



**AUDLEM**  
PARISH COUNCIL

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### **Turnpike Field & Playing Field Recreation Areas Working Group**

**Thursday July 15 2021**

**Venue: Youth Club Room of the Annexe, Audlem Public Hall, 7.00pm**

Present: Michael Cookson, Adrian Leighton, Steve Elliott, Judy Evans, Cllr Andrew Bicknell, Cllr Joy Sansom, Cllr Margaret Duys, Clerk Owen Hembry. There were two members of the public in attendance.

In the absence of committee Chairman James McGregor, Vice Chairman Michael Cookson acted as chair of the meeting.

#### **Public Forum**

Questions and points raised by members of the public:

- It was asked why the grass in the field had been mowed.
- The absence of life in the stream was questioned.
- It was asked why sand appears in the field.
- Mud on the bridge between the fields and at Grey's Bridge was raised as an issue.
- Barbed wire along the hedge was highlighted as a problem.
- The selection of the wording for the signs was questioned.

Responses from the committee:

- The mowing of grass in the field was discussed under the agenda item on maintenance.
- The lack of life in the stream was noted as having been the case for a long period of time. The possibility of nutrient run-off from the field and a sewage overflow last year were highlighted as possible causes.
- Sand in the field is naturally occurring.
- The creation of an additional pond was raised as a possible solution to alleviate mud by the area of Green Lane.
- The issue of barbed wire will be investigated.
- The committee as a group decided on the wording of the signage.

#### **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr James McGregor, Neil Goodyear, Chris Lewis, Cllr Ralph Warburton and CEC Cllr Rachel Bailey.

## Declarations of Interest

Steve Elliott declared that he is a member of Audlem Rambling Society, which will submit a booking request to use the field.

## Review of meeting notes from previous meeting held on June 3, 2021

The notes from the last meeting held June 3, 2021 were considered and approved as a true record.

## Matters Arising from the previous meeting held on June 3, 2021

Discussion was held regarding uncertainty about the overage charge related to use of the field. It was raised that any area related to the field could be subject to a charge. Clerk to investigate available details related to the overage charge.

## Financial matters

- A summary of the financial report prepared by the Interim Clerk is to be posted on the Council website and Audlem Online, following approval by the Parish Council.
- Balance of the cost of signage has been paid following approval of the installation.

## Signage

The signage has been installed and paid for.

## Car Park

- The proposed next step to get three initial quotes, provided at no cost, for work on a car park as outlined in the design brief prepared by the working group was approved by the Parish Council meeting held on July 12, 2021.
- Fifteen companies have been approached about providing quotes.
- Details may be available at the next meeting.

## Review field bookings and enquiries

### Current bookings:

- Party on the Park. Booking **AMENDED** to July 31 to August 1.
- Gathering of Historic Boats. This booking has been **CANCELLED**.
- Festival of Transport has booked for July 25.
- Bridge Inn Music Festival has booked for August 28-30.

### New booking requests:

- A booking request has been received from Audlem Rambling Society to use the field on August 28. The booking is at the same time as the Bridge Inn Music Festival. Audlem Rambling Society is coordinating with the Bridge Inn. Insurance documentation has been provided.

## Booking conditions

- A review is underway of the conditions, terms and documentation required of organisations wanting to book the field. It was asked at the meeting what the Parish Council's duty of care was as the owner of the field.
- The Parish Clerk was asked to check the Bridge Inn Music Festival booking for any information still to be provided. Organisations that have already booked the field have been emailed regarding their applications. The organisers of Party on the Park and the Festival of Transport responded to say a public liability insurance certificate was not required as they were using the field only as a car park. The responses have been forwarded to the committee for review.

## **Ecology**

- An ecological report was circulated with the agenda and presented at the meeting.
- There had been two wildlife safaris and it is hoped more will be run in August.
- The possibility of installing a pond dipping platform is to be investigated. The estimated cost could be between £270 and £850, depending on the size. Committee member A Leighton has written a number of articles about the field for Audlem Online and proposed collating them into a book for sale to provide funds that could be used for such a project.
- Health and safety guidelines in relation to installing a pond dipping platform are to be investigated.
- A draft tree planting policy previously circulated, detailing the types and location of trees was approved. The next planting will take place in the autumn and is envisaged to be undertaken with saplings donated by the community.
- A response is awaited from Canal & River Trust following an earlier inspection of holes in the canal bank.
- It was understood Cllr R Warburton has volunteered to be the liaison with Canal & Rivers Trust.
- The Wildlife Trust has suggested that a remedy for boggy ground in the lower field could be a third pond to drain off some of the water. There is a possibility of funding from Wildlife Trust for a third pond. Further investigation is to be undertaken.
- Last year's cull of invasive species had been quite effective, with less evidence seen this year. It is currently the right time of year to remove invasive species and a working party is to be organised.
- The judging for Britain in Bloom has been postponed. A wildlife report has been prepared for the judges.
- Expenses for work undertaken so far on tree planting undertaken is to be presented to the Parish Council. Procedure to be confirmed by the Clerk.
- The Committee expressed its appreciation for the excellent, comprehensive, work carried out by Working Group Member A Leighton.

## **Footpaths**

- The barbed wire discussed at the meeting held on June 3 has been removed.
- Further reported barbed wire along the hedge line is to be removed.
- At the June 3 meeting it was discussed that the responsibility of the Parish Council regarding the maintenance of a public right of way was to be researched. CEC Cllr R Bailey has provided a summary saying parish councils do not have any specific duties in respect of maintaining public rights of way. The duty rests with the highway authority for surface and enforcement matters and the landowners for keeping open and available the gates and stiles. Email from R Bailey to be forwarded to the committee.

## **Maintenance report**

The grass in the whole of Turnpike Field has been mistakenly cut following a request for work to be undertaken. A maintenance plan was drawn up and approved by the committee earlier in the year, stipulating when vegetation work was to be undertaken in various areas. The upper part of the top field was supposed to be mowed for events with the rest left as a grassland and then cut at the end of August, together with the grassland in the other field. Future work requirements are to be clearly communicated in line with the agreed plan. Correct instructions are to be ensured for the cutting of hedgerows, which is due in approximately two months. The maintenance plan is to be updated to specify the required cutting of hedges by section. A message has been placed on Audlem Online to

explain the cutting of the grass. Two points of liaison will be established with the contractor for future communication.

**Any other business**

- Discussion was held on the subject of memorial benches, including design, practicality and maintenance. Donation of trees for planting was raised as an alternative.
- Discussion was held on the subject of creating a bicycle track area on Turnpike Field. Concern was raised about the risk of injury. A bicycle track was one of many uses for the field previously suggested and disregarded. It was said the field was a natural area, and for people to sit and enjoy the wildness. The subject is to be added to the agenda for discussion at the next meetings of the committee and the Parish Council.

**Set date for the next meeting**

- The next meeting of the committee is to be held at 7pm on Wednesday September 22, 2021 at the Youth Club Room of the Annexe, Audlem Public Hall.

Meeting closed at 8.30pm