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# The Heron



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

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Issue 4

July 2013



This Summer 2013 edition of the Heron goes to press as the final preparations for the Best Kept Village Competition are made. I have received a lot of

favourable comments about how the village is looking and let us hope that the judges are impressed when they inspect.

There is certainly a lot less litter around and most of the public areas are looking tidy. The Parish Council has been heartened by the level of resident response to the

BKV and is pleased that the decision to re-enter the competition has been so well supported.

Whatever the verdict, involvement has been a worthwhile exercise in building up community feeling.

*Chairman - Gareth Jones*

## Best Kept Village Update - Patrick Linehan

On a visit to Abbots Bromley on the bank holiday weekend the Best Kept Village trophy for that area of Staffordshire was proudly displayed in the centre of the village. On closer inspection the names of all the previous winners and the date of victory were entered on the main post. I feel sure that all residents will be interested to learn that Barlaston is there as the winner in 1984 – 29 years ago!

The judges for the BKV made their first inspection and then a second inspection took place during the first two weeks in June - sadly we weren't informed when this took place.

By the first week in June the planters were in position by each of the village boundary signs and other planters were placed at the Village Hall, the corner of Station Road and Old Road and hanging baskets at Orchard Place.



Tittensor Road Planter



Conservation area on the Village Green

Areas on the Green have been left for wild life conservation and posters are being prepared by the school children to indicate this.

The Parish Council would particularly like to thank Tony Shepherd for making the superb planters, Joe Poultney for the planting and our dedicated litter pickers - you know who you are! Thanks to Sarah Broome who is responsible for organising posters at Barlaston First School which we hope will catch the eye of the judges.

A special thanks to Neil Hemmings, our Parish Clerk, for his sterling work regularly litter picking along the canal tow path, painting the bus shelter and the bollards at Orchard Place and other tasks too numerous to mention. Peter Hedley must also get a mention for organising and positioning the 'welcome signs' and Peter Sellers for mowing and helping to keep the station area and areas around the planters trim. We must not forget Stafford Borough council for their support, particularly Mick



Barlaston Park Flower Bed

## ... Best Kept Village Update

Bailey and team (litter collection) and Ann Toon (baskets and troughs).

If we do score enough points we will go through to a final judging in July so come on Barlaston. Keep up the good work and keep on acting like Wombles with regard to the litter. Let us hope that the judges respond to our efforts but in any case we hope that you all enjoy the improved look to our village.



## Level Crossing Campaign - John Russell

Parish councillors have voted to campaign for a footbridge at the Station Road level crossing. At a recent meeting with our MP and representatives of Network Rail the matter was raised by Barlaston First School Governors.

The number of trains passing through around the time school starts is always a problem but if there has been a hold-up on the line, delayed trains queue up and pass through at four minute intervals so the usual gaps are lost and pedestrians and drivers have to wait for four or five trains. Sitting in a car is bad enough but standing in the rain with no shelter is a terrible way for our children to arrive late for school.

The Parish Council has considered asking for a footbridge on the platforms before but it would dominate a beautiful part of the village and fears of vandalism caused members to vote against. It was also probable that ramps for disabled users instead of steps would make the structure longer than the platform.

The status of both our village stations is also a problem. They have not been officially closed and, in theory, could be brought back into use for a local service. However

if a footbridge was built on the platforms they could never be reopened for passenger use.

The only alternative, considered back in 1990, was to petition for a completely new by-pass road and a rail-bridge from the field by the canal up to the field below the Church. That was a tall order when they spent £9Bn on the upgrade in 1997. In today's austerity a £3M project seems even more unlikely.

If this matter affects you in any way please write to our MP. Mr William Cash, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. Alternatively e-mail [mconaloguej@parliament.uk](mailto:mconaloguej@parliament.uk) to save a stamp.



## Barlaston Post Office - Richard Wright

I have been Postmaster in Barlaston for 37 years and I am retiring. Steve Green of Londis Stores has been given the opportunity to continue the Post Office services in the village. I wish Steve well for the future and I would like to thank all the past staff for the help and support they have given.

On the Post Office side Brenda McManus, Gwen Banks, Elizabeth Evans and more recently Jolene Wright and Kerry Clarkson. From the Royal Mail staff John Buxton, Stan Wright (deceased) Patrick Donohue (Postman Pat) and recently Alan, Mick and Annette.

Lastly a big thank you goes to all the customers past and present for all the support that has been given.



Retiring Postmaster and Postmistress: Richard & Pam Wright



It is very pleasing to record that the Village Show has firmly re-established itself in the diary of village events since its reintroduction five years ago. It does not seek to spread its net outside the village but looks to provide a platform for friendly rivalry between neighbours and friends and it has generated a large degree of interest. The Village Hall is an ideal venue for it, being located in the centre of the village.

There are a number of excellent gardeners in Barlaston The Show Committee hopes that people can be

persuaded to show the results of their hard work.

The Show Committee has been looking to develop categories that are interesting and this year's programme contains some new classes. It has been gratifying to note that the number of entries has been growing year by year and we hope that this trend continues.

This year's Show will be held on **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September**. Entrance fee is 50p with free admission for children.

The show will have a royal baby theme, in honour of the new royal baby due in July, and we are delighted that Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant, Mr Ian Dudson, CBE will officially open the show at 2.30 pm with prizes presented by Mrs Jane Dudson. As part of the royal baby theme we will be holding our very own Bonny Prince and Princess of Barlaston competition for the under 2's – judging will take place at 3.30 pm.

The show this year is sponsored by The Country Cabin and Mark's Quality Meats and the Show Committee would like to thank them for their support.

This is your chance to show off your horticultural, crafting, baking and photography skills – you can see a full list of show categories in the show programme which is included inside this edition of the Heron. The Village Hall will be open to receive entries between 8.30 am and 12 noon. You will be given an exhibitor number when you bring in your item(s).

Entries from Ages 2 upwards are welcome. There is a 50p entry fee for adults for each class entered. All children's entries are free.

In addition there will be a bouncy castle and face painting on the school playing field and a variety of stalls and activities on the village hall car park.

The show promises to be a great family afternoon out with something for all ages.

To find out more you can visit the Village Show website at <http://villageshow.wordpress.com/>, follow us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/BarlastonVillageShow> and Twitter [@barlastonvs](https://twitter.com/barlastonvs).

or e-mail us [barlastonvillageshow@hotmail.com](mailto:barlastonvillageshow@hotmail.com)



## Barlaston Children's Centre Summer Timetable

### Broughton Crescent Barlaston

The Summer Timetable (term time only) is varied and a warm welcome is assured.

#### Monday

**13.30-15.00** Health Visitor Drop In Clinic & Breast Feeding Support.

#### Wednesday

**9.15—10.00** Baby Cook: Sensory session for babies from 8 months

**10.45-11.30** Cookie Tots: helping to encourage a positive attitude towards food for 2-4 year olds

To book a place for either of the Wednesday morning activities call Diane on 07540 927 067.

**13.15-14.45** My Learning Journey Stay & Play session

#### Thursday

**13.00-15.15** Signposts Community Café: Drop in for a chat/support/advice/help with job searches. ALL WELCOME.

#### Friday

**13.30-15.00** Sing and Sign: to book a place call Leese on 07967 286 271.

For further information about sessions at your Children's Centre feel free to call us on 07896 998 643.

Please note the timetable is for term time only. For holiday opening times and activities please call the centre or visit us at [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/eyc](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/eyc)

## Barlaston Village Hall - Gareth Jones

The Annual General Meeting of the Village Hall Management Committee was held on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May. Councillor Steve Hall was in the Chair. It was reported that whilst the Hall had generated a very modest surplus in 2012/13 there had been very significant expenditure (£9k) on maintenance, refurbishment and the upgrading of facilities.

Included in this category was the provision of a new backstage curtain and a new sound system. The

programme to improve the insulation of the Hall had been completed and the benefit from this programme was being realised through lower utility bills. There had been expenditure on painting and decorating, floor repairs and repairs to the drainage system. The Hall Management Committee had received £3k in grants to support some of this activity.

The Management Committee had placed orders to upgrade the

electricity supply and to improve the ventilation in the current year and it was also engaged in looking at way to enhance the kitchen facilities. Discussions are also ongoing with the County Council to make good the damage to the forecourt caused by the library van.

The Village Hall continues to be very well used with a wide range of events to offer villagers. Please see what is available on the Village Hall website. [barlastonvillagehall.co.uk](http://barlastonvillagehall.co.uk)



## Parish Council Awards 2013



This year the award of the Golden Jubilee Bowl will go to **Richard Wright**, who ably supported by his wife Pamela, has managed the local Post Office for the past 37 years. It seems very appropriate that as the Post Office relocates to the Londis Stores and Richard retires from office that his contribution to village life over this period of time should be recognised by the presentation of this award.

The Parish Council is also presenting Certificates of Commendation to **Christine Donohue** of Meadow Road and **Mike**

**Dunn** of Longton Road.

Christine is currently the Captain of the local Boys Brigade. She has been associated with the Brigade for 17 years. The Brigade meets all year round at the Methodist Chapel Hall except for the school summer holidays. There are currently 22 members spread between the three groups and Christine always welcomes new faces and is looking for people to support her in her role. Her commitment to the Boys Brigade and the young people in the village has been noteworthy.

Mike Dunn has played a very important role in the Village as Secretary of the Village Hall Committee until his resignation last year. He was a very

successful Project Manager at the time of the Hall major refurbishment and he was a key member of the team that oversaw the re-establishment of the Hall as a vibrant and important feature of Village life. The importance to the Hall of having someone living close by who has taken an interest in what has been going on cannot be overstated. Mike is also a member of the church choir.

**Barlaston Community First Responders** are looking for three Trustees to oversee the Charity aspect of the group. They need a Chairman, Treasurer and a Secretary. If you have a spare hour or two each month, and are willing to help please get in touch with Marie on 07504 981 632 or [mariegoodall31@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mariegoodall31@hotmail.co.uk)

## The Blue Cross Charity come to school - Tony Dodd

The Parish Council Environment Committee arranged for a presentation to be given to the School children of Barlaston on the responsibilities of pet ownership and the dangers of Dog Poo.

This took place on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April and was presented by the Blue Cross Animal Charity in conjunction with the Borough Council.

A presentation was made to each of the three classes and each one lasted around an hour, these were interactive and very well received by both children and staff. They took the form of a quiz and games and involved a real Jack Russell dog.

I was pleasantly surprised

at the interest shown by the children and their awareness of the correct way to feed and look after their pets. In particular they were aware of diseases that are spread by dog poo and the unsociable attitude of a few individuals who fail to clean up after letting their dogs foul pavement's and grass verges. Even the youngest children had plenty of questions to ask and gave plenty of feedback to the excellent presenter from Blue Cross.

We asked the children to design a Poster to encourage dog owners to clean up after their dogs, with the best poster from each class to be printed by Stafford Borough Council



and displayed around the village.

We still have one or two irresponsible Dog owners in the village who refuse to pick up after their dogs, or more strangely pick up the poo and then throw the bags in a field or in a tree. Rest assured that those who are guilty will be

prosecuted and fined when caught.

There is no excuse as free Poo bags are available at Kc K9 Pet shop in Orchard Place and at Ivy House Stores on Barlaston Park.

**Please do the responsible thing and pick up after you Dog.**

## Lynn Jones-Pullin - PCC Child & Family Support Worker

I am Lynn Jones-Pullin and I work for the PCC at The Parish Church of St John the Baptist, Barlaston, alongside Vicar Jane and her team - I was employed in November 2011.



I work with groups of Children and Young People, supporting families at the Church and in the Community. At Barlaston C.E (VC) First School children know me as Miss Lynn and I enjoy our

Assembly times together. I run a Christian Club (Being like God wants us to be..... Busy Bees) on Tuesday's after School for an hour; children are invited from years 1 and 2. Jesus is our friend; we try to be like him and his disciples as we enjoy crafts, stories, and pray together.

On Wednesday lunch times I meet with year 4 children. We share Bible stories, play games and take part in craft activities. It is called The Sunshine Club.

The school ethos being "Let your light shine" is an inspiration to us all. The School is a place of learning,

friendship and fun, in a context of Christian values. Each person is uniquely valued; they are all nurtured to reach their full potential.

The following activities all take place within Church; all new members are warmly welcomed:

- **Tots' Church:** Tuesdays 1-30 until 3pm: A friendly relaxed atmosphere, with activities, refreshments, Singing, join us to make new friends and have fun.

- **Kids' Church:** 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month. Craft activity; listen to a bible story, prayer. During the 10.30am service.

- **Junior Choir:** 1st Sunday of the month rehearsal after 10.30am service.

2nd Sunday of each month sing during 10.30am service. New members are welcome to sing and have fun.

Contact Ashley Mellor, [ashley@themusicinyou.co.uk](mailto:ashley@themusicinyou.co.uk)

- **Youth Church:** Alternate Thursdays from 6-8pm. Our next meeting is 6th June. Pool, wii and table tennis games, music, activities and much more. Age 10 to 18 years

- **Fun Church:** On the last Friday of the month 6pm - 7.30pm, for 6 -16 yr olds. Activities, crafts, music, wii and other games, refreshments.

For more details of any of the above sessions, or if you can spare an odd hour to support please contact me on 01782 373126 or Contact [Lynnjones60@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Lynnjones60@hotmail.co.uk)

# theWI

## INSPIRING WOMEN

Barlaston Herons WI is a newly formed WI group. We meet monthly in the Methodist Church on Park Drive on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month from 7.30 – 9.30pm. It is a time for women to meet, learn new things, share ideas, show off their own talents, fundraise and have fun. We have been planning a varied programme with things like craft workshops, interesting speakers, belly dancing, meditation and a lot more. This new group offers meetings for women who are unable to get to the existing Barlaston WI afternoon group due to work and family commitments.



The WI is the original social network, founded nationally in 1915, but we had our official forming meeting on 20th February 2013 and 10 members signed up. Since then each month we have seen lots of new faces and by the April meeting our membership had increased to 17. The WI Federation have provided us with an official advisor Kay Jackson, who has been an invaluable help getting the group going and will continue to support and guide us during our first year. We are a really enthusiastic group, and it is great to see everyone getting involved. We choose not to sing

Jerusalem at each meeting but we do love some “old fashioned” WI pastimes: chatting, crafting and campaigning. We haven’t made any jam yet!

At our meetings so far, we have decorated a silk scarf, and each member was able to take home their own individual colourful creation. At another meeting we had an introduction to meditation, learning to focus on our breathing and avoid distracting thoughts, allowing us to take a pause from our busy lives. It is the only time the group has been silent.

We offer visitors the chance to come and see what we do at any meeting for a £3 charge, so if you see something you fancy, come along and do bring a friend! At future meetings we can look forward to:

**17<sup>th</sup> July 2013 – “Heartstart” with Julie Sentence & Viv O’Dunne**

**21<sup>st</sup> August 2013 – In house craft activities**

**18<sup>th</sup> September 2013 – Bee Keeping with Andrew Lakin**

**16<sup>th</sup> October 2013 – Willow Weaving with Sam Taylor**

**20<sup>th</sup> November 2013 – To be confirmed**

**18<sup>th</sup> December 2013 – The art of the chocolatier with Jackie Roberts**

After only three months we have a sub-group; The Knit and Natter group which meets at The Plume of Feathers on the Wednesday after the main meeting from 7-9pm. It is a great place for members to meet each other, share yarn tips and skills, swap knitting and crochet patterns, and admire each other’s handmade woollen wonders.

Any lady from anywhere can become a member, and it costs £33 a year to join the WI, which gets you free access to meetings once a month, plus the National Women’s Institute bi-monthly magazine “WI Life”. New members are welcome and for further information please contact Karen on 07770241437 or [kl2burns@aol.com](mailto:kl2burns@aol.com).

### Would you like:

- Help with the internet
- People to talk to
- Advice
- Free coffee/tea
- help reducing your bills
- help with job searches
- help managing your money
- an emergency food parcel
- advice on healthy living



Then please come and visit the new Signpost Centre drop-in service in Barlaston Park

**Where?** Mobile unit outside the shop at Barlaston Park

**When?** 2nd & 4th Thursday of the month

**What time?** 10.00 - 12.30

A trial period of 4 months has been set for the project and **if** there is sufficient demand it will continue until April. In the future we aim to extend the service to other parts of Barlaston on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month.

This drop in centre is open for anyone to call in, have a chat, socialise, seek support, or browse the internet. At the centre, tea and coffee are provided free of charge. Signpost staff will always be on hand to help, listen or signpost to other agencies.

Signposts is a local charity set up to make a positive difference in the lives of people in the local area and community as a whole.

For more information call Karen Wardell on 07731 795 782

## The Samaritans - Local Samaritans Volunteer

Samaritans notices recently appeared at our level crossings because of the tragic loss of several individuals. As a Samaritans volunteer and Barlaston resident, I have obviously been very concerned about those events.

The word Samaritans conveys thoughts of death by suicide, something that we often find difficult to talk about.

Whilst the primary aim of Samaritans is indeed to help reduce the number of deaths by suicide, Samaritans volunteers listen confidentially to anyone whose circumstances result in emotional distress.

In any life, difficulties and pain are likely at some stage, whether through

bereavement, job loss, work pressures, financial difficulties, loneliness, bullying, exams, physical or mental health, etc.

Sometimes, it may feel like more than our fair share and, for whatever reason, we may experience difficulties in finding - or even seeking - support.

At such times, that support may come from Samaritans whose volunteers are people from within our communities - not unlike our First Responders - who are trained to listen unconditionally in such a way that callers may find their own way forward.

Today, our callers are not limited to the telephone or face-to-face meetings at our local branch. Email and text are also available for

those who prefer written communication.

In my experience, there has never been anything so rewarding as giving a little of my time and attention to someone in crisis. The thorough training has taken care of any apprehension about being able to cope. It is also good to be part of such a friendly, vibrant and diverse network of people. And I realise how fortunate I am too.

Our nearest Samaritans branch is at: 15, Chapel Lane Burslem, Stoke on Trent ST6 2AB.

It may be reached on 01782 213555.

Should you be interested in joining, our Recruitment Mobile Number (may be voicemail) is 07852 339688 or email:

stokesamsrecruitment@hotmail.co.uk

<http://branches.samaritans.org/stoke/>



## Planning

The review of planning applications continues to be an important function for the Parish Council.

During the last Council year 29 planning applications were reviewed and where appropriate comments were made to be brought to the attention of the Stafford Borough Planning and Regeneration Department. However the liberalisation of the national guidelines governing planning regulations has caused some difficulties resulting in several applications that were opposed at local level being approved by the Borough Council.

Despite these setbacks the Parish Council is

committed to do all that it can to protect the Green Belt and also to preserve the essential character of the village.

There have been concerns raised at the Open Forums prior to Parish Council meetings about the need to protect the many fine trees in the village and also the need to sensitively managed open areas. This is a matter that the Parish Council takes very seriously.

There are two very significant challenges facing the village. The former Wedgwood Memorial College remains empty and is up for sale. The Parish Council has had a preliminary meeting with

Stafford Borough Council planners to consider a design statement for the site involving some residential development and it is expected that this will be progressed in the year.

Further, a planning application for the residential development of part of the WWRD site has been lodged with Stoke City Council. This application is consistent with the proposal that was consulted upon in 2012 but it is clear that if it is progressed it will have a major impact on village life.

The basic issues at stake are clear. It is felt that most villagers would support an initiative that

seeks to underpin employment locally in a traditional industry but the proposed residential development is in land designated within the Green Belt. It is anomalous that the Planning authority that will consider this development is the City whilst the impact of the residential development will fall on Barlaston and Stafford Borough Council.

What will be the consequences of this development locally for our school, our Health Centre and our roads. The Parish Council is committed to monitor the developing situation very closely.

Gareth Jones - Chairman

## The Samaritans and Network Rail Training Day - Viv O'Dunne

On average, one person per day tries to take their own life on the UK's railways. In 2010 The Samaritans and Network Rail formed a partnership to try to reduce railway suicides by 20% over a five year period. (source: <http://tinyurl.com/d9cqtlp>)

The Partnership deliver a bespoke training course to staff that then gives them the skills and confidence to identify and approach a distressed/suicidal person, to give emotional first aid and a successful referral to The Samaritans.

It was mooted at a public

meeting in March that the training course could be extended to Barlaston residents; on the 13th June Barlaston became the first community group to be given the training in the Village Hall.

I was tasked with organising the day and faced the difficulty of how to advertise the course sensitively, without attracting any media attention.

As places were limited, I worked alongside a local Samaritans volunteer to target specific groups and individuals who were most

likely to encounter vulnerable people in our community.

On the day 17 individuals from a real cross-section took part in the day long course. The Samaritans trainer, Steve Tollerton, delivered an informative well-structured programme and we were educated in barriers to listening, emotional health, bereavement and loss, appropriate responses, signs of suicidal intent and we learned how to approach a distressed person using the 6 stages of the listening wheel. The day culminated in how to

make a referral to The Samaritans.

Steve said after the course *"It was a privilege working with a community group so dedicated to making a difference"*. He thanked Elaine Shaw, one of the Barlaston CFR's, for the provision and preparation of a delicious buffet lunch for everyone, and to Steve Green at the Londis for donating our water and snacks.

My experience of the day was best summarised by feedback from an attendee who said *"It was a wonderful experience to be there and to feel part of such a caring community. Barlaston is not just a pretty village"*.



## Good Neighbour Scheme



Do you have a few hours free each week, month, or now and then? Or are you someone that needs a bit of help? Or are you both?

The setting up of a Good Neighbour Scheme is being explored in a number of areas and it's hoped that Barlaston residents, already active and caring in the community, may wish to support the development of a scheme in the Village with the intention of enhancing current services and opportunities for residents who, because of age or disability, may be isolated and in need of assistance.

The aims of a Good Neighbour Scheme are to:

- make the introductions: connect people and help to support each other.
- share skills and abilities
- reduce isolation and help people to stay independent
- encourage social contact to keep people safe and well
- make OUR village an even better place to live in.

There are many things that people need help with:

- some company: people go for days without talking to, or seeing anybody.
- shopping
- access to GP

- walking the dog
- pursuing a hobby
- writing a letter
- learning how to use a computer



The Staffordshire Good Neighbour Schemes Project, which is being led by the Community Council of Staffordshire invites you to come along to an information session, where you can find out how you could be involved and offer as much or as little time as you can.

Two information sessions are being held in the Ruth Dickson meeting room at Barlaston Village Hall on Tuesday 9th July from 2-5pm and Friday 12th July from 10.30—13.30.

You are warmly invited to come along and find out more and to share your ideas and views. Join us for a cuppa and a chat and give us your views on what you think would most benefit our village and its most vulnerable residents.

For more information contact Michelle Reynolds on 07985 801 626, or Gill Wyatt on 07928 833065.

We hope you've enjoyed reading this issue of *The Heron* and hope to have another issue with you before the end of the year. Please get in touch if you'd like to showcase your community group, or share an article. Get in touch with editor: Viv O'Dunne [vivienodunne@gmail.com](mailto:vivienodunne@gmail.com)