

**Minutes of the Barlaston Parish Council Meeting
Held on Tuesday 6th September 2011.**

Present: – Gareth Jones
Chairman

Paul Fisher	John Russell
Steve Hall	Elaine Philpott
Sheila Perkin	Louise Stone
Viv O'Dunne	Tony Dodd
Sara Fearn	

Apologies: Peter Stevenson

In attendance: Lynne Bakker-Collier, Ian Parry, Patrick Linehan, Derek Sweet & David Wright.

Open Forum

96a). Mr. Linehan spoke on behalf of Mrs. A. Howard of 38, Longton Road who replaced a railing with a low wall. She has been told by Stafford B.C.that she needs to remove the wall. Mr. Linehan wanted to express his support for Mrs. Howard along with other neighbours that they are against the wall being demolished.

b.) The Chairman has spoken to the Enforcement Officer from the Borough Council on the matter. He felt the proposal to demolish the wall was unfair and will follow the matter up with Highways and to pursue the matter in the hope that the wall does not have to be removed.

97. Mr. Sweet and Mr. Wright from Stone Ramblers outlined the work undertaken by the group and produced a detailed breakdown of each footpath that they had walked and worked upon. The Chairman expressed the gratitude of the Council for all the work and hard effort and the Clerk kept a copy of the schedule noting the issues on two footpaths that needed further attention.

Minutes of the meeting held on July 5th. 2011

98: RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on July 5 th be approved and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising

99a). Re Minute 57- it was noted that no further application to alter the licence had been submitted.

b.)Re Minute 65- the Chairman reported that he had met with several Councillors regarding the suggested areas of responsibility.

c.)Re Minute 94- Councillor Fearn reiterated concerns over the high noise levels from the Village Hall. The problem on a Sunday morning was a disturbance to neighbours. The Chairman outlined the steps taken to reduce noise levels. The doors to the Hall were to

remain shut as a fan had been provided. There was also a problem at this time with parking on the grass verges.

d.) Councillor Fisher outlined the need for a consistent approach to the matter of noise. He raised the matter of the large numbers in the Zumba class which would create heat with the dancing. Councillor Philpott and others outlined her sympathy for the neighbours.

e.) The concerns were noted and the Chairman will stress the concerns of the Council to the Village Hall Committee.

Report by Chairman

100. The Chairman had no specific matter to report on as the remaining agenda would cover relevant matters that he would speak upon.

Report by Borough Councillors

101. Councillor Bakker-Collier noted the planning application for Mr. Bean from Cocknage that had been withdrawn but there was still activity on the site with the delivery of more building materials. The Borough Enforcement Officer had visited the site and there was likely to be action to remove the track as the entrance onto the road was deemed dangerous.

102. The draft Local Development Framework was being published with a number of opportunities to view and comment. The opportunity to view locally at Stone was noted.

Report by County Councillor

103. The Clerk outlined the main points from Councillor Parry's email sent earlier but Councillor Parry arrived late at the meeting and took up several matters with the Council.

104. Councillor Fisher asked what impact the Localism Bill might have on planning legislation. Councillor Parry indicated that local authorities would not necessarily remain as barriers to economic development and growth. The wishes of the local people would be noted and the local neighbourhood plan would be crucial in determining priorities.

105. Councillor Russell outlined the possibility that the Parish Council might be consulted with regard to the Wedgwood Memorial College becoming part of a community asset. Councillor Parry suggested that any suggestion needs to be pursued to maintain the facilities which if viable might enable the facility to be sustained.

Finance Report

106. The following items were considered and approved:

Item 7: Finance Report.			
	NET	VAT	Total Cost
a.) Neil Hemmings Accommodation and postage -July	£44.32		£44.32
b.) Stafford B.C. – lease of land Flaxman Close	£10.00		£10.00
c.) SPCA- new councillor Training	£35.00		£35.00
d.) Biffa Waste Services- waste collection the Cricket club	£59.97	£11.99	£71.96
e.)Greenfingers-grass cutting-July	£400.00	£80.00	£480.00
f.)PJ Services- Cemetery mowing	£268.00	£53.60	£321.60
g.) Stafford B.C. –Civic Amenity Visit	£87.08	£17.42	£104.50
h.) Neil Hemmings- back pay (April-July)	£135.84		£135.84
i.)Stone Rural P.C.- half cost of repairs to Millennium Viewpoint	£63.99		£63.99
j.) British Gas- Village Hall	£296.84	£14.84	£311.68
k.)Town & Country Services- Flaxman close	£90.00	£18.00	£108.00
l.) Biffa Waste Services- Cricket Club	£121.10	£24.22	£145.32
m.)PJ Services- Cemetery mowing	£268.00	£53.60	£321.60
n.) Custom- production of cloth bags	£1700.00		£1700.00
o.) N Power- Village Hall	£234.12	£11.71	£245.83
p.) Shore Mechanical services-new boiler Villager Hall	£3465.00	£693.00	£4158.00
q.) Neil Hemmings Accommodation and postage -August	£49.92		£49.92
r.)Greenfingers-grass	£400.00	£80.00	£480.00

cutting-August			
s.)Peter Plant jewellers-engraving of the Golden jubilee Award.	£25.00		£25.00
t.)Town & Country Services- Flaxman close	£90.00	£18.00	£108.00
u.) Biffa Waste Services-Village Hall & Cricket Club	£92.32	£18.46	£110.78
v.)PJ Services- Cemetery mowing	£268.00	£53.60	£321.60
w.) Panda Press- printing and postage Village Plan questionnaires	£675.00	£135.00	£810.00

x.)The July & August salaries for the Clerk, Transport Co-ordinator and litter pickers have been met.

y.) A grant of £250 to support the production and distribution of the Village Plan has been received from the Staffordshire County Council Community Development Fund via Councillor Parry.

z.) Sponsorship of £1700 has been received from Wedgwood for the cost of the cloth shopping bags.

aa.) Councillor Hall thought that the cost of grass cutting was high. The Clerk explained that 50% of the costs for the Cemetery were repaid by the Church and that some of the schedule in the Parish was on behalf of the County Council who were recharged for approximately £1700 at the end of the year.

bb.) It was agreed to accept the gift of a petrol strimmer from Councillor Philpott in order that some of the weedy areas such as Station Road could be maintained by the Parish Council as despite requests to the County Council it was a perennial problem. Councillor Dodd offered to tackle the weeded areas in the first instance.

Planning Update

107. The notes of the July planning meeting were accepted and the Clerk and Councillor Fisher outlined the comments submitted online regarding the four most recent applications.

108. Councillor Russell expressed his disappointment that little comment had been made to the proposal for an extension in Tittensor Road which was in the greenbelt. He requested that the procedures relating to the Planning Committee should be considered at the next meeting.

Voluntary Transport Scheme.

109. Councillor Dodd reported that there had been approximately 15 lifts during August; there was still a shortage of drivers and he was looking into the possibility of a new volunteer driver from Blurton. An article concerning the scheme had been placed in the Heron.

110. Councillor Russell raised the issue of providing lifts for shopping trips rather than medical visits. Councillor Dodd felt several users of the scheme were dependent on the

service as they felt comfortable with the drivers and it was necessary for some users following the reduction of the local bus service.

111. It was agreed to look at the scope of the scheme and the terms of reference in the light of recent usage and the varied views on its priorities.

Village Plan

112. Councillor Hall outlined the outcomes of the recent meetings with the leaders of the working group and the details of the questionnaire that had been finalised and now gone to print.

113. The Clerk had obtained a grant of £250 towards the cost of printing from the County Local Development fund and thanks were expressed to Councillor Parry in supporting the bid. A bid to the Coalfields Regeneration Board had also been made by the Clerk to assist with the analysis of the questionnaire but no response on this was to hand.

114. The questionnaire was being sent out with a pre-paid envelope and the return date was October 1st.

115. The next stage would be how to analyse the responses and involve community groups in the writing of the Plan.

The Heron

116. The Heron had been produced and thanks were expressed to Councillor O'Dunne for her work in putting the edition together.

117. The Clerk proposed that once he had received the Heron and questionnaire back from the printers he would deliver to Councillors their allocation to be delivered. He would also deliver a set allocation of cloth bags for the village but not the outskirts of the Parish as there were only 1000 bags and there were practical difficulties in delivery or postage.

118. After discussion the proposal was agreed and Councillors hopefully would deliver all three items by September 11th. He would make the delivery to Councillors within the next two days.

119. Any spare envelopes or bags were to be returned to the Clerk who would receive through the post the completed questionnaires.

Weeds in the village in public areas.

120. There were public areas where there was a perennial problem with weeds as well as the increasing amount of weed in mown areas as there had been no treatment by weedkiller for several years on Parish land.

121. It was suggested by Councillor Russell that the public footpaths should be treated with a systemic weedkiller but Councillor Fisher argued that no weedkiller should be used in the Parish.

122. This would leave an alternative of strimming weeded areas which had already been discussed. It was agreed to approach Mr. Steve Parry Thomas to see if he might be interested to trim identified areas several times each year.

123. Councillor Fisher volunteered that his wife, Audrey, would weed the war memorial without weedkiller. This offer was accepted.

124. The cost of strimming or using weedkiller would have to be considered within the various contracts for grass cutting in the next budget plan.

125. Councillor Hall suggested the local community could be involved to manage a problematic area if there was a groundswell of public opinion.

Cemetery Grounds Maintenance Report.

126. Councillor Fearn reported on the work of the new contractor PJS Landscapes and the progress made in the last two months. She felt that there had been serious neglect of the grounds in recent years and had met with the Church PCC to outline her plans to improve the area. The Church had agreed to pay half of the costs of this additional work.

127. It was agreed that there had a big improvement in the Cemetery but Councillor Fearn had identified a longer term plan to improve the neatness and ambience of the grounds which would need additional maintenance.

128. She outlined a proposal to edge the paths remove some small trees and prune a number of bushes. It was agreed to spend upto £700 on these improvements with the Church paying half of the cost.

129. Any additional expenditure would have to be planned for.

130. It had been noted that there was a wasps nest in a quiet part of the grounds that was not visited by the public.

131. Councillor Fisher raised the matter of debris under the hedgerows; it was noted that this debris had accumulated over a number of years and in the longer term it was hoped to remove this and tidy the mound of soil in one corner of the grounds.

132. The Chairman thanked Councillor Fearn for taking over the responsibility of managing the Cemetery issues.

Additional off-site parking for the Village Hall- Ecogrid

133. It was noted that on several occasions during any week there were parking problems at the Village Hall. Many users did not use the car park on the Green and parked on verges to annoy residents and cause traffic congestion on Longton Road.

134. The Village Hall Management Committee would remind all users not to park on the verges.

135. It was agreed that Councillor Russell would establish the costs of an area of Ecogrid being laid on the Village Green adjacent to the Hall. Councillor Jones would establish whether planning permission would be needed for such a parking area.

136. It was noted that if the proposal was moved forward there would be the problem of the wet nature of this part of the Green and there would be a need for permission to drop the kerb to allow easier access.

137. Once these matters and costs had been investigated by the next meeting a feasibility study could occur.

Matters arising from the Open Forum.

138. The Council were extremely grateful for the work of the Stone Ramblers group in improving the local footpaths.

Barlaston Village Show assets.

139. It was agreed that the assets of the Village Show including trophies should be managed by the Village Hall Management Committee who should report on a regular basis to the trustees of the Village Hall on pertinent matters.

Correspondence and Clerk's Report

140. The Clerk's actions were noted and agreed.

141. The Clerk was asked to write to Liz Blakemore from Wedgwood and thank the company for their hospitality during the factory visit. He would also suggest in his letter an opportunity for representatives from Wedgwood to meet with the Council.

142. It was noted that councillor Jones would attend the Stafford B.C. Parish Forum on September 29th.

143. The Clerk reported on a recent break in and theft from the Gas Supply Station off Meaford Road.

144. The Clerk would contact the police regarding the proposed arrangements for Remembrance Sunday.

145. The Clerk had a DVD of the "Good Council Guide" for distribution if requested by any Councillor. Councillor Jones had a hard copy of the materials.

146. The agendas for the September meeting of the Playing fields Committee had been distributed.

147. It was noted that the sports and social facilities at Wedgwood had been closed- hopefully for a temporary period. An email from the company indicated this action was needed as there were several health and safety issues that needed action before the facilities could be opened up to the public. The company were liaising with the representatives of the sports clubs on the matter.

148. The Council gave Tim Cockin permission to organise the Wassail on December 31st 2011.

149. The discussions with Network Rail were noted as were the train times which had been posted on the Parish website for journey planning.

Any other business – Agenda items for meeting to be held on October 4th. 2011

150. The following agenda items were agreed planning procedures, terms of reference of the Voluntary Transport Scheme and the next publication of the Heron.

151. The nomination for Councillor Russell to apply for a seat on the S.P.C.A. executive committee was agreed.

152. Councillor Philpott would write to Mrs. Jo Gent for instigating the idea of the Parish Cloth Bag.

Note by Clerk

153. The Parish Council meeting closed and members re-convened as the Village Hall Trustees.

Village Hall Committee Report

154. The Council had received the most recent minutes of the Village Hall Committee.

155. The points raised in the meeting during the evening relating to the Village Hall would be reported back to the Village Hall committee.

Chairman

