



AUDLEM
PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk:
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MINUTES OF MEETING OF AUDLEM PARISH COUNCIL (APC)

Held Monday 4 October 2021 at 7.00pm at the Youth Club Room, Audlem Village Hall

Present - D Winskill (Vice Chair and acting Chair), M Duys, J McGregor, R Warburton, J Bower, P Salt, P Cawood

In attendance: CEC Ward Cllr R Bailey, Clerk O Hembry and six members of the public.

115/21 Apologies

An apology was received from Cllr J Stainthorpe that was not reported at the meeting.

116/21 Public speaking open forum.

A member of the public asked if the Council's bank account had been hacked.

A member of the public asked if there had been any impropriety with the accounts.

Acting Chair Cllr D Winskill presented a statement to say Audlem Parish Council was intending to instigate an investigation into recent financial issues that would establish the financial security of the Council's accounts and ensure that its audit and governance procedures are proportionate, fit for purpose and up to date. The report would also include recommendations. Cllr D Winskill did not think the Council should respond to questions to which it did not have definitive answers until an investigation took place.

A member of the public asked if the Council's bank account had been hacked.

The Clerk provided detail that there had been a transaction that had been reversed and that as far as the Council was aware no money was missing, but it was difficult to comment further at this stage with the matter under investigation.

A member of the public asked that if in the investigation it was found that the account had been hacked that the police, national fraud office and fraud office at Santander Bank were informed.

Questions were raised by members of the public about the up to £3000 potential cost of an investigation by Cheshire Association of Local Councils noted on agenda at item 120/21.

117/21 Election of Chairman of Audlem Parish Council.

Cllr R Warburton proposed Cllr J McGregor for the position of Chairman. Cllr P Salt seconded the motion. The Council **resolved** that Cllr J McGregor is Chairman of Audlem Parish Council.

I 18/21 Election of Vice Chairman of Audlem Parish Council.

Cllr M Duys proposed D Winskill for the position of Vice Chairman. Cllr J McGregor seconded the motion. The Council **resolved** that Cllr D Winskill is Vice Chairman of Audlem Parish Council.

I 19/21 To appoint Cheshire Association of Local Councils to undertake an investigation into recent financial challenges.

Chairman J McGregor circulated an alternative six-point plan to members which included contacting the police, reporting to Santander fraud department, all emails and correspondence regarding the hacking and ongoing problems with access to the Parish Council bank account to be handed to the Council, regain access to the Parish Council bank account, once access to the account is achieved find an auditor to carry out a full audit into the activities of the Parish Council. Cheshire Association of Local Councils could be contacted for recommendations as well as independent auditors.

Ward Cllr R Bailey advised that the Parish Council's external auditor would need to be made aware of the investigation at the end of the current year, and could be contacted for advice and guidance.

A member of the public said the matter should be reported to the Council's auditor without waiting for the end of the year.

Cllr R Warburton proposed the alternative plan of action. Cllr J McGregor seconded the plan. The proposed action plan was unanimously **resolved** by the Council.

A subgroup was proposed to manage the plan, comprised of Cllrs J McGregor, P Cawood and J Bower. The Council unanimously **resolved** to approve the subgroup.

I 20/21 To agree to release funding of up to £3000 for the delivery of the investigation.

This item was not discussed following the approval of the alternative action plan.

The meeting closed at 8pm

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2021 which were signed by the Chair of the meeting as a true record on 8 November 2021.

Signed:

Position:

O Hembry
Clerk