

## Barlaston Parish Council

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# The Heron



[www.barlaston.org.uk](http://www.barlaston.org.uk)

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## Welcome from the Chairman: Cllr. Gareth Jones



I am very honoured to have been elected Leader of the Parish Council by my fellow Councillors and I am fully committed to work as hard as I can to justify the trust and responsibility that they have placed in me. I am fully aware that it will be a difficult task to follow in the

footsteps of Mrs Ellie Philpott who was the previous Council Leader for ten years and who commanded general admiration and respect for the way that she undertook her duties

A new Parish Council came into office on the 5<sup>th</sup> May and this is the first issue of the Heron under the new regime. It is planned to produce the Heron three times a year, distribute throughout the village and the prime objective will be to keep the material printed relevant, topical and interesting. I am very grateful to Viv O'Dunne for agreeing to be the Editor.

There will be changes in the way that the Parish Council

operates, not as a criticism of previous practice but in recognition that there is a move to give greater responsibilities at Parish level.

I strongly believe that for a Parish Council to be effective it must develop strong relationships with the key agencies that affect our lives in the village from such as Network Rail through to Stafford and Rural Homes for example.

I am discussing with colleagues how this can best be done and asking Councillors to undertake specific liaison roles. It will be interesting to see how the initiative develops.

## Wedgwood Bags

I am really delighted to have been involved in the project to provide a free bag to every household in the village. The idea for these bags came from a conversation I had with a local resident. She told me about a scheme that had been run in another parish and how successful this initiative had been.

So I got to work – commissioning a design and seeking sponsorship. Wedgwood came up trumps and agreed to pay the total costs.

Wedgwood has a strong environmental policy which is reflected in the design and production of the bag which has been manufactured from 100% organic cotton plain weave. It is small enough to fold up and carry in a handbag or pocket.

We hope you will get plenty of use out of the bag.

*Cllr. Elaine Philpott*

**See back page for information and guidance on completing the enclosed Questionnaire....**



## The Barlaston Voluntary Transport Scheme



**If you would like to become a volunteer driver or you would like to arrange a lift please contact me: Gill Dodd 01782 373228**

The Barlaston Voluntary Transport Scheme was started a number of years ago by The Parish Council whose objective was to provide transport for villagers who are having difficulty travelling to various locations around Staffordshire.

The Service is open to all Parishioners of Barlaston no matter what age or circumstances, Here's a few ideas where you may need the assistance of the transport volunteers.

-You need a lift to the Doctors or Hospital and there is no bus service that will get

you there in time for your appointment.

-You would like to visit a relative or friend in Hospital or in a Residential Home but the bus service doesn't go anywhere near your destination.

-You need help with your shopping.

-You would like to visit *Morrisons* in Stone or *Tesco* Longton but you may lack the confidence to go alone or you may need assistance.

Our local volunteer drivers are here to assist you whatever your needs

providing that they are reasonable.

The service is not free as the drivers use their own cars, and due to the ever escalating costs of running them, fuel, insurance etc we ask that you make a small donation to the driver to cover their running costs. Examples of costs are as follows:

£3 Barlaston doctors and local shops

£7 Stone and Longton

£14 Hospitals

We also ask that you cover any parking charges that may occur.  
*Gill Dodd*

**Crimestoppers** is dedicated to fighting crime across Staffordshire.

**Crimestoppers** guarantees anonymity, which means that no-one can ever find out who passed on information about crime.

To pass on information about crime anonymously, call Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111** or go online

[www.crimestoppers-uk.org/](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/)

## Neighbourhood Policing

The Council regularly contact our Neighbourhood Police Officers to liaise over local issues but also incidents that may have been reported. Locally there is currently an increase in burglary and thefts from vehicles.

The common link between the majority of these incidents is that the houses, garages and vehicles have been left insecure. Residents need to be careful to ensure that they check that their homes, out-buildings and vehicles are se-

cure before leaving them or retiring for the night. Please ensure keys, wallets and purses are not left on window shelves of homes and no valuables are on display in vehicles. If you see any suspicious vehicles or persons contact the local police. *Neil Hemmings - Clerk*

### Police Contact numbers

In an emergency, where life is in danger or a crime is in progress, call **999**.

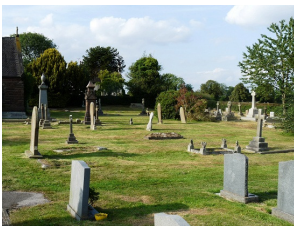
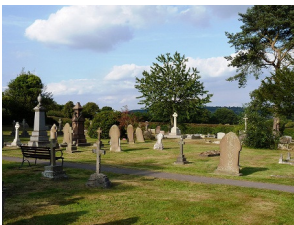
For non-emergency calls and

general enquiries contact us on **0300 123 4455**.

Based at Stone Police Station are the Community Beat Officers and Police Community Support Officers for our area, PC 5506 David Perry  
PC 4884 Gareth Hilditch,  
PCSO 8849 Becky Powell  
PCSO 6643 Emma Kempson.

**Call Crimestoppers - Tel 0800-555-111**

## The Village Cemetery



I have been asked to take responsibility for the upkeep and appearance of the Cemetery grounds, my aim is to make it a pleasant and peaceful place to visit and for private thoughts.

After adverse comments (well founded) earlier in the year concerning the appearance of the grounds visitors have noticed major improvements to the entrance, grassed areas, hedges and grave surrounds and have been generous with their compliments and praise.

There is however no room for complacency, after such a long period of neglect areas

still remain to be tackled which include the removal of the elder tree trying to strangle the yew at the entrance, cutting back laurel at the front window and obviously tidying the two long paths.

My hope is that funds allowing (Barlaston Parish Council and the Parochial Church Council share financial responsibility) we will not just 'maintain' but think of ways to make the grounds even more attractive such as grassing over the mound of soil to the left and providing the grave diggers with an out of sight area for

earth removal, possibly creating a (controlled) wild area by the very old graves top left. It would be wonderful to see the little Chapel (despite its lack of water and electricity) used in some way - any thoughts?

I have regretfully had to decline your offers of help because of England's draconian Health and Safety regulations - so please, much as I understood in the past, no more smuggling of hedge cutters! Leave it to us!

I look forward to writing of our achievements in the next Heron.  
*Clr. Sara Fearn*

## Speeding traffic in Barlaston

Speeding traffic through the village has again been identified as an ongoing problem which the Parish Council wishes to address.

In April Staffordshire Police carried out a survey in several parts of the village and identified that there were many vehicles speeding into and out of the village. In July a speed trap recorded over 25 vehicles speeding along Meaford Road and Old Road at speeds

of up to 42 mph – in a 30mph area. Analysis showed that 28% of the vehicles were from the Barlaston and Tittensor area.

Despite the speed restriction signs on all the roads leading into the village a number of drivers both local and non local ignore the speed limit.

There have been accidents at various points in the village such as the junction of Titten-

sor Road and Old Road and Staffordshire Highways have monitored the situation but have not come forward as yet with any traffic calming alternatives.

The possibility of a new *Speed-watch* scheme run by volunteers (any offers?) will be discussed locally whilst the Police will carry out speed checks at various points in the village.

*Neil Hemmings. Clerk*



## Canal News

There are some big changes about to take place in the canal world.

Next year the government are promising to form a new National Trust for the Waterways in England and Wales replacing British Waterways with a charity.

As the Trent and Mersey canal forms such an important part of village life it could be the ideal time to set up a Barlaston Volunteer group who could improve this wonderful wildlife haven and green space.

The second important event is the possibility of the completion of the paved towpath from here to Stone. The scheme had to be deferred last year but finance could become available to complete the National Cycle Route from Stafford to Stoke.

If you would like to become a volunteer please indicate on the village survey and provide a contact phone or email.

*Cllr. John Russell*



## Wedgwood College and Conference Centre

Wedgwood Memorial College has changed its name as its management team try to find a business formula that will provide a secure future at a time of severe financial cut-backs.

For those of you who are new to the village I hope this article will interest you enough to pay the college a visit and enjoy one of Barlaston's great treasures.

The two buildings - 'The Limes' and 'Estoril' set in extensive grounds have been adapted to provide lecture rooms and accommodation

that has enriched the lives of thousands of local children and students from all over the world.

Based within the College grounds is the Headquarters of the Esperanto Association of Britain which promotes the international language. The Butler Library has one of the worlds largest collections of Esperanto books and periodicals and is well worth a visit.

The college facilities have been a great asset to Barlaston's social life and a small group of Friends have

worked hard to improve facilities inside the buildings. In the grounds of 'The Limes' is the arboretum or tree collection. This has been created by David Wright a former County Forestry Officer who saw a unique opportunity to plant a large selection of unusual trees from across the globe.

Just call in at the office by the first entrance and take a copy of the latest prospectus and ask for a folder that lists and provides information about the trees and enjoy your walk in the grounds.

*Cllr. John Russell*

## Network Rail: Wedgwood and Barlaston Railway Crossings

The Council have again raised concerns over barrier down times being longer, ongoing safety concerns and the lack of an emergency contact number at the crossings. A response has been received and further discussion requested.

Network Rail state that:

"Barlaston level crossing is of full barrier MCB-CCTV control and is therefore the safest automated level crossing type in use by Network Rail. This type of level crossing is used at a variety of locations nationally on public highways.

The level crossing itself is

protected by signals that can be maintained at danger to safeguard pedestrian and vehicular user groups when the barriers are in the raised position.

The level crossing is equipped with CCTV coverage which is monitored by signallers working the controlling signal box during the lowering of the barriers.

The signals protecting the level crossing are not cleared until the signaller is satisfied that there are no pedestrian or vehicular movements trapped within the confines of the barriers and the barriers

and road traffic lights themselves have operated correctly.

This method of operation negates the requirement for public telephones to be fitted to this type of level crossing, given that the crossing is able to be visually supervised by the controlling Signaller".

The Council has not yet been able to exert much influence on Network Rail management, but it will continue to monitor issues that it is made aware of.

*Neil Hemmings—Clerk*



## VILLAGE HALL PROGRAMME 2011



**Barlaston Village Hall** boasts excellent and flexible facilities, which include a large entertainment area, fully equipped kitchen, private meeting room as well as car parking.



Enquiries and private bookings: 01782 618801  
**Weekly programme:**

**Zumba:** Gail Nicholls 07980 690 356  
Monday 7pm  
Thursday 10 am then  
Bootcamp at 6pm  
Sunday 10.30 am

**Socatots:** socatots.com  
Tuesday 9.30 am

**Defy Gravity Dance**  
Laura: 07795 255290  
Tuesday 4.45pm to 9.15pm  
Includes: Nursery ballet and tap, adult tap and body blast fitness.

**Stokie's Tango Dance**  
www.stokies.org  
Tuesday 8.15pm  
Argentine Tango classes

**NHS Toddler group**  
Sam Wood: 01785 811471  
Wednesday 9.15am

**Kickboxing**  
Steve Hallam 07834 875 420.  
Wednesday 5pm  
shkickboxing.co.uk

**U3A Art Group**  
Friday: 2pm

For more details see the website  
barlastonvillagehall.co.uk

The current Government has outlined a strategy to pass more decision making powers to local bodies, such as Parish Councils (see Cllr. Jones article below on the Localism Bill). The Barlaston Parish Council recognises that, in preparation for this, it needs to be better informed about the concerns and aspirations of the people who live in Barlaston, and has thus decided to create a "Village Plan". The aim of the Plan is to give an informed basis for the Parish Council to take action, knowing the expressed views of the Villagers.

### HOW will the Plan be created?

Your household questionnaire has been delivered along with this copy of the Heron. The content has links to the survey of 100 households in the Village that took place in February of this year (results are available on the Parish Council web-site). It contains more specific questions on all topics, and covers a wider range of subjects. The results will be collated, analysed and made available to the Village using various media.

### WHAT use will be made of the Plan?

The Plan will provide a focus for Action Groups, led by the Parish Council but involving interested villagers as well. The aim will be to address, and take actions to improve, identified issues of concern, leading to steady improvements in Village life and, hopefully, increased satisfaction for all of us who live here.



### WHY is it important that I take part?

The questionnaire is, of course, anonymous, but everyone has a voice and an opinion, and this is an opportunity to be heard. Your responses can shape the future of the Village you live in!!

### A PLEA!!!

**Please show that you care about your village by filling in and returning your questionnaire.**

**Many thanks. Cllr. Steve Hall**

## Localism and what it could mean for Barlaston?

The Localism Bill which is currently going through Parliament is expected to become law in early 2012. The proposals that are contained in the measure could have a significant impact on parishes such as Barlaston.

The fundamental objective of the legislation is to allow local communities to have real opportunities to influence the future development of where they live and to provide them with the right to draw up a neighbourhood development plan.

Neighbourhood planning will allow a Parish Council to state where it thinks new houses, businesses and shops should be located

and what they should look like.

As proposed, Parish Councils would be allowed to grant full or outline planning permission in the areas where they most want to see new homes and businesses thus making it easier and quicker for schemes to be implemented.

A precondition for a Parish Council to be given these powers is that the neighbourhood plan produced must be seen to be in line with the strategic vision set by the local authority and it must also conform with the overall principles in the New National Policy Framework which is yet to be

published.

For a self contained village like Barlaston this initiative could be very significant and it reinforces the need for the Parish Council to have a clear understanding of locally expressed aspirations.

*Cllr. Gareth Jones*



**We hope you've enjoyed reading this issue of the new-look Heron.**

**Please send any comments or suggestions for future articles, or questions you have for the Parish Council to:**

**heroneditor@gmail.com**