Minutes of the Meeting of Barlaston Parish Council
Held on Tuesday 8th April 2025 at the Methodist Church Hall at 19:15

Present:

Cllr S Tudor (Chair)
Cllr C Hurst
Cllr G Lloyd
Cllr E Philpott
Cllr J Dando
Cllr P Fisher

Also in attendance: Parish Clerk: Ms Vivien O'Dunne.
One member of the public was in attendance.

Open Forum: A member of the public in attendance expressed interest in offering their skills to the Village Hall Committee. The Chairman advised that they contact the committee directly.

329. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from Cllrs Borasinski, Jones, Pickering and Oakden; it was resolved to accept these.

330. **Declarations of Interest:** There were no declarations of interest.

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

332. **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 11 March 2025:** These were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

333. **Clerk's Report:** see appendix A

334. **Update from County Councillor:** No report received in this pre-election period.

335. **To receive updates from working groups and determine actions:**

- Community & Health: the working group had prepared a short questionnaire. It was resolved that changes were needed and a revised questionnaire should be bought back to the next meeting for approval.
- Communications: No report
- Youth engagement: Cllr Lloyd will organise a drop-in session at the village hall for anyone interested in forming a youth council.

336. **Training courses:** nothing to report

337. **Financial matters:**

I. The bank reconciliation reports were accepted and signed.
II. The schedule of payments report for March 2025 was accepted.
III. Year-end financials: these were circulated and reviewed against the 2024/2025 budget.
IV. New bank account/investment account for reserves: The Clerk reported that she was still in the process of researching suitable options.
V. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR): The Clerk reported that she was in receipt of the paperwork and a meeting with the internal auditor was scheduled for the 29th April.

March Expenditure - Standard	GROSS	VAT	NET	Payment
Tesco: mobile phone – Bill ref – 134237413495	15.10	0.00	15.10	DD
BT: Phone & Broadband – Invoice M066 GT	39.30	6.55	32.75	DD
Pozitive Energy – Village Hall Gas – 26181820257515462	366.35	17.45	348.90	DD
Pozitive Energy – Village Hall Electric – 26181620257515301	134.91	6.42	128.49	DD
Openstrike – Inv4440 – Domain registration (5 years)	125.00	0.00	125.00	BACS
Stafford Borough Council: Allotment Rent 25/03 – 23/06	300.00	0.00	300.00	BACS
Staffordshire LGPS – February Pension	354.10	0.00	354.10	BACS
Rialtas – Data Transfer fee – Invoice 32464	42.00	7.00	35.00	BACS
Stafford Borough Council: Bin emptying Jan-Mar 2025 Inv 7070296358	447.31	74.55	372.76	BACS
Viking – Consumables – Invoice 5586575	35.27	5.88	29.39	BACS
Staffordshire LGPS – March Pension	354.10	0.00	354.10	BACS
Vivien O'Dunne – March Basic Salary	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	BACS

Vivien O'Dunne – Mileage: 2 x trips noticeboards – SLCC Branch meeting (Stowe-by-Chartley) – Solicitors (Hanley)	23.95	0.00	23.95	BACS
HMRC – Quarterly PAYE April 2025 – June 2025	230.43	0.00	230.43	BACS
Buxus Green – March Grounds Maintenance	1,081.50	0.00	1,081.50	SO
Income – Standard	**GROSS**	**VAT**	**NET**	**Payment**
Interest – Business Bank	108.61	00.00	108.61	
Allotment Association Rent: 25/03 – 23/06	300.00	0.00	300.00	BACS
Village Hall Energy Refund	477.39	0.00	477.39	BACS
Via V O'Dunne (Cash receipt of £25 re Invoice 641 Gate License)	25.00	0.00	25.00	BACS
Transfers				
No Transfers				

338. **80th anniversary of VE Day:** It was noted that Fiskars had approved the replacement of the existing bench by the bus stop at Barlaston Park with a new commemorative VE/VJ Day bench. The bench has been ordered. Cllr Tudor informed the meeting that the Community Group is organising an event to mark the occasion, which will be held at the Village Hall on Monday, 5th May. The group will be invited to apply for a grant to support the associated costs.

339. **Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Award:** It was resolved that Michala Black be selected as the recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Award in recognition of her service to the village. Certificates of Commendation will be issued to all other nominees in recognition of their contributions to village life. The Clerk has contacted Fiskars to order the commemorative keepsake bowl for the recipient of the Community Award and will arrange for engraving. The date for the award presentation is to be confirmed.

340. **New Parish Council website:** The Clerk had circulated a link to the new Parish Council website to all members for review. It was resolved to publish the website.

Email addresses using the permanent domain @barlastonparishcouncil.gov.uk have been issued to all Councillors.

341. **Grounds Maintenance:** It was noted that the hedge cuttings, previously left on site, have been cleared. The contractor acknowledged that the cuttings had been left unintentionally.

The contractor also confirmed that, commencing in April, they will resume monthly meetings with The Clerk to review scheduled work and progress.

342. **Meadow Road lease:** The Clerk reported that contact had been made with the Borough Council regarding the Meadow Road lease and assured councillors that the matter is progressing.

343. **Cricket Club lease:** Cllr Fisher reported that he and the Clerk had met with the Parish Council's solicitor to review and address the amendments requested by the Cricket Club's solicitor. Once the changes have been made, the lease will be returned, and a date will be agreed for signing.

344. **Neighbourhood Plan:** The updated plans have been submitted to the Borough Council. Information requested by return has since been provided, and further feedback is awaited.

345. **Casual Vacancy (Barlaston Park Ward):** The Clerk reported that there has been no interest in the casual vacancy. It was agreed that the vacancy will continue to be advertised.

346. **Allotment site located off Meadow Road:** The Parish Council resolved not to accept the offer from Homes Plus to take over the Meadow Road Allotment site. The Clerk will inform the Homes Plus representative of the decision.

347. **Footpath Barlaston 3:** The landowner has responded to the Clerk's request regarding the safety of the fence at the junction with the field. He has confirmed that he will be happy to carry out the repairs once the weather improves.

348. **Gate licences:** The Clerk reported that three licences remain unpaid. She will conduct further research to understand the history of the licences, and the Parish Council will review the findings at a future meeting.

Exclusion of the press and public under S2 and S3 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 during consideration of item 349 below because of the confidential nature of the items for discussion.

349. **Review of the Clerk's activities:** A review of the Clerk's activities, including work completed, ongoing tasks, and future projects took place.

It was resolved that the Parish Council will pay the Clerk for 12 additional hours worked outside of regular hours for tasks related to the new website.

It was resolved to increase the Clerk's working hours by an additional 5 hours per week in light of the current workload. This will be reviewed in six months.

350. **Signage at the Downs Car Park:** The Parish Council resolved to accept the quote of £63.46 + VAT for an 800 x 600 mm sign with anti-graffiti coating, displaying the message "Vehicles and Contents are left at owner's own risk and to purchase a post and fittings for £70 + VAT.

351. **To receive Risk Assessment updates and determine actions:**

- Downs Car Park pathway: Only one quote has been received. The Clerk will make efforts to obtain additional quotes for the next meeting.
- Two leaning trees on the Village Green, T20 and T25, were brought to the Council's attention by a member of the public. The lean of both trees was noted in the 2024 inspection report, with no further action required until the next survey in January 2026.
  Tree T26 had been inspected by Cllr Fisher as required by the survey. Cllr Fisher confirmed that the tree was in blossom and noted that it appears healthy. See Appendix B
- Defib location awareness: The Clerk reported that a local artist has been approached to create a map of the defibrillator locations for sharing with other groups in the village. The artist has agreed to assist, and the Clerk will provide the necessary details.

352. **Weekly play reports:** were submitted by the nominated Cllr.

353. **Section 137 Grant application(s)**

- Barlaston Bowling & Tennis Club. The club requested £212.00 for materials to install additional boards on the retaining wall to prevent damage to bowling balls. This amount covers the total cost of the project. It was resolved to award the full grant of £212.00 to the club.
- The Parish Council considered a grant request from Barlaston Guides for £600 to purchase two replacement tents for use at their camp in the summer. It was **resolved** to award the full amount of £600.

354. **Correspondence received:** Correspondence received was circulated.

355. **Planning decisions:** 25/40220/HOU Orchard Cottage, 64 Longton Road, Barlaston: described as ground floor extensions, internal alterations, replacement of roof to form rooms in the roof space. There were no objections to this application.

356. **To receive items for inclusion in next agenda:** Crossing Patrol Officer safety; HGV's driving through the village; parking issues on Station Road

357. **Date of next meeting:** 13th May 2025 Annual Meeting of Barlaston Parish Council

clerk@barlastonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Appendix A

Clerk's Report March 2025

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

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

290 **Flashing Lights for the School Crossing:** There's been no contact with Cllr Parry regarding this. It will be added back to the agenda when an update is received.

291 **Culvert adjacent to the village green:** Cllr Hurst will obtain a quote for a new sediment trap in the spring

317 **Staffordshire Societal Resilience Summit:** The Clerk will add back onto the agenda for discussion when progress has been made on this.

319 **Annual football match on The Green:** The Clerk will write to the Cricket Club later in the year to request that players and attendees refrain from parking on the grass.

Appendix B:

Photo	Ref	Notes from Tree Survey
	T20	Tree has 45 degree southward lean into the green, no signs of root plate movement. Ivy is beginning to grow up the stem again from the north. Minor dead branches throughout crown. Condition - Fair T20 – ivy and basal epicormic growth was removed earlier this year. Reinspection recommended for 2 years time.
	T25	Tree has south westerly lean away from road, no signs of recent movement. Good vitality. Condition – Fair Reinspection recommended – over 2 years.
Pear Tree – see map for location.	T26	Advised that this needed reinspection for vitality when in leaf. The tree has been inspected and was seen in full blossom in 2025.