

Barlaston Parish Council

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The Heron



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Issue 3

February 2013



I am delighted that the Parish Council has agreed that the Village should re-enter the Staffordshire Best Kept Village competition after a gap of fifteen years. Historically Barlaston has done well in this competition

and whilst there will be some formidable competition there is no reason why the Village should not impress the judges again. The whole of the village will be entered and a map is being prepared which will outline all the key features of the village which will be given to judges. I am very pleased that Councillor

Patrick Linehan has agreed to Chair the Committee and I am sure that he will be looking for support from across the village. The Diamond Jubilee celebrations showed how the village could respond when asked to.

Gareth Jones: Chairman of Barlaston Parish Council.

Barlaston Re-enters Best Kept Village Competition

Following on from the success of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations which generated so much community spirit and pride in our village it was thought appropriate to enter the Best Kept Village competition this year.

The BKV is primarily about community involvement, caring for the environment, pride in the village and that indefinable element 'tender loving care' a quality frequently and sadly now eliminated from our busy daily lives. So let us now attempt to resurrect it. To quote the old cliché, 'It's not the winning (although that would be most satisfactory) – it's the taking part'.

Barlaston was one of the original villages to enter back in 1956 and we entered every year from then up to 1991. The last time we entered was in 1997 so a further entry is now long overdue.

It is worth remembering that the competition is not about the prettiest village although Barlaston would score heavily on that count, but the best kept. It really means that all of us should strive in a diversity of ways however seemingly insignificant to keep our environment clean and tidy. In an ideal world the village would be liberally sprinkled with hanging baskets and front gardens would look like exhibits from the Chelsea flower show but this is neither feasible nor realistic and indeed there already exists some lovely gardens in the village displaying a considerable amount of all round pride.



The requirements for the BKV are more about keeping the garden tidy, the hedge clipped, the surrounding areas free from litter and unnecessary debris also addressing any dog fouling issues particularly along the canal and on the cricket ground, areas which seem to generate more complaints.

The Parish Council intend to help 'prime the pump' by organising some

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Barlaston Re-enters Best Kept Village - Get Involved!

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planting of public spaces for all to enjoy, including any visitors to the village.

Our entry will be in the BKV large village category which was won by the village of Haughton last year. They also won in 1963, 2000, 2004 and 2011 so the competition is fierce you might say.

It's my intention to have a launch meeting for the BKV to enable all villagers willing and able to support and participate in our campaign to come forward with ideas and/or offers of help as this would be a most welcome contribution

The village school and indeed all children in the village will be encouraged to enter the supplementary childrens' competition. There are three categories for the children :-

- best poster 5-7 year olds
- best poster 8-11 year olds
- a competition based on the theme of the Remembrance of the two world wars, for 11-16 year olds through a submission of a poem, painting or essay.

It is hoped that the latter will serve to cement an understanding of an important piece of history and also create further understanding of what grand parents and great grand parents endured during the two wars.

When judging takes place, marks are awarded out of 100 and **tidiness is key**. The tidiness of the church, chapel and burial grounds carries 8 marks, the communal buildings and the village hall carries 8 marks, the telephone boxes, bus shelters, seats, benches village

features and signs – 10 marks. The overall cleanliness absence of litter, dog fouling and evidence of community effort – 10 marks. The war memorial, village green and playing fields – 15 marks and so on.



The panel of judges will visit each village once in May and once in June. The marks will be aggregated and will go forward to the district finals for judging in late July. The best village in each district will receive a framed certificate and the best overall village will receive the sponsor's trophy together with £200 towards a specific project to be approved by the sponsor.

We hope that all will agree that this is a very worthwhile exercise and it can only help to make our already handsome village an even better place to live and enjoy. Come on Barlaston lets go for it! We've everything to gain and nothing to lose if we all contribute in whatever small way we are able.

Please contact me on 01782 372878 or email patrick_linehan@btinternet.com if you'd like to be involved.
Cllr. Patrick Linehan

News from the Environment Committee



The majority of dog owners clean up after their pets - those few irresponsible owners that don't will face a fine. This was the message we were trying to get across to dog walkers when we assembled at the Plume car park on a cold December morning at the end of last year.

Along with a representative from

the Borough Council we reiterated the consequences of this anti-social behaviour to dog owners out for their morning stroll along the canal towpath.

Anyone who does not clean up after their pet will be issued with a **£75 fixed penalty notice** or face prosecution with a fine of up to **£1,000**. This includes those people that pick up the dog mess and then proceed to throw it into the hedgerow.

Our awareness campaign was featured in the Sentinel, The Newsletter and in the Stone Gazette. We publicised the fact that there are **free dog waste bags available** from **KC-K9's** and

Ivy house Stores.

We reiterated the fact that Toxocariasis, caused by dog mess, can cause serious illness and blindness; young children

are particularly susceptible and for this reason alone we urge you to report any incidents of dog fouling to the enforcement team at Stafford Borough Council, via their website, or by calling, anonymously if you like, 01785 619000.

**There really are no excuses:
we want people to clean up
after their dog!**

Scoop it! Bag it! Bin it!



Communication

It's vital that news from around the village is available to everyone. Our village survey revealed that 'The Heron' was your most favoured source of information; as editor that was extremely welcome news.

Between 'Heron's' you can update yourself by looking at our website, read the Chairman's blog, read our monthly update in the Church magazine, see notices posted on the boards around the village,

come and give us your views at the Open Forum, interact with us on Facebook and **now** you can follow us on Twitter.

Barlaston is one of the first, if not *the* first, Parish Council to have a Twitter account in Staffordshire. Twitter is a real-time information network that connects you to the latest stories, opinions and news - it's what you find interesting. If you have an account, follow us **@barlastonparish**. We

interact with, and retweet information from other community groups in the area .. Here are a few favourites!

@Barlaston_1873: celebrating 140 years of our school

@SARhomes: Stafford & Rural Homes

@BarloCC: Barlaston Cricket Club

@bakerbus: vital service updates, especially in winter!

@NTDownesBanks: news and beautiful photos

@StaffordBC: information from the Borough Council

@barlastonhall: News and events from the Village Hall

@bitofstone: excellent timely news resource for Stone and surrounding area (on the web too alittlebitofstone.com)

@Staffsnews: community news from the Stone Newsletter
Viv O'Dunne

WWRD Development

Wedgwood and their development team were delighted to have been given the opportunity to discuss the latest proposals for the Wedgwood Estate with the Parish Council last month. The discussions were useful in explaining the evolution of the proposals which have responded positively to the feedback received in the two exhibitions together with the technical and

environmental testing now completed in respect of, highways, ecology, landscape, drainage, trees, etc.

Wedgwood are committed to an exciting future at the Barlaston site, that will include manufacturing at the site, whilst also significantly improving the visitor experience, associated leisure uses and retaining the museum.

The significant cost required

to bring the site up to standard will be part funded by "enabling development". In this case enabling development will be the building of up to 205 high quality executive houses respectful of the Barlaston area and the Wedgwood brand.

Detailed plans are proposed to be submitted with a planning application to give both the local community and the local

planning authority confidence that the scheme submitted would be the one that is delivered.

The planning application is likely to be submitted in the coming weeks. Wedgwood look forward to continuing to liaise with the Parish Council and local community on these important and exciting proposals.

Phil Richens. WWRD

The Churchyard Extension (Hartwell Lane) - Vicar Jane and Sara Fearn

The Churchyard Extension grounds were put to bed for the Winter after the hugely successful Working Party held in November which focused on

the area containing the interred cremated remains, an area becoming increasingly difficult to maintain on a routine basis. Thank you to all who

joined us and because so much was achieved we do not anticipate another Working Party until the Autumn - please may we call upon you again!



We wish to draw visitors' attention to the new notices which give a reminder of the key rules governing the Churchyard, as specified by the Diocese of Lichfield; they also incorporate our local practices.

When you visit the Churchyard now you will find that once again it is a quiet and well maintained area in pleasant and tranquil surroundings. Your understanding and co-operation in keeping it neat and tidy are greatly appreciated.

BARLASTON VILLAGE HALL PROGRAMME



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

A sample weekly programme:

Monday:

06.00 Body Blast Class
09.30 K-OR
14.00 U3A
18.00 Zumba Fitness
19.15 Boxerbeat
20.30 Boxerbeat

Tuesday:

10.00 Rosemary Conley
16.30 Defy Gravity Dance
20.15 Stokie's Tango

Wednesday:

06.00 Body Blast Fitness
09.30 Boxerbeat

Thursday:

09.30 Zumba Fitness
18.00 Zumba Fitness
19.15 Boot Camp

Friday:

06.00 Body Blast Fitness
10.00 Hatha Yoga
19.30 Meditation Class

Saturday:

12.00 Stokie's Blues Party

Sunday:

10.30 Zumba Toning
11.45 Boot Camp

For more details see the website
barlastonvillagehall.co.uk

Barlaston Village Hall

A glance at the events calendar on our Village Hall website will immediately reveal how busy it is, week in and week out. As well as our more established activities, we've had several new ones in recent months, which are proving to be very popular - a yoga class, an early morning fitness class and even a Spanish conversation class for those of us looking to learn the lingo in readiness for summer hols!

Stone and District U3A are running more of their group activities from the Village Hall on Monday

afternoons. There is a patchwork and quilting group one week and a music appreciation group the next. Our new sound system makes listening to music a very pleasurable experience and membership of U3A costs only £8 per year.

Our 'pop-up' restaurant has proved very popular with local residents - so much so, we will be tickling our taste buds again on an almost monthly basis from March onwards.

We're delighted to say that there is an extensive

improvement programme planned for our Hall throughout 2013. This includes replacing our stage curtains, installing a new kitchen and working with the Parish Council on funding a new ventilation system.

We really do have a smashing village hall that has something going on to suit most tastes.

If you want to know more about what's going on and when, or, you're interested in hiring our hall yourself, please visit our website.

Kate Burton

Meaford Flooding

At least two of our residents have written off their vehicle and had to be rescued after discovering how deep the flood water can get at the junction of Meaford Road with the A34. Other drivers found themselves in a similar situation with water up to their necks but fortunately no one has been seriously injured.

This problem has gradually got worse over the last few years but reached crisis point as Staffordshire had its wettest year on record. At first it appeared to be simple run off from the fields on either side as the ground became totally saturated. When the amount of water became so great that the A34 had to be closed in both directions it was obvious that something was seriously wrong.

What few of us realise is that the stream that runs through the Downs Banks ford does not continue towards Stone but turns west underneath the



railway then the canal and gets to the River Trent through a large brick culvert underneath Meaford Road. It should then flow down through the park at Meaford Hall and enter the Trent opposite the Darlaston pub. When, eventually, County Highways employed divers to enter the culvert they found that the outlet was reduced to two smaller pipes that were blocked by debris. All the water from the stream then formed a lake between the canal and road and overflowed down Meaford Road and flooded the village and eventually the A34.

Following the latest flood,

that nearly claimed the life of a Barlaston resident, the County Council kept the road closed while they first tried to pump the water across the road. Later they brought in contractors who took their machines into Meaford Park and power jettied the culverts to improve the flow of water.

Whether these will cope with another major downpour remains to be seen. The snow and the rain, that melted it overnight, amounted to nearly five inches of rain causing a tidal wave of water to sweep down Meaford Road that could have killed any of us. Only the restoration of the original culvert will ensure our safety. *John Russell*



A consultation programme is underway locally to consider proposals for **Westbridge Park** in Stone.

A proposal has been developed whereby through the sale of a small amount of Westbridge Park to a food store operator a new purpose built leisure centre incorporating a six lane 25 metre swimming pool, a fitness gym, aerobic studios, a new riverside walk and picnic area and a football pitch can be developed.

The scheme will be presented to us at a public exhibition in the Methodist Chapel Hall on Wednesday 27th February between 4.30 and 7.30pm

More news from the Chairman...

The Parish Council recently had a meeting with Ted Manders, Head of Planning and Regeneration at Stafford Borough Council to discuss the changed planning environment under the Localism Act. The Parish Council was seeking clarification on planning regulations following the passing of two planning applications in December that the Parish Council strongly objected to.

It was made clear at the meeting that under the new procedures there was an obligation on planners

Your Parish Council

Barlaston is divided into three wards for election purposes. Barlaston Park (P), Barlaston East (E) and Barlaston West (W). You are free to contact any of us with your concerns, questions, or comments. The photograph below identifies each Parish Councillor and the ward to which they have been elected.



Back row(L-R) Gareth Jones: Chairman (W), Patrick Linehan (E), Tony Dodd (P), Paul Fisher: Vice-Chairman (E), Ian MacMillan (W), Steve Hall (P), John Russell (W)

Front row(L-R) Viv O'Dunne(W), Sara Fearn(E), Sarah Broome(W), Elaine Philpott (W)

to approve planning applications provided that they conformed to the Local Development Framework. This is a major change in the planning environment. The current priorities are growth and employment.

In view of the high potential for development within the Parish, the Council is anxious to proceed with the development of a Neighbourhood Plan that encapsulates the community's considered views.

At the current time planning engineers from Lichfield District Council have been commissioned to produce a Planning and Design statement for the Wedgwood Memorial College site. This document should be available to the Parish Council in the middle of

March.

The Parish Council has submitted an application to Stafford Borough Council for the Parish boundary to be considered for a 'neighbourhood' area. The consultation process has now commenced on this with the deadline for comments being Thursday 14th March. Similar applications have been received from Sandon and Burston and Colwich Parishes. This consultation will focus on the area boundary itself and not on the possible contents of a Neighbourhood Plan at this time

There is a great deal of infra structure activity planned to take place in the Village over the next few weeks. Western Power is improving the electricity supply through the village working along Meaford and Old Roads. The upgrade of

the canal towpath between the Plume of Feathers Car Park and Meaford will be progressing. In order to allow this work to proceed the Canal and Rivers Trust has issued a towpath closure notice between Rookery Lane and the Plume of Feathers until 22nd November 2013.

The Post Office will be moved from its current location on Longton Road to the Londis Store on Station Road. WWRD are progressing their plans to redevelop the Wedgwood site. Severn Trent is progressing with the construction of its phosphorous extraction site. It is to be hoped that Staffordshire County Council Highways Department will also be active in dealing with the numerous potholes that have appeared as a result of the recent cold and wet winter. *Gareth Jones*

140 yrs Barlaston School



On January 6th 1873 Master John Ordish Hulme commenced duties at Barlaston School. As part of our 140 years celebration the schools IT team have opened a twitter account. Tweeting excerpts from the 140 year old log book that records school day to day life. Twitter users can follow **'BarlastonSchool_1873'**, and if you don't have twitter you can still read the excerpts on our school website.

www.barlastonfirstschool.co.uk

Scans from the first two years of the log book can be seen and read from the school 'Flickr' account by using the photo gallery link on the website. Tweets from the log book will happen all year as the school plans other celebration activities over the coming year.

The log book records the daily activities of school with many visits from local dignitaries of the day.

Over the 140 years the school has evolved to meet the demands of modern life and changes from governments in the way education is delivered. The log book records visits from government inspectors these days its 'Ofsted' who oversee the schools. Barlaston's last inspection in 2010 the school was classed as a 'Good School'. In January the school had an interim assessment which shows that the school's performance has been sustained and that the next full inspection will be in summer 2014.

With increasing pupil numbers and the need for better facilities the old school rooms were no longer fit for purpose. A new school was built and in 1962 the school moved to its new site just a few hundred metres away from the old school. The county library service took over the old buildings.

On the school web site is the full history of our village school up to the present date with the current head teacher Mrs Mandy Clarey.

Today the school is thriving with proud pupils and staff providing a safe, friendly learning environment. After school clubs such as Cooking, Gardening, Lego, Football, Gym and Christian clubs enrich the school even more.

On the 27th February from 1:30pm the school will be open for visitors to take a look around. We would be very pleased to welcome past pupils with stories and memories of how lessons were in the old school rooms. If you have any old photos please bring them along we would love you to share your memories and learning experiences with the children at the school today.

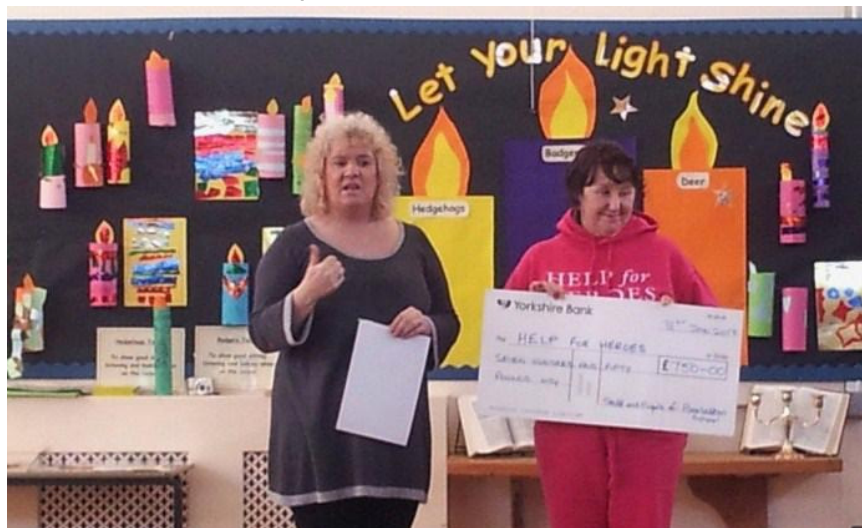
The school on that day will be in a Victorian themed day with some children dressed in clothes of the period. The old school log books will be on display from 1873 to 1975 with a few photos from the school archives.



Help for Heroes

Barlaston First School children from the Badger and Deer Classes were part of a musical evening to raise money for Help the Heroes charity. The children were brilliant, incredibly smart in perfect uniforms with perfect behaviour performing a number of songs, a most enjoyable evening at the sell-out event.

Parents and Staff left feeling very proud of our children who raised a staggering £750.00 for such a small school! The school is hoping to stage another concert later this year – well done to all who were involved.



Barlaston Plume of Feathers Bowling Club in its 87th year warmly invites more people to join, whether experienced, casual bowlers or complete beginners of **all** ages.

To start we are holding a free open day on Easter Sunday, 31st March between 2pm & 6pm. We have ample club bowls, all are welcome. New members wishing to join the club will also be offered a substantial discount on fees.

Past-President Ernest Hawkins' memoirs revealed when he was a lad the only sport allowed on Sundays was bowling at the Plume. A good start for Easter certainly - Church in the morning, a Pub carvery at lunchtime and a chance to try bowling in the afternoon. *Peter J. Nichols*

Voluntary Transport Scheme

The Barlaston Transport Scheme was set up by the Parish Council some 10 years ago and is run by volunteers who are led by a transport co-ordinator who organises the lifts.

The purpose of the scheme is to provide transport for parishioners who are finding it difficult to get to the Doctor's, Hospital, Post Office Shop's etc.

Our drivers are all volunteers and as such do not charge for their services, however we would expect that the person being given a lift would make a donation to the driver to help cover their costs of running the car, (e.g. fuel car tax, insurance). Our Co-ordinator will be able to advise you on an

appropriate amount to offer the driver

We are always looking for new drivers so if you think that you could afford an hour or two each month then please let our Transport Co-ordinator know.

We now have a new Co-ordinator **Mrs Rose Kingsbury** who has taken

over from Gill Dodd who has now retired. If you require a lift or you would like to volunteer to be a driver please phone Rose on **01782-373643**.

We would like to thank all our regular drivers for the time and commitment that they are affording to the scheme as without you we would not be able to function. *Tony Dodd*

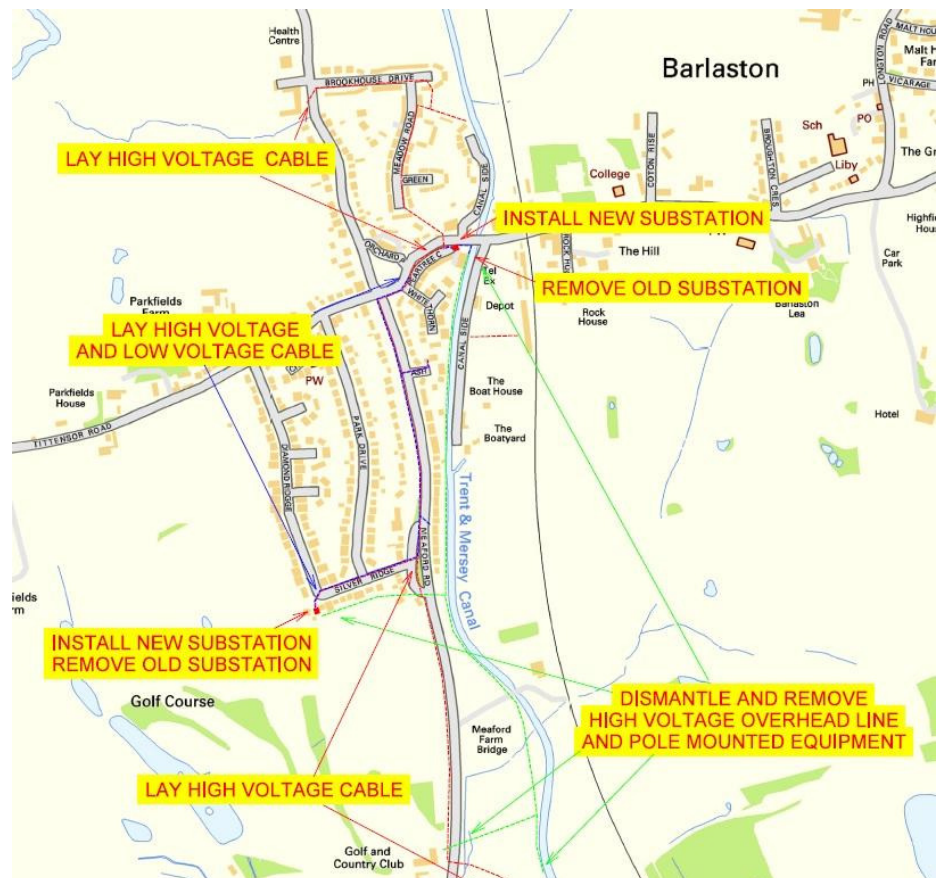
Electricity upgrade

Residents of Barlaston West may have received a letter from Western Power about the current scheme to improve the electricity supply. This is to lay a new cable from the grid at Meaford to all the substations in the lower part of the village.

At present a cable is being laid in Diamond Ridge and another will continue along the canal, down Brookhouse Drive and to the transformer behind Meadow Court.

Some residents will have new connections to their properties but in spite of the information in the letter the overhead cables will not be replaced at this time. Information about individual properties can be obtained from Chris Philipson at Western Power.

cphilipson@westernpower.co.uk



Strongford

It would seem that Trentham residents are having some success in persuading Severn Trent to consider putting an access road from the A34 to the Strongford Works.

Last year Severn Trent managers told the Parish Council that due to the fact

that the increase in traffic flow on Old Road to support their major construction project was temporary it would not be economically viable to consider an alternative access road to the site.

At a public meeting at the end of January, Severn Trent engineers

acknowledged that whilst Old Road was adequate to carry heavy traffic, it was not ideal, and revealed that an alternative route starting from the lay by on the A34 was being considered. This access road would involve using Green Belt land which would be controversial.

Also it was clear from

Severn Trent management at the meeting that an alternative access would be difficult to justify economically. It was clear that a decision on the road would not be made for some time but it was gratifying to learn that the public voice was being heeded.

Gareth Jones

Barlaston Wassail - Mud, mulled cider & medieval monks! - Sue McKerracher

Although I had never been, I was aware of the annual Wassail; a friend from Newcastle had been in previous years and in describing it, she told me how one year on a clear, moonlit night with a heavy frost, walking into the Downs had been magical - "like walking into Narnia".

The weather was not so magical this year and there was some speculation as to whether the walk would take place at all but around 8pm, the skies started to dry up if not exactly clear.

Our family donned wellies and warm jackets and armed with torches we set off to the meeting point at Barlaston Green.

Despite the damp, there was a small crowd waiting and after a mug of traditional mulled cider our host - Beornwulf, the Father of the Village arrived to lead us. A striking figure in his Viking helmet, and great fur coat, he led us onto the Downs.

At points along the way, colourful banners of saints, kings and monks were hung on trees as Beornwulf told us tales of murder and martyrdom from the early days of Staffordshire.

On reaching Millennium Point, the clouds briefly parted and we were treated to a moonlit view of the landscape before we began our descent through

the mud back to Barlaston.

At the Duke of York, we were joined by revellers from the pub and watched as the effigies of the saints and monks were readied and then followed in procession to the Village Green where we rounded off the night with toasts and singing (much to the amusement of two police officers watching from the their patrol car).

New Years Eve offers families few choices these days - rowdy bars with overpriced drinks or TV programmes that leave us feeling a bit left out if we are not jumping in a fountain or watching fireworks - but as a family

event, that costs next to nothing and doesn't involve a hangover, getting dressed up or exorbitant taxi fares home - Barlaston Wassail proved an entertaining and very enjoyable alternative way to bring in the New Year... so see you next year!



The 2012 Wassail raised £216 for Midland's Air Ambulance and £25 for the National Trust (Downs)

Monthly Coffee Mornings - Marianne Stevenson

It is now a year since, Amanda Jones, Chris Donohoe & Pete Stevenson took over the reins of the Barlaston Coffee Morning when Derek and Enid Ralphs retired after 11 years of very successfully organising the event.

It has continued to be a productive monthly event held in the Methodist Church Hall and welcoming many regular friends who not only come from the village but also Tittensor, Clayton & Trentham.

Through a regular raffle the morning has supported a number of local charities, all suggested by those closely involved like the stall holders, those that work in the kitchen making the drinks as well as practical supporters like Steve at Londis who donates the tea, coffee & biscuits.

The stalls are always busy as there is Bric-a-brac & Clothes, Books, CDs and Jigsaws and cakes & groceries from Ladies' Guild - often freshly home-made. Additionally Chris Donohoe has a stall full of interesting gifts and trinkets to sell in support of the Boys' Brigade as they receive very little funding and the money raised enables the group to go on trips, pay required insurances, etc.

We meet from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm on the last Friday of each month, except in December and when Good Friday falls on the last day of the month as it does this year. March's morning will now be on Friday 22.

Do come and join us - there will be lots of people you know and the opportunity to meet new ones.



Steve Green & Eileen Wilkinson present Liz Quick with funds raised for the Douglas MacMillan Hospice & the Air Ambulance.

CFR's Julie & Viv (wo)man the raffle at the Nov Coffee morning - the proceeds of which went to the Village CFR scheme



Christine Donohoe is looking for volunteers to help with the 2nd North Staffs Boys Brigade Company. The boys meet on Mondays (7-9pm) and on Thursdays (6.30- 8pm). If you are interested in helping out, contact Christine on 01782 372176.

Updated Barlaston Crossing: Scheduled trains (hourly)

11.11 north
11.14 south
11.15 north
11.22 south
11.32 north
11.45 south
11.48 north
11.48 south
11.52 north
11.55 south