



AUDLEM
PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk: Carol Bell

Foxes Field
Sheppenhall Lane
Aston
CW5 8DT

Phone: 07783580406

e-mail: parishcouncil@audlemc.co.uk

Minutes of meeting of Audlem Parish Council held in the Methodist Church, Shropshire St. Audlem on Monday 4th March at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors Geoff Seddon (GS) (Chair), Lynette Hopkins (LH), Stephen Hopkins (SH), Steve Elliott (SE) George McLaren-Brown (GMB), Kate Down (KD), Keith Nord (KN)

In attendance: Carol Bell (Clerk to APC) Rachel Bailey (Ward Councillor) (attendance for Public participation only)

Part A

GS opened the meeting at 7 pm and advised that the meeting was being recorded.
Members of public in attendance: 22

23/166 Apologies for absence

No apologies

23/167 Public participation

A member of the public (MOP) asked what the criteria is for putting an item in Part B on the agenda and in particular why is Item 23/179 the police investigation in Part B when last time it was discussed in the public meeting.

Clerk responded: Items that are put into Part B are any items that are of a sensitive nature or are general informal items that the councillors wish to discuss.

A MOP asked, over Turnpike Field, if there is an issue with the use of or the wording of the contract, why do you not buy an indemnity to cover any misleading words in there so the field can be used by the villagers and visitors, especially in the summer as a car park.

GS responded – The intention has always been to use part of the field as a car park. I can't answer your question about buying an indemnity so will need to get back to you on that point.

A MOP asked the Clerk, it stipulates in the Turnpike Field Working Policy that they will use you as a point of reference for all issues, have they done so?

Clerk responded: No

The MOP continued, this is Turnpike Field's Working Group terms and conditions, this is your policy. It states in these terms of reference that your Clerk is your point of call, is the Clerk your point of call or not?

GS responded -Yes. Things have been referred to our Clerk, but I agree not everything has.

A MOP read out a statement from the organisers of the Music Festival highlighting their disappointment and the possible impact on the village traders if they were not allowed to offer the use of Turnpike Field for campers as part of the Music Festival's facilities. Another MOP stated that whether Turnpike Field is used for agricultural or recreational use, the law allows a generous number of days for camping so I can't see any reason why camping should be stopped for the festival.

GS responded – there is a rule to that and as I said earlier this evening, we are appointing a solicitor to look at the contract.

A MOP asked what is the relation between the contract and camping?

LH advised the previous owner (MOP) was in the audience and asked the previous owner if they would explain the contract.

The MOP (previous owner) responded - the land is split. There is the top one acre that is put aside for parking, and the remaining ten and a half acres was put aside for recreational use. Under recreational use it can be bee keeping, village orchards, allotments, and camping. All camping is free. If recreational use takes place on the top one acre that should be free as well. The only time the overage comes into play is if the parish council put a car park on there and charge. Everything should be free on that field.

A MOP asked if the contract is breached what can happen?
LH advised that the Council could be sued.

GS asked the MOP (previous owner of the field), if the Music Festival organisers allow the campers to use the field and do not charge them, then the camping can go ahead.
The MOP (previous owner) said yes.

GS advised that a point had been reached where it looked like the Festival could go ahead if the festival organisers agreed not to charge for camping on Turnpike Field and would they do that?
The MOPs (festival organisers) agreed they would not charge for camping.

A MOP asked if campers were allowed to camp on the field for free, how would that affect the retrospective planning application, is it allowed and where is the retrospective planning application up to?
GS responded: If the council can be allowed 2 to 3 days to appoint a solicitor and allow them to look at the contract then we can confirm the situation. We have been given a decision date of the 22nd March for the planning application decision.

A MOP stated they had concerns about the operation of the parish council and asked what is going wrong with the parish council that has allowed two parish councillors to leave recently and that they would be willing to liaise with members of the Council to understand where the issues lie?
GS responded: The parish councillors will sort the issue out between themselves.

23/168 Declarations of Interest

SH declared an interest in the quote from Whelan Tree Services, of whom the owner is a friend. SH also declared an interest in the solicitor firm Freeths, who had quoted, as he had used a branch of that firm in the sale of his company. LH declared an interest in the solicitor firm Freeths as she had dealt with a branch of that company in relation to HR advice.

23/169 Requests for Dispensation

LH and SH requested a dispensation in relation to their declarations of interest.

23/170 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 5th February 2023 were **AGREED** as a correct record.
Proposed KD. Seconded SH. Abstention Se and KN

23/171 Planning Matters

23/171 (ii) Councillors **NOTED** the following decisions.

- **23/4829N** 85 McKelvey Way Audlem - single storey glass roofs located on the rear and side elevation of the property. CE approved with conditions.
- **24/0279N** Land opposite Swanbach Grange, Green Lane, Audlem – proposed 2 steel frame agricultural buildings with associated access track. CE determination – refusal (stage 2)
- **23/4305T** Maybridge, School Lane, Audlem – works to TPO trees – CE consent with conditions

23/171 (iii) Councillors **NOTED** the following appeal.

- **23/2064N** Bunsley Bank Farm, Bunsley Bank Audlem – Approval for change of use of Barn (no.5) to provide a 5 bedroom dwelling. Appeal made by applicant to Secretary of State

23/172 Financial Matters

23/172 (i) Councillors **NOTED** the income and expenditure statement as of the 29th February 2024

23/172 (ii) Councillors **NOTED** the update from the Finance Committee meeting held on Tuesday 27th February

23/172 (iii) Councillors resolved to **APPROVE** the following payments.

Invoice Date	Supplier	Goods/Service	Amount (£)
01.02.2024	Then Media	Website hosting/e-mail supply	45.00 + 9.00
05.02.2024	Audlem Methodist Church	Room hire for TFWG 29.01.2024	65.00

		Room hire for APC meeting 04.02.2024	
08.02.2024	ICO	Data Protection Fee	40.00
19.02.2024	GiffGaff	Clerk mobile phone	10.00
29.02.2024	Lengthsman	Lengthsman duties	521.40
29.02.2024	Parish Clerk/RFO	Clerk duties (inc. 10.5 hrs O/T)	1671.38 (gross)
05.03.2024	EDF Energy	Electricity supply to toilet block	42.00

Proposed SH. Seconded KD. All in favour

23/172 (iv) Councillors resolved to **APPROVE** the retrospective payments below.

Invoice Date	Supplier	Goods/Service	Amount (£)
02.02.2024	PWLB	Loan for Turnpike Field	5231.83
26.02.2024	Cheshire East	Emptying of green bins for Audlem Methodist Church/ADAS (£56.00 to be reimbursed to APC from AMC)	112.00
21.02.2024	WaterPlus	Water supply to toilet block	93.24

Proposed SH. Seconded KD. All in favour.

23/173 Correspondence

Clerk advised no correspondence to note.

23/174 Turnpike Field

23/174 (i) SE gave an update from the Turnpike Field Working Group meeting held on 26th February 2024. SE advised that Adriana Roscoe had stepped down from Turnpike Field Working Group to allow Jean Stainthorpe to take up a position on the group. Her position had been approved by the group. SE asked if the Council could approve her joining. All agreed. SE also added that as a result of Jean Stainthorpe's resignation as Councillor and as Chair of Turnpike Field Working Group SE had put his name forward to be considered as Chair which had been agreed by the working group but needed full council approval. GS proposed. KD seconded. 6 votes in favour, 1 abstention

23/174(ii) SE advised that Cheshire East Planning had advised that a decision on the retrospective planning application would be made by the 22nd March.

23/174 (iii) GS advised that the Council had received three quotes from tree surgeons to do the required work on the trees on Turnpike Field. GS proposed that the tender be given to BenBow Brothers Ltd, Timber Merchants and Tree Surgeons of Shropshire . SH seconded. All in favour

23/174 (iv) GS advised that three quotes had been received to appoint a solicitor to view and advise on the purchase contract for Turnpike Field and also Fields in Trust process. KD proposed Freeths Solicitors, Manchester GMB seconded. All in favour

23/174 (v) SE stated that based on what had been discussed earlier in the evening with regards to the Music Festival he would like to propose that the Council vote for the festival to go ahead. KD seconded. All in favour.

23/175 Village Management (VMG)

23/175 (i) LH advised that further action had been suspended until the Ward Councillor Rachel Bailey had received a reply from her and 16 other Councillor's decision to call in Cheshire East over the car parking charges. The call-in was rejected by Cheshire East. We are now in a position to discuss how we move forward. GS advised that Richard Hibbert at Cheshire East had been approached to arrange a meeting. Mr Hibbert had advised he could not meet until Cheshire East's committee had met to discuss the charges and once that had happened, he would be in a position to provide a meeting date.

23/175 (ii) LH advised that a MOP had asked if they can have a copy of the Road Safety Report that was commissioned by APC. LH advised that as a Council they had not had the opportunity to discuss the report in full but once this had happened then a copy of the report would be released into the public domain.

23/175 (iii) LH advised the Council were investigating sites for a new notice board in addition to the one in the village which is often taken up with minutes of meetings, agendas and financial information and does not leave room for other items to be advertised. Various grass sites had been discussed but would need planning permission from Cheshire East but if there was a space on a wall in the centre of the village, the board could

be sited there without the need for permission from Cheshire East. LH advised that any suggestions for the siting from the residents would be useful.

23/175 (iv) Terms of Reference for the Village Management Committee were not discussed so will be deferred to the next meeting.

23/175 (v) GMB advised he would discuss the proposed letter about access to private land to inspect an outlet pipe from Longhill Moss in Section B along with the other item positioned there.

23/175 (vi) LH advised that a couple of residents had previously complained about the area behind the Shroppie Fly which is being used by youngsters of the village to build mounds to ride their bikes over. LH advised that the area of land belongs to Cheshire East and not Audlem Parish Council so if residents wished to complain they would need to direct their complaints to Cheshire East Council. LH advised that members of Audlem Parish Council had spoken to the children previously in the area and had found them to be polite and respectful and willing to remove all their rubbish from the area after playing there.

23/175 (vii) KD advised that the annual Village Meeting had been booked for the 22nd May and will be held in the public hall and if any members of the community wished to have a stall at the meeting, then they were to contact the parish clerk.

23/175 (viii) LH advised that Audlem Parish Council had been asked by a member of the village if they would support a pop up Post Office in the Public Hall due to the closure of the main Post Office in the village. LH advised that the opportunity had not arisen yet for this to be discussed amongst the Councillors but would be discussed in the near future.

23/175 (ix) LH advised there was a Memorial Bench Policy that had been written by the Clerk that needed to be approved. LH proposed, SH seconded, All in favour.

23/176 Report by Ward councillor

Cllr Bailey was not present at this point.

23/177 Office Matters

23/177 (i) New accounting Package. GS advised this had already been approved under financial matters. The recommended package was Scribe. Proposed by SH. Seconded by SE. All in favour

23/177 (ii) SH advised the discussion of a new website and e-mail addresses would be deferred to the next meeting.

23/178 Date of Next Meeting and Items for Future Agenda

The next meeting will take place on **Monday 8th April 2024** at 7.00 pm in the **Methodist Church, Shropshire Street, Audlem, 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.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.32 pm, thanking everyone for their attendance.

PART B

23/179 Council **NOTED** update from Clerk regarding ongoing police investigation.

23/180 Cllr Keith Nord advised he would step down from the Turnpike Field Working Group for now whilst there were only 7 Members on the Council of which 4 were currently on the working group. Once more Councillors had been elected to the Council, he would be happy to re-join the working group. Councillors agreed that the Terms of reference for the group needed to be reviewed and updated to reflect how a working group should operate.

23/181 The discussion on the tenancy of Longhill Moss was deferred to the next Village Management Meeting.