



AUDLEM
PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

In attendance: Cllr Rachel Bailey (Ward Councillor), Carol Bell (Clerk to APC)

Part A

Members of public in attendance: 11

Please note there is no recording for this meeting due to a failure in the recording.

23/113 Apologies for absence

No absences

23/114 Public participation

A member of the public (MOP) asked if they could have a copy of the letter sent by the clerk to Cheshire Constabulary regarding the siting of an ANPR camera at Kingbur Place.

ACTION: Clerk to provide a copy of the letter to resident

A MOP questioned the amount of time the police investigation was taking in relation to the missing money from the Audlem Parish Bank account and the apparent lack of involvement from Audlem Parish Council in pursuing this.

Response: The Chair advised that councillors were not able to be privy to the investigations but that the clerk had been in contact twice with the police in the last 6 weeks and that investigations were still very much in progress but no information could be released into the public domain at this point. LH advised that any member of the public could write to John Dwyer (Police and Crime Commissioner), to complain about the length of time the investigation is taking.

A MOP asked for the parish council's support with the next steps for the protest against parking charges and asked why this item was not on the agenda given the consultation end date was only just over a month away.

Response: LH advised that the topic would be discussed under the Village Management Group heading.

The member asked if the council could approach Cheshire East to look at alternative solutions such as buying or leasing the car park.

Response: LH advised that Cheshire East will not enter into discussions until they finish their consultations. LH stated that the most important step to take was to engage the services of an Officer to conduct a road safety survey as Cheshire East would have to act if a survey was submitted to them. The Chair advised that he had received one quote for a survey which was £1,250. This was from a company recommended by the planning agent. LH asked the clerk if she could obtain a further 2 quotes as quickly as possible for the council to instruct for the survey to take place.

The member also stated that a letter of judicial review could be submitted to Cheshire East but it would cost approximately £1,000 to do this. He was in consultation with the other towns in the area who were also undergoing the threat of car parking charges, to see if they could submit one letter and all contribute to the cost. The member advised a letter could be submitted by the village only but it would need help from the council to meet the £1,000 cost.

Response: LH advised that it is most important that we do not lose sight of the fact that we are a village and not a town, unlike all of the other areas that are under the proposed introduction of parking charges.

The member asked who from the council would be the contact going forward to keep this topic active and to ramp up interest before the January deadline.

Response: LH advised that she will for now be the contact and if anything changed one of the Village Management Team councillors would take up that role.

ACTION: Clerk to obtain 2 quotes for Road Safety Survey

A MOP advised he had received a reply on the 1st December to his request about the GDPR breach of his personal information. The member asked why it had taken so long to receive this information as he had first requested it on the 9th October. The member asked the Chair why at the time had he not informed the member of the public and also the ICO that a breach had taken place. The member advised that he felt basic governance of the council by the council was lacking and that the Chair should seriously consider his position on the council due to his inability to act at the time. The member advised that his personal contact details had been passed on to a third party who could use them as they wish. The member advised that in light of this, he had spoken to his solicitor and intended to take legal action against the council.

Response: The Chair apologised to the member of the public for the breach and that he had not been contacted and told of the breach at the time

The member asked if the third party that his information had been breached to had been given delegated powers in dealing with council business.

Response: The Chair advised that no delegated powers had been given to any member of the public.

LH asked the question, why is a member of the public undertaking administrative duties for the Turnpike Field Working Group. LH advised that at no time should a member of the public be dealing with anything in a working group, once TFWG have discussed an item it should be brought back to council. LH advised that is where governance comes in. The Chair advised that the reason items are on the minutes is because they are being brought back to council. LH advised that there had been a number of decisions made by TFWG that had not been brought to council or had been seen by members of the council such as the e-mails to a member of the public on the TFWG regarding the siting of Fields In Trust plaques on the field.

A MOP questioned why, in the recent TFWG minutes was there a line stating that a meeting was to be had with Martin Measures to clarify the legal situation in relation to the Deed of Dedication registration with Fields in Trust. The member asked if this had been brought council and resolved.

Response: The Chair advised it had not been brought to council

23/115 Declarations of Interest

AR declared an interest in Agenda Item 23/121 as a consequence of the appointed Planning Consultant dealing with Turnpike Field being an acquaintance.

Cllr Bailey declared an interest in Agenda Item 23/121 as she and her husband rent a field adjacent to Turnpike Field

23/116 Requests for Dispensation

None received.

23/117 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 13th November 2023 were **APPROVED** as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

The final point under public participation to read;
A member of the public asked in relation to their GDPR breach, were any councillors aware of the breach before 9.30 p.m. on the 9th October. LH and SH confirmed they were aware and had asked the chair to let the member of the public know about the breach.

Minute 23/109 -maintaining playing fields, farming and grass verges.

Proposed by SH, Seconded KD. All in favour, 2 abstentions

23/118 Planning Matters

23/118 (i) The following applications have been received

- 23/3878N - Spout Farm, Longhill Lane, Audlem: Variation on Condition 2 on approval 21/5453N for proposed rear extensions, internal remodelling and external reconfiguration- Council **APPROVED**
- 23/4271N - Peace and Quiet, Daisy Bank Crescent, Audlem. New detached dwelling with detached garage. The council has asked for an extension to the response date to further look into the application due to the siting of the dwelling being outside of the settlement boundary which conflicts the neighbourhood plan. Clerk confirmed an extension had been applied for.

23/118 (ii) The following decisions have been made by Cheshire East

- 23/3532N – Spring Morn, Copthorne Drive. Single storey side extension. Cheshire East approved with conditions.
- 23/3447N – Public Hall - change of use for caretakers flat– granted

23/118 (iii) The Chair advised that the planning agent had not received a response from Cheshire East as to whether an Ecological Assessment was needed for Turnpike Field

23/119 Financial Matters

23/119 (i) SH advised that a request had been received from Cheshire East for an update on where the Community Infrastructure Levy monies had been spent. The Chair advised that the allocated amount of £29,074.50 given on 12th November 2019 would have been part of the loss of funds from the parish bank account that is currently under investigation. The amounts of £1799.11 and £552.41 given on the 22nd May 2023 had been banked in the parish bank account.

ACTION: Clerk to respond to Cheshire East to advise them of the above.

23/119 (ii) Due to personal circumstances a meeting to discuss the spend against budget had not taken place. SH and the chair will meet and place this item on the next agenda. SH advised that he estimates the council will be approximately £5,000 underspent this year with a reserve of £20,000. SH and GS to produce draft budget and send out to Councillors.

23/119 (iii) Councillors were asked to **APPROVE** the following payments.

Invoice Date	Supplier	Goods/Services	Amount (£)
06/11/2023	Audlem Methodist Church	Hire of Seville Room for TFWG 06.11.23 and hire of Church Hall for APC 13.11.23	65.00
24/11/2023	ChALC	Roles and Responsibilities Clerk Training 16.11.23	25.00
30/11/2023	Lengthsman	Lengthsman's duties	521.40
01/12/2023	Parish Clerk	Parish Clerk and RFO duties	1539.20 (gross)

Proposed by SH, Seconded by KD. All in favour

23/120 Communications

23/120 (i) The clerk advised that Libby Dudley had made contact to ask if it was possible for a memorial bench to be sited somewhere in the village in memory of her late mother Adele Dudley. The councillors discussed various sites and requested the clerk respond to Libby to discuss further.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Libby Dudley

23/120 (ii) The Clerk advised that Adam Goode owner of Audlem Post Office had made contact to ask if the council could consider the post office becoming a community run project. The Clerk advised that Mr Goode said the Post Office had been up for sale for a while with no firm interest and would have to close if no sale was forthcoming. The Councillors considered Mr Goode's suggestion but felt there were too many questions unanswered in relation to having a community run post office and suggested in the first instance that Mr Goode post on Audlem Online that the business was up for sale and also his suggestion of it becoming a community run post office to see if there was any interest in the village.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Mr Goode to advise of the above

23/121 Turnpike Field

23/121 (i) The Chair advised that there have been no further meetings since the November meeting. The Chair advised he was waiting for the full tree survey report on the trees on the field and once received to advertise for tenders for the work needed.

Proposed by GS, Seconded by SH. All in favour

LH asked if there had been any response back from Cheshire East regarding the tree on the Heath. Clerk advised that no response received to date.

The Chair proposed to go out for quotation for legal advice in relation to Fields in Trust and also the Turnpike Field contract.

Approved by SH, Seconded by JS. All in favour

23/122 Village Management (VMG)

23/122 (i) Road Safety Survey – The Chair reported he has received one quote for the work needed. Clerk to obtain a further 2 quotes as soon as possible.

CCTV – LH queried which camera in the car park belonged to the council. The Chair advised it was the camera near the electricity substation and that the local PCSO held the key for it. LH asked if there was a further need for CCTV to be installed around the village. JS asked if any of the local shops had CCTV installed. LH asked JS if she could enquire into this.

Bellyse monument repairs – LH asked the Clerk if there had been any response from Cheshire East in relation to allowing repairs to go ahead on the monument. The Clerk advised a follow up e-mail had been sent but no response had been received to date.

Buttermarket bench - LH asked SE for an update on the state of the bench. SE advised it needed repairing, either by replacing the whole metal frame the bench sits on or by just repairing the leg that is damaged but that would require welding.

ACTION: SE to enquire if anyone in the village had skills that could help repair the bench.

Stafford Street sign – GMB had advised the sign was dirty, making it hard to read.

ACTION: Clerk to contact the Lengthsman and ask if he could clean up the sign.

Tree works on Churchfield Nature Area – LH advised that ADCA had given a price, and the council were waiting on 2 more quotes for the work needed.

Green bins – ADAS are in need of another green bin. LH asked if the council could pay for the emptying of the additional bin if required.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Cheshire East to see if another green bin could be acquired and also the cost of emptying.

Chapel Lane – LH asked the Clerk if any quotes had been obtained for additional emptying of the gulleys by a private firm. The clerk advised she was waiting on one quote. Cllr Bailey advised that it may be best to contact Cheshire East to ask if paid additional gully emptying could take place as CE would be held liable if any damage was done to the drainpipes during emptying by a third party.

ACTION: Clerk to contact CE.

The Chair requested if Cheshire East could also be asked to reinstate the grass verge in that area.

Heathfield Road – LH advised that there was a large spring water leak in that area. The Chair advised this had already been reported to Cheshire East Highways. RCllr Bailey commented that CE's Drainage Team were trying their best to deal with all drainage problems.

Bridge over the Weaver – LH asked if there had been any progress. Cllr Bailey advised that this would be an insurance job as the tanker had hit the wall as a result of a burst tyre.

Toilet repairs – The Chair advised he had chased this up once but would speak to the individual who had offered to carry out the repairs again.

23/122 (ii) Size, material and siting for the 12 defibrillator signs were discussed. GMB to discuss further with Clerk after the meeting.

23/123 Report by Ward Councillor

- (i) Cllr Bailey commented on and would like to give a big thank you to ADAS for how wonderful the village looked for Christmas after all their hard work.
- (ii) Cllr Bailey advised that Cheshire East had a consultation in progress on the cost of sourcing care. The proposal is that the cost will be based on your revenue income. Cllr Bailey stated how lucky the village was to have ADCA and Surecare to provide a source of care for the local population.
- (iii) Cllr Bailey advised that a planning application had been made by United Utilities for the removal of an ancient hedgerow in Kettle Lane. Cllr Bailey and a local resident have contacted United Utilities to ask them to withdraw their application.
- (iv) Cllr Bailey recommended in relation to the item 23/110 – Cheshire East Code of Conduct - on the November minutes that the council look at this carefully and adopt and make change of name amendments only to that of Audlem Parish Council

23/124 Office Matters

None to report

23/125 Date of Next Meeting and Items for Future Agenda

The next meeting will take place on **Monday 8th January 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 8.56 pm, thanking everyone for their attendance.

PART B

23/126 Council **NOTED** update from Clerk regarding ongoing police investigation.