, and also the official policy of not repatriating the dead which meant that the memorials provided the main focus of the grief felt at this great loss.
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> One such memorial was raised at Barlaston as a permanent testament to the sacrifice made by the members of the local community who lost their lives in the First World War. It was unveiled on 23 April 1926 by Private William Lowe and dedicated by the Reverend AC Oliver. The memorial was designed by Frederick Landseer Maur Griggs of Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire and built by Robert Bridgeman and Sons, Lichfield. It originally commemorated 18 servicemen who died in the First World War, with an additional name included at a later date.
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> A further seven names were added to the war memorial following the end of the Second World War for those who died in that conflict"

(taken from the official list entry of Historic England – read the full entry here: https://tinyurl.com/Barlastonwarmemorial)

"We Will Remember Them"