

**Minutes of the Barlaston Parish Council Meeting-
Held on Tuesday 3rd. June 2014.**

Present: – Gareth Jones
Chairman

Paul Fisher	Sara Fearn
Patrick Linehan	Tony Dodd
Ian Macmillan	John Russell
Sarah Broome	Elaine Philpott
Steve Hall	

Apologies: Viv O'Dunne

In attendance: Lynne Bakker Collier, David Connell, Mrs. P. Morgan, George Powell, D. Bentley, Andrew & Michala Black.

Open Forum

50. Mr David Connell and Mrs. Morgan provided detailed notes on the use of herbicides around the world with precise references to perceived health dangers. It was agreed that the documents needed to be read and that the research related to a global issue not just a local one. Mr. Connell outlined his concerns over the use of *Roundup* on the Barlaston Park Estate and provided photographs of a mobile sprayer and a nearby field that appeared to have been sprayed with chemicals and there were cattle grazing. His concerns centred around his opinion that potential harmful chemicals were entering the water table and the food chain.

51. The Chairman had checked with Stafford Borough Council that the chemicals being used by local contractors met COSHH regulations and agreed to the literature provided by Mr. Connell. Councillor Macmillan suggested that the Parish Council could do little more as they had checked with Greenfingers and the County Council that in their opinion *Roundup* was safe and did not have any residual impact on water or animals. The Clerk suggested that Mr. Connell take his concerns to the Health & Safety Executive or the Environment Agency.

52. George Powell expressed his concern over the apparent neglect by WWRD of the Millennium Arboretum. He felt the Council had a duty of care to the trees some of which were being damaged; he suggested these were deliberate actions by WWRD. It was pointed out that the area lay outside the Parish in Stoke-on-Trent; the Chairman was due to meet with WWRD in the near future and agreed that WWRD had promised to replace any dead or damaged trees in the Arboretum. George Powell suggested that the Parish Council adopt the Arboretum and tend to it; the Council would consider this later in the meeting.

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

Minutes of the meeting held on May 6th. 2014

54: RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on May 6th. be approved and signed by the Vice Chairman.

Matters arising

55. Re. Minute 8: Councillor Fearn indicated that she had not resigned from the Cemetery Committee, only that she no longer was able to contribute as much time as in previous years. The composition of the Cemetery Committee needed further consideration as there was little representation from the Church; it was agreed that the Chairman discuss with the Church and report back in July. Councillor Fearn noted this suggestion.

56. Re. Minute 10: The Clerk reported on the poor germination of the wild flower seeds on the Green and the ongoing growth of weeds which PJS Landscapes had treated several times. The wet weather hadn't helped so it was unlikely that there would be a full flowering display in 2014.

57. Re. Minute 11: It was noted that Mr. Wilshaw had made a contribution to the BKV competition relating to the improved drainage adjacent to his property. The Clerk read out his letter.

58. Re. Minute 22: All residents of Canal Side had received a letter regarding the gap in the hedge. There had been no action to date. The Clerk had requested that the Canal & River Trust provide new chippings for the towpath from Canal Side towards Wedgwood which often had puddles and waterlogged. He also reported new notices re dog fouling had been posted and seemed to be effective.

59. Re. Minute 30: Stafford & Rural Homes had not actioned any of the issues raised which was disappointing as there were trip hazards associated with the problems.

60. Re. Minute 33: A response was awaited.

61. Re. Minute 35: George Powell had provided photographs of the felled Sweet Chestnut tree at the Upper House Hotel. Councillor Bakker Collier had met with Craig Watkins from Stafford B. C. who indicated that the tree had been inspected and was diseased. So there were opposite opinions on the condition of the tree and this led to a suggestion that there should be a survey of all known TPO's in the Parish which she indicated was being planned by the Borough Council.

62. There was an ongoing problem of HGVs passing through the village to Wedgwood Park construction site; WWRD had been informed of this and would be informed again if the problems persist. Councillor Philpott reported on lorries taking building waste away from the WWRD factory and speeding along Blurton Road towards Newstead. The Chairman agreed to raise this at his forthcoming meeting with WWRD.

Report by Chairman & Borough Councillors

63. The Chairman reported that the recommendations for the electoral review in the Borough had been agreed in the main; there were some boundary changes but these did not impact upon Barlaston.
64. He had met with WWRD regarding the Best Kept Village competition and changes to the factory site. He circulated an artist's impression of how the site would be developed. WWRD and David Wilson Homes and Thomas Vale were keen to employ local workers where possible; it was agreed to promote any vacancies through the Parish's communication channels.
65. Cottage Furniture were planning to move all their work and employees to their Stone site. The owner had indicated he would be making a planning application for housing development on the site in due course.
66. Once the Vicar had left the Parish Cathy Case would conduct the main activities of the Vicar; a remembrance service marking the centenary of the outbreak of World War 1 was being planned for 3rd. August.
67. It was agreed that the Chairman would undertake a review of the Cemetery (Churchyard extension) Committee activities.
68. Mr. Warren's appeal for the retention of his building at Hartwell Stud had been successful.
69. Councillors as Trustees were encouraged to attend the Village Hall AGM.
70. Councillor Bakker Collier reported that there was likely to be a review of TPO's in the Parish.
71. She outlined the excellent work of the Stone & District Branch of Age Concern. There were in need of ongoing funding to support their work; the Council would be happy to consider a donation on receipt of an official request.

Report by County Councillor

72. No report.

Finance Report

73. The following items were considered and approved:

	NET	VAT	Total Cost
a.) Neil Hemmings- Allowance	£48.00		£48.00
b.) PJS Landscapes- monthly Cemetery Maintenance	£241.00	£48.22	£289.00
c.) Parton Agriplant- drain on Green	£350.00	£70.00	£420.00
d.) J.E. Poultney- replant planters	£48.00		£48.00
e.) British Gas- electricity Village Hall	£218.01	£10.90	£228.91
f.) Plants the Jewellers- new plinth and engraving Golden Jubilee Award	£189.00		£189.00
g.) Broker Network- annual Insurance renewal	£1034.01		£1034.01
h.) Biffa Waste Services- Village Hall waste collection	£249.39	£49.88	£299.27
i.) Biffa Waste Services- Cricket Club waste collection	£53.57	£10.71	£64.28
j.) Biffa Waste Services- Village Hall waste	£249.39	£49.88	£299.27

collection			
k.) Town & Country Services- grass cutting	£90.00	£18.00	£108.00
l.) Greenfingers- grass cutting	£453.68	£90.74	£544.42
m.) Patrick Linehan- BKV materials	£15.24		£15.24

74. The May salaries for the Clerk, Transport Co-ordinator and litter picker have been met.

75. The Clerk outlined a problem that had arisen with the cutting of verges on Barlaston Park and the Brookhouse Drive Estates. On May 2nd Stafford & Rural Homes had told Greenfingers that they would no longer pay for this work as they had done previously since they took ownership of the areas. As a result the Clerk had contacted Staffordshire Highways to adopt this work and for Greenfingers to cut on their behalf at a cost of £150 per cut. The Clerk explained that any reimbursement for this would not match the charge by Greenfingers and would relate to 8 not 14 cuts per year. The Parish Council employed Greenfingers to cut grass in the village 14 times each year on a fortnightly basis from April through to October.

76. It was agreed that the Clerk instruct Greenfingers to cut the unmown areas as soon as possible to ensure that the areas were tidy and safe. It was agreed to delegate authority to the Chairman and the Clerk to agree further cuts of the area either monthly or fortnightly knowing there would be an additional cost of £150 per cut.

77. It was agreed that next year's precept should take account of these ongoing additional charges. The Chairman would contact senior management at Stafford & Rural Homes at a planned meeting to express that such a decision had been taken in April and not last year at the end of the growing season. The Clerk would meet with Greenfingers to clarify the arrangements.

Planning Update

78. The Planning Committee had met earlier in the evening but there were no significant issues, further consultation events relating to the proposed Gas Power Station at Meaford were noted.

Neighbourhood Plan

79. The Clerk reported that a total of 352 completed questionnaires were returned. This represents 29% of the total distributed. He suggested that a number of questions now arise:

a. Why did 848 not respond? A number of old or infirm would be unable to others may have forgotten.

b. Younger residents were in a minority in responding so how can their view on a Neighbourhood Plan be gauged?

c. Further consultation is now needed to meet the requirements of the plan timetable.

e. Local shops and businesses should be given an opportunity to participate in the formulation of the Neighbourhood Plan

f. Local groups should be included with 4 short questions which were agreed.

g. The groups to target would be

1. Young people through the scouts, boys brigade, school.

2. Young families via the school and Church.

3. Street surveys of people who haven't completed the questionnaire (forgot/ too long/ can't be bothered/ no interest?) just focussing on the questions above.

80. The Clerk agreed to push for more returns by advertising in the Stafford Newsletter and Radio Stoke; Councillors agreed to remind any residents they met to return the questionnaire as the deadline had been extended.

81. The Clerk would hold back until the next meeting on 79f above until these actions had been taken; the Council thought the return was good.

82. Without any detailed analysis his initial view was that there were no new generic issues emerging with most responses positive about the village.

Voluntary Transport Scheme

83. There had been 16 lifts in May. It was noted a possible conflict of interest between the Parish scheme that continued but struggled to recruit drivers and the Good Neighbour Scheme that might develop a similar service. It was agreed all parties should meet to agree a way forward.

Best Kept Village Competition 2014

84. Councillor Linehan provided a detailed written report on the actions undertaken by volunteers in the village which he found most encouraging.

85. It was agreed that any involvement by Parish Councillors was on a voluntary basis and as the impetus of the scheme developed it should be run by the volunteers.

Barlaston Health Centre

86. Councillor Dodd reported that for health and safety reason a spare wheelchair could not be kept at the Health Centre.

87. It was agreed that representatives of the Council should meet again with representatives of the Health Centre; several members outlined difficulties known to them and reported to them regarding appointments.

Uninvited Traders

88. Councillor Linehan suggested we provide details of a display notice for householders to prevent uninvited visitors. This could be included through the Heron.

Matters arising from the Open Forum.

89. It was agreed that the Council had no concerns with the use of *Roundup* in the parish but would suggest to Mr. Connell to take his concerns to a higher authority as suggested earlier in the meeting.

90. WWRD would be contacted over the concerns of dead and damaged trees. There was no suggestion to consider adopting the arboretum.

Correspondence and Clerk's Report

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

92. The Clerk had spoken to both Network Rail, Bakerbus and London Midland regarding the X1 bus service. The London Midland subsidy was to end on June 6th but the service was to run until June 30th and would then be reviewed. However no one would confirm the security of the service after that date.

93. The Clerk had raised a number of ongoing issues relating to the level crossings. He cited a recent long delay through a mechanical problem on a train; litter left by workmen and many points raised by residents over delays. The senior manager from Network Rail agreed to look into the matters and reply in due course. He had also questioned the viability of a footbridge over the line at Barlaston and the policy re the removal of the level crossing as was happening in some parts of the country.

94. It was agreed to consider an entry to the Stafford Borough Green Awards at the next meeting.

95. It was agreed to consider a request from the Good Neighbours Scheme for a pull up promotion banner once the exact cost was known.

96. It was noted that there had been vandalism to at least two vehicles in the Old Road area; Councillor Macmillan reiterated the absence of a police presence in the village or

representation at the monthly Council meeting; the Chairman cited an example of no follow up to a serious reported incident despite his efforts to obtain an update.

Any other business – Agenda items for the Parish Meeting to be held on Tuesday July 1st. 2014

97. It was agreed to discuss the Stafford Green Awards.

Note by Clerk

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

Village Hall Committee Report

99. Trustees at the meeting listened to reports from Councillors of ongoing concerns that village residents were being charged the same hire charge as commercial hirers. One particular commercial hirer had made inappropriate use of the Hall with Hot Yoga suggesting an unnecessary use of energy in the Hall.

100. It was felt that the Management Committee should consider a strategy towards a two tier system of charging allowing local bookings some reduced rates. Several Councillors felt that this should be investigated as well as a review of all the existing rates for hirers.

101. The Trustees commented on the excellent work over the years of the Management Committee in developing a healthy surplus and the many improvements that had happened in the Hall.

102. It was agreed that this concern and possible strategy should be proposed by a representative of the Trustees at the AGM.

Chairman

