

**AUDLEM PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING**  
**THURSDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2014 AT 7.30PM**  
**METHODIST MEETING ROOMS, SHROPSHIRE STREET, AUDLEM**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr Johnson	Cllr Jones (Chair)	Cllr G Seddon	Cllr Hill
Cllr Furber	Cllr Siddorns	Cllr P Seddon	Cllr Down
Cllr Langston	Cllr Christie		

**In Attendance:** J Kemble (RFO), K Dixon (Clerk)

**Present:** CEC Cllr Rachel Bailey, 66 members of the public

PUBLIC FORUM

Members of the public spoke about the potential takeover of the playing fields, playground, car park and tennis courts. Bill Consterdine read his open letter that had been published on Audlem on-line in support of the takeover and Ralph Warburton and Derek McKelvey, amongst others, also spoke in support. Roland Hall spoke about the evolution of usage for community facilities which is likely to occur in the coming decade. Elizabeth Huntbach asked whether, particularly in light of the poor management of parking, Audlem might do a better job. Others voiced caution, urging the Parish Council to be thorough in matters of liability, insurance and health and safety.

14.90 APOLOGIES

Cllr Higham due to a prior commitment.

14.91 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None declared.

14.92 TRANSFER OF CHESHIRE EAST ASSETS TO AUDLEM PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr Jones asked John Kemble, Responsible Finance Officer, to present and explain the indicative figures that he had produced for the running of the car park, playing field, playground and tennis courts. Mr Kemble gave a thorough explanation of the indicative annual costs, paper copies of which had been distributed to the attending public. He then explained his 5 year projection of costs.

The figures showed that the Parish Council could just afford to run the assets based on the indicative figures and assuming a 10% uplift in the number of households in the Parish within the 5 years. Cllr Jones thanked Mr Kemble for his hard work on the indicative figures and councillors were then given the opportunity to speak and ask questions. Cllr G Seddon commented that the most recent costs for lighting maintenance that Cheshire East had provided the Parish Council were £2,000 more than those used and the car park maintenance figures were also too low.

Cllr Siddorns stated that it was a wonderful opportunity but he had concerns about the costs to the community who already pay for the facilities through their council tax to Cheshire East and would end up paying twice. He also stated that the Parish Council had not been standing idly by as had been suggested but that Cheshire East had a long list of assets to be devolved and that CEC Cllr Rachel Bailey had helped Audlem to move up that waiting list and Cllr Jones confirmed that Cllr Rachel Bailey had been helpful in facilitating recent progress.



There was a discussion on the changes in precept over the 5 years forecast, which had not been increased other than through increasing the number of houses paying.

Cllr Jones then asked members of the public if they had any questions relating to the figures of points for clarification. Questions about the level of insurance cover, whether a 10% uplift in households was an appropriate assumption and whether there would be any payments made to CEC for the assets were asked. It was explained that Cheshire East wanted only a cost neutral handover so the assets would change hands for the nominal amount of £1 and it was confirmed that Cheshire East have allocated a Partnership Manager to the proposed transfer of assets. Other members of the public commented on the general support for the proposal and asked whether it had been owned by the Parish Council in the past, but Cllr Jones commented that none of the research had shown this to be the case.

It was also asked whether the Parish Council would take account of public opinion and whilst Cllr G Seddon explained that ultimately the Parish Council has the right to vote and decide, a referendum, though costly, could be an option. Members of the public suggested a show of hands of those present be held. Cllr Jones explained that the Parish Council would be taking a vote on the matter in the next Parish Council meeting on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November, once councillors had had time to consider and reflect on the figures and the discussions of this meeting.

Cllr Jones then asked for a show of hands in support of the proposed transfer of assets as well as those against and those in abstention: 59 for: 2 against: 6 abstentions.

The meeting was then closed.

**CHAIRMAN** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

