



AUDLEM
PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk: Carol Bell

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Minutes of meeting of Audlem Parish Council held in the Methodist Church, Shropshire St. Audlem on Monday 5th February at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors Geoff Seddon (GS), Lynette Hopkins (LH), Stephen Hopkins (SH), George McLaren-Brown (GMB), Kate Down (KD), Keith Nord (KN), Jean Stainthorpe (JS)

In attendance: Carol Bell (Clerk to APC)

Part A

GS opened the meeting at 7 pm and advised that the meeting was being recorded.
Members of public in attendance: 16

23/153 Apologies for absence

Cllr Steve Elliott, Cllr Rachel Bailey

23/154 Public participation

A member of the public (MOP) asked for an update on the missing parish council funds.

The Clerk read out a statement from the police (Appendix 1)

A MOP asked do you think you will be in a position to publish the Road Safety Report and if so, when?

GS advised that the Road Safety Report would be discussed further on in the meeting as an agenda item.

A MOP asked if it would be possible to have stones laid down in the muddy areas of Turnpike Field

GS stated due to retrospective planning application not yet being approved APC have decided to undertake no further work. Once approved work will begin. JS also advised that ground conditions on the field now were not suitable for vehicles to enter for work to be done.

A MOP asked if APC would be discussing with Cheshire East the need for free parking between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. and to negotiate free days for village events.

GS advised that yes APC would be going into discussions with Cheshire East on these items.

23/155 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.

23/156 Requests for Dispensation

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

23/157 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 4th December 2023 were **AGREED** as a correct record.
Proposed KD. Seconded SH. All in favour.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 8th January 2024 were **AGREED** as a correct record.
Proposed SH. Seconded JS. All in favour.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12th January 2024 were **AGREED** as a correct record.
Proposed KD. Seconded LH. All in favour.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd January 2024 were **AGREED** as a correct record.
Proposed GMB. Seconded KD. All in favour

23/158 Planning Matters

23/158 (i) Councillors **NOTED** the following planning application -

- **24/0279N** Land opposite Swanbach Grange, Green Lane, Audlem CW3 0ET. Proposed two steel framed agricultural storage buildings with associated access track.

23/158 (ii) Councillors **NOTED** the following decisions.

- **23/4271N** Peace and Quiet, Daisy Bank Crescent, Audlem CW3 0HD. New detached dwelling with garage – APC objected – application refused
- **23/0814N** Pheasants Rise, Damson Lane, Cox Bank CW3 0EU. 3 bedroom bungalow – APC objected – application refused.

23/159 Financial Matters

23/159 (i) Councillors **NOTED** to income and expenditure statement as of the 31st January 2024

23/159 (ii) Councillors resolved to **APPROVE** a pay rise for the Lengthsman.

Proposed SH. Seconded KN. All in favour

23/159 (iii) Councillors resolved to **APPROVE** the appointment of a new internal auditor.

Proposed SH. Seconded KN. All in favour.

23/159 (iv) Councillors resolved to **APPROVE** the following payments.

Invoice date	Supplier	Goods/Service	Amount (£)
03.01.2023	Royal Mail	Recorded delivery letter to tenant	2.75
08.01.2024	Audlem Methodist Church	Room hire for 08.01.24 for APC meeting and Seville room 12.01.24 for additional APC meeting	65.00
15.01.2024	SLCC	Clerk ILCA course fee	120.00 + 24.00 VAT
18.01.2024	GiffGaff	Clerk mobile phone	10.00
23.01.2024	Audlem Methodist Church	Seville room hire 23.01.24 for additional APC meeting	25.00
22.01.2024	Road Data Services	Road Safety Survey	3,500 +700.00 VAT
24.01.2024	W H Smiths	Paper, hole punch, alphabet dividers	25.48
26.01.2024	RB & Sons Plumbing & heating	Repairs in toilet block	1863.00
30.01.2024	Audlem printers	Defib signs	73.00
31.01.2024	Parish Clerk/RFO	Clerk duties	1592.38 (gross)
31.01.2024	Lengthsman	Lengthsman duties	521.40
31.01.2024	3 counties cleaning	Toilet cleaning + toilet rolls– January	427.00
31.01.2023	Medisave	Toilet roll for public toilets	42.94 + 8.59 VAT

Proposed SH. Seconded GS. All in favour

23/159 (v) Councillors resolved to **APPROVE** the retrospective payments below.

Invoice date	Supplier	Goods/Services	Amount (£)
18.01.2024	EDF	Electricity for toilet block	94.70
07.01.2024	Waterplus	Water supply to toilet block	83.46

Proposed SH. Seconded KD. All in favour.

23/159 (vi) Councillors **NOTED** credit received.

Invoice date	Supplier	Goods/Services	Amount (£)
23.01.2024	PHS	Supply of toilet roll, soap	447.01 CR

23/160 Communications

23/160 (i) The Clerk advised that the Parish Clerk from Dodcott-cum-Wilkesley had e-mailed her advising that there were potential funding concerns for the Go-Too bus come October 2024. The Clerk asked if APC would

be interested in joining forces with Dodcott and other local parish councils to jointly campaign for the service to continue.

23/160 (ii) GS read out a leaflet from Bruno Peek Pageant master D-day 80 which was sent out by ChALC detailing the various way the parish could pay tribute on the 6th June commemorating the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings. It was agreed to add an item to the next agenda in connection with the possible purchase of a Lamp Light of Peace.

23/160 (iii) The agenda item was to discuss the role and responsibilities of the Comms group going forward. JS advised she would like the group to meet first and then bring their thoughts to the APC council.

23/160(iv) GS advised that since the last APC meeting Adriana Roscoe had resigned from APC. GS advised the council has 5 available spaces if any of the MOPs attending wanted to apply or knew someone who would like to apply. Clerk to contact CE to advised of co-option and APC to advertise posts.

23/160 (v) Councillors **NOTED** that a statement for payment had been sent to the tenant of Longhill Moss.

23/161 **Turnpike Field**

23/161 (i) JS advised that a vacancy had appeared on the TFWG. JS advised that KN had showed an interest in joining the group which had been discussed with other members of the TFWG.

JS proposed that KN be opted in. Seconded SH. All in favour.

23/161 (ii) GS to discuss the retrospective planning application later in the meeting.

23/161 (iii) JS advised she had not seen any quotes from tree surgeons. GS advised that one quote had come in earlier in the day. Clerk advised that 3 companies had been contacted but only one had been out to view the work needed on the trees on Turnpike. Clerk advised she would need to contact further companies to obtain more quotes. JS advised that it is important the work gets done as soon as possible before nesting season. GS proposed that as soon as further quotes were received, he, the Clerk and Chair of Finance SH, should approve a contractor to start the work.

Proposed GS. Seconded SH. All in favour

23/161 (iv) GS advised that the Clerk had obtained 3 solicitor quotes. Company A (Manchester based) Company B (Norfolk based) Company C (Chester based)

GS proposed Company B. Seconded KD.

LH proposed an amendment and proposed Company C (Chester based) Seconded GMB. 4 in favour of the amendment – amendment carried.

23/161(v) JS advised to defer bookings until further down the agenda.

23/161 (vi) JS advised that there were 2 vacancies for the community on the TFWG which had now been filled.

23/161 (vii) JS advised that the Clerk had drawn up a policy in relation to prohibiting the siting of flags and banners on Turnpike Field and asked that the policy be approved.

Proposed JS. Seconded KD. All in favour

23/161 (viii) JS advised that an application for Audlem Music Festival had been received for camping only, on Turnpike Field. Councillors agreed that no bookings can be approved until a solicitor has looked at the purchase contract and advised how the council can use the land.

23/161 (ix) JS advised that a request had been made by a resident of the village as to whether they could use Turnpike Field for parking of cars for a birthday celebration they were holding. Councillors agreed that the same rules applied as in 23/161 (viii).

23/161 (x) JS advised that Cheshire Wildlife need contacting re maintenance of the ponds on the field. KN advised it would be prudent to advise CE that Cheshire Wildlife would be coming out to maintain the ponds. Clerk to contact Cheshire Wildlife and CE.

23/161 (xi) JS asked the council to discuss and approve the expenditure of £145 + VAT for the purchase of additional posts to support the boardwalk on Turnpike Field. Councillors agreed that until retrospective planning is approved that no further work can go ahead. JS asked if councillors could approve the expenditure if and when the planning application is approved.

Proposed JS. Seconded LH. All in favour

GS then explained that CE's Principal Nature Conservation Officer (JB) had visited Turnpike Field last week in connection with the objection made by the Environment Agency. SE, GMB and GS had attended. JB had

inspected the site and checked for any signs of either great crested newts or water voles in the area where the boardwalk is within 5 metres of the stream. He said that it was unlikely that either species would be affected by the work, although this was a poor time of year to detect water voles. JB stated that he would write to the Planning Officer with his comments. (See 23/161 (ii))

23/162 Village Management (VMG)

23/162 (i) LH advised that the council would be asking to meet with Cheshire East to further negotiate on the car parking charges set to be implemented by CE in October.

23/162 (ii) LH advised that there had been some controversy in relation to the cost for a Road Safety Report that had been undertaken for Audlem Parish Council. LH advised that the report was commissioned not just to assist with the objection to the parking charges but to also assist with other safety concerns in the village relating to the volume of traffic and safety of residents and could be used to support talks with Cheshire East such as installing a pedestrian crossing in the village.

23/162 (iii) A member of the public had requested whether a bench could be sited in the village in memory of her late mother. The Clerk advised it had been suggested the triangle of land on the entrance to the public car park could be used. KD advised there was room for another bench at the front of the church near Boots the Chemist. KD advised that a resident of the village was currently trying to find out who the parcel of land belonged to. LH advised that the agenda item be brought back to council once we had received an answer.

23/162 (iv) LH advised the toilet money collection boxes needed replacing. GS advised this would need more discussion. LH asked for the item to be moved to Section B.

23/162 (v) The Clerk recommended that the Village Management Group should have committee status due to the nature of the items that are discussed that could be dealt with at committee level rather than being brought to full council. The Clerk advised that working groups are usually task and finish groups and working groups that are ongoing are usually turned into committees. KD advised that there would need to be terms of reference drawn up and approved
Proposed LH. Seconded KD. 6 in favour. One abstention.

23/162 (vi) SH advised that ADAS had said that further work needs to be undertaken behind the Scout Hut in the conservation area. SH advised that if Audlem Parish Council were to pay for the work then three quotes would need to be obtained. SH advised that he would enter into further talks with ADAS on what additional work needed doing and then bring back to council.

23/162 (vii) LH advised that it would be useful to know what trading premises around the village had exterior cameras and how far their coverage went. Once this information had been collated a discussion could happen on whether additional CCTV cameras were needed in the village. The Clerk to draft a letter for traders to complete.

23/162 (viii) LH advised that herself and RB had been in contact with Cheshire East regarding the closure of Whitchurch Road into Audlem whilst repairs were done to the bridge. LH advised they had asked if it was possible for the road to be opened up for traffic over the Easter period so that the traders of the village would not be impacted. CE advised they would need to review this as they are not sure how much of the width of the road would be taken up with making the repairs.

23/162 (ix) The Clerk advised that ADAS had asked if Audlem Parish Council could fund a green bin for them.

LH proposed. KD seconded. All in favour.

23/162 (x) LH advised that a MOP had asked for funding for anti-fray material to repair the church flag. The Clerk advised that the council purchase the material and donate the material.

Proposed LH. Seconded KN. All in favour

23/162 (xi) Councillors agreed repairs to the toilet block were to go ahead as per the agreed quote which was approved at point 23/159 (iv)

23/163 Report by Ward councillor

Cllr Bailey was not present but had advised that with the support of 14 fellow Councillors she had submitted a 'call in request' in relation to the decision by the Highways & Transport Committee on 25/1 re MTFS Parking Charges.

23/164 Office Matters

23/164 (i) GS advised that the Clerk had been with the council for nearly 4 months now and was due a 3 month review which would be undertaken by the staffing committee.

23/164 (ii) GS advised a review of the Clerk's working hours would be undertaken during her review.

23/165 Date of Next Meeting and Items for Future Agenda

The next meeting will take place on **Monday 4th March 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 8.35 pm, thanking everyone for their attendance.

PART B

23/166 Council **NOTED** update from Clerk regarding ongoing police investigation.

23/167 It was **AGREED** to look for alternative money collection boxes for the toilets.