Minutes of the Meeting of Barlaston Parish Council
Held on Tuesday 9 September 2025 at the Methodist Church Hall at 19:15

Present:

Cllr D Borasinski (Chairman)
Cllr P Fisher
Cllr E Philpott
Cllr L Pickering
Cllr C Hurst
Cllr O Sear and Cllr S Thomas joined following their co-option (Agenda Item 461)

Also in attendance:
Parish Clerk: Ms Vivien O'Dunne.
8 members of the public were in attendance along with the local PCSO.

Public Open Forum:

A member of the public updated those present on a meeting they had with representatives of the local MP regarding planning applications to the east and west of Old Road. Other members of the public expressed their views on the applications. The condition of the former Wedgwood Memorial College and lack of security measures was also discussed. Two members of the public, putting themselves forward for the two casual vacancies, introduced themselves.

452. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from Cllrs Dando, Jones, Tudor and Arnold. It was resolved to accept these. County Councillor Sean Bagguley also sent his apologies.

453. **Declarations of Interest:** None received

454. **Written applications for dispensations under the Localism Act 2011:** None received

455. **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 8 July 2025:** The minutes of the meeting were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

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

457. **County Councillor:** The County Councillor was not present and no report was received.

458. **Borough Councillor:** The Borough Councillor was not present and no report was received.

459. **Working Groups:** The Clerk and Cllr Philpott had attended a webinar on community engagement for playground projects. **Resolved**: The Clerk will circulate the recording to all councillors.

460. **Training courses:** As the previous poll did not identify a suitable date for all councillors to attend training, the Clerk will liaise with Urban Vision and SPCA to obtain alternative dates in October/November. She will also gauge interest from other Parish Councils in joining and sharing the cost. The Clerk further reported that she has commenced the CiLCA course.

461. **Parish Council Vacancies: Resolved**: Olivia Sear was co-opted to Barlaston West Ward and Sue Thomas to Barlaston Park Ward. The Clerk will inform the Elections Office. The new councillors signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office and Declarations of Pecuniary Interests and joined the meeting.

462. **Meeting with the local MP:** A date for councillors to meet with the local MP was agreed. **Resolved**: The Clerk will inform the MP's office.

463. **Electronic devices and meeting equipment: Resolved**: Clerk to investigate the cost and logistics of issuing laptops to councillors, including a comparison with printing meeting packs. It was noted that a screen cannot be installed in the hall as this would be an enhancement of a religious building.

464. **Bench at Barlaston Park play area:** Councillors agreed in principle to a resident's request for benches and **resolved** that the Clerk will consult Stafford Borough Council regarding permissions, as the land is theirs, and report back at the next meeting.

465. Safety Concerns - Wedgwood Memorial College Site: Concerns were noted about the unsecured site and risk of anti-social behaviour. **Resolved**: Clerk to contact Stafford Borough Council to request enforcement action to secure the premises.

Cllrs Thomas and Hurst left the meeting at 20:30.

466. Finance and Administration

466.1 The July and August bank reconciliation reports and bank statements were noted and signed. The budget position at 31 August was also presented and noted.
466.2 The schedule of payments report for July & August 2025 was reviewed and accepted (see Appendix A: Schedule of Payments)
466.3 Conclusion of Audit - AGAR 2024/25: The Council noted the conclusion of the external audit by Mazars, which raised no matters of concern. The required Notice of Conclusion of Audit and Sections 1–3 of the AGAR will be published on the Council's website and noticeboard in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015..
466.4 Signatory for the Lloyds bank account: **Resolved:** Cllr Pickering to be added as an additional signatory for the Lloyds bank account.

Cllr Hurst returned to the meeting at 20:40.

466.5 Speed Gun Replacement: **Resolved:** To purchase the Laser Tech UK speed gun for the Speedwatch group.
466.6 Purchase of Planter - Orchard Place: Quotations were noted. Further consideration will be given to the design and size of the planter, and the item will be rolled forward to the next meeting.
466.7 Level Crossing Notice Board: Three quotes were considered. **Resolved:** To approve the resubmitted design and proceed with QPS Print. The Clerk will inform the artist, publish the text online, and provide a QR code for the notice board.
466.8 Chairman's Chain of Office: It was **resolved** to send the Chain of Office to Vaughtons by courier for fitting the new bars, following approval of the expenditure at the previous meeting.

467. Policy Matters

467.1 Investment Policy: The Council's Investment Policy was reviewed. **Resolved:** To approve and sign the policy. The Clerk will publish it on the Council's website.
467.2 IT Policy: A new IT Policy, required for Assertion 10 of the 2025/26 audit, was reviewed. **Resolved:** To approve and sign the policy. The Clerk will publish it on the Council's website.

468. Assets and Leases
468.1 Grounds Contractor's report: The contractor's completion of Staffordshire County Council's supplier approval checks is in progress.
468.2 Meadow Road and Cricket Club leases: Updates were received. The Meadow Road lease is complete and will be signed at the next full Council meeting. Negotiations continue regarding the Cricket Club lease.

468.3 Gate Licences: Consideration of issues around the Gate Licenses was deferred to a future meeting.
468.4 Village Green Hedge: **Resolved:** To request a price for a second cut each spring and to request a date for autumn cutting this year.

468.5 Village Green Culvert and Drainage Works: An update was received from Cllr Hurst. The works scheduled for August are in hand.

469. Health & Safety / Risk Management

469.1 Bench Repair – Railway Crossing: The Clerk reported that Network Rail and West Midlands Trains are determining land ownership and the appropriate approvals for maintenance of two public benches near Barlaston Station. One bench requires minor repairs. No formal consent has yet been given.
469.2 ROSPA report – MUGA and Wild Play Area: The annual ROSPA report was received. **Resolved:** The Clerk will arrange required green works, procure a sign within a £1,000 budget for purchase and installation, and obtain prices for re-marking the MUGA.

469.3 Weekly Play Area Reports: The reports from the appointed councillor were received.

470. To consider grant applications and determine awards

470.1 **Barlaston Community Group**: Request for £150 for litter-picker protective clothing. **Resolved:** Grant approved under Section 137.

471. Planning

471.1 Neighbourhood Plan: Cllr Fisher reported that no response has been received from Stafford Borough regarding screening feedback on the revised plan.
471.2 Planning Committee Terms of Reference: Motion**:** Cllr Fisher proposed that the Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee be amended to delegate authority to the Chair of the Planning Committee and the Parish Clerk to review and respond on behalf of the Council to planning applications deemed non-contentious. All other applications will continue to be referred to the Planning Committee for consideration. **Resolved:** The motion was approved.

471.3 Planning Committee decisions:

22 July 2025

- 25/40758/HOU: 46 Park Drive - No objection
- 25/40771/HOU: 9 Park Drive - Objection

29 July 2025

- 25/40830/HOU: Whiteacres, Malt House Lane - No objection

14 August 2025

- 25/40803/FUL: The Granary, Hartwell Lane - No objection; query regarding drains
- 25/40919/PIP: Land West of Old Road (5 dwellings) - Objection

9 September 2025

- 25/41009/HOU: The Willows, Longton Road - No objection in principle; request removal of mock-Tudor styling.

472 Date of next meeting: 14 October 2025

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

July Expenditure - Standard	GROSS	VAT	NET	Payment
Tesco: mobile phone – Bill ref – 134250575437	16.06	0.00	16.06	DD
BT: Phone & Broadband – Invoice M070 YH	41.81	6.96	34.85	DD
Pozitive Energy – Village Hall Gas – 26181820258244262	33.22	0.00	33.22	DD
Pozitive Energy – Village Hall Electric – 26181620258244051	111.44	0.00	111.44	DD
Barlaston Cricket Club – Grant S137	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	BACS
Restore the Planet Solutions Ltd (Art Trail) Inv 1005	450.00	75.00	375.00	BACS
Lloyds Bank – Charges Inv: 458990561	6.25	0.00	6.25	DD
Staffordshire LGPS – July Payment	472.59	0.00	472.59	BACS
Vivien O'Dunne – Salary July	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	BACS
Vivien O'Dunne – Mileage July	9.59	0.00	9.59	BACS
Vivien O'Dunne – Expenses (Paint/brushes for Goalpost painting: £43.88; Copyholder £11.62; Barrier Tape £13.99)	69.49	0.00	69.49	BACS
Information Commissioners Office (ICO) Annual Fee	47.00	0.00	47.00	DD
Buxus Green – July Ground Maintenance	1,109.62	0.00	1,109.62	SO
P & M Edwards – Two Pear Trees	59.90	0.00	59.90	BACS
Income – Standard	**GROSS**	**VAT**	**NET**	**Payment**
Interest – Business Bank	125.33	0.00	125.33	
Barlaston Village Hall Invoice 664 (Gas & Electric July)	144.66	0.00	144.66	
VAT Refund	837.94	0.00	837.94	

August Expenditure - Standard	Invoice/Ref	GROSS	VAT	NET	Payment
Tesco: mobile phone	134253555110	16.06	0.00	16.06	DD
BT: Phone & Broadband	M071 13	41.81	6.96	34.85	DD
Stafford Borough Council Muga Lease Annual	7070297126	10.00	0.00	10.00	BACS
N & J Tree Services – Emergency Tree Works	18398	864.00	144.00	720.00	BACS
Lloyds Bank – Bank Charges	461345058	5.75	0.00	5.75	BACS
Vivien O'Dunne – August Salary		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
Vivien O'Dunne – Mileage August		2.75	0.00	2.75	BACS
Staffordshire LGPS – August Payment		548.88	0.00	548.88	BACS
Buxus Green: Aug Grounds Maintenance		1,109.62	0.00	1,109.62	SO
Playsafety Ltd – Annual ROSPA Inspection	91730	192.00	32.00	160.00	BACS
Staffordshire County Council - Allotment Rent – 29/09 – 24/12	1000154903	300.00	0.00	300.00	BACS
Income – Standard		**GROSS**	**VAT**	**NET**	**Payment**
Interest – Business Bank		137.95	0.00	137.95	

Appendix B

Clerk's Report July and August 2025

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.

418 iv **Conference Pear Trees:** These have been purchased and planted.

432 iii **Unity Trust and CCLA Public Deposit Funds**: Opening an account with each of these is underway.

432 iv **Mobile Phone Contract:** Moving from a contract to PAYG contract is in process

432 vi **Employer Pension Discretions Policy Statement** for Employees been submitted to Staffordshire County Council and uploaded onto the website.

438 **Neighbourhood Planning support:** A letter urging the continuation of dedicated funding and support for Neighbourhood Plans has been sent to Allison Gardner, MP and the Rt Hon Angela Rayner, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

445 i **Downs Car Park pathway works:** The contractor has agreed to undertake the work and will reuse the existing hedge, therefore work will take place later in the year.

445 ii **Asset of Community Value:** The Clerk has received confirmation that the application to register the Methodist Church as an Asset of Community Value has been successful. The property will now appear on the Register of Assets of Community Value for a period of five years.

445 iii **Repainting of the Goal Posts:** The repainting has now been completed. The Clerk will express thanks on behalf of the Parish Council to the volunteer who kindly undertook the work.

For information

Emergency Tree works: Damage to tree T20 on the Village Green was reported to the Clerk. On inspection, the tree was found to be unsafe, with evidence of root lift and a large branch breakage. In accordance with Financial Regulation 6.9n(ii), which permits the Clerk to authorise expenditure up to £2,000 (excluding VAT) in cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the Clerk instructed that remedial works be carried out. The total cost was £720.00 plus VAT.

Visibility Concerns – The Green: Following concerns from residents that trees on the Village Green were obscuring drivers' line of sight, the Clerk raised a query with County Highways and requested an inspection (Case Ref: 4448115). The case has since been closed with the following comment: *"As per photographs attached, my personal opinion is that the clearance and views along the road from the junction are fine."*

Downs Car Park Pathway: On the 8th September Cllr Hurst reported that a manhole cover had lifted on the pathway, with evidence of foul sewage present. The matter was reported immediately to Severn Trent, who attended the site within the hour. Severn Trent identified a blocked grid, which is to be cleared, and confirmed that the pathway will be cleaned and sanitised to ensure it is left safe for public use. The matter is live and you will be updated at the next meeting.

Code of Conduct Reminder: With several planning applications currently under consideration, and given the location of some developments in relation to where councillors live, it is especially important to uphold the highest standards of conduct. Councillors must carefully consider whether they have an interest in any application that could reasonably be seen as affecting their own financial position or well-being more than that of other residents.

Where a councillor's property is in close proximity to a proposed development, it is likely that a reasonable member of the public would consider this to influence their ability to take an impartial view. In such cases, the proper course of action is to declare the interest and withdraw from the meeting during both discussion and voting.

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