



**AUDLEM**  
PARISH COUNCIL

**AUDLEM PARISH COUNCIL**  
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Minutes of meeting of Audlem Parish Council  
held in the Methodist Church, Shropshire St. Audlem  
on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 7.00pm.

**Present:** Geoff Seddon [GS] (Vice Chair), Tim Lawton [TL], Jean Stainthorpe [JS], Paul Cawood [PC], Chris May [CM], Kate Down [KD], Adriana Roscoe [AR].  
**In attendance:** Dr Kate Howe (Locum Clerk), Rachel Bailey (Cheshire East Ward Councillor), Jackie Weaver (ChALC).

**PART A**

**Members of the public in attendance (MOP's): 8**

**22/128      Apologies for absence:**

(a) Council **NOTED** formal apologies received from Cllr. Steve Elliott

**22/129      Public participation**

- a) MOP attending is potential purchaser of property opposite Church. He wanted to raise serious concerns regarding traffic issues – vehicles regularly mounting pavement and potential for public safety and property damage ensuing. He has made enquiries of local police who confirm they have no jurisdiction. He reported signalling system is not working, it surely should be a one way system through the village. GS responded this has been a problem identified in Audlem over many years. The signalling lights are better 'off' than 'on' – causing more problems when flashing. There used to be bollards outside Old Post Office properties. APC has written to CEC previously expressing concern. APC can do that again. CEC have previously considered traffic light system, but due to length of road it would cause serious back up of traffic through village. **Clerk to write to CEC Highways raising the issue of damage to buildings and ask for a site visit.** GS advised that separately, ADAPT have also raised issue with CEC requesting 20 mph system through village.
- b) MOP registered formal concern there had been no APC public consultation on Fields in Trust registration. Turnpike Field is APC's greatest potential asset for raising income by sale of any parcel of land. GS responded, as from April APC will have money again through precept payment. Turnpike Field could only be sold as agricultural land which would be at a loss. Turnpike Field was purchased in order to ensure no development takes place which was wish of residents. CE Local Plan states area outside of development boundary. Audlem residents have now been informed, via statements on APC website and AOL, due to 'loss of reserves' there is no longer any money to pay for a car park as previously anticipated. If money had not been 'removed' from the reserves account, a green car park could have been constructed to support community events on the field. Partnership with Field in Trust is in perpetuity to ensure no development can take place.
- c) MOP (at end of public meeting) congratulated APC councillors on their willingness to allow MOP's to interject throughout the meeting, he found this very refreshing, by comparison to

Parish Council meetings he has been a councillor on. GS thanked MOP for his positive comments regarding APC management of meetings.

**22/130      Declarations of Interest**

None.

**22/131      Requests for Dispensation**

None.

**22/132      Confirmation of Minutes**

CM proposed, PC seconded, (TL abstained due to absence at January meeting), Council **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on **9<sup>th</sup> January 2023**. Signed as accurate minutes of meeting by APC Vice Chair – Geoff Seddon.

**22/133      Election of Members to Committees & Working Groups**

Due to retirement of Chairman Cllr. Derek Winskill, and co-options of new councillors, Council considered, elected, and **RESOLVED** to appoint APC members to the following:

- a. **New Chair of APC Council** – Geoff Seddon was proposed by PC, KD seconded, and Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Geoff Seddon as new Chair of APC and GS accepted. **New Vice Chair of APC Council** - Tim Lawton was proposed by GS, CM seconded, and Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Tim Lawton as new Vice Chair of APC and TL accepted.
- b. **Chair of Planning Group** - Kate Down was proposed by GS, TL seconded, and Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Kate Down as new Chair of Planning Group.
- c. **Chair of Staffing Committee** – Adriana Roscoe was proposed by JS, TL seconded, and Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Adriana Roscoe as new Chair of Staffing Committee.
- d. **Chair Village Management Group** – Chris May was proposed by KD, JS seconded, and Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Chris May as Chair of Village Management Group. Additional **new member of Village Management Group** Steve Elliott was proposed by GS, CM seconded, and Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Steve Elliot as new member of VMG.
- e. **Vice Chair of Finance Committee** – Chris May was proposed by TL, AR seconded, and Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Chris May as Vice Chair Finance Committee.
- f. Representatives on:
  - o **Burial Board** – Adriana Roscoe and Steve Elliott were proposed by GS, KD seconded and Council **RESOLVED** to appoint.
  - o **Public Hall Committee** – Kate Down was proposed by TL, JS seconded, Council **RESOLVED** to appoint.

**22/134      Planning Matters**

Council **NOTED** – consultation on:

- **23/0467D** - Discharge of conditions 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13 on application 20/4811N: conversion of ex building in Churchfields to a holiday let at 15-17, Stafford Street, Audlem, CS3 0AW – **NO RESPONSE REQUIRED**.

Council **NOTED** update from Chair on two planning decisions notified:

- **22/3466N** Sweetbriar Cottage, Damson Lane: Front first floor extension and new roof – **APPROVED**.

- **22/4034N** 5 Mill Lane, Swanbach: Two-storey side extension and single storey front extension – APPROVED.

**22/135**      **Staffing Matters**

- a) JS proposed, AD seconded, Council **RESOLVED** to appoint new permanent Clerk by recommendation of Staffing Committee – appointee Katrina Chalk – start date 20<sup>th</sup> February.
- b) GS proposed, TL seconded, Council **RESOLVED** to approve handover and shared Cloud and email access / working arrangements between Locum Clerk and new permanent Clerk as agreed handover schedule starting 20<sup>th</sup> February to be completed by 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023.
- c) Council **NOTED** Kate Howe Locum Clerk formal resignation from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 following 6-week handover to new permanent Clerk. GS requested formal thanks to be **NOTED** by Council for Kate's advice, support and positive approach to all challenging issues impacting Audlem Parish Council over the last 9 months. GS commented that without Kate's ongoing positive help, in role of Locum Clerk, APC would have been unable to continuing operating.
- d) Council **NOTED** retirements of previous Chair - Derek Winskill and previous Vice Chair – Ralph Warburton. GS requested formal thanks to both councillors from Audlem Parish Council, be formally **NOTED** in the meeting minutes, for their unstinting support of Audlem Parish Council during the challenging issues impacting Audlem Parish Council over the last 9 months. GS also thanked Paul Cawood for his efforts in this period.

**22/136**      **Financial Matters**

- (a) TL proposed, CM seconded, all **RESOLVED** to give retrospective approval to payments made (via ChALC) from 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 to 10<sup>th</sup> February 2023 (as schedule circulated) authorised by the Clerk using delegated authorities (since January meeting) due to urgent business need.
- (b) Council **NOTED** Lloyds account closed and need to wait for new permanent Clerk to start to open new Lloyds account with new Clerk as administrator on 20<sup>th</sup> February. TI proposed, CM seconded, Council **RESOLVED** to open new Lloyds bank account with previously approved signatories.
- (c) Council **NOTED** APC currently have no bank account to receive precept.
- (d) TL proposed, GS seconded, Council **RESOLVED** to approve Clerk retrospective delegated authority to notify CE to remove previously advised Lloyds bank details from record as recipient of APC precept. **RESOLVED** to approve Clerk retrospective delegated authority to notify CE to reinstate ChALC as recipient of APC precept for first 2023-24 precept payment.
- (e) TL proposed, CM seconded, Council **RESOLVED** to approve ChALC continue to make payments on behalf of APC until new Lloyds bank set up, new signatories and authorisation approved, new permanent Clerk formally authorised to make payments on behalf of APC.
- (f) TL proposed, KD, Council **RESOLVED** procedure for Lengthsman timesheets to be approved by Chair of Staffing, notified to new permanent Clerk and paid by ChALC.
- (g) TL proposed, CM seconded, Council **RESOLVED** new permanent Clerk timesheets / payments be authorised by Chair and notified to ChALC for payment.
- (h) Council **NOTED** new permanent Clerk and Lengthsman payments need to be notified to Shires for payroll calculation NIC / tax / pension contributions.
- (i) TL proposed, CM seconded, Council **RESOLVED** Locum Clerk timesheets be authorised by Chair for notification to LCC for payment.
- (j) Council **NOTED** HMRC advice received - outdated VAT 126 form used to make two VAT reclaims (on contracted professional advice of DCK Accounting Solutions). Council **NOTED** need to re-apply using new form and provide additional information relating to ChALC bank account and new postal address. £8,121.67 submitted to Dec 2022 and £1,300 to be submitted. Rachel Bailey (in attendance) requested 'full transparency on this issue in recorded minutes. Council **NOTED** that on this occasion due to financial issues impacting

APC it was contracted forensic auditors DCK who made the VAT claim on behalf of APC. Previously it had been the permanent Clerk role to do so. In future it would be within Clerk responsibilities to submit VAT reclaim.

(k) TL proposed, AR seconded, Council **RESOLVED** to use and notify all suppliers / partners of ChALC as registered office and postal address to match bank account recipient and payment provider. New Clerk to notify all of new postal address.

(l) TL proposed, CM seconded, Council **RESOLVED** to arrange for the contract with EDF Energy to be renewed in line with paragraph 11.1.a of the Council's Financial Regulations. New Clerk to address as matter of urgency.

(m) Council **NOTED** APC had paid the re-payment on the PWLC loan on 13th February 2023.

(n) Council **NOTED** due to financial situation ChALC requested on behalf of APC that CE consider advancing some of the precept – due to be paid in April - to enable ChALC to make pre-committed payments on behalf of APC for February and March. Council **NOTED** CE have today provided written confirmation of their intention to provide an advance on the APC half year precept payment for 2023-24. Locum Clerk and Jackie Weaver (ChALC) have been working closely with Tracy Baldwin of CE on APC financial situation. Tracy Baldwin has advised CE will continue to monitor closely APC financial situation and accounting practices. CE advise APC will receive precept payments quarterly. Locum Clerk to minute precept advance payment of £40,000, as 'loan' via ChALC and ongoing CE accounting support in full in APC 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023 Council minutes.

## 22/137 Communications

Council **NOTED** the release of four public statements:

- Audlem Parish Council Changes 1.2.23
- Report of Audlem Parish Council Meeting 15.1.23
- Audlem Parish Council Precept 20.1.23
- Looking Forward released on 4.2.23.

## 22/138 Turnpike Field

Council **NOTED** verbal report from Chair of Turnpike Field Working Group meeting:

- a) Council **NOTED** TFWG was continuing with the application to register Turnpike Field with Fields in Trust. JS read related item from APC November 2022 minutes evidencing this had been previously approved and **RESOLVED** by APC Council.
- b) Council **NOTED** update on Muddy Paths project – boardwalk successfully installed at no cost to APC – awaiting payments of grants from PNFS and CE and all work done by TFWG volunteers using their own machinery (for which Audlem Parish Council wish to record their thanks). Now need to chain harrow ruts in the field when weather improves.
- c) Council **NOTED** report on application to community Cash Fund to improve the Green Lane gate entrance awaiting response.
- d) The natural environmental **habitat** of Turnpike Field is blossoming. School and community groups are expressing interest in accessing. JS proposed, AR seconded, Council **RESOLVED** to approve installation of a pond dipping platform on the pond in the upper field at a cost of £500. Council **NOTED** costs to be funded by village groups.
- e) Post February Council Meeting Agenda circulation – JS notified Council of interest received from detectorists wishing to investigate Turnpike Field. Council **NOTED** they have formally advised they have their own insurance. Detectorists wish to apply giving 2 days' notice of their intention to come to site and survey. They have offered a £100 donation to APC. Rachel Bailey and Jackie Weaver advised Council, as this was not an item on the formally notified agenda – this interest was notified subsequent to circulation of formal agenda – item should be deferred to March agenda.

## 22/139 Village Management

Council **NOTED** Chair of VMG verbal report:

- a) Council **NOTED** January Crime Data for Audlem supplied by PCSO Nick Jarvis (document circulated) and that CM met with PSCO Nick Jarvis.
- b) Council **NOTED** Clerk had written to Cheshire East regarding request to allow parking outside the marked bays during alteration to Medical Practice. Chair read out letter sent to CE dated 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023.
- c) CS proposed, GS seconded, Council **RESOLVED** to notify Cheshire East that Audlem Parish Council no longer wishes to proceed with the transfer of the playing field and car park. Council **NOTED** at the time, APC deposited £1300 with the solicitor acting for them to pay the estimated legal costs of CEC. As APC are withdrawing, those funds can be released back into APC bank account. Rachel Bailey interjected to advise that CE policy has changed from wholesale transfer to lease agreement. This should be reconsidered. CS agreed to ascertain current CE situation and report back to March Council meeting.
- d) Council **NOTED** VMG are investigating ways they can support village youth and potential external funding available following the demise of the Youth Club. PC commented young children are well catered for in the village, it's teenagers and young adults who have no resource. VMG will pursue this matter, taking advice from Rachel Bailey on partnership opportunities working with CEC and report to March Full Council with proposals.
- e) Council **NOTED** the letter received (and circulated) from Adderley Parish Council regarding flooding on Green Lane. CM reported he had attended meeting with Head of CE Highways in January. PC advised resulting from this letter, he has been in direct contact with Clerk from Adderley Parish Council. Adderley PC have made formal complaint to Shropshire Council regarding temporary traffic lights and received no response. Rachel Bailey interjected to advise costs for mitigation of funding at Railway Bridge is £90k. CE hold far smaller 'pot' of shared Shropshire Council / CEC funding from Dept. of Transport (at £35k). PC advised Adderley PC are opting to take legal route. Costs of temporary traffic lights at currently running at £1,200 per month. Rachel Bailey agreed there should be better engagement and cross border partnership working between Shropshire / Cheshire East Highways on this capital project. CM proposed, JS seconded, Council **RESOLVED Clerk to write to Cheshire East regarding serious ongoing community concerns regarding flooding issues. Clerk to notify Adderley Parish Council Clerk of APC Resolution.**
- f) Council **NOTED** VMG will consider ways to celebrate the Coronation within the community and how such events may be managed and funded and report to March meeting.

**22/140** **Report by Ward Councillor**

Council **NOTED** verbal report from Cheshire East Councillor Rachel Bailey:

- NALC and CE have identified 'pots' of funding available for Town & Parish Councils to bid for to celebrate Coronation.
- Visit to Audlem with CE Highways to allocate £6,500 for Highways work and crossing for new development.
- Corbrook and work to remove silt from gully should be funded by CE.
- Paddock Lane – looking to address sink holes – where cyclist was badly injured.
- Green Lane – hoping to get groundwork on pathway.
- A530 scheduled to open next week – will be single traffic and some closures.
- Current scoping exercise for brown signage.
- Health & Wellbeing visits are available. CE service team come out to do basic medical checks. No cost to APC.

- Representatives from Airband (acting for digital Cheshire) wish to attend APC meeting. Contract finishes in March. Locum Clerk again advised she had been in communication with Airband representatives. However, required urgent Agenda items for Audlem PC have been extremely challenging over last 9 months. Locum Clerk advised no availability within 2 hour session to accommodate a 20 minute Airband presentation due to need to transact urgent APC business at every meeting.

**22/141**      **Office Matters**

Council **NOTED** verbal update from Locum Clerk:

- a) Despite regular chasing there was still no progress on claim actioned to Santander Bank via their Fraud Team (with whom the Clerk was in direct contact). MOP advised Clerk to correspond with Legal Team at Santander for more prompt response to claim.
- b) Claim against Santander had been actioned to Financial Services Ombudsman. Paper forms need to be completed and all correspondence with Santander must be copied and supplied to Ombudsman. With handover to new permanent Clerk this will be administered by existing Locum Clerk and handed over to Chair of Council.
- c) Members of Finance Committee, Jackie Weaver and Locum Clerk were agreeing dates for a meeting with Ryan Jones in February to take his advice.

**22/142**      **Items for Future Agenda**

Use of Turnpike Field by Detectorists

**22/143**      **Date of Next Meeting**

Council **NOTED** the next meeting will be held on **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023** in the **Methodist Church, Shropshire St, Audlem, Crewe CW3 0AE**.

**Exclusion of Public**

At this point the Council 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.

**PUBLIC meeting closed at 8.50pm.** The Chair thanked members of the public, Rachel Bailey, and Jackie Weaver for their attendance.

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**PART B**

**22/144**      **Appointment of new Permanent Clerk**

Katrina Chalk left the room.

- a) Council **NOTED**, as circulated, the Permanent Clerk Contract of Employment prepared on NALC / SLCC template.
- b) GS proposed, JS seconded, Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Katrina Chalk as Permanent Clerk for Audlem Parish Council on contract supplied. Chair of Staffing to sign contract on behalf of APC. Should there be any requirement for de-minimus amendment to contract Chair of Staffing will affect them.
- c) Locum Clerk to send contract and offer letter, by email tomorrow, to Katrina Chalk to sign acceptance of job offer.

**CONFIDENTIAL section of meeting CLOSED ay 9.25pm.**

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**Minutes of 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023 APC Council meeting signed as approved by Full Council at March 2023 Council meeting.**

Signed by Chair (Name) .....

Signature .....

Date (signed at meeting) on .....

DRAFT FOR APPROVAL