

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting Held on Tuesday 25 April 2017

Councillors Present:

Cllr Fisher (Vice Chair)
Cllr E Philpott
Cllr P Linehan

Cllr I Moran
Cllr Macmillan

In attendance: Mrs K St Leger (Clerk)

A number of the Public were in attendance

Although a public open session was not on the agenda, questions were taken from the floor.

A request was made for a full set of accounts. It was clarified that the accounts were not on the agenda and that it is not a statutory requirement for these to be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting. The agenda is drawn up by the Chairman. However, the Parish Council would be happy to discuss the accounts and the increase in precept at the Parish Council meeting on 2 May 2017.

- 1 **Apologies.** Cllrs' Jones, Dodd, Hall, O'Dunne, Barnett and Brown submitted their apologies, it was resolved to accept these.
- 2 **Declarations of Interest.** There were no declarations of interest.
- 3 **Written applications for dispensations under the Localism Act 2011.** There were no written applications for dispensation.
- 4 **Chairman's Report.** Due to Cllr Jones' absence, Cllr Fisher read out the Chairman's report (Appendix A).
- 5 **Neighbourhood Plan Presentation.** Cllr Macmillan presented an overview of the Neighbourhood Plan via a PowerPoint presentation

For the past couple of years, the Parish Council along with the Borough Council, members of the Barlaston Community and other stakeholders have been working on a Neighbourhood Plan for Barlaston.

It is important to remember that the Plan is created by us, the residents of Barlaston, for our benefit. Once adopted, it will enable us to control the future direction of planning consents in our village. It is all about growth and development but exists to shape and protect our semi-rural and residential village environment.

Once adopted, the plan will be a legal document in Planning Terms and will be taken into consideration as such. In order to be effective, it must be a joined-up process and be used in conjunction with the Stafford Borough Council's Local Plan

In the development of our Plan, a great deal of time and effort has been spent on tailoring the Plan in Planning terms to meet the wider needs of Barlaston Residents, every effort has been made to take account of the issues, concerns and character of Barlaston along with the general consensus of opinions and wishes of the Residents. The Plan however, is a planning Document.

It is important to note the Planning hierarchy. The local Plan and our Neighbourhood Plan must dovetail and be harmonious with the National Policy Framework. Key to this is Community and Local Planning Authority Engagement and approval. The final stage of this process is a referendum.

Therefore, the plan will not be adopted if it doesn't meet the approval of the residents of Barlaston. Community Engagement is a key element of a Neighbourhood Plan. The initial reference point was the Village Survey that was carried out in 2011, this information formed the foundation of our aims and wishes, this process started in 2012.

We have been working with Hannah Barter from Urban Vision who delivered focus and real purpose to our mission. We owe her and her team a debt of gratitude.

Choosing sites for development was a very important part of this process. A SWOT analysis was undertaken and is shown in detail in the Plan and gave us a real insight into the issues and requirements of the Village - green belt and open (green) space preservation was a key priority for most people surveyed along with preserving the character of the village. Restricting or containing development was also a key issue. The people of Barlaston value a lively, vibrant village environment.

The policy in our Plan goes into quite a lot of detail but the main issues are around ensuring that any development fits in with the existing surroundings. We must ensure that any development does not do anything detrimental to our natural environment and makes allowances for wetter conditions. Our policies ensure that we try to improve Transport and Movement issues and do nothing detrimental

The next step is to make as many people aware of the plan as possible and to prepare for a Village referendum.

Questions:

Timescales

- The Parish Council are awaiting an up to date map showing the back of Leese's Garage. Once we are in receipt the plan will be issued to Stafford Borough Council who in turn will start environmental searches. This process takes approximately 6/7 weeks. If it is deemed no environmental surveys have to be undertaken we can start the consultation process with members of the public.
- A mail shot will be issued to all Barlaston residents and surrounding areas with a briefing pamphlet and questionnaire form.
- On-line versions of the Plan and questionnaires will be available along with a number of hard copies around the village.
- Repository bins will be publicised and available around the Village so everyone should have an opportunity to completed a survey.

It is critical that Barlaston implement the Plan, this ensures we maintain control on what happens in the Village.

The referendum will be organised by Stafford Borough Council following a strict criterion.

Wedgwood College

Concerns were raised with regards to the possible increase in traffic. Highways have not raised this as an issue. We had to put forward sites for development, this site has been vacant for 3 years and the Village would benefit for this being redeveloped. Leese's Garage had planning permission but has now lapsed

Once the Plan has been adopted, Developers will see that Environmental Searches have been undertaken and as long as they conform to the plan it would speed up the planning process.

Surgery

Can the Plan specify that we need a Doctors Surgery?

The Plan cannot specify we need a Doctors Surgery, however if a request to demolish or redevelop the existing Surgery was received, questions would be asked. This will need to be checked. The Parish Council are working to resolve the current situation.

Transport Link

Is there a plan to re-open the railway station?

There were no plans to reopen the Station at Barlaston or Wedgwood. Due to the delays already incurred at the barriers, concerns were raised over the increase in traffic delays.

6 Relaunch of the Neighbourhood Transport Scheme

There has been a scheme in the Village for 10 years whereby nothing has changed. Although the scheme ran well, the policies needed updating. The new scheme is based on an existing one from Sussex which enabled a 'light touch'. Richard Upton from Stafford Borough Council secured a grant of £2,500 to ensure the continuation of the scheme for the foreseeable future. The Scheme now runs independently of the Parish Council however it doesn't mean it cannot be accessed for funding in the future.

The drivers will be protected by Public Liability Insurance and a set rate of £0.45 per mile will be charged. Leaflets were distributed. More volunteer drivers are required, we are looking for one journey per week which we feel wouldn't be too onerous to commit to.

Questions:

Do volunteer drivers have an issue with their insurance?

It is recommended you advise your insurance company that you are a voluntary driver. The rate charged per mile is £0.45 which is within HMRC guidelines. They should make a note but nothing on your policy should change.

Date of Next Meeting

Date of next meeting is 7:30pm at the Ruth Dickson Meeting Room, Barlaston Village Hall on 2 May 2017.

Cllr Jones arrived following the conclusion of the meeting.

BARLASTON PARISH COUNCIL
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
APRIL 2017

This report covers Parish Council activities for 2016.

2016 was a difficult year for the Parish Council. Neil Hemmings, who had been the Parish Clerk since 2008 contracted Motor Neurone Disease and in the early part of the year resigned his position as he experienced increasing difficulty in undertaking his duties at the level required. Unfortunately, Neil Hemmings died in the latter half of 2016 and he is greatly missed by his many friends in the village and the surrounding area.

The Parish Council appointed John Blount, someone very experienced in Parish Council matters to cover the Clerk position on an interim basis and he was supported by Mrs Kim Squires, the Parish Clerk of Berkswich near Stafford.

John Blount did an excellent job in ensuring that all outstanding matters that arose following Mr Hemming's illness were cleared up and he took the opportunity to review and update the Council's policies and procedures. He also clarified the relationship of the Parish Council as Sole Trustee of the Village Hall with the Village Hall Management Committee.

Mr Blount also gave strong support to the incoming Parish Clerk, Mrs Karen St Leger, upon her appointment.

The Council is extremely appreciative of the support that it has received from Mr Blount and Mrs Squires during the time they have been working on Village matters.

Considerable progress has been made in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan which will be shortly distributed so that resident's views can be gained as part of a consultation process. The Plan has already been subject to considerable discussion within the Village. The Plan when approved will be an important document for the Village as it will have great influence on how the Village evolves in the period up to 2030, the expected life of the Plan for Stafford Borough. Work on the Neighbourhood Plan has been greatly facilitated by Ms Hannah Barter, a planning consultant with Urban Vision.

During the year three new Parish Councillors were appointed, Mr Andrew Brown of Longton Road, Mrs Irene Moran and Mr John Barnett, both of Meadow Road. The new members have made a strong contribution to the work of the Council.

I am very grateful to all of the Parish Councillors for the support that they gave to the Council during the year and the way that they ensured that the Council's business was properly undertaken. The challenges that the Council faced have been overcome and there is a strong basis upon which to go forward.

Gareth Jones (April 2017)