

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

Present: – Gareth Jones
Chairman

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

Apologies: Lynne Bakker-Collier

In attendance: Liz Blakemore and Phil Richens representing WWRD

Open Forum

271a.) The Chairman welcomed Liz Blakemore and Phil Richens representing Wedgwood (WWRD) to the meeting.

b.) It was agreed that Wedgwood and the Council wished to develop a positive working relationship on a number of matters.

c.) Liz Blakemore gave an update on the current business position and trends indicating that the markets remain difficult but the WWRD group had recently reported pleasing trading results.

d.) There had been local recruitment in the Barlaston factory for a number of apprenticeships and employment is steady at the factory.

e.) A number of products have been rebranded, such as Royal Albert.

f.) Phil Richens is now responsible for the management of the estate.

g.) The location of different manufacturing processes on the estate will be reviewed to maximise efficiency and to improve the working environment.

h.) WWRD is keen to support the local community – the Sports Pavilion has been reopened and a modern constitution is being developed to ensure all users can be welcomed and that all health and safety regulations are met.

i.) The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust is developing the woodland on the estate and the bridleways and the facilities are to be improved.

j.) The tree survey has been completed.

k.) Councillor Fearn thanked Wedgwood for their recent involvement with the planned restoration of the Wedgwood family graves in the Churchyard.

l.) Liz Blakemore provided a précis of the present position regarding the funding of the Wedgwood Pension Scheme. It was noted that the Wedgwood Museum stands alone as an organisation.

m.) The Council thanked Liz and Phil for their time and response to issues raised and gratefully accepted a ceramic memento of the Barlaston Heron.

Minutes of the meeting held on November 8th. 2011

272: RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on November 8th be approved and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising

273. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Report by Chairman

274. The Chairman opened a full and detailed discussion concerning the recent announcement that Wedgwood Memorial College had been recommended for closure in 2012. It was a recommendation he thought would be supported by Stoke-on-Trent City Council. If that were to happen the College would close and the buildings mothballed.

275. As the land was in the public domain it would be affected by the Localism Act. The Parish has a right to represent the public view and act upon that view based upon views obtained locally.

276. The main question was how could a representative view regarding the College be obtained and hopefully to impact on the City Council's decisions.

277. A campaign to save the College had been started headed by the former principal Derek Tatton.

278. A number of meetings with the City and Council were planned and it was hoped that the Parish Council would be present through the Chairman and other Councillors.

279. It was likely that there were a number of businesses, possibly local that would be interested in any sale of the College and the land, for a range of uses of the buildings and land.

280. The Council then discussed the known situation and shared their views to enable a credible expression for a way forward- suggestions ranged from a public meeting to leafleting and questionnaires in the village as well as registering comments via the www.savewmc.org web site.

281. Each Councillor shared their viewpoint in order that a collective view could be reached.

282. It was agreed that the Council, or any member of the Council should remain impartial and fully transparent in any discussions which must be reported in full to the Parish.

283. The possibility of a Capital (Community) Asset Transfer was discussed and although the initial business plan had been rejected there was a strong view that this way forward was possible to save the College.

284. The Council were unanimous in their view that they wanted the College to remain in some form as it was an integral part of the village and a large site.

285. It was resolved that the Parish Council view was that " we should want the Wedgwood Memorial College to continue via a Community(Capital) Asset Transfer and for the local to community to be able to use the facilities. We would wish to work with all the parties involved and would seek to focus upon obtaining a representative view from parishioners in the most suitable way early in 2012."

286. The details of the closure of the Barlaston Level crossing and the work being undertaken in late December had been circulated and it was expected that official notices would be published within the next week.

287. No definite progress on the improvement to the Canal towpath could be reported as the matter had still to be taken to the Stafford B.C. Cabinet; this was likely to be in February 2012.

Report by County Councillor

288. In the absence of Councillor Parry the Chairman thanked him for the donation of £1000 towards the replacement of the clock at the front of the Village Hall.

289. The Council considered the recommended design of the clock face of Arabic numerals which was acceptable.

Report by Borough Councillor

290. There were no matters to report upon.

Finance Report

291. The following items were considered and approved:

Item 7: Finance Report.			
	NET	VAT	Total Cost
a.) Neil Hemmings Accommodation allowance.	£40.00		£40.00
b.) Biffa Waste Services- Cricket Club and Village Hall	£92.32	£18.46	£110.78
c.) Town & Country Services- Flaxman Close	£45.00	£9.00	£54.00
d.) Ann Howard- refuse bags	£10.43		£10.43
e.) Catalyst2- web domain	£25.00	£5.00	£30.00

f.) The November salaries for the Clerk, Transport Co-ordinator and litter pickers have been met.

g.) A meeting of the Finance committee was arranged for Thursday 5th January 2012 at 7p.m. in the Village Hall to discuss a preliminary budget for the next financial year and to agree the Precept.

Planning Update

292. There had been no objections to the last three planning applications that had been considered.

Voluntary Transport Scheme.

293. Councillor Dodd reported 17 trips had been organised in the month.

Village Plan

294. Councillor Hall reported that 310 questionnaires had been analysed by the working group and the responses collated. He gave an overview of the way in which the data could be presented.

295. The next task was to analyse and collate the written comments of the respondents. This would be a sizeable task. Several Councillors offered to help in this task.

296. The volunteers had now been contacted by the co-ordinators of the groups.

297. The following was noted:

- Marie Goodhall- First Responders- several additional people who would be invited to training
- John Russell/ Ash Connor- Neighbourhood Watch- eleven people had responded to date.
- Gill Dodd- Voluntary Transport- four people had signed up.
- Charles Aked- Speedwatch- a viable group was expected.

298. Councillor Hall reported that there was an overwhelming feeling of being safe in Barlaston.

299. Councillors thanked the group for the work carried out so far.

Barlaston East Ward- Councillor Vacancy

300. The Clerk reported on the resignation of Louise Stone.

301. The Clerk had posted notices regarding the vacancy and there would be a cut off date of December 20th for an election to be called.

302. The Clerk explained the procedure in the event of an election or the power to co-opt from January 2012 if no election was needed.

303. Councillor Russell had been contacted by a person seeking election; it was hoped a parishioner with the interests of Barlaston East would come forward.

Matters arising from the Open Forum.

304. The discussions from the Open Forum were noted.

Correspondence and Clerk's Report

305. The Clerk's actions identified in his written report were noted and agreed. The meeting dates for 2012 were agreed noting the March date was the 6th not the 7th.

306. The style by the Cricket Club score box had been made higher by the landowner of the adjoining land; the Rights of Way Officer was to make a site visit and advise the Council on the matter.

Any other business – Agenda items for meeting to be held January 10th 2012.

307. Councillor Jones and Councillor Russell agreed to look into the cost of Ecogrid on the Village green to provide additional parking including the likely cost and whether planning permission was needed.

308. The Clerk had noted a number of Agenda items raised earlier in the meeting.

Note by Clerk

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

Village Hall Committee Report

310. The asbestos survey had been completed and a copy was to be on hand if needed; no problems had been identified.

311. The Chairman had identified a dissolution clause for the Village Hall that would not be invoked, but was needed to satisfy a bid to the Coalfields Regeneration Board. It was agreed to accept the clause which would be added to the constitution.

312. It was noted that there was still a condensation problem in the main hall no solution to this had been found.

313. It was suggested separate thermostats in the meeting room might be appropriate to balance the heat.

Chairman

