Parish Council Update

In May, we held our **Annual Parish Meeting** - an opportunity for residents to hear about the work of the Parish Council and raise any issues of local concern.

Cllr Tudor opened the meeting with a review of the Council's activities during the 2024/25 year, highlighting the progress made on a number of village priorities. We were also delighted to hear from several local groups who had received Parish Council grants over the past year, including the Stone Community First Responders, Barlaston Wassail, the Voluntary Car Scheme, and Warm Welcome Wednesdays.

We also heard about the many initiatives brought together by our incredible Community Group: from the ever-popular Film Nights and Silver Surfers sessions to the Strollers and Striders walking group and, of course, the enthusiastic Womblers, keeping our village tidy with their regular litter picks.

During the open forum, residents voiced serious concerns about the state of the former Wedgwood Memorial College site - noting that it has become both unsightly and potentially dangerous.

Also in May, we held the **Annual Meeting of the Parish Council** – a formal meeting where statutory business is carried out, including the approval of our Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

We were pleased to elect Cllr David Borasinski as Chairman for the 2025/26 year, with Cllr Sue Tudor elected as Vice Chairman.

We also warmly welcomed Professor Lydia Arnold to the Council, who joined us through a recent casual vacancy. We look forward to the insight and experience Lydia will bring to the Council.

At our **June meeting**, we were pleased to welcome our new County Councillor, Sean Bagguley. Councillors raised several ongoing concerns including the deteriorating condition of the former Wedgwood Memorial College site, potholes, flooding issues, gulley emptying, and missing signage on Hartwell Lane. We look forward to working with Sean to help address these local priorities.

One topic we'd really like your views on is a proposal to install a flagpole on the Village Green. Should we have one? If so, where exactly should it go? And what flags would you like to see flown - just the Union Jack, or a wider selection to mark national events or community occasions? We'd love to hear your thoughts - please do get in touch!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Cllrs Oakden and Lloyd for their service to the Parish Council. Both have recently stepped down, and we wish them all the very best for the future.

We were absolutely thrilled with the turnout to our **Community Awards Service**, held on 15th June at St John the Baptist Church. It was a warm, joyful event, attended by so many - including Dr Allison Gardner, MP and County Councillor Sean Bagguley.

The atmosphere was uplifting as we recognised the achievements of our award recipients: Charlotte Davies, Gareth Jones, Lynne Coates, the Green family, Gill Brealey, and Mandy Bloor. Becky Wilshaw received her certificate at the Warm Welcome Wednesday event on 11th June, and we will be presenting awards to Shane Brunt and Dave & Irene Moran at a future date, as they were sadly unable to attend.

Cllr Sue Tudor presented the awards, ably assisted by Cllr Elly Philpott, with Cllr Lydia Arnold serving as our resident photographer. A slideshow featuring all the recipients played in the background throughout the presentation of the certificates.

A highlight of the service was the presentation of the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Award to Michala Black. Before the presentation, we watched a slideshow celebrating Michala's years of service to Barlaston all set to the Womblers' soundtrack, which had the whole congregation singing along. It was truly a joyous and memorable moment.

After the ceremony, we enjoyed delicious refreshments provided by The Secret Kitchen of Stone, with tea and coffee served by Cllr Julia Dando and the Parish Clerk, Viv O'Dunne.

The Parish Council would like to express heartfelt thanks to:
- St John's Church for hosting us so generously
- Fiskars for providing a beautiful keepsake commemorative bowl for Michala
- And to Cllr Bagguley and MP Allison Gardner for joining us.

Most of all, thank you to everyone who came along to support and celebrate Barlaston's amazing community spirit.

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