Barlaston Parish Council – December 2025 / January 2026:

The Parish Council meeting scheduled for 13th January was unfortunately cancelled due to the Clerk being unwell. The meeting was rescheduled for Tuesday 20 January 2026 at 7:15pm. Matters considered at that meeting will be reported in the next newsletter. Residents are always welcome to attend the public forum to raise issues and stay involved in decisions affecting the village.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 10 February at 7:15pm in the Methodist Church Hall. Agendas for all meetings are published on the Parish Council website and displayed on notice boards at Orchard Place, Barlaston Park, The Country Cabin, and the Village Hall.

Community Safety and Public Forum
Two local PCSOs attended the December public forum, where parking issues were raised by councillors. The PCSOs advised that parking enforcement is undertaken by Civil Enforcement Officers, and the option of holding a joint public surgery in the New Year was discussed.

Play Parks and Community Spaces
The Play Park Working Group continues to progress plans for the Meadow Road Play Area. Members have been reviewing example designs from other villages to help shape potential options. Further ideas will be sought from additional suppliers, and community consultation events are being planned.

The Meadow Road lease has now been completed. The area will be included in the annual RoSPA inspection programme, inspection sheets have been prepared, and a risk assessment has been completed. The Council is also obtaining costs for signage to clearly indicate Parish Council responsibility for the site.

Village Facilities and Assets

- **MUGA Refurbishment**: The Council has approved the payment of a 20% deposit to secure works scheduled for **Spring 2026**. The refurbishment will significantly extend the life of this important facility.
- **Cricket Club Lease**: The lease is nearing completion and will be signed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, subject to insurance arrangements being finalised.
- **Emergency Tree Works**: A storm-damaged tree on the village green was dealt with promptly using the Clerk's emergency powers to ensure public safety.
- **Railway Crossing Bench**: The Clerk is liaising with Network Rail and awaiting permission to proceed with repairs.
- **Bus Stop Bench:** A new 100% recycled bench has been installed to replace the damaged one at the Station Road bus stop.

Finance and Administration
The November bank reconciliation and budget position were reviewed and noted, and the schedule of payments approved.

To improve financial controls, the Council has approved the introduction of a Unity Trust corporate multi-pay card for the Clerk, in line with Financial Regulations.

The Council has also agreed to increase the Clerk's hours from 15 to 20 per week, reflecting the growing workload and scale of Council projects.

Grants and Community Support
The Council approved a £1,500 grant to St John's Church towards 50% of the annual maintenance costs of the village cemetery, recognising its importance to the community.

Neighbourhood Plan Update
Work continues on the revision of the Barlaston Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Fisher and the Clerk met with the planning consultant in November, and follow-up requests for feedback on draft policies have been sent to the Borough Council and to landowners of current housing allocation sites. A further meeting with the consultant is planned for mid-January, with public consultation anticipated in Spring 2026.

Councillors have also been asked to identify potential green spaces in their wards for consideration as Local Green Space or valued community open space within the Plan.

Viv O'Dunne
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