



AUDLEM
PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk: Carol Bell

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Minutes of the Meeting of Audlem Parish Council FINANCE COMMITTEE held on **Tuesday 27th February at 10.30 a.m.** in the **Methodist Church, Shropshire St, Audlem, Crewe CW3 0AE.**

Present: Cllr Stephen Hopkins (SH) (Chair), Cllr George McLaren-Brown (GMB), Cllr Kate Down (KD), Cllr Steve Elliot (SE)

In attendance: Carol Bell – Clerk

23.13 Apologies for absence

No apologies

23.14 Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

23.15 Declarations of Interest

None declared.

23.16 Requests for Dispensation

No requests received.

23.17 Confirmation of Minutes

Members APPROVED the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6th June.

23.18 Budget Matters

- I. January and February expenses were checked against bank statements. SH gave a verbal update to those present and advised that APC should come in under budget for 2023/4.
- II. Members discussed new accountancy software to use for APC finances for the next financial year. Recommendations to be submitted to Full Council in the 4th March meeting. The Clerk advised she had looked at three packages and outlined the pros and cons of each package;
 - a. Scribe
 - b. Easy PC
 - c. Xero small business software

Members agreed that the Scribe package was best suited to a parish council's needs and seemed to be most user friendly and would be recommended at the next APC meeting on the 4th March for implementation in April when the Clerk should have access to the bank account. Until then Cllr Geof Seddon will continue to update the excel spreadsheet for

expenditure and income. SH advised that the package had been accounted for in the 2024/5 budget.

- III. Members discussed new website providers and the move to .gov e-mail addresses. The Clerk advised that she had looked at 2 packages used by several other parish councils and was waiting for a third quote to come in. The two discussed were;
 - a. Eyelid Productions
 - b. Parish Online

Members agreed to wait until the third quote was received and discussed in full council on Monday 4th March.

23.19 Lloyds Bank Account

- I. SH advised that he and the Clerk had now been set up as signatories to the bank account and that the bank account address had now been changed to the Clerk's address. Lloyds Bank had advised the Clerk to complete a further form for her to obtain access to APC bank account transactions.

The Clerk advised that it would be useful to have a Business Debit Card for small transactions as the current process of paying for her personal account and claiming the money back was not ideal. A debit card would allow complete transparency on the parish account. All members agreed and advised would take the request to full council.

23.20 APC Assets

- I. GMB advised that he would be walking around the village and checking what assets belonged to APC and then would update the register which could then be used to produce a maintenance plan.
- II. The Clerk advised that the tenancy on Longhill Moss was up and needed reviewing. Members agreed to discuss in full council on Monday 4th March.
- III. Churchfields conservation area. SH advised that the first stage of the work on clearing brambles and scrub and work on the trees had been completed but further work needed to be done. SH advised that ADAS estimated this would cost approx. £1,200. The Clerk advised that she would need to obtain three estimates for the work. KD advised that previously Reaseheath College were interested in allowing their students to come and work on the land to gain experience. To be discussed in Full Council.

23.21 Finance Regs

- I. The Clerk advised that she had a copy of the regs which were reviewed in March 2023 but did not have any signed copy probably due to a changeover of Clerks and the signing not being followed through. Members agreed to review the regulations again and make any adaptations needed before bringing to full council for signing.

23.22 Loan to Village Hall

- I. GMB advised that a loan of £5,000 was given to the Village Hall in 2023 to help them with refurbishment of the building due to lack of funds at the time. GMB advised that in exchange for the loan it was agreed that APC could have the use of a room for a specified time each week to hold Councillor Surgeries or for the Clerk to work from. GMB advised he did not think there was a written agreement for this. KD advised she would speak to John Tilling.

23.23 Next Meeting Dates

- I. The next meeting dates were agreed to be May 14th at 11.00 a.m., September 17th at 11.00 a.m. and December 17th at 11.00 a.m.

SH thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 11.50.