

Minutes of the Barlaston Parish Council Meeting- Held on Tuesday 6th January 2015.

Present: – Gareth Jones
Chairman

Steve Hall	Elaine Philpott
Patrick Linehan	John Russell
Ian Macmillan	Sarah Broome
Paul Fisher	

Apologies: Lynne Bakker Collier, Viv O'Dunne, Tony Dodd.

A letter of resignation from the Council had been received from Councillor Fearn in December 2014. The Clerk was asked to write to thank her for her long and dedicated service to the Council.

In attendance: Jack Griffiths, Susan Griffiths & Elizabeth Hulme

Open Forum

331. Mr. & Mrs. Griffiths sought advice regarding a problem relating to the deteriorating condition of the exterior of a now vacant neighbouring property and its exterior walls. They had not yet spoken to the letting agent to report the problem but had been rebuked by the property owner when they had outlined the impact of the problem on their property via adjoining walls. Although there appeared to be no imminent danger they felt the exterior appearance detracted from the area.

332. The Council advised that they take the matter up with the letting agent and the Chairman would report the problem to the relevant department of the Borough Council.

333. The Clerk clarified the parking arrangements on Queens Row that often caused difficulties. He explained efforts to improve the parking spaces in the area had not been addressed by the County Council and Stafford & Rural Homes to date.

334. Mrs. Hulme outlined the ongoing problems of traffic in Tittensor Road. In particular she expressed concern over the narrowness of the pavements, the traffic noise and excessive speed and that the road was poorly lit. Councillors acknowledged these problems and the Clerk outlined the representations he had made to Highways over these matters. A meeting with a senior representative had been called and the Clerk would raise again the issues of problems on Tittensor Road and other roads in the village and feedback the response to Mrs. Hulme.

335. There were no declarations of interest made before the meeting began.

Minutes of the meeting held on December 2nd. 2014

336: RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on December 2nd. be approved and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising

337. Re. Minute 306: There had been no progress relating to the replacement of the toposcope.

Report by Chairman & Borough Councillor

338. The Chairman reported that the dispute relating to 9 Longton Road looks to being resolved in the near future.

339. He reported upon a special meeting of the Borough Council to be held to discuss the transfer of services from Stafford Hospital to Stoke.

340. He reported on a further consultation event regarding the likely possibility of the Westbridge Park development with a M&S food store, new sports centre and swimming pool and a destination play area. He would attend and thought it would enhance local provision.

341. He reported that there would be no increase in the 2015/16 Borough Council tax.

342. The Community Council of Staffordshire and similar ACRE organisations across the country appeared to be under threat with the possible removal of government subsidies; the Clerk had signed a petition against such proposals.

Report by County Councillor

343. No report

Finance Report

344. The following items were considered and approved.

	NET	VAT	Total Cost
a.) N. Hemmings Allowance & b.) Mileage	£56.00		£56.00
c.) PJS Landscapes- monthly Cemetery Maintenance	£241.00	£48.20	£289.00
d.) Biffa Waste- Cricket Club	£73.65	£14.73	£88.38

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

- f.) The Finance Committee had met to discuss the 2015/16 Budget and Precept. The minutes and proposals had been circulated as well as the agreed priorities relating to the Neighbourhood Plan; the village defibrillator scheme and the Village Show.
- g.) The Clerk had since identified savings relating to a new noticeboard by the canal and the village show that suggested the increase of the precept to £31000 was a reasoned increase based on likely expenditure to fund the agreed priorities. However there were still some unknown costs and it would be prudent to have some contingency for a local parish election.
- h.) The Chairman outlined the impact of raising the precept but the meeting felt that it was crucial to support the funding of initiatives that would be of potential benefit to every resident.
- i.) Councillor Fisher argued that there were community groups in the village that continually struggled financially or needed to improve the fabric of their buildings. He cited the Scout Hut which had a leaking roof and some known problems with this and the floor. He suggested this group along with others provided a valuable activity for local youngsters and that within the precept that should always be the capacity to support such groups otherwise they would disappear. The meeting agreed that there should be such a contingency.
- j.) The fabric of the Village Hall did need consideration and although much of this was being undertaken by the Village Hall Committee there would come a time when major work to the exterior of the building would be required.
- k.) It was agreed that the support for the Church Child & Family Support worked needed evaluation before further support from March 2015 be agreed.
- l.) It was agreed that with rising costs and more demands from the community that a small annual rise in the precept was needed for the forthcoming year to meet the agreed priorities a slightly bigger increase was needed.
- m.) There was a healthy Village Hall balance which should be looked at in terms of its utilisation by the Council if it needed to undertake major work in the Hall.
- n.) A grant application to support the development of the Neighbourhood Plan was to be submitted later in the month but the outcome of this bid would not be known until April 2015 at the earliest.
- o.) All members present reflected upon this and it was agreed to raise the precept but by the minimum amount.

345. After a proposal and an amendment to the proposal a vote was taken and it was carried to raise the Precept for 2015/16 to £31,000.

346. The Precept for 2015/16 is £31000.

Planning Update

347. The Planning Committee had met earlier in the evening and would submit comments of no objection regarding the two applications considered, but believed the boundary dispute relating to the proposal for an extension at 9, Longton Road, had now been settled.

Neighbourhood Plan

348. The Clerk was applying for a bridging grant to support the development of the plan. He had circulated the dates for the Steering Group meetings and Councillors agreed that additional members (residents) should be invited and encouraged to attend. The Heron and the parish website had articles inviting this action.

349. He would provide discussion papers for each group in turn.

350. The Barlaston Settlement Boundary had still not been finalised after the amendments but it would not include Barlaston Park. Councillor Hall again expressed his concerns over this but was reassured the area had the protection of the greenbelt and by Barlaston Park not having a settlement boundary any potential development would be in the green belt and would be opposed.

Voluntary Transport Scheme

351. There had been 18 lifts in December.

The Heron

352. An edition would be prepared for distribution towards the middle of January.

The provision of defibrillators in the village

353. The Clerk reported that the cost of 2 Turtle Engineering Cabinets was £1000, and the annual running cost was approximately £12 per annum, per cabinet. He has approached Stafford & Rural Homes regarding the siting of an initial cabinet on the Orchard Place shop frontage and was awaiting confirmation. He asked the Chairman to liaise a position for a cabinet outside the Village Hall.

354. The Clerk believed that the Herons WI grant application to the British Heart Foundation was being actioned for up to 10 defibrillators for the village.

Parish Elections 2015

355. The Clerk would attend a briefing over procedures in February and report back in due course.

356. For retiring members who wished to seek re-election nomination papers would have to be filled in but any resident could stand for election and until the nominations closed it would not be known if a local parish election would be needed. If it was then there would be a cost.

357. The vacancy for Barlaston East had not been filled and as the period of notice had now expired the Parish Council could co-opt; it was agreed to advertise the vacancy to see

if there was any interest in the vacancy; the Council was still quorate on all Committees so could function effectively until May.

Matters arising from the Open Forum.

358. It was agreed that the Parish Council had no powers to alleviate the traffic problem on Queens Row but would raise the matter with Highways; similarly the meeting on January 12th it was hoped would move towards some prioritising of actions over local highways issues.

Correspondence and Clerk's Report

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

360. Because of the May elections it was agreed to move the Annual Parish Meeting and the A.G.M. to Tuesday May 12th.

Any other business – Agenda items for the Parish Meeting to be held on Tuesday March 3rd.2015.

361. Councillor Hall referred to 2 items raised by George Powell. The Chairman would liaise with WWRD over these. These were the impact of a large pile of earth at the front of the factory that covered part of the arboretum and the remnants of the fallen tree at the junction of Wedgwood Drive and Lakewood Drive.

362. Councillor Broome informed the meeting that the Council would be invited to the service installing the new Vicar on Saturday February 21st at 2pm.

Note by Clerk

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

Village Hall Committee Report

364. Councillor Jones reported that one member of the Hall Committee was now working away and that was putting pressure on the existing committee members; additional committee members were needed.

365. The revised hiring fees were being implemented.

366. It was agreed that the air conditioning system needed servicing

Chairman