Minutes of the Barlaston Annual Parish Meeting

Held on Tuesday 5 May 2026 at the Methodist Church Hall, Park Drive ST12 9DP at 7pm

Present:

Cllr D Borasinski (Chairman)
Cllr J Dando
Cllr C Hurst
Cllr S Thomas
Cllr G Jones
Cllr E Philpott
Cllr O Sear

Also In attendance:

Vivien O'Dunne (Parish Clerk)
6 members of the public were in attendance.

In accordance with Schedule 12, Part III of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr David Borasinski, presided over the meeting

1. Welcome: The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

2. Apologies: Apologies were received from Cllrs Arnold, Pickering, Tudor and Fisher. It was resolved to accept these

3. Minutes: The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 6 May 2025 were accepted as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

4. Chairman's Annual Report: The Chairman presented his report on the work of the Council for 2025/26. The report was received and noted. The report is attached as an appendix to these minutes (Appendix A)

5. Village Groups & Associations: Grant recipients were awarded a total of £7,180.98 in 2025/26. They were invited to attend and to share how the funding has supported their work and benefited the community. The list of grants can be viewed at Appendix B.

A representative from Barlaston Community Group attended in person to report on the work of the Community Group, The Silver Surfers, Barlaston Strollers, Barlaston Womblers and Barlaston in Bloom. A representative from Barlaston Proscenium Players attended to share how funding had been used to support the Christmas pantomime and members of Stone Lions attended to discuss the recent PSA testing event.

Written reports were received from 1st Barlaston Guides and the Voluntary Transport Group.

6. Open Forum: Villager of the Year 2025, Tim Cockin, was in attendance and formally thanked the Parish Council for his award.

A member of the public enquired about the Parish Council election process, including elected and co-opted Councillors. The Clerk explained that recent elections had been uncontested, meaning Councillors were elected unopposed without the need for a ballot, and outlined the process followed when vacancies arise.

A question was also raised regarding the cost of elections, and the Clerk explained that funds are held within earmarked reserves for this purpose. It was reiterated that Parish Council meetings include a 15-minute Open Forum at the start of each meeting to allow members of the public to raise questions or matters of concern.

Councillor Borasinski thanked all those in attendance and formally closed the meeting.

Appendix A: Chairman's Report 2025/2026 (minutes)

Barlaston Parish Council: Chairman's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting
5th May 2026

Good evening everyone and thank you for attending tonight's meeting. The Annual Parish Meeting is a gathering of local electors in a civil parish, providing an opportunity to hear reports from local groups, raise issues, and discuss parish matters. It is important to note that this is not a Parish Council meeting. All electors are welcome to speak and vote on matters raised.

It gives me great pleasure to reflect on the work of Barlaston Parish Council during the 2025/2026 financial year.

Staffing
Following a trial period, the Clerk's hours were permanently increased to 20 hours per week. The Council thanks Viv O'Dunne for her continued hard work and commitment. The Clerk is undertaking the Certificate in Local Council Administration and has completed training with the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association during the year.

Governance & Finance
The Parish Council meets monthly to consider a wide range of village matters. We encourage public participation through the Open Forum at the beginning of each meeting. A full GDPR review has been undertaken to ensure compliance with Assertion 10 of the AGAR. Councillors have also undertaken refresher training in good governance and updated planning training.

The year-end internal audit has been completed, and the Council will shortly submit its AGAR to the external auditor, demonstrating responsible financial management and compliance with national regulations.

The precept for 2026/2027 has been set at £116,792, with a Band D charge of £104.86 per property, an increase of 1.3%.

General reserves are held for unexpected costs, with JPAG guidance recommending three to twelve months of expenditure.

In line with good practice, two new savings accounts have been opened to manage reserves. 60% of balances above the (then) FSCS limit of £85,000 is held in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund, with 40% in a Unity Trust instant access account. Earmarked reserves at year end were:

- Election: £7,000
- Village Hall contingency: £10,000
- Village Hall renovations: £43,273
- Playpark: £82,650
- Asset Replacement: £5,000

Total: £147,923

The accounts for 2025/26 will be available for public inspection during the statutory period in June and July, with exact dates confirmed at the next Council meeting and published online.

Planning & Development

The Parish Council remains committed to preserving the village and Green Belt, considering applications in line with the Neighbourhood Plan. During 2025/26, 15 planning applications were considered. Work is underway to revise the Neighbourhood Plan.

Village Maintenance
We thank Paul from Buxus Green for his work on grass cutting and maintenance. The contract ended on 31 March, and councillors approved a two-month extension to allow a full review of the specification and legal terms prior to tendering.

In 2025/26

Trees and Green Spaces

Urgent tree works were carried out on the Village Green, including felling two trees, with two pear trees planted in replacement. The biennial tree survey was completed in January 2026, with works scheduled for May. Drainage improvements were also completed on the Village Green.

Highways, Paths and Public Areas

Works at the Downs car park included rerouting the path due to root damage. New signage was installed at the Downs and MUGA (RoSPA requirements). Railway station benches were removed, the area resurfaced, and benches reinstated for safety. A new planter was installed on Old Road, along with a new bench at the Station Road bus shelter. A VE Day commemorative bench was installed on Wedgwood Lane.

Play Areas and Community Facilities

The MUGA at Barlaston Park underwent extensive refurbishment with a new non-slip surface and sealing. Works began in 2025/26 and were completed in 2026/27 due to weather constraints.

Assets, Equipment and Infrastructure

The Clerk was issued with a laptop for meetings and home working. New Speedwatch equipment was purchased. The level crossing noticeboard was refurbished with volunteer support and Parish Council funding. A new noticeboard was purchased for Orchard Place. New village gates were purchased, with installation planned for 2026/27.

Civic and Ceremonial

The Chairman’s chain was updated for the first time in 20 years, including new bars, cleaning, and ribbon.
The Council continues to fund litter bin emptying, four annual visits from the Civic Amenity Lorry, and Warm Welcome Wednesdays at the Methodist Church.

Leases

The lease with Barlaston Cricket Club has been renewed. The lease for the Meadow Road former play area has also been secured.

Village Hall

Work continues to formalise governance with the Village Hall Charity. Terms of reference are in place and a wider governance review is ongoing, including a separate bank account and review of costs and fees. As Sole Trustee, the Parish Council is legally responsible for the governance, management and assets of the charity.

Communication

The Clerk produces a monthly newsletter published on the Council website and featured in the Church magazine. The monthly update is also published online, supported by a regularly

updated news page. Facebook is used for notices and updates, and official notices are displayed on the Council's five noticeboards.

Community Engagement

In 2025/26, the Parish Council supported several local groups and initiatives, which will be shared at item 5 on the agenda. With the Meadow Road lease secured, the Play Park Working Group is now developing design options and quotations ahead of a public consultation in 2026/27.

Recognition

The Parish Council awarded Tim Cockin the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Award for his significant contribution to village life. Certificates of Commendation were awarded to Claire Bailey, Sandie Buxton, and Dennis Croome.

Thank You

Finally, I would like to thank all councillors and residents who have given their time and energy to support and improve our village.

Presented by

Cllr David Borasinski
Chairman, Barlaston Parish Council

Appendix B: Grants 2025/26 (minutes)

Grants were issued as follows:

£599.98	1st Barlaston Guides – Tents
£212.00	Barlaston Bowls and Tennis Club – Renovation Work
£150.00	Barlaston Community Group: VE Day Event
£1,000.00	Barlaston Cricket Club – Fireworks Event
£150.00	Barlaston Community Group: Womblers
£25.00	Royal British Legion Wreath
£558.00	Barlaston Proscenium Players – Pantomime
£136.00	Volunteer Transport Grant
£250.00	Barlaston Community Group: Golden Agers Party
£150.00	Barlaston Community Group: Silver Surfers
£150.00	Barlaston Community Group: Strollers & Striders
£300.00	Royal British Legion
£1,500.00	Barlaston Village Hall
£1,500.00	St John's Church (half the annual cemetery grass cutting costs)
£500.00	Stone Lions PSA Testing Event

Total grants £7,180.98