

**Minutes of the Barlaston Parish Council Annual Meeting
Held on Tuesday 16 May 2023**

Present:

Cllr P Fisher (Chairman)
Cllr C Hurst
Cllr V O'Dunne
Cllr D Bentley
Cllr S Tudor

Cllr A Hemming
Cllr D Borasinski
Cllr E Philpott
Cllr G Jones

Also In attendance:

Mrs K St Leger (Clerk)
No members of the public were in attendance.

1. Welcome and introductions

The retiring Chairman Cllr Fisher and Vice-Chairman Cllr Bentley welcomed those present.

2. Barlaston Parish Council/Declaration of Office

The newly elected councillors signed their acceptance of office forms under the Local Government Act, 1972, Section 16(3)

Councillors were also issued with the Disclosable Pecuniary Interests forms under Regulations 2012.

3. Election of Chair

Cllr Fisher was duly elected Chairman and signed the Chairman's Acceptance of Office form.

4. Election of Vice Chair – Cllr Tudor was duly elected as Vice Chair.

5. Apologies – Cllr Dando sent her apologies, it was resolved to accept these.

6. To determine formation of working groups in line with Parish Strategy

- **Finance Committee** (Operates across all pillars of the Strategy). The following Cllrs were appointed:
 - Cllr O'Dunne - Chair
 - Cllr Fisher
 - Cllr Borasinski
 - Cllr Hemming
 - Cllr Jones
 - Cllr Tudor
 - Cllr Philpott
- **Planning & Development** (Formerly Planning Committee) - encompassing Joint Playing Fields Committee
 - Cllr Fisher - Chair
 - Cllr Bentley
 - Cllr Hemming
 - Cllr Borasinski
 - Cllr Philpott
 - Cllr Tudor
- **Sustainability** (Formerly Environmental Committee)
 - Cllr Hurst - Chair
 - Cllr Borasinski
 - Cllr Dando
 - Cllr Jones
 - Cllr Philpott
 - Cllr Tudor
- **Sole Trustee Representative(s)** – to be encompassed within 'Business as usual'. All Cllrs act as Sole Trustee as a collective.
 - Chair of the Sole Trustee - Cllr Fisher

- Chair of the Village Hall Committee – Cllr Jones

Representatives on Village Hall Committee

- Cllr Jones - Chair
- Cllr Borasinski
- Cllr Bentley

- **HR Committee**

- Cllr Fisher
- Cllr O’Dunne

- **Community** (inc Entertainment / Health)

- Cllr Tudor - Chair
- Cllr O’Dunne
- Cllr Bentley
- Cllr Jones
- Cllr Fisher
- Cllr Dando

- **Aesthetics** (Village branding)

- Cllr Hemming - Chair
- All members of the Parish Council

7. Banking arrangements

It was resolved to add Cllr Fisher to the bank mandate.

8. Asset Register - The asset register dated 31 March 2023 was duly accepted.

9. Risk Register – The Clerk had amended the previous year’s risk register to address the issues raised by the internal auditor with regards to the level of general reserves and the use of private email addresses by the Clerk and Cllrs. It was resolved to accept these amendments.

10. Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year ending 31 March 2023

a) Annual Internal Audit Report, the Cllrs were issued with copies of the report.

- It was noted the Parish Council had left insufficient general reserves in the bank following end of financial year equating to 0.22 years. However, the Clerk noted the £36,000 earmarked reserve retained as an emergency fund regarding HMRC had now exceeded the 7-year term the internal Auditor had deemed the Parish Council to be at risk. These funds can now be reallocated. Therefore, it was deemed there was no financial risk to the Parish Council.
- The use of personal email addresses by the Clerk and the Parish Cllrs was not in line with JPAG recommendations. The Clerk to investigate and respond back to the Parish Council with recommendations.

b) Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023) of the Annual Return was accepted and duly signed by the Chairman and witnessed by the Clerk.

c) Section 2 (Accounting Statements 2022/2023) of the Annual Return was accepted and duly signed by the Chairman and witnessed by the Clerk.

d) The advertising of the exercise of public rights to commence on 5 June 2023

11. Budget Details for Financial Year 2023/2024 including earmarked reserves. The Clerk issued a financial summary (appendix A) the figures including the levels of earmarked reserves were duly accepted.

The Clerk highlighted the following:

Proposed budget for 2023/24

Opening Balance	79,168.00
Income	95,171.00
Total	174,339.00

Expenditure Administration	91,600.00
Non Parish Administration	11,270.00
Village Hall Administration	5,160.00
Total	108,030.00

Earmarked Reserves	65,000.00
General Reserves	1,309.00

Due to the risk with regards to the general reserves the grant budget has been reduced to £8000 (this figure has not been exceeded in the past 5 years, therefore there is limited impact on the village). It was noted there was no legal requirement for the Parish Council to issue grants.

Neighbourhood Plan figure reduced to 0. It was agreed to commence the Neighbourhood Plan review once grant funding has been made available.

Use the HMRC earmarked reserve of £36,000 to offset the costs of the Village Hall Porch build as the advice from the internal auditor is the risk of a fine is now very low as we have exceeded 7 years. The recommendation is to release these funds. Cllr Borasinski will look at the cost of the build to ensure the relevant procurement route is undertaken.

Use the £10,000 Village Hall Funds to fund the Project Management Element of the build (unless this figure can be sought from the Village Hall funds).

With regards to the Repair / Maintenance budget, there is little wiggle room as most of the expenditure has already taken place in April including the clean/repair of the War Memorial / MUGA and Tarmac Works and procurement of new assets.

With regards to the war memorial, the stone masons highlighted issues which needed addressing, their recommendation is to replace a large piece of damaged sandstone, use this piece to replace other areas of the memorial which had not been sympathetically repaired in the past, holes in the main column to be sealed with colour matched filler to stop water ingress and erosion, and the structure to be fully sealed to protect it. The total cost of the repair is £2,870.00. Although there was a financial risk undertaking the works now, it was felt that there was no option but to have the works undertaken. The Council resolved to approve the works.

With regards to the Capital Projects / New Assets budget the Clerk had obtained a price for 2 No. bus shelters, one for Old Road and one for Barlaston Park at £6,556. The Clerk to forward the specification to Cllrs for consideration at the June meeting.

With regards to 2024/25 financial year the precept will need to be raised to undertake any works not completed in 2023/24 and need to bear in mind the lease of Meadow Road and the provision of play equipment. The Clerk has approached the owners of the Wedgwood Memorial College requesting CIL monies be used for the Meadow Road site.

The budget throughout the year to be monitored closely by the Clerk and for her to highlight any risks as they arise.

12. Auditor for 2023/2024 – The Council duly appointed Kim Squires to undertake the audits in 2023/24.

13. Governing Documents:

- Standing Orders – these were duly accepted.
- Financial Regulations – these were duly accepted.

14. Minutes of the full Council Meeting of 4 April 2023 – These were accepted as a true and accurate record and were duly signed by the Chairman.

15. Matters arising from the meeting of 4 April 2023 and not otherwise on the agenda

See the Clerk's Report (Appendix B) covering the following:

92	Highway matters
160	Planting of trees in Barlaston initiative / Installation of hedge Downs Car Park
161	Wedgwood Memorial College
195	Lease of Meadow Road land
221	Neighbourhood Plan review grant
80	Installation of Christmas Tree at Orchard Place
119	Replacement noticeboard on Barlaston Park
134	Bus stop shelter outside Orchard Place
135	Drainage issues on the green (below the war memorial)
150	Lampposts Old Road
180	Play equipment on the Village Green
185	Tree for Orchard Place

- 186 Replacement of footpath on the Village Green / procurement of Manchester Bollards / installation of the King's Coronation bench
- 213 Annual Parish Meeting
- 215 Risk Assessment
- 218 Homes Plus

Reports from Councillors:

- 95 Parish Council Strategy, Cllr Hemming agreed to present the proposed strategy to the Annual Parish meeting on 30 May 2023.
- 133 Implementation of electric charge points in the village (deferred)

16. Committee updates:

- **Sustainability (Environmental)**
 - a. Willow structure (deferred)
 - b. To determine signage for the Wild Green following installation of new items. Stone Rotary would contribute £50 towards the signage.

17. To note financial matters:

(a) Bank reconciliation Reports – No reports were available due to the budget for 2023/24 not being resolved.

(b) Schedule of payments report April 2023. It was resolved to accept these payments.

Expenditure - Standard	NET	VAT	Payment
K St Leger – Salary / Expenses	1,202.14	0.00	BACS
Staffordshire County Pension	398.34	0.00	BACS
Rural Services Partnership Annual Subscription Inv RMTG/23/24/7	97.00	19.40	BACS
Buxus Green – Inv 202304 inc works on the Wild Hedge Planting	1,350.00	0.00	BACS
Barlaston Community Group / St John's Church Coronation Grant (inc £300 from the Borough Council)	800.00	0.00	BACS
Barlaston Bowls & Tennis Club Grant for fence works	1,000.00	0.00	BACS
Scouts Grant towards card readers	149.00	0.00	BACS
Barlaston Brownies – Donation towards hall hire costs	1,000.00	0.00	BACS
Wedgwood Cricket Club Grant towards Patsy Jones Memorial Festival Day	300.00	0.00	BACS
Artisan Painting & Decorating – Painting Manchester Bollards	220.00	0.00	BACS
Jeremy Construction – balance of payment re works on the Green	4,800.00	0.00	BACS
Wildlife & Bird Care Inv WBC0133	853.20	170.64	BACS
David Ogilvie Inv 189617 – King's Coronation Bench	1882.00	376.40	BACS
Zoom– Video Conferencing Inv INV199530550	12.99	2.60	DD
BT – Inv– Broadband Inv M044ZQ	16.00	3.20	DD
Pozitive Energy Gas inv 26181820233174485	333.49	16.67	DD
Pozitive Energy Electricity Inv 26181620233186379	123.00	6.15	DD
Income			
Tree Council Grant – Wild Hedge	1985.65	0.00	BACS
The Upper House – Donation to Wild Hedge Fencing	300.00	0.00	BACS
Gate Licence Fees	200.00	0.00	BACS
HMRC VAT Return	5568.82	0.00	BACS

18. Cricket Club Lease renewal - the Clerk has been in liaison with Wooliscrofts who work with other Staffordshire Parish Councils, if they look to extend the lease retaining the content of the document as it is, the costs would be in the region of £500 plus VAT and reasonable expenses. It was resolved to appoint Wooliscrofts to undertake the works.

19. Distribution of mugs following King's Coronation – Cllr Hurst dropped 174 mugs off at the School prior to the Coronation weekend, which were distributed at assembly. With regards to the

balance of the mugs available, the Clerk has been liaising with the various voluntary groups within the village to determine numbers. It was noted there are only 31 mugs available and would be distributed as follows (these figures exclude where volunteers are represented in other groups):

Community Transport 12 No.
Village Hall Committee 5 No.
Speed Watch 7 No.
Walking Group Coordinators 3 No.

If any spare it was resolved to issue these to Hannah Barter, Mr Chris Roberts and Mr Paul Goodall.

- 20. Upgrade of SID devices by Elan City to solar** – The volunteers are taking down and recharging the batteries on a regular basis and are charging these at their own cost. They have proposed the devices be upgraded to Solar. The cost of undertaking the works would be £626.52 per unit, total cost 1,879.56 plus VAT. It was resolved to accept this recommendation.

With regards to the posts, there is a query that the weight of the panels may be detrimental to the post, Mr Norman has tried to ascertain if these are adequate but the Company who supplied them is no longer in business.

- 21. Procurement of Solar Flashing School 20MPH signs** – The County Council safety officer has advised that they will not approve flashing signs for the area as there is no crossing patrol officer. The Clerk has gone back to her to explain that this is a designated crossing patrol area and that the vacancy is being looked at and to go back and review the situation.

- 22. Procurement of a Community noticeboard at the Downs Car Park in conjunction with the Upper House.** The Upper House are looking to advertise their functions at the Downs Car Park to passing walkers / visitors and have asked if the Parish Council would wish to share the costs of a noticeboard. Although the Parish Council has no objection to the proposal, having gone through the budget, there is unfortunately no spare capital available to undertake such a project.

- 23. Risk Assessment updates and actions**

- Rialtas Cloud – Date to be set

- 24. Grant application(s)**

- **Barlaston Cricket Club** – A request was received to provide 2 No. cigarette bins to ensure the site remains tidy, the Clerk can obtain these at £74.96 each plus VAT. The Parish Council did not deem this to be a suitable use of funds, however as children and animals could be adversely affected by discarded cigarette butts, they would fund one of the bins.
- **Annual Prostate Screening event** – The Clerk noted the Parish Council had agreed to contribute towards the event during 2022/23 financial year, however no money was awarded. It was therefore agreed to grant them £150 for last year and £150 towards this financial year's event.

- 25. Planning issue(s) and outcomes** – It was noted the works being undertaken in the field alongside Old Road (north of Yockerton) was being undertaken by Severn Trent Water repairing a main sewer.

- 26. Items for inclusion in next agenda**

- Wedgwood Bowl
- Dog fouling on the Cricket Pitch

- 27. Date of next meeting(s)**

- 30 May 2023 – Annual Parish Meeting.
- 6 June 2023 – Parish Council Meeting

BUDET COMPARISON DATA						
Receipts	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/24 Budget
Income	75423.00	74467.00	74631.00	75224.00	77255.00	74469.00
Non Parish Income	6771.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7418.00	7202.00
Village Hall Income	708.00	2236.00	11403.00	2297.00	9538.00	4500.00
VAT on Receipts	1173.00	0.00	8714.00	3803.00	4018.00	9000.00
	84075.00	76703.00	94748.00	81324.00	98229.00	95171.00
Expenditure						
Administration						
Wages & Salaries	11507.00	12295.00	10229.00	12354.00	13678.00	13500.00
PAYE/NI	1309.00	1264.00	691.00	1125.00	1305.00	1500.00
Pension	0.00	0.00	6342.00	4298.00	4875.00	4500.00
Training Staff	1140.00	1317.00	704.00	577.00	80.00	500.00
Training Members	200.00	1812.00	150.00	125.00	0.00	1000.00
Expenses / Allowances	1293.00	1020.00	51.00	44.00	254.00	100.00
Chairman's Allowance	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00	300.00
Consultancy	982.00	1114.00	1187.00	840.00	125.00	3000.00
Audit	480.00	485.00	171.00	493.00	539.00	600.00
Insurance	980.00	1905.00	980.00	980.00	1036.00	1200.00
Grounds Maintenance	5496.00	7247.00	4953.00	14249.00	15007.00	13600.00
Repairs & Maintenance	3020.00	4873.00	791.00	10390.00	2774.00	28500.00
Subscriptions	626.00	840.00	1271.00	887.00	1522.00	1500.00
Other office costs	2439.00	4158.00	2941.00	7078.00	10904.00	3000.00
Election	0.00	0.00	286.00	0.00	0.00	300.00
Capital Projects / New Assets	0.00	18081.00	14650.00	4791.00	22009.00	17500.00
Entertainment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9821.00	1000.00
	29722.00	56661.00	45647.00	58482.00	84179.00	91600.00
Non Parish Administration						
Lengthsman	794.00	2373.00	8048.00	1600.00	1316.00	1400.00
Repairs & Maintenance	211.00	6370.00	675.00	0.00	78.00	0.00
Grants & Donations	3052.00	1050.00	3400.00	7601.00	7131.00	8000.00
Leases	3120.00	0.00	0.00	1050.00	2687.00	1220.00
Civic Amenity Visits	325.00	447.00	0.00	0.00	1181.00	650.00
Neighbourhood Plan	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Electricity	738.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	8240.00	10239.00	12123.00	10251.00	12393.00	11270.00
Village Hall						
Wages	55.00	362.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Audit	137.00	142.00	146.00	149.00	154.00	160.00
Repairs & Maintenance	0.00	2299.00	26053.00	258.00	3680.00	0.00
Gas	695.00	1139.00	615.00	1067.00	2040.00	3000.00
Electricity	250.00	883.00	473.00	785.00	1421.00	1500.00
Telephone / Broadband	390.00	166.00	360.00	496.00	513.00	500.00
	1527.00	4991.00	27647.00	2754.00	7808.00	5160.00

Earmarked Reserves

Election	7000.00
Village Hall	10000.00
HMRS reallocate to Village Hall	36000.00
Play Park	12000.00
	65000.00

Clerk's Report May 2023

92 Highway updates

Cllr Parry will be visiting the Parish in the next few weeks with the head of Highways to review the safety issues on Station Road and Longton Road. An update to follow.

The Clerk complained that there had been no response with regards to the installation of flashing 20mph speed signs adjacent to Broughton Crescent, the County Highways Officer again came back with their previous prices for their road painting options etc., but this is not what was requested and had been rejected yet again. It is disappointing that the Parish have agreed to pay for this signage but had no positive response from the County Council. This has again been submitted to County for consideration. The Clerk is in the process of obtaining prices, however we would require Highways to approve the installation and to identify suitable locations.

It is noted the Parish Council have procured 4 No. safety speed characters for Station Road. These are due to be delivered imminently.

- 160 Barlaston tree initiative** – The hedge has been installed. The initiative was fully supported by the School. The grant funding has now been received to offset the majority of the expenditure. The fencing has to be installed which will be scheduled imminently. Mulch will then be applied.

Volunteers are looking forward to help seed around the wild play area.

- 161 Wedgwood Memorial College** – No further update has been received to date.

- 195 Land at Meadow Road lease** – The Clerk has been chasing the Borough for an update on the advertising of the lease but no response has been received.

- 214 Cricket Club Lease** – Wooliscrofts Solicitors are happy to undertake the lease works. Their recommendation is to extend the lease and not change the content, this would be the cheapest option at approx £500 plus VAT plus any out-of-pocket expenses. They need sign off by the Parish Council to commence with the works, the Clerk has already forwarded a copy of the existing lease. They will require the representative information for the Parish Council. The Cricket Club have already forwarded their information.

The Solicitor is used to undertaking Parish Council works and comes highly recommended.

- 221 Neighbourhood Plan review** – We are waiting for the Government to announce any new funding.

- 80 Installation of Christmas Tree on Orchard Place** – The tree has been installed. All works are now complete. Cllr Philpott expressed disappointment at the size and shape of the tree given the costs.

- 119 Replacement noticeboard on Barlaston Park** – The noticeboard has been delivered. Fiskars have asked if they could install it to address any liability moving forwards. With regards to planning, this would need to be applied for retrospectively if required.

- 133 Implementation of electric charge points in the village** – A date is yet to be agreed for a visit by RAW to survey the site.

- 134 Bus stop shelter outside Orchard Place** – It is noted planning permission will be required along with a s115e 'licence to plant' notice, the County Council have been approached to see if this is feasible. There has been no movement on this.

We are also still waiting to see if Fiskars would be happy for a new shelter to be installed at Barlaston Park.

The Clerk has obtained a quotation for two Harrowby Standard Shelters with perch seating, including delivery and fitting @ £6,556 plus VAT from Broxap, the Company from Newcastle Under Lyme who supplied the Manchester Bollards.

- 135 Drainage issues on the green (below the war memorial)** – The works will be scheduled in June.

- 150 Lamppost Old Road** – Due to the list of expenditure scheduled for 2023/24, the Clerk recommends this project is postponed/cancelled.

- 180 Plan Equipment on the Village Green** - All items have been installed with the exception of the additional stepping logs / wooden bench.

- 185 Tree for Orchard Place** – This has been installed.

- 186 Replacement of Footpath / Installation of Manchester Bollards** – Works are now complete, including the installation of the King's Coronation bench.
- 213 Annual Parish Meeting** – A projector and screen will be on site for the presentation(s). To date some of the volunteer groups has not confirmed if they will be in attendance. The food has been scheduled.
- 215 Risk Assessment**
- Pavement repairs on the green – works complete.
 - MUGA improvements to address ROSPA requirements – works complete.
- 218 Homes Plus** – the following issues have been forwarded for action:
- Lighting issues outside Kitsons Chemist
 - Blocked drain at Kitsons Chemist
 - Deteriorating tarmac
 - Flooding issues
 - Damaged bollards