Minutes of the Meeting of Barlaston Parish Council

Held on Tuesday 10 March 2026 at Barlaston Methodist Church Hall at 7:15pm

Present:

Cllr D Borasinski (Chairman)
Cllr P Fisher
Cllr E Philpott
Cllr G Jones
Cllr C Hurst
Cllr J Dando

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

Public Open Forum: There was one member of the public present.

566. Apologies for Absence: Apologies were received from Cllrs Pickering, Arnold, Tudor, Thomas and Sear. It was resolved to accept these.

567. Declarations of Interest: Cllr Hurst declared an interest in item 581.1, Villager of the Year, as he had been nominated, and Cllr Jones' position as a borough councillor was noted for transparency in relation to item 576.1, Local Government Reorganisation.

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

569. Minutes: The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 10 February 2026 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

570. Meeting Procedures: The item was deferred as only six members were present.

571. Clerk's Report: See Appendix B

572. County Councillor Report: Cllr Bagguley reported on actions taken regarding mud on the village roads and the results of the Station Road average speed checks; councillors noted these did not reflect the situation at school crossing times, and Cllr Bagguley agreed to observe the school crossing at busy periods. He also reported that visits are being made by the mobile enforcement speed check van. Councillors reported damaged verges at Barlaston Park and surface water at The Crossroads. The Chairman thanked Cllr Bagguley for his assistance with clearing the Old Road pavement after hedge cutting. Cllr Bagguley left the meeting after this item.

573. Borough Councillor Report: Cllr Jones spoke briefly regarding the options for local government reorganisation.

574. Finance and Administration:

574.1. The February bank reconciliation and bank statements were noted and signed.

574.2. It was resolved to approve the schedule of payments: February 2026 (Appendix A) It was noted that the payment to the grounds contractor for £1,109.62 had been omitted from the circulated list in error and this payment was also approved.

574.3. The budget position as at 28 February 2026 was reviewed and noted. It was resolved to approve virements from underspent headings to cover predicted overspends: £6,350 from Neighbourhood Plan to Wages and PAYE, £1,623 from Office Costs to Pension, and £3,000 from Village Hall Repairs to Purchase of Capital Assets. Remaining balances will stay in their original headings. Details are in Appendix C.

574.4. **Drainage Works Village Green:** It was resolved to approve payment of £870 for drainage works completed on the Village Green. *(Note: the agenda incorrectly stated £860.)*

574.5. **Grass Cutting:** It was resolved to continue grass cutting on behalf of Staffordshire County Council for 2026/27 at £4,767 for 8 cuts (7 cuts between April–October 2026, plus 1 in April 2027), reflecting a 3.5% increase.

575. Playpark Working Group:

575.1. The Working Group has not met since the last Parish Council meeting. The Clerk reported that St John's Church is happy to host the consultation event. Four dates were available from the caterer; the previously chosen date conflicted with Mother's Day, so an alternative date will be selected to maximise attendance.

576. Governance:

576.1. **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR):** Councillors considered and agreed a collective response to the LGR consultation. A preference was expressed for the proposals put forward by Staffordshire County Council, Lichfield/South Staffordshire/Tamworth Councils, and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council. The Clerk will complete the online consultation form.

576.2. **Parish Council Website:** Councillors considered further improvements to the Parish Council website to meet AGAR publication and accessibility requirements. It was resolved to approve expenditure of up to £200 for this purpose.

576.3. **Councillors' Responsibilities - AGAR Assertion 10:** Councillors received a presentation from the Clerk outlining their responsibilities, including email use, GDPR compliance, data handling, governance obligations, and training. Councillors were reminded to use official council email accounts, uphold GDPR principles and maintain awareness of legislation. Completion of the ICO free training, for which a link was provided, will be recorded in the minutes to support audit. Councillors noted their responsibilities to ensure transparency, compliance, and good governance.

576.4. **GDPR Compliance Documents:** Councillors considered and approved the updated and new GDPR compliance suite, including the Data Protection Policy, Retention & Erasure Schedule, Appropriate Policy Document, Data Security Policy, Data Breach Policy, Rights Request Policy, Privacy Notice, Data Handling Policy, Accessibility Statement, Data Map, Data Risk Register, and CCTV Policy.

The Clerk confirmed that all Council data had been mapped and that supporting policies had been developed in line with AGAR Assertion 10, statutory transparency requirements, and NALC guidance.

It was resolved that the GDPR compliance suite be adopted and published on the Council's website. The Clerk will action publication of the approved documents.

577. Leases and Contracts:

577.1. **Grounds Contractor's Report:** Councillor Hurst reported on works completed by the Grounds Contractor. Councillors resolved to approve the removal of tree waste from the Village Green at a cost of £100.

577.2. **Cricket Club Lease:** The signed lease remains with Wooliscrofts Solicitors pending council instruction. An insurance quote is under consideration by the Cricket Club, and a joint Playing Fields Committee meeting has been scheduled for 21 March in line with statutory notice requirements.

578. Exclusion of the Press and Public: It was resolved, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, to exclude the press and public for the confidential business to be discussed at item 579.

579. Confidential Business:

579.1. Staffing: Councillors noted that the annual appraisal of the Clerk is due. It was agreed that the HR Committee will undertake the appraisal and report back to the council with any actions.

579.2. Grounds Maintenance Contract: Councillors received an update from the Working Group on progress with the ongoing work on the specification of the new Grounds

Maintenance contract. Updated maps are required to progress, and the contract wording will be aligned with the tender assessment table.

580. Health & Safety / Risk Management:

580.1. **Asset Inspection:** Councillors were invited to undertake a walkabout to inspect Parish Council assets and identify any items requiring renewal, repair, or replacement. The Clerk will circulate lists of assets to councillors by ward for feedback at the next meeting.

580.2. **Tree Survey Remedial Works:** No quotations had been received for the remedial works identified in the tree survey. The item will be brought back to the next meeting.

580.3. Weekly Play Reports: Councillors received weekly play reports from appointed councillors.

Wild Play Area: The xylophone clapper has split and requires replacement; branches by the agility trail need cutting back; a child-friendly solution is needed for cleaning the wooden play equipment.

MUGA: Perch seating requires cleaning.

Meadow Road Play Area: No issues were reported.

The Clerk will arrange for the identified maintenance and cleaning works to be completed.

581. Community Initiatives and Proposals

581.1. **Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Award and Certificates of Commendation:** Cllr Hurst left the room for this item. Councillors considered nominations received. It was resolved to award Villager of the Year 2025 to Tim Cockin in recognition of his outstanding voluntary contributions to the village, including organising the Barlaston Wassail for 21 years, managing village history projects, and supporting community initiatives.

Certificates of Commendation will be awarded to Claire Bailey, Sandie Buxton, and Dennis Croome for their long-standing service and contributions to local organisations and the community.

The award ceremony was approved for 3 May 2026 at St John's Church, 10:30am.

582. Planning:

582.1. **Neighbourhood Plan:** Cllr Fisher provided an update. A meeting with the Borough Planning Officer has been scheduled for 24th March.

582.2. **Planning Committee:** Two planning applications were considered on the 10th March:

Planning Application 26/41654/ANX – Fernbank Cottages, 69 Longton Road
Councillors noted concerns about size, scale, potential overlooking, and self-contained use. It was resolved to object on grounds of overdevelopment, impact on neighbours, and risk of independent use. If approved, a condition should ensure the annex remains ancillary to the main dwelling.

Planning Application 25/41490/OUT – Land North of Flax Croft, Old Road
Councillors resolved to object. The site is outside the settlement boundary, designated Green Belt, and not allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan. The proposal would harm openness, rural character, and the setting of the nearby Trent & Mersey Canal Conservation Area. No heritage or landscape assessment has been provided.

583. Date of next meeting: 14 April 2026

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

February expenditure and items for approval	Invoice Reference	GROSS	VAT	NET	Payment
BT: Phone & Broadband	M077 PU	41.81	6.96	34.85	DD
Stafford Borough Council – 4 x Civic Amenity Visits 2026/27	7070298173	672.00	112.00	560.00	BACS
Forvis Mazars LLP – Annual Limited Assurance Review 2024/25	2649719	504.00	84.00	420.00	BACS
Lloyds Bank – Bank Charges	476012613	4.25	0.00	4.25	-
David Borasinski – Approved purchases using the Chairman's Allowance	-	69.97	0.00	69.97	BACS
Signs of Cheshire Ltd – Noticeboard Deposit 50%	12531	819.00	136.50	682.50	BACS
Staffordshire County Council – Quarterly Allotment Rent	1000164591	300.00	0.00	300.00	BACS
Wooliscrofts Solicitors – Cricket Club Lease	MC/JA/916071	1,560.00	260.00	1,300.00	BACS
Vivien O'Dunne – Salary February	-	[redacted]	0.00	[redacted]	BACS
Vivien O'Dunne – Expenses	-	22.95	0.00	22.95	BACS
Vivien O'Dunne - Mileage	-	13.55	0.00	13.55	BACS
Staffordshire Local Government Pension Scheme	-	552.30	0.00	552.30	BACS
Income		**GROSS**	**VAT**	**NET**	**Payment**
Interest – Commercial Bank (Lloyds)	-	58.75	0.00	58.75	-
Transfer					
From Commercial to Community (Lloyds)	-	10,000	0.00	10,000	-

Appendix B (back to the minutes)

Clerk's Report February 2026

317 Emergency Plan: The Clerk will add back onto the agenda for discussion when progress has been made on this.

468.5 Village Green: Drainage works have been completed.

469.2 RoSPA advised signage for the MUGA: This has now been fitted.

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

510.8 The Village Gateway gates have been ordered.

526.4 Gate licenses: 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.

542.5 Purchase of iPads and MDM: This is in process.

556.5 Library Plaque: Ownership is being reviewed through archived minutes. A report will follow in due course.

556.8 The noticeboard for Orchard Place has been ordered and permission to replace the existing board has been granted by Homes Plus.

562.2 Work on the benches by the railway crossing has been completed.

562.4 Canal and River Trust Works: The ivy cuttings have been chipped and the fence works have been completed. Additional saplings have now been planted, and the wood chippings have been spread as mulch beneath both the new and existing hedgerow.

563.1 Seasonal Community Decorations and Event: This item will be reinstated on the agenda in April when the Councillor responsible for this remit is present.

564.2 Green Spaces Templates: One template has been received. Councillors are reminded to identify community spaces in their ward to be earmarked as protected green spaces and submit details to the Clerk

General updates:

Downs Car Park CCTV: There are still issues with the installation of the software required. I am liaising with the supplier who are trying to resolve the problem connecting to their VPN.

Appendix C (back to the minutes)

Budget Virements:

From (Underspend)	Amount (£)	To (Overspend)	Amount (£)
Neighbourhood Plan	6,350	Wages	3,064
		PAYE	3,191
	Remaining	–	95
Office Costs	1,623	Pension	1,431
	Remaining	–	192
Village Hall Repairs	3,000	Purchase of Capital Assets	2,288
	Remaining	–	712