

**Minutes of the Barlaston Parish Council Meeting- Annual General Meeting
Held on Tuesday 6TH May 2014.**

Present: –Paul Fisher
Vice-Chairman

Patrick Linehan	Tony Dodd
Ian Macmillan	John Russell
Viv O'Dunne	Elaine Philpott

Apologies: Lynne Bakker Collier, Sara Fearn, Steve Hall, Gareth Jones & Sarah Broome

In attendance: No one

Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2014/2015

1. **RESOLVED:** That Gareth Jones be appointed as Chairman and Paul Fisher as Vice-Chairman for 2014/15.

Minutes of the meeting held on April 1st. 2014

2: **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on April 1st. be approved and signed by the Vice Chairman.

Matters arising

3. Re. Minute 481: the appeal had been held and a decision was awaited.

4. Re. Minute 485: insurance cover for the Fete had been arranged. Councillor Philpott would identify what financial support the Show Committee were requesting.

5. Re. Minute 489g. : The Clerk's salary review had been concluded with a move to SCP 26.

6. Re. Minute 491: The Clerk gave a detailed report on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Questionnaires had been distributed to all households and replies had started to be received; his initial reading of these suggested no new generic issues but a fuller report would be given at the June meeting before the detailed analysis was undertaken. He had noted many positive comments about the village but concerns about the speed of traffic and delays at the crossing; he noted that some respondents were unaware of certain activities and facilities in the village which needed to be communicated back to residents in the final documents of the Neighbourhood Plan.

7. Re. Minute 505: it was agreed that the revised bus service the X23 served the local community very well.

Barlaston P.C. Committee Membership 2014-15

8. The Membership was confirmed for 2014/15 as follows:

Planning Committee-meets as required	
Tony Dodd	
Sarah Broome	
Paul Fisher- Chair	
John Russell	
Ian Macmillan	
Elaine Philpott	
Patrick Linehan	
Steve Hall	

Joint Playing Fields Committee-meets twice a year	
Sara Fearn	
Paul Fisher	
Gareth Jones (Rep. S.B.C)	
Tony Dodd	
John Russell	
Patrick Linehan- Chair	
Peter Taylor Barlaston C.C.	
Ray Mosley Barlaston C.C.	
Neil Davies Barlaston C.C.	

Finance Committee- meets once a year	
Viv O'Dunne	
Ian Macmillan	
Elaine Philpott	
Gareth Jones Chair	
Steve Hall	
Paul Fisher	
Patrick Linehan	
Sarah Broome	

Health and Safety Committee- meets as necessary	
Tony Dodd	
Gareth Jones	
John Russell	

Cemetery Committee- meets twice a year	
Patrick Linehan	
Gareth Jones	
Elaine Philpott	
Paul Fisher	
Dennis Twigg	

Rights of Way Committee-meets as necessary	
Tony Dodd	
Gareth Jones	
Viv O'Dunne	
John Russell	
Sara Fearn	
Paul Fisher	

Report by Chairman & Borough Councillor

9. In the absence of the Chairman and Councillor Bakker Collier the Clerk reported on the action of the Chairman in relation to the drainage problem at the top of the Village Green and the progress on the areas being developed as wild flower areas.

10. He outlined that PJS Landscapes had now completed their work on the Green with the planting of a variety of wild flower seeds but to be aware that the growth of a strong display of wild flowers may take time to develop. Signs indicating work in progress had been placed on the Green as the flowers would take time to grow; the pernicious weeds had been sprayed several times by PJS Landscapes and many nettles and brambles removed. After discussion it was agreed to wait and see how the Green developed; the planting of annuals and some cultivated shrubs around the tree by the old school had not followed the original schedule but the majority of the meeting felt it was a colourful display for 2014.

11. The Clerk reported that work to improve the drainage at the top of the Green had been completed by Parton Agriplant at a cost of £350; the area would now be drained through a proper drain and into an existing land drain. It was hoped that the problem would be solved with this action. The Chairman had negotiated a contribution from Mr. Wilshaw towards the cost of the work that was acceptable to the Council.

12. Councillor Linehan had received the offer of sponsorship for a number of trees and bluebell bulbs from a resident. He felt a number of flowering cherry trees and natural bluebells could brighten several areas of the village. It was agreed to take up this opportunity. Councillor O'Dunne had received a request for flowering cherry trees to be planted along Meadow Road; the Clerk would seek permission from County Highways for this.

Report by County Councillor

13. No report.

Finance Report

14. The following items were considered and approved:

	NET	VAT	Total Cost
a.) Neil Hemmings- Allowance	£48.00		£48.00
b.) BKV- materials	£58.12		£58.12
c.) Postage –stamps	£6.00		£6.00
d.) Picture frames	£12.92		£12.92
e.) Postage Heron & questionnaire	£108.04		£108.04
f.) Envelopes re e.)	£2.00		£2.00
g.) PJS Landscapes- monthly Cemetery Maintenance	£241.00	£48.22	£289.00
h.) Biffa waste Services- Cricket Club	££31.83	£6.37	£38.20
i.) Panda Press- Heron	£625.00	£15.00	£640.00
j.) Staffordshire County Council- Annual Allotment Rent-2014/15**	£900.00		£900.00
k.) Panda Press- envelopes and postage questionnaire	£780.00	£156.00	£936.00

l.) British Gas- gas village hall	£141.50	£7.07	£148.57
m.)J.E. Poultney- BKV work	£115.00		£115.00
n.)Nigel Ferguson- web domain renewal	£340.00		£340.00
o.)Trowers Creative- BKV banners	£291.00		£291.00
p.) Greenfingers- mowing	£453.68	£90.74	£544.42
q.) Panda Press- questionnaires and info. Sheet re neighbourhood plan	£1125.00	£105.00	£1230.00
r.) Leaflets Ltd- questionnaire distribution	£105.00		£105.00
s.) M. Rogers- painting benches re BKV	£108.00		£108.00
t.) Biffa Waste- Cricket Club	£35.94	£7.19	£43.13
u.) Town & Country services- grass cutting Flaxman Close	£135.00	£27.00	£162.00

** Barlaston Allotments Association had repaid this amount in full.

v.)The April salaries for the Clerk, Transport Co-ordinator and litter picker have been met.

w.) The Council received the Accounting Statements for 2013/14 which would then be sent for internal audit. The statements were approved.

x.) The Annual Governance Statement was read and approved by the Council.

Voluntary Transport Scheme

15. There had been 8 lifts in April.

Planning Update

16. The Planning Committee had met earlier in the evening but there were no significant issues apart from opposition to the felling of a large sweet chestnut tree on the Upper House site and a comment on this had been submitted regarding the retrospective planning application.

Best Kept Village Competition 2014

17. Councillor Linehan provided a detailed written report on the actions undertaken by volunteers in the village which he found most encouraging. A number of significant activities had taken place such as extended litter picks along Meaford Road and a significant improvement to several areas had been made. Over 20 volunteers had helped to undertake tasks in the village which now awaited the judges first visit.

18. Councillor Fisher and his wife had tidied the war memorial and the removal of debris from the top of the Green.

19. A number of banners were to be placed in strategic positions in the village and it was agreed to develop a BKV section on the website with updates and photographs of activities.

20. The allocation of £1000 had been spent but several items such as the new bollards on the Green were permanent.

21. It was hoped that the local schoolchildren would be able to produce a range of posters for the competition.

The Canal Towpath

22. The Clerk reported on a successful working party on the canal towpath in April; Darren Green from the Canal & River Trust assisted and presented the Council with a Certificate of Adoption; it was agreed to display copies of this certificate in appropriate spots near the towpath. It was agreed that the display noticeboard from Orchard Place could be moved next year as it was in need of some repair and placed alongside the towpath with notices relevant to the canal and village; a new noticeboard for Orchard Place would be budgeted for. The Trust would consider bids for improvement such as improving the area alongside Meadow Road playground that tended to flood.

23. Darren Green had spoken to Councillors Jones and Russell at the working party regarding the gap in the hedge alongside Canalside. He was aware of the use of Canalside by cyclists and pedestrians leaving the towpath and through the gap where once there was a gate.

24. The Canal & River Trust had confirmed that the hedgerow alongside this area belonged to them but they were prepared to allow the erection of a secure gate in this

gap, provided that all the residents agreed to this and that access to the canal was provided for Mr. Preece who had a mooring alongside the canal. The Trust would not contribute to the cost of a gate.

25. The Council reviewed the issues discussed at the April meeting when several residents from Canalside put forward their views on the need for the gap in the hedge to be closed with a gate to stop egress onto Canalside which was a private road. Councillor Philpott outlined the problems for the residents and that the gap had widened through time as the original gate had disappeared either through theft or being thrown into the canal.

26. The Council felt a gate was the preferred course of action provided Mr. Preece had access to his boat and mooring. However they felt it was an issue the residents should attend to and was not the responsibility of the Parish Council, who would not contribute to the cost. The Council felt that the residents affected should meet and agree a course of action and follow an agreed course of action to fit a gate. The Council felt signage at the point of the gate and at the southerly entrance to Canalside stating no access would help to ease the problem with cyclists and to reduce the danger to residents in Canalside.

27. The residents should pursue the option that Mr. Dobson from Stone Ramblers had made that their volunteers could erect a gate and fill the gap possibly at little or no cost. If there was a cost then it should be shared between the residents affected.

28. The Clerk was instructed to write to all the residents in Canalside outlining these suggestions but pointing out it was for them to settle the matter.

Correspondence and Clerk's Report

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

30. The Clerk had reported several problems to Stafford & Rural Homes regarding the road surface in Orchard Place, the trip hazard of metal grids on the car park, the rotten door frames leading to the flats above the shops and the tree stumps of the old poplar trees alongside the car park. He had no response on these items being attended to.

31. He reported that Stafford & Rural Homes were in discussion with Housing First over a possible merger.

32. The Clerk outlined the renewal costs for the parish insurance which were still very competitive. It was agreed to renew with Came & Co. and also to enter into the three year long term agreement that gives a discount of 5%.

33. The Clerk would submit a bid to Community Paths Initiative to produce a leaflet relating to local footpaths.

34. Notices regarding the European Parliamentary Elections had been posted.

35. The Clerk had asked George Powell of Cedar Point, tree surgeon, to check out the condition of a white poplar on the edge of the Village green that bordered Spokane House. Mr. Powell had reported the tree was in excellent condition. The owner of the property had enquired on the height of the tree. Mr. Powell had also looked at the stump of the

felled sweet chestnut by the Upper House and had reported that in his opinion it was not a diseased tree. Councillors felt that the Council should pursue TPOs on a number of trees.

36. There were ongoing road closures at the Barlaston level crossing with new rails being fitted as well as improvements to the line. The issue of the crossings had already been highlighted in responses to the recent questionnaire and the Clerk reported that nationally 38 level crossing gates had been removed in the last year and new technology installed; the issue of a footbridge was clearly a preference for many residents.

37. The Council agreed to support an on-line petition relating to the Sustainable Communities Act urging the government to allow a percentage of Business rates to be paid direct to Parish and Town Councils for use to benefit the local community.

38. It was agreed that Councillor Russell attend the SPCA 75th Anniversary Conference in June with the Chairman and the Clerk.

39. Councillor Dodd reported that there was damage to the grass verge on Wedgwood Drive caused by Amery the contractor filling a bowser on a daily basis. He had spoken to the driver and Amery had agreed to repair any damage in due course.

40. Several Councillors reported HGVs passing through the village to the WWRD building site. The Clerk would contact WWRD again on the matter. Councillors were asked to take the registration numbers of offending vehicles over 7.5t.

Any other business – Agenda items for the Parish Meeting to be held on Tuesday June 3rd. 2014

41. Councillor Dodd had received an enquiry as to why there was no spare wheelchair in the Health Centre for someone who might need to use. He would check and suggested in view of ongoing issues over appointment delays that the Centre is an agenda item for the June meeting.

42. Councillor Philpott had received a request for a traffic calming ramp on the road leading to the garages off Meadow Road.

43. Several items for the next meeting were agreed: Barlaston Health Centre; Uninvited Traders.

Note by Clerk

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

Village Hall Committee Report

45. The minutes of the most recent meeting of the Village Hall Committee were circulated.

46. Councillors were encouraged to attend the AGM on May 29th as Trustees to the Village Hall; several members hoped to attend.

47. A new auditor was needed several members had suggestions which they would pass on to the Chairman.

48. It was noted that the Village Hall Committee was working with Mike Dunn as the Secretary and four other committee members but the Chair had indicated a preference to stand down.

49. The Clerk pointed out that as the Parish Council would continue to pay all energy bills as they were the account holder and then recharge the Village Hall Committee. The Council was tied into a long term arrangement with British Gas for the next two years and the Village Hall would not be able to change this arrangement; it was agreed that the monitoring of energy usage was for the Village Hall Committee to undertake; the Clerk was happy to provide copies of any bills.

Chairman