**Minutes of the Meeting of Barlaston Parish Council**
**Held on Tuesday 20 Jan 26 at Barlaston Village Hall at 19:15**

**Present:**

Cllr D Borasinski (Chairman)
Cllr L Arnold
Cllr E Philpott
Cllr O Sear
Cllr G Jones
Cllr S Thomas
Cllr C Hurst
Cllr J Dando
Cllr S Tudor
Cllr P Fisher

**Also in attendance:**
Parish Clerk: Ms Vivien O'Dunne
County Councillor: Cllr S Bagguley

**Public Open Forum:** There were no members of the public present.

**533. Apologies**: Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Pickering. It was resolved to accept these.

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

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

**536. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting 9 December 2025:** The minutes of the meeting were accepted as a true record and signed by The Chairman.

**537. Clerk's Report – See Appendix B**

**538. County Councillor:** The County Councillor gave updates on local issues, including speed vans and gully cleaning. Members raised concerns about mud on the roads, potholes, and suggested a pavement accessibility audit.

**539. Borough Councillor:** The Borough Councillor provided a brief update on progress of Local Government Reorganisation proposals.

**540. Training:** Five councillors will attend the "Planning for Non-Planners" course organised by the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association on 22 January 2026, @ £35 per person.

**541. Play Park Working Group**: The Working Group did not meet over the festive period. An update was received on progress with design proposals and plans for a public consultation event. It was resolved to allocate £1,500 for the consultation, with proposals to be brought back to a future meeting for approval.

**542. Finance and Administration:**

542.1. The December bank reconciliation and bank statements were noted and signed.
542.2. The budget position as of 31 December 2025 was reviewed and noted.
542.3. It was resolved to approve the schedule of payments: December 2025 (Appendix A)
542.4. Councillors considered the recommendations of the Finance Committee:

**Earmarked Reserves** were reviewed, and it was resolved to:

- Reallocate the Village Hall Reserves to the Play Park Reserve and add £4,077 to round it up to £140,000. It was noted that the Village Hall Reserve cannot be spent on the Hall, and that this provision will exceed the maximum in the Reserves Policy; however, following consultation with providers, this level is considered necessary for the project as a one-off exception.
- Increase the Election Reserve in anticipation of likely increased costs following receipt of information from the Elections Office.

- Increase the Asset Replacement Reserve by £1,000, in accordance with the Reserves Policy.
- Allocate £2,000 to the General Reserve.

The updated Earmarked Reserves are as follows:

| Reserves | 2025/26 | 2026/27 |
|---|---|---|
| V Hall Contingency | £10,000 | £0 |
| V Hall Works | £43,723 | £0 |
| Play Area | £82,650 | £140,000 |
| Asset Replacement | £5,000 | £6,000 |
| Election Costs | £7,000 | £10,000 |

**Section 137 budget:** It was resolved to set the Section 137 budget for 2026/27 at £17,500. The budget was increased to reflect the anticipated grant requirement for the Village Hall, and it was noted that, following legal advice, the only way the Council can provide funding to the Village Hall is via Section 137 grants, in line with statutory limits.

**Adoption of the 2026/27 Budget:** It was resolved to accept the 2026/27 budget as presented by the Finance Committee.

**Parish Council Precept for 2026/27:** It was resolved that the Parish Council sets the precept for the 2026/27 financial year at £116,792, representing a 1.3% increase on 2025/26.

542.5. **iPad Purchase and MDM Implementation:** *Resolved:* Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council approved the purchase of 11 iPads (A16, 128GB Wi-Fi, Silver) with Apple Stylus pens from Fifteen Group (£3,870.90 + VAT) and the commissioning of a Mobile Device Management (MDM) system (£795 + VAT) to allow remote lock/wipe, standardised app/security settings, and access to council documents. Ongoing MDM costs: £55/month plus optional unlimited support £25/month (+VAT). Purpose: to comply with GDPR, improve inclusivity for councillors without personal technology, and provide a long-term, cost-effective, environmentally sustainable alternative to paper and toner.

542.6. **Annual Parish Meeting:** It was resolved that the Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Tuesday 5 May 2026, with the venue to be confirmed.

542.7. **Chairman's Allowance:** It was resolved to approve payment of £133.36 to the Chairman in respect of the Chairman's Allowance, for volunteer token gifts at Christmas. Receipts for the expenditure were provided.

542.8. **Publication Scheme:** The updated Publication Scheme was considered, and it was resolved to approve it. The Clerk was instructed to upload the updated scheme to the website.

542.9. **Notice board at Orchard Place:** Consideration of quotations for a notice board at Orchard Place was deferred.

**543. Leases and Contracts:**

543.1. **Civic Amenity Visits 2026:** It was resolved to approve the 2026 Civic Amenity Visits, noting the dates of 24 January, 18 April, 25 July, and 24 October, at a total cost of £672 (£168 per 2-hour visit).

543.2. **Grounds maintenance contract:** It was noted that the grounds maintenance contract is expiring. A working group of Councillors (Hurst, Thomas, Sear, Borasinski, Fisher) will review the contract to ensure it is fit for purpose and bring a revised draft for approval to the next meeting.

543.3. **Grounds Contractor:** The Council received a report from the Grounds Contractor detailing scheduled works.

543.4. **Cricket Club Lease:** *Resolved:* At the December meeting, councillors signed the lease for the Cricket Club land in principle. The Clerk had intended to send it for completion once the required insurance was in place but was unable to obtain the insurance. Following legal advice, it was resolved to remove the insurance clauses relating to the right of subrogation and the non-invalidation provision, with the resulting solicitor's fee of £250 approved.

543.5. **Meadow Road Play Area Lease:** It was noted that the completion statement for the Meadow Road lease has been received, completed on 9 December 2025, and that registration with HM Land Registry is ongoing.

**544. Health & Safety / Risk Management:**

544.1. **Railway Crossing Bench Repair:** Councillors approved the repair of the benches by the station at an estimated cost of £380–£420, following receipt of Network Rail permission. The works will include removal, re-levelling of paving, installation of suitable concrete pads, and refitting of the benches with new fixings.

544.2. **Weekly play reports:** The Council received reports from the appointed Councillors.

**545. To consider grant applications and determine awards:**

545.1. **Stone Lions Grant Request:** It was resolved to award a Section 137 grant of £500 to Stone Lions for their annual PSA testing event. It was noted that many men from the village have used and continue to use this vital service.

**546. Community Initiatives and Proposals**

546.1. **Gesture of thanks:** It was resolved that the Chairman will use his allowance to thank residents of the Old School House for allowing use of electricity for the annual Christmas tree lights on the Village Green.

546.2. **Seasonal community decorations and events:** Consideration of proposals for seasonal community decorations and events for December 2026 was deferred.

546.3. **Rural Health Roadshow – Barlaston Village Hall:** *Noted:* Councillors were informed that Barlaston Village Hall has been selected by Support Staffordshire as a venue for a rural health roadshow and noted the opportunity for Council support and involvement.

546.4. **Villager of the Year 2025:** Councillors approved opening nominations for the 2025 Villager of the Year and Certificates of Commendation, continuing a community-led selection process. The event will be in the same format as last year, and the Clerk is to liaise with the church to agree a suitable date. A budget of £660 for refreshments, printing, engraving, and certificates was approved.

**547. Planning:**

547.1. **Neighbourhood Plan:** Cllr Fisher provided an update on the revision of the Neighbourhood Plan. A meeting with the planning consultant is scheduled for 3 February.

547.2. **Green Spaces:** No templates were submitted by councillors. The Clerk will recirculate the template for completion.

547.3. **Wedgwood Memorial College:** Cllr. Fisher provided an update on a recent meeting with the owners of the College site. Councillors noted the feedback and that dialogue will continue.

547.4. **Planning Decisions:**

25/41593/HOU: Mulberry House, The Green Retrospective approval for a detached garage. *Resolved:* No objections

25/41606/PIP: Land Adjacent to Barlaston Old Road Garage, Old Road Permission in Principle for up to nine self-build/custom bungalows and public open space. *Resolved:* Objection submitted on grounds of Green Belt, settlement boundary, Neighbourhood Plan, and local housing requirements

**548. Date of next meeting:** 10th February 2026

**clerk@barlastonparishcouncil.gov.uk**

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

| December expenditure and items for approval | Invoice Reference | GROSS | VAT | NET | Payment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| St John the Baptist – S137 – Cemetery Maintenance | - | 1500.00 | 0.00 | 1500.00 | BACS |
| BT: Phone & Broadband | M075 HL | 41.81 | 6.96 | 34.85 | DD |
| Playdale Playgrounds – MUGA Signage | 63333 | 633.60 | 105.60 | 528.00 | BACS |
| Lloyds Bank – Bank Charges | GB244155576 | 4.75 | 0.00 | 4.75 | - |
| Soft Surfaces (20% MUGA Refurb) | 26157 | 1256.16 | 209.36 | 1046.80 | BACS |
| Seated Furniture – Bus Stop Bench | 104473 | 569.76 | 94.96 | 449.81 | BACS |
| Stafford Borough Council – Quarterly Bin Emptying | 7070297909 | 460.73 | 76.79 | 460.73 | BACS |
| Vivien O'Dunne – Salary December | | [redacted] | [redacted] | [redacted] | BACS |
| Vivien O'Dunne- Mileage | | 2.75 | 0.00 | 2.75 | BACS |
| Vivien O'Dunne – Laptop Bag | | 35.99 | 0.00 | 35.99 | BACS |
| CPRE Membership | O1109582 | 36.00 | 0.00 | 36.00 | DD |
| Staffordshire LGPS | | 543.86 | 0.00 | 543.86 | BACS |
| David Borasinski – Chairman's Allowance | | 133.36 | 0.00 | 133.36 | BACS |
| Buxus Green – December Grounds Maintenance | 202512 | 1109.62 | 0.00 | 1109.62 | SO |
| Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association: Councillor Introduction Course | SI-2094 | 48.00 | 8.00 | 40.00 | BACS |
| **Income** | | **GROSS** | **VAT** | **NET** | **Payment** |
| Interest – Business Bank | - | 83.18 | 0.00 | 83.18 | - |
| Barlaston Allotment Association | Inv 666 | 300.00 | 0.00 | 300.00 | - |

**Appendix B**

**(return to minutes)**

**Clerk's Report December 2025**

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

468.5 Village Green: Drainage works are in hand.

492.11 Dog fouling awareness campaign will be worked on and added back on the agenda when progress has been made.

495.2 RoSPA advised works are expected to be completed soon.

510.7 The bench for the Station Road bus shelter has been installed.

510.8 The Village Gateway gates will be ordered soon.

525.5 The MUGA works have been scheduled for week commencing 23rd March 2026

526.4 Gate licenses: I need to spend time going through old files to determine the history of the charge. I will move this back to the main agenda when progress has been made.

525.6 Unity Trust multi-pay card: This is in process; I will report when this has been completed.