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

Present:

Cllr D Borasinski (Chairman)
Cllr S Tudor
Cllr E Philpott
Cllr P Fisher
Cllr G Jones
Cllr C Hurst
Cllr L Arnold

Also in attendance:
Parish Clerk: Ms Vivien O'Dunne.
County Councillor: Sean Bagguley, Borough Councillor: Alec Sandiford, PCSO Davies
1 member of the public was in attendance.

Public Open Forum: The organiser of the Village Market & Art Trail attended to update councillors on plans for the upcoming event, scheduled for 26 July. PCSO Davies provided an update on issues raised during recent visits by the mobile policing unit, which was noted as a welcome initiative. She encouraged residents to report any instances of anti-social behaviour/cars racing, particularly around the Downs car park, so that appropriate action can be taken. The Clerk will share this message on social media to raise awareness.

424. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from Cllr Pickering. It was resolved to accept these.

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

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

427. **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 10 June 2025:** The minutes of the meeting were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

428. **Clerk's Report:** See Appendix B

429. **County Councillor report:** Cllr Bagguley provided updates on several local matters, including highway signage on Hartwell Lane, overgrown footpaths, the status of the Wedgwood Memorial College site, and the reopening of the County Council Community Fund. He is also awaiting feedback on school crossing warning lights and agreed to follow up concerns raised about the condition of Lakewood Drive.

430. **Working Groups update: Play Parks:** group members will be attending a webinar on Thursday 10 July which will advise on the process and importance of public consultations.

431. **Training courses:** Resolved: That expenditure be approved for the SPCA councillor training session (£375) and the planning and Neighbourhood Plan training session from Urban Vision (£289 + VAT), with dates to be confirmed. Approval was also given for the Clerk's enrolment on the CiLCA qualification (£775 total).

432. **Financial matters:**

I. The bank reconciliation reports for June 2025 were accepted and signed.
II. The schedule of payments report for June 2025 was accepted (see Appendix A: Schedule of Payments)
III. **Investment Policy:** It was resolved that the Clerk be authorised to open a Unity Trust Savings Account and an account with the CCLA Public Sector Fund, allocating 60% of the funds currently held in Lloyds Bank (above the FSCS £85,000 threshold) to Unity Trust and 40% to CCLA. The agreed signatories for both accounts shall be Cllr Elaine Philpott, Cllr Gareth Jones, Cllr Paul Fisher, and Cllr Sue Tudor. It was also agreed that this arrangement be reviewed in November.
IV. **Mobile Phone Contract:** It was resolved that the Clerk be authorised to make the switch to a Pay As You Go mobile contract upon expiry of the current contract.
V. **Finance Committee, 8 July:** The feedback from the Finance Committee meeting held on 8 July was received and approved.
VI. **LGPS Employer Pension Discretions Policy Statement for Employees:** Cllr Arnold declared an interest as the Clerk's sister and did not participate in the discussion or vote. The Employer Pension Discretions Policy Statement was reviewed and approved. The Clerk will upload the policy to the website and forward it to Staffordshire Pension Fund (LGPS).

433. **Vacant Parish Councillor position, Barlaston West Ward:** No candidates attended the meeting. Cllr Arnold resigned from the Barlaston Park seat and was co-opted to the Barlaston vacant West Ward position. The Clerk will notify the Elections Office.

434. **Grounds Contractor update:** No formal report was received. It was noted that the contractor has experienced delays but that most scheduled mowing has now been completed. It was also observed that mowing is impeded in areas where residents have placed stones or bricks on County Council verges; the Clerk will raise this issue with the County Council.

435. **Meadow Road lease:** The Clerk received an update to say that the lease should be available for signature soon.

436. **Cricket Club lease:** The Cricket Club confirmed their solicitor has reviewed the parish council's amendments and will shortly be responding to the Parish Council's solicitor.

437. **Neighbourhood Plan Revision:** The Planning Policy Officer has returned from leave and confirmed that the Housing Needs Assessment and Design Codes have been downloaded for screening feedback.

438. **Changes to funding for Neighbourhood Planning support:** The Parish Council noted correspondence regarding the withdrawal of government funding and technical support for Neighbourhood Plans from March 2025. In recognition of the value of neighbourhood planning and the challenges posed by this change, it was resolved to support the national campaign and write to the local MP and Secretary of State urging the continuation of dedicated funding and support for Neighbourhood Plans.

439. **Gate licences:** It was resolved that the Leases Working Group will review the issue of gate licences in detail and report back to the Council.

440. **Installation of a flagpole on the Village Green:** Following consultation feedback, it was proposed that the installation of a flagpole on the Village Green **not** be pursued. The proposal was carried with five votes in favour and two against, and the vote was requested to be recorded.

441. **Duke of Edinburgh Award Meeting Observer:** As the participant will attend meetings as a member of the public only, no additional insurance or safeguarding checks are required.

442. **Level crossing notice board restoration:** The draft design was reviewed. The Clerk will pass on suggested changes to the artist, along with thanks for the work completed to date.

443. **Chairman Chain of Office - Silver Engraved Clips:** The Clerk reported an estimated cost of £270 per hallmarked silver engraved clip. Three quotes are being sought. The Council approved spending at this level in principle and authorised the Clerk to proceed with the purchase once the most competitive quote has been selected.

444. **Meeting with Local MP:** The Council noted that the local MP is unable to attend a formal Council meeting due to diary commitments but has offered to meet informally. Councillors Fisher, Borasinski, Tudor, Hurst, and Philpott will attend the meeting once a date is confirmed.

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

I. **Downs Carpark pathway remedial works:** Only one estimate could be obtained for the required remedial works. It was resolved that Financial Regulation 5.9, which requires the Clerk to seek three estimates where possible, be noted as having been followed to the extent practicable. The Council approved the work at a cost of £700 and agreed to tape off the affected path until the work is completed.

II. **Asset of Community Value Nomination:** The nomination form has been submitted and acknowledged; a decision is expected by 2 September 2025.

III. **Goalposts on Village Green:** The Council accepted a resident's kind offer to volunteer to paint the goalposts on the Village Green. The Clerk will purchase the necessary materials and ensure an appropriate risk assessment is in place.

IV. **Replacement of Planter by Orchard Place:** Due to its poor condition, the planter by Orchard Place was considered for replacement. The Clerk will research sustainable, possibly self-watering options and bring costings back to the next meeting for further consideration.

V. **Benches by Railway Crossing:** The benches were noted to be in poor condition due to uneven ground. Given the risk, the Council requested the Clerk to proceed with removing the bench, installing concrete pads, and refixing the bench without delay.

446. **Weekly play area reports:** Councillors noted that the wooden play equipment would benefit from a coat of clear preservative. The Clerk will obtain quotes for this work.

447. **Grant application:** The Council approved a grant of £1,000 to support the Barlaston Cricket Club's annual fireworks event. It was noted that the Guides shared feedback about the tents purchased with a previous Parish Council donation, which contributed to a successful recent camp.

448. **To note Planning decisions:** Planning Application 25/40666/HOU – It was noted that there were no objections to this application.

449. **Correspondence:** The Parish Council noted correspondence regarding Local Government Reorganisation for Staffordshire. Positive feedback from recent Community Awards was also acknowledged. It was with regret that the Council noted the passing of former Parish Councillor and village hall committee member Tony Dodd, who was greatly respected for his service to the community.

450. **Items for next agenda:**

Wedgwood Memorial College
Orchard Place lighting and potholes
Digital Efficiency and Equipment Provision

451. **Date of next meeting: 9 September 2025**

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Appendix A – Schedule of Payments (click here to return to the minutes)

June Expenditure - Standard	GROSS	VAT	NET	Payment
Tesco: mobile phone – Bill ref – 134247050346	16.06	0.00	16.06	DD
BT: Phone & Broadband – Invoice M069 S2	42.41	7.06	35.35	DD
Pozitive Energy – Village Hall Gas – 26181820258079722	83.77	0.00	83.77	DD
Pozitive Energy – Village Hall Electric – 26181620258079386	120.90	0.00	120.90	DD
Joe Poultney – Summer Planting – Invoice 171	475.00	0.00	475.00	Chq 002877
David Borasinski – Flowers – Village Awards – Chairman's Expenses	30.00	0.00	30.00	BACS
Can Print – Invoice 36196 – Certificates Printing	18.00	3.00	15.00	BACS
The Secret Kitchen – Awards Catering – Invoice 2002	600.00	100.00	500.00	BACS
Viking – Office Consumables – Invoice 5901978	34.02	5.67	28.35	BACS
Elan City – SID Batteries x 6 Inv SAJ-UK/2025/02593	527.71	87.95	439.76	BACS
Staffordshire County Council – Allotment Rent – Inv 1000149561	300.00	0.00	300.00	BACS
Stafford Borough Council – Litterbin emptying – Invoice 7070297000	460.73	76.79	383.94	BACS
Vivien O'Dunne – Salary June 2025	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
Vivien O'Dunne – Expenses – Village Awards, mileage & Postage *	106.63	0.00	106.63	BACS
HMRC – Quarterly PAYE/NI Payment	1076.70	0.00	1076.70	BACS
Staffordshire County Council – LGPS – June	472.59	0..00	472.59	BACS
Society of Local Council Clerks – CiLCA Qualification Fee Invoice QL207473-1	450.00	0.00	450.00	BACS
Buxus Green – June Ground Maintenance	1,109.62	0.00	1,109.62	SO
Income – Standard	**GROSS**	**VAT**	**NET**	**Payment**
Interest – Business Bank	145.19	0.00	145.19	
Barlaston Village Hall Invoice 662 (Gas & Electric June)	204.67	0.00	204.67	BACS
Staffordshire County Council – Grass Cutting	4,605.00	0.00	4,605.00	BACS

Clerk's expenses June 2025

Date	Detail	Amount	Rcpt
14/06	Tesco: Milk, Filter Coffee x 4, Squash, Coffee Filters	£22.75	Yes
13/06	Tesco: Milk, Sugar, Tea Bags	£6.39	Yes
12/06	Stone Shoe Repairs: Engraving	£8.00	Yes
27/05	Post Office Ltd – Registered Post Insurance Renewal Chq	£8.75	Yes
03/06	Amazon – Frames for Certificates	£23.75	Yes
10/06	Amazon – Paper Plates for Awards Service	£16.38	Yes
30/06	Mileage: 2 round trips (agendas), CanPrint, Tesco, Stone Shoe Repairs x 2	20.61	
	Total	106.63	

Appendix B – Clerk's Report June 2025. **(Click here to return to the minutes)**

290 **Flashing Lights for the School Crossing:** New County Councillor is following up on this.

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.

347 **Footpath 3:** This will be repaired once the landowner is in receipt of the wire to repair the fence with.

350 **Signage on the Downs Car Park:** The 'Park at your own risk' sign for the Downs Car Park is now in place.

384 **Traffic Concerns:** Severn Trent have confirmed they have passed on a reminder to their transport team and they have received specific reports from us to follow up with individual drivers

408 **Community Awards:** The event was a great success with lots of positive feedback from attendees. The Clerk has extended thanks to St Johns Church for hosting the event, Allison Gardner MP and County Councillor Sean Bagguley for their attendance and also to Fiskars for providing the commemorative keepsake Bowl. The Clerk will ensure that award winners who couldn't attend the service receive their certificates in due course.

417 **The Village Green:** Culvert Maintenance and Drainage Works: This is scheduled for August.

418 iv **Conference Pear Trees:** I have contacted the nursery to request their account details for a bank transfer; as soon as I receive them I will purchase and our contractor will plant.

For information

Flaxman Close Oak Tree: Stafford Borough Council have advised that the large oak tree next to the play area off Flaxman Close will be removed due to safety concerns, following multiple failures. The tree will be reduced to a standing monolith to support habitat. The work is scheduled for the 3rd July.

Tree Preservation Order: Village Hall: Please note that the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) relating to the Oak Tree at the Village Hall site is now in effect.

Cemetery Grass Cutting: The church has confirmed that the contractors were unable to cut the grass w/c 23/06 as scheduled but are attending on 30/06. Grass is cut monthly, and some areas are being left longer intentionally to support wildlife. The church monitors the site weekly.

Parking on Meadow Road Play Area: We have received two requests for permission to park on the grassed area at Meadow Road Play Area in connection with fishing events organised by the Canal and River Trust. On both occasions, the organisers were advised that this land falls under the jurisdiction of Stafford Borough Council and that any such requests should be directed to them.

Annual Inspection - Wild Play Area and MUGA: Please be advised that the annual inspection of the Wild Play Area and the MUGA is scheduled to take place in August. The inspection will be carried out by RoSPA.

Clerk's Annual Leave: Please note that the Clerk will be on annual leave for two weeks from 4th August to 14th August inclusive.

Cricket Club: The Cricket Club will be holding a summer ball at the club on Saturday 27th September. This is a charity event with proceeds going towards the Dougie Mac and the future redevelopment of the pavilion.

Incident Report from Speedwatch - Old Road: Speedwatch volunteers reported that during a recent session on Old Road, a volunteer was verbally abused and intimidated by a speeding driver. The volunteer was unharmed but concerned. The incident has been reported to the Staffordshire Speedwatch Coordinator, who has informed the Police.

Anti-Social Behaviour at The Downs Carpark: Anti-social behaviour has been reported at The Downs carpark, including people congregating and revving cars late at night. On 1st July, the PCSO held a surgery at the carpark, giving residents the opportunity to raise their concerns directly. While the Parish Council has no direct powers to deal with this issue, we will cooperate fully with the police and provide any CCTV footage if requested.