



**AUDLEM**  
PARISH COUNCIL

## **AUDLEM PARISH COUNCIL**

Chair: Derek Winskill  
29 Daisy Bank Crescent  
Audlem, Crewe CW3 0HD

e-mail: [parishcouncil @audlemc.co.uk](mailto:parishcouncil@audlemc.co.uk)

### **Minutes of meeting of Audlem Parish Council held in the Methodist Church, Shropshire St. Audlem on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 7.00pm.**

**Present:** Cllrs Derek Winskill [DW](Chair), Ralph Warburton [RW] (Vice Chair), Nigel Mottershead [NM], Geoff Seddon [GS], Jean Stainthorpe [JS] and Paul Cawood [PC]

**Absent:** Cllr J Bower

**In attendance:** Rachel Bailey (Cheshire East Ward Councillor), Jackie Weaver (ChALC) and Dr Kate Howe (Locum Clerk)

**Members of the public (MOP):** 7

#### **PART 1**

**22/77 Apologies for absence** received from Cllrs. Tim Lawton and Mark Jeffs

#### **22/78 Public Participation / Open Forum**

MOP said APC have previously made available copy of the bank statement in response to his FOI request and asked to see copies of bank account when 'potential' frauds were transacted. Chair responded APC currently advised not to make this information public due to police and forensic accounts investigation in progress. MOP asked for sight of new Lloyd's account statement. The Clerk said she could arrange to obtain a copy and believed two amounts of £112 and £78 had recently been paid in. GS corrected that £78 was still to be paid in. Clerk asked the MOP to send an email she could respond to.

**22/79 Declarations of Interest** – there were none

**22/80 Requests for Dispensations** – there were none

## **22/81 Confirmation of Minutes**

GS proposed / RW seconded, Councillors **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on **10<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

## **22/82 Planning Matters**

### **New applications**

a) Councillors **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the following responses made by the Locum Clerk by delegated authority to Cheshire East Planning Team.

- **22/4043/N** 5 Mill Lane, Swanbach – **no objection**

### **Current applications**

b) Councillors **NOTED** update from Chair of Planning Group on:

- **22/2734/N** Roseleigh, School Lane, Audlem – application withdrawn
- **22/3550N** The Courtyard, Audlem, CE Environmental Health Dept. withdrew their objection as a result of a letter received from Steve Hands Piccola restaurant containing additional information.

## **22/83 Financial Matters**

Councillors **NOTED** Chair of Finance Committee report on following matters:

- 22.83 (a) Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the Draft Scheme of Delegation produced by the Finance Committee as a formal APC policy document. Councillors **NOTED** that Financial Regs. and Standing Orders will be reviewed at December meeting to ensure all three documents comply.
- 22.83 (b) DW proposed, NM seconded and Councillors **RESOLVED** unanimously to give retrospective approval to payments made (via ChALC) from October 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022 (as schedule circulated) authorised by the Clerk using delegated authorities (since October meeting) due to urgent business need.
- 22.83 (c) Councillors **NOTED** there were now four signatories on the Lloyds bank account and £112 had recently been paid in and £78 to be deposited.
- 22.83 (d) Councillors **NOTED** the budget forecast for the second half year is estimated at £43k. Finance Committee are identifying cost savings and producing accurate budget projections for remaining financial year (to end March 2023) and for year 2023-24.
- 22.83 (e) Councillors **NOTED** and thanked ChALC for continuing to provide loan facilities to cover the projected overspend against the remaining half year precept.

- 22.83 (f) DW proposed, GS seconded and Councillors **RESOLVED** unanimously to ensure actions are taken quickly to reclaim VAT estimated to be in the region of £8k.
- 22.83 (g) Councillors considered potential use of Turnpike Field for income generating events, such as Christmas Market, to support projected overspend. TFWG requested to consider the idea in principle.
- 22.83 (h) Councillors **NOTED** notification received from Pension Regulator of non-compliance for previous Lengthsman. To date no invoice or payment notice has been received.
- 22.83 (i) NM proposed, DW seconded, Councillors **RESOLVED** unanimously retrospective authority for the release of the public statement on the APC website by the Locum Clerk (as approved by the Finance Committee) due to urgent business need.

#### **22/84 Staffing Matters**

Chair of Staffing Committee reported progress on:

- (a) Lengthsman Job Description has been produced
- (b) Lengthsman Contract has been produced and a meeting with the Lengthsman being arranged to discuss
- (c) Lengthsman Health & Safety Guidance (Risk Assessment & Method Statement) is being produced based on a template from another council. Training is being arranged.
- (d) Job description and advert for the recruitment of a permanent Parish Clerk has been finalised. (SP 13-17) 20 hours per week. Job is being advertised currently with a closing date of 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Staffing Committee recommend they produce short list of applications, interview and recommend preferred candidate to Council. Jackie Weaver requested both she and Locum Clerk be given sight of documents produced and advised Council she believed the proposed contract was set low on spinal point range to attract a Clerk suitably capable of dealing with the issues currently impacting Audlem PC. GS confirmed the grade set is higher than the spinal point range JW recommended. JW also advised it appeared too few hours to cover the current workload and she had seen no formal approval of Clerks terms and conditions being resolved by Audlem Parish Council (as required protocol). GS proposed, RW seconded, and Councillors **RESOLVED** to go ahead with recruitment of new permanent Clerk having **NOTED** JW's advice.

#### **22/85 Turnpike Field**

Chair of Turnpike Field Working Group reported on meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November:

- a) Group are making an application for registration under Fields in Trust. JS proposed, GS seconded, Councillors **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the submission of title deeds and other information to ensure fields can't be developed.
- b) A working group member is standing down producing a vacancy. Councillors **RESOLVED** to co-opt Peter Morgan as a new member of the working group.

- c) JS proposed, GS seconded and Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve setting up of Turnpike Field Volunteer Group and to authorise the TFWG to appoint members as required and to report back to Audlem Parish Council.
- d) Councillors were asked to retrospectively confirm their approval for setting up of a Maintenance sub-group (consisting of Jean Stainthorpe, Adrian Leighton and Peter Morgan) and to authorise the TFWG to appoint other members as required and report back to the Parish Council. RW proposed, PC seconded and Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve Maintenance sub-group.

### **22/86 Village Management**

Chair of Village Management Group reported on:

- (a) A letter has been received from CE Highways regarding a request for installation of bollards on Stafford St / School Lane to stop trucks mounting the pavement. Householders have great concern and parishioners are frightened for their safety. CE suggested a one-way system down School Lane. Councillors think this is unworkable. A suggested solution is traffic lights and pavements made higher to stop trucks mounting the kerb. Councillors **NOTED** correspondence and suggestions and request this is discussed at next Village Management Group. Chair of Village Management to call a meeting to suggest solutions to send in correspondence to CE Highways.
- (b) This is not the first incidence of vandalism in the Public Toilets. PC Nick Jarvis checked the CCTV cameras and reports a car is seen entering the carpark at 8.15pm on 15<sup>th</sup> Nov. Man got out went into toilets, came out later carrying toilet seat although it appears vandalism is far more extensive. Toilets are flooded and unsafe to use, hence they have been permanently locked as a H&S intervention. Councillors are in process of obtaining quotes for repair. Locks are on an electronic timer and are not working properly. Clerk and Jackie Weaver suggested this should be treated as an insurance claim. Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the Clerk report the incident to the Insurer and notify of a claim.

### **22/87 Co-option of Councillors**

GS proposed, DW seconded and Councillors **RESOLVED** to advertise co-option of 3 additional councillors to Audlem Parish Council (up to re-election in May 2023).

### **22/88 Police**

No update from the Police or Community Support Officer was available.

### **22/89 Report by Ward Councillor**

Cheshire East Councillor Rachel Bailey updated on local issues including:

- Repair on Cheshire St should help reduce vibrations experienced.

- Continuing need for a safe crossing on Cheshire St – Audlem PC agreed to consider supporting a pedestrian crossing as this doesn't attract automatic funding from CE Highways.
- Traffic lights on Green Lane and ongoing flooding at Swanbach causing road closure, diversion and highway safety issues.
- Estimated cost of culvert repair work at Swanbach, promised 3 years ago, is £90k.
- Mount Pleasant has been re-surfaced.

#### **22/90 Office Matters**

Locum Clerk updated Councillors that a letter has been sent to HMRC requesting a recalculation of amounts estimated and notified as overdue for payment.

#### **22/91 Items for Future Agenda**

- Siting of Notice Board
- The proposed Village Surgery is now on hold until next year.

#### **22/92 Date of Next Meeting**

Councillors **NOTED** the next meeting will be held on **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022** in the **Methodist Church, Shropshire St, Audlem, Crewe CW3 0AE**

#### **22/93 Part 2 Exclusion of Press & Public**

At this point the Council will ask 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.

---

## **PART 2**

### **Finance**

Report from Finance Committee Chair who updated Councillors on the position of the Council's finances, police and forensic fraud investigation. Councillors agreed they need to be proactive in seeking legal redress and mitigation of financial losses.

- a) Councillors **RESOLVED** to mandate the Clerk to write a formal letter of complaint to Financial Ombudsman regarding Santander apparently poor administration of APC bank accounts.
- b) Councillors **RESOLVED** to mandate the Clerk to make an insurance claim for apparently fraudulent transactions occurring on Santander account.

**Chairman thanked Councillors for their attendance and ongoing service to Council.**

**Meeting closed at 9.25pm**

APPROVED