Minutes of the Meeting of Barlaston Parish Council
Held on Tuesday 11th February 2025 at the Methodist Church Hall at 19:15

Present:

Cllr S Tudor (Chair)
Cllr C Hurst
Cllr D Borasinski
Cllr G Lloyd
Cllr S Oakden
Cllr E Philpott
Cllr J Dando
Cllr P Fisher
Cllr L Pickering

Also in attendance: Parish Clerk: Ms Vivien O'Dunne.

Open Forum: No members of the public were present.

269. Apologies: Apologies were received from Cllr Jones: it was resolved to accept these.

270. Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest.

271. Written applications for dispensations under the Localism Act 2011: There were no written applications for dispensation.

272. To approve minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 14 January 2025: These were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

273. Clerk's Report: See Appendix A

274. **Update from County Councillor Ian Parry:** Cllr Parry sent his apologies. He had updated the Clerk on various matters by email prior to the meeting.

275. **Working groups:** nothing to report.

276. Training courses: nothing to report

277. Financial matters:

I. The bank reconciliation reports were accepted and signed.
II. The schedule of payments report for January 2025 was accepted.
III. Banking: As earmarked reserves continue to grow, it was resolved that the Clerk would investigate the possibility of opening a new bank or investment account to manage these reserves.
IV. Unpaid Wayleave invoices: The Clerk reported that four wayleave invoices remain unpaid. Reminders were sent in October, and further reminders were issued this week.

January Expenditure - Standard	GROSS	VAT	NET	Payment
Tesco: mobile phone – Bill ref – 134231348656	15.10	0.00	15.10	DD
BT: Phone & Broadband – Invoice M064 8K	39.30	6.55	32.75	DD
Pozitive Energy – Village Hall Gas – 26181820257086156	331.32	15.78	315.54	DD
Pozitive Energy – Village Hall Electric – 26181620257086438	161.29	7.68	153.61	DD
Graham Burdett – Bus shelter repair (£50) and bench installation (£60)	110.00	0.00	110.00	BACS
D Norman – Speed Gun batteries	11.49	0.00	11.49	BACS
Barlaston PCC – 50% cost of print & distribution Christmas Gazette	500.00	0.00	500.00	BACS
SLCC – Training – GDPR E-course – Inv QL206493-1	36.00	6.00	30.00	BACS
SLCC – Training – FiLCA course – Inv QL206492-1	144.00	24.00	120.00	BACS
Stafford Borough Council – 4 x Civic Amenity 2025 7070296051	652.00	108.67	543.33	BACS
HMRC – Employers NI/PAYE- Quarter 3 2024/2025	335.76	0.00	335.76	BACS
Vivien O'Dunne – Salary	1203.30	0.00	1203.30	BACS
Vivien O'Dunne – Mileage and expenses (stationary & postage)	10.05	0.00	10.05	BACS
Value Products Ltd – No Overnight Parking Post - Inv 4312090	102.00	17.00	85.00	BACS
Value Products Ltd – No Overnight Parking Sign – Inv 4315084	130.21	21.70	108.51	BACS
Buxus Green – January Grounds Maintenance	1,081.50	0.00	1,081.50	BACS
Stafford County Pension Fund (January 2025)	354.10	0.00	354.10	BACS
Christopher Roberts: Groundworks – Downs Car Park	450.00	0.00	450.00	BACS

N&J Tree Services – Remedial Works Village Green Inv 17986	2,016.00	336.00	1,680.00	BACS
VEN-A-S Contractors Ltd – Station Rd Hedge Cutting – Inv 3533	168.00	28.00	140.00	BACS
Income – Standard	**GROSS**	**VAT**	**NET**	**Payment**
Interest – Business Bank	137.01	0.00	137.01	
Viv O'Dunne – overpayment due to Pension start after salary payment	66.93	0.00	66.93	BACS
Tinsdills: Donation (re Lindsay Willis Bench)	928.00	0.00	928.00	BACS
Transfers				
Transfer – from Business Bank a/c to Treasurers Bank a/c	20,000.00			TRF

278. **Annual Parish Meeting:** It was resolved that the Annual Parish meeting will take place on Tuesday 6th May at 19:00 at the Methodist Church Hall. The Clerk will book the hall and circulate the agenda at the appropriate time.

279. **80th anniversary of VE Day:** It was suggested that the Parish Council, in collaboration with the Village Hall Committee, the Community Group, and St John's Church, may wish to join forces to organise an appropriate celebration on Monday, May 5th. The Clerk will write to each organisation to propose a meeting.

The Parish Council resolved to commemorate the event by replacing the damaged bench at Barlaston Park with a new commemorative bench from Ogilvie Engineering. The cost breakdown is as follows:

80th Anniversary VE/VJ Day bench: £1,695 + VAT, Delivery: £105 + VAT, Bolt-down kit: £15 - £36

The Clerk will obtain permission from Fiskars to site the bench before placing the order.

280. **Buxus Green:** No report received

281. **Meadow Road lease:** No progress has been made since the last meeting. The Parish Council's Solicitor has accepted responsibility for the delay.

282. **Cricket Club lease:** The Cricket Club Committee extended an invitation to the Parish Council to meet on February 21st, alongside the Cricket Club Solicitor and the Parish Council Solicitor, to resolve any outstanding issues regarding the lease, as the current lease expires on March 31st.

The Parish Council resolved to decline the invitation. The associated costs to the Parish Council would be significant. The Parish Council considers the final draft, incorporating its amendments, to be with the Cricket Club's solicitors, and this draft will be the version for both parties to sign.

283. **Neighbourhood Plan review:** Cllr Borasinski provided an update on progress. It was noted that the delay had worked in the Parish Council's favour due to changes in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Clarification is being sought regarding any updates to the emerging Local Plan growth strategy and the current status of the five-year land supply.

Cllr Borasinski outlined the next steps: a draft plan will be submitted to the Borough for comment, with preparation for Regulation 14 taking place in April and May.

It was also noted that the former Clerk would no longer be able to assist with this process. Cllr Borasinski requested that thanks be extended to her for the work completed to date.

284. **Casual Vacancy:** Although the Clerk had received expressions of interest from two individuals, neither were present. It was resolved that the Clerk would re-advertise the vacancy on the village noticeboards and online.

285. **Migration of Parish Council website (and email):** The Clerk reported that the current email provider will cease service on 31st May 2026. The use of a gov.uk domain for email is mandatory and recommended for websites. A gov.uk domain must be purchased through an approved registrar. It was resolved to use Open Strike for this at a cost of £25 per year (if more than five years are purchased).

The Clerk has sourced a web designer, Stef Giblin, who comes highly recommended and has experience of working with other local Parish Councils. A quote for the website rebuild has been received (£600), along with ongoing support costs. Hosting will cost £43.06 per year (including unlimited email addresses), and backup and maintenance will be £208 per year.

It was noted that the work is expected to be completed before the contract with the current providers is due for renewal, and the new website should be manageable for the Clerk to update in the future.

It was resolved to accept this proposal and for the Clerk to begin the process.

286. **Map update proposal:** A local artist has submitted a proposal to update the village map, currently displayed in the notice board by the railway crossing on Station Road. It was resolved to accept the proposal, with no obligation to proceed if the final design is deemed unsuitable. It was noted that copyright would remain with the artist, and a copy of the updated map may be used in place of the original. The Clerk will inform the artist to proceed.

287. **Public Rights of Way:** It was noted that the condition of the public footpath leading to the Downs was in a dangerous state. It was resolved that the Clerk would forward photographs and a report to the Rights of Way officers at the County Council. Additionally, it was resolved that Councillors would each walk the public footpaths in the parish and report back on their condition. The Clerk will circulate a map of all designated footpaths.

288. **Allotment site off Meadow Road:** The Clerk reported on a meeting held with the Parish Council Chairman, Borough Councillor Alec Sandiford, and a representative from Homes Plus at the allotment site off Meadow Road. Homes Plus has expressed a willingness to sign over the land for allotment or community use. The Clerk advised Councillors to visit the site and familiarise themselves with it. This item will be discussed at the March meeting.

289. **Empowering the Young Councillors of Tomorrow**: Cllr Lloyd provided an update on his efforts to encourage greater youth involvement. He reported that he has been in touch with local universities to explore the possibility of recruiting politics students who may be interested in becoming involved with the Parish Council. Additionally, Cllr Lloyd plans to advertise on social media to engage 16-19 year olds in forming a Youth Forum, with the aim of giving young people a voice in Barlaston. Interested individuals would be invited to a drop-in session at the Village Hall to discuss the forum further.

290. **School Crossing:** There has been no further progress on this matter, but it will remain on the agenda. Cllr Parry is exploring funding options and has sourced some solar-powered signs that could help reduce costs. It was indicated that the Parish Council may consider contributing funds in the new financial year.

291. **Downs Car Park/Culvert:** Improvements to the Downs Car Park have been completed, and remedial works have been carried out on the blocked culvert. Cllr Hurst advised the Council that a new sediment trap is needed. This is a task suitable for summer, and quotes for the works will be obtained in the spring. It was also noted that the culvert inspection should be included in the annual maintenance schedule.

292. **Primary health care provision:** Concerns have been raised about the availability of appointments at the local surgery. The Patients/Community Group will meet in March and will bring proposals to the March meeting on how the Parish Council can take positive action within its powers.

293. **Risk Assessment:**

- Downs Car Park pathway: A contractor has suggested that a long-term solution to the raised roots issue could be to divert the existing pathway around the affected area. Quotes and solutions will be obtained for the work and presented at the next meeting.
- Defib location awareness: this is still outstanding

294. **Weekly play reports:** Cllr Hurst submitted the weekly play area reports using the new reporting sheets, which align with the itemised areas on the annual ROSPA report.

295. **Grant applications:** None received

296. **Correspondence received:** The Clerk circulated redacted correspondence regarding the Lakewood Drive pothole issues.

It was noted that Vicar Stewart Jones would be leaving the Parish on May 11th 2025.

The Clerk would be taking leave w/c 24th February.

297. **Planning decisions:** No planning applications were received

298. **Items for inclusion in next agenda:** *Spade not Sprayed* (Cllr Philpott). Signage on the Downs Car Park (Cllr Hurst)

299. **Date of next meeting(s) – 11 March 2025**

clerk@barlaston.staffslc.org.uk

Appendix A

Clerk's Report January 2025

161 **Wedgwood Memorial College** – no updates received

233 **Tree works on the Village Green:** These are now complete. The next tree survey will take place in January 2026

245 **Letter of appreciation:** A letter of appreciation has been prepared to be sent to the former Clerk

246 **Training:** The Clerk has enrolled on the FiLCA and e-GDPR course and will complete these when time allows.

248 **Parish Council Precept:** The Clerk has informed the billing authority regarding the level of precept to be charged to taxpayers in 2025/2026

255 **Signage Downs Car Park:** The sign has been delivered and will be installed by the end of the month.

257 **Parking issues:** The letters to residents of Broughton Crescent regarding parking issues at school drop-off/pick-up times will have been hand delivered by the date of the meeting.

261 **'Report It'**: The Clerk has shared details of this County Council online tool on social media and in the Parish Gazette.

262 **Village Green Drainage**: The work will be completed when the ground has dried out.

263 **Play equipment inspection forms**: The Clerk has issued new forms to Cllr Hurst that align with the format of the RoSPA reports

266 **Planning Appeal 24/39525/FUL:** The Clerk made additional comments on behalf of the Parish Council.