



AUDLEM
PARISH COUNCIL

AUDLEM PARISH COUNCIL
c/o Cheshire Association of Local Councils
Park View Business Park
Combermere
Whitchurch
SY13 4AL
Phone: 07507 732832
parishcouncil@audlempc.co.uk.c.uk

**Minutes of meeting of Audlem Parish Council
held in the Methodist Church, Shropshire St. Audlem
on Monday 12th June 2023 at 7.00pm.**

Present: Kate Down (KD), Steve Elliott (SE), George McLaren-Brown (GMB), Lynette Hopkins (LH), Stephen Hopkins (SH), Adriana Roscoe (AR), Jean Stainthorpe (JS) and Geoff Seddon (GS) (Chair)

In attendance: Katrina Chalk (Clerk to APC)

PART A

Members of the public in attendance: 7

23/22 Apologies for absence

Cllrs Tim Lawton and Chris May
Ward Cllr Rachel Bailey

23/23 Public participation

A resident asked if Ward Cllr Rachel Bailey had, over the past four years, suggested that Turnpike Field should have a *change of use* from agricultural to recreational? The Chair advised that he had no recollection of this, nor did LH, who on the Parish Council when Turnpike Field was first acquired, however stood down from the council in September 2020. The Chair stressed that he couldn't speak for the whole of the last four years, as he hasn't been continually serving over that period. A resident also asked who the Solicitors were who oversaw the purchase of the field – The Chair advised that it was Hibberts LLP Solicitors.

23/24 Declarations of Interest

Personal Interests were declared by:
Cllrs L Hopkins and S Hopkins – Agenda item 23/27 - Planning application 23/2109N – neighbouring property
Cllrs K Down, S Elliott and J Stainthorpe – Agenda item 23/30 iii – BBQ organised by Audlem Ramblers Society – members of the aforementioned.

23/25 Requests for Dispensation – none declared.

23/26 Confirmation of Minutes

Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on **15th May 2023**.
Proposed SE, seconded by JS – All in favour.

The Chair asked Members if item 23/31. iv Allotments could be moved up the agenda as a member of the public wished to speak on this matter.

LH advised the meeting that the original contract between the sellers and APC for Turnpike Field states that the field could, potentially, be used for allotments as they are deemed recreational. However, the Deed of Dedication precludes allotments. LH enquired if TFWG had sought advice from a Solicitor regarding this matter?

LH has a list of 15 residents who would be interested in an allotment and APC has a duty to carry out some research to see if there is any land available locally.

A resident advised the meeting that 15 years ago APC was approached to source land for allotments; the possibility of some land from local farmers was explored, but none of the farms approached were able to release land. Whilst Turnpike Field was considered, the site was not necessarily suitable as it slopes, there are soggy areas, and its plots would eliminate the use of the field for other activities.

Action: APC will arrange to contact local landowners to see if they are willing to donate a parcel of land to facilitate an allotment.

23/27 Planning Matters

The Chair of the Planning Group (KD) went through Planning Applications/ Planning Appeal 2,3 and 4

	Planning Application	Address	Description	Decision
1	23/00335E	Turnpike Field	Retrospective Planning Application for change of material use and operational development.	
2	23/2064N	Bunsley Bank Farm, Bunsley Bank, Audlem, CW3 0HS	Prior Approval for Change of use of Barn (no.5) to provide a 5-bedroom dwelling	No objections
3	22/1302N	Field to the east of Audlem Road, Audlem	Appeal to the Secretary of State	Response sent to CE Planning will be forwarded to Secretary of State
4	23/2109N	Woodgreen 29 Whitchurch Road Audlem	Demolition of porch, garage and conservatory	No objections

Applications 2 & 3 – **Decisions Proposed by KD seconded by AR – All in favour.**
 Application 4 - **Proposed by KD seconded by GMB – 6 in favour, 2 abstentions.**

Members discussed application 23/00335E – retrospective Planning Application for Turnpike Field with the Chair outlining the issues raised by the Enforcement Officer from Cheshire East and the need to submit the required documentation as soon as possible to ensure the field can be used for events and car parking, as has been the case for many years.

Application 1 – **Proposed by GS and Seconded by AR – All in favour.**

- Update on Cheshire East Planning Decisions if any received.

23/2039N – Granted.

23/28 Financial Matters

- i. Council **APPROVED** the Internal Auditor's report and recommendations from Year End 31st March 2023
Proposed GS, seconded by SH, All in favour.

DRAFT

ii. Council **APPROVED** the payment schedule 6th May to 31st May 2023

Agenda Item ChALC/APC Payments of Schedule 6th May 2023 to 31st May 2023								
Filing Number	Date	Supplier	Invoice NO.	Item	Net cost	VAT	Total	ChALC confirmed
1	04/05/2023	Hales Retail Sawmills	1061	Easy edge brow/coach screws/stock	£ 7.72	£ 1.55	£ 9.27	25/05/2023
2	31/05/2023	M Dolan	May-23	Wages for May 2023	£ 416.00	£	£ 416.00	25/05/2023
3	31/05/2023	K Chalk	May-23	Wages for May 2023	£1,128.	£ -	£1,128.	25/05/2023
4	10/05/2023	Shires Accountant	SHI - 1282	Pension Redecoration	£ 50.00	£ 10.00	£ 60.00	25/05/2023
5	24/04/2023	Hedges Direct (Reimburs	#HDT0035 0061	Plants for Turnpike Field	£ 66.30	£ 13.30	£ 79.60	25/05/2023
6	12/05/2023	Audlem First Responders	Email attached for transparency and record	DONATION (covers Internal Audit 2021/22)	£ 100.00	£ -	£ 100.00	Unable to make payment due to account details
7	30/04/2023	Tony Hamer &	41454	MOT 40mm Down	£ 436.50	£ 87.30	£ 523.80	25/05/2023
				Total				

Although the financial check was carried out. One payment had not been made, although confirmation had been received that it had been made (£79.60 – line 5). Clerk following this up and will update Members at the next meeting.

Resolution: Proposed by SH, seconded by SE, All in favour.

- i. Council **NOTED** the up to date expenditure sheet.
- ii. Council **NOTED** Finance Committees first financial check of 2023/24
Financial check completed. One entry error raised during check – see minute under 23/28 ii above.
- iii. Council **NOTED** and **DISCUSSED** Cheshire East Precept payment schedule and proposed handover timescale between ChALC and APC.
- iv. Council **APPROVED** JS attending a training course on social media - £60.00.

Resolution: Proposed by GS, seconded by KD, 7 in favour, 1 abstention.

- v. Land Registry fees of £80 for Turnpike Field - **Deferred until the outcome of the Retrospective Planning application is known.**
- vi. Council **APPROVED** instructing a Planning Agent to assist with the retrospective planning application:
 - a. Richard Lee – Project Planning and Property Consultant - **£1,850 plus VAT**
 - b. Goodwin Planning Services – **£2,000 to £2,500 plus VAT**

Members discussed the two quotes received. A query was raised in relation to the cost of any technical drawings required and how this would impact the budget set against Turnpike Field (as the cost of the planning application and associated works will come from this budget).

Mr R Jones offered to contact the Chamber of Commerce as they may be able to recommend a Planning Agent who could carry out all the related works.

Resolution: Members approved to engage Richard Lee if he is able to give an idea of what the costs would be for technical drawings and after Mr R Jones' has contacted the Chamber of Commerce and will contact the Clerk. In view of the urgency, Members agreed to give the Clerk and the Chair delegated authority to appoint a Planning Agent once costs have been determined and Members notified.
Proposed by GS, seconded by SE, all in favour.

The Chair thanked Mr Jones for his assistance.

23/29 Communication Group – no report this month.

23/30 Turnpike Field

- i. The change of Turnpike Field Working Group to become Turnpike Field Management Committee – Terms of Reference will be circulated prior to the meeting. - **Deferred until the outcome of the Retrospective Planning application is known.**
- ii. Members to be **UPDATED** on the Deed of Dedication – - **Deferred until the outcome of the Retrospective Planning application is known.**

- iii. Members **APPROVED** the booking for the ARS bbq on 26th August.
Proposed by GS, seconded by SH, 5 in favour, 3 abstentions.
- iv. Members to **DISCUSSED** the installation/expenditure of the pond dipping platform.
The Clerk asked Members to take into consideration, before approving this purchase, the possibility of the planning application not being granted and the money received from a generous donor being spent on an item which couldn't be used.
Action: The Chair will contact the supplier of the platform and ask if the order can be put on hold for the moment.
- v. Members **APPROVED** the maintenance schedule for Turnpike Field - £830 in total.
Proposed by SE, seconded by JS, All in favour.
- vi. Members **NOTED** the donation of £100 has been received towards the cost of signage for the Turnpike Field.
Resolution: SE will order the signs which are required to advise who to contact in an emergency, should access to the field be required, as there is a combination padlock on the entrance gate.
Proposed by JS, seconded by SH, All in favour.

23/31 Village Management Group (VMG)

- 23/31. i Members **NOTED** crime stats supplied (April 23).
 - 2/4. Lost property: Phone found in the park.
 - 5/4. Suspicious person: Coole Lane.
 - 10/4. Road Related Offence: Reports of drink driver Mckelvey Way.
 - 10/4. Burglary Other: Theft of footballs from shed on tennis courts.
 - 17/4. Domestic incident.
 - 18/4. RTC: Cheshire Street no injuries.
 - 22/4. Criminal Damage: Damage to vehicle in public car park.
 - 27/4. Road Related: Road rage incident on Shropshire Street.
- 23/31.ii Tree management for the conservation area adjacent to the Scout and Guide Hall
Action: SH will apply to CE Planning for the work to be undertaken – this is free of charge.
In addition to the trees adjacent to the hall, those alongside the bungalows on Churchfields may also require some maintenance.
- 23/31.iii Update on the venue for the Annual Village Meeting
Action: AR will check to see if the Public Hall is available on 20th July, if not the school is available on 19th July.
- 23/31. iv Members to DISCUSS the request to financially support the purchase of new flags, which are displayed on the Church roof.
Deferred – to be discussed at the 2024/25 budget meeting in November.

- 23/31. v Gully clearance information **NOTED** – the situation with the gullies will continue to be monitored by APC.
- 23/31. vii Meeting with CE Road Safety Team Leader **NOTED**.

23/32 Report by Ward Councillor

The report submitted was **NOTED** by Members.

23/33 Appointment of members to existing committees and as per Standing Orders 4 d. VI. - Shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee, appoint the Chair of the standing committee

Membership of the following Committees and Groups was agreed:

- Finance Committee

Cllr Tim Lawton was proposed by GS, seconded by AR, All in favour.

- Communication Group
- Planning Group
- Village Management Group
- Internal & Staff Committee Group
- Turnpike Field Working Group

Representatives to the following organisations were agreed:

- Burial Board, Public Hall, ADAPT, ADAS, Traders, ChALC, Canal & River Trust

Resolution: Proposed by GS, seconded by SH, All in favour

23/34 Date of Next Meeting and Items for Future Agenda

The next meeting will be held on **Monday 10th July 2023** in the **Methodist Church, Shropshire St, Audlem, Crewe CW3 0AE**.

Exclusion of Public

At this point the Chair asked that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of an item pursuant to Section 100 (A) 4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and public interest would not be served in publishing the information. He thanked them for attending.

PART B

- 23/35** Council **AGREED** for the information on Longhill Moss to be collected from Rostons. This matter will then be discussed by the Village Management Group.

Action: GMB and AR will collect the documentation from Rhostons.

23/36 Council to **NOTED** the update from Cheshire Police regarding the ongoing alleged fraud investigation.

Update for the council: “A Police investigation continues. This is a complex investigation, and all investigative avenues are being explored. Moving forward Police will ensure updates are provided to Katrina Chalk. As soon as a significant development occurs then additional information will be provided”.

Action: The Clerk will raise a complaint to John Dwyer, Police Commissioner for Cheshire regarding the timescale of the ongoing investigation into the alleged fraudulent act with public money.

23/37 Council to **APPROVED** the recommendations from Staffing Committee regarding the interviews for the new Clerk and outcomes.

Members were advised that two candidates were interviewed. The second candidate was offered the position.

The successful candidate is a serving Parish Councillor for APC, Cllr Chris May. Subject to satisfactory references, Chris would be required to step down as Parish Councillor prior to commencing this unpaid role (expenses can be claimed).

Members asked if the serving Clerk could be a mentor for a few weeks after the hand. She advised Members, this was not possible.

Members were reminded, and acknowledged, the membership for NALC and SLCC should be applied for as soon as possible.

Resolution: Members approved the appointment.

Proposed by AR, seconded by LH, All in favour.

23/38 Response to Cheshire East Highways regarding the email from an Officer restating the conversation between himself, SE and a member of the TFWG.

Members discussed the reported conversation and discussed the merit of responding prior to the retrospective planning application or once submitted.

Resolution: AR proposed SE should send the email immediately, from his APC email address, seconded by JS, 5 in favour, 3 abstentions – Cllrs GMB, LH and SH.

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.38pm, thanking Members for their attendance.