

AUDLEM PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of Finance Committee Meeting held on Monday 25th November 2013
at 7.30pm in the Methodist Meeting Rooms, Shropshire Street, Audlem.**

PRESENT: Cllr Johnson, Cllr Jones, Cllr Furber, Cllr Down, Cllr Christie, Cllr G Seddon, Cllr Siddorns, Cllr Hill, Cllr P Seddon, Cllr Langston.

In Attendance: K Dixon (Clerk), J Kemble (RFO). Mr J Tilling, Mr B Cartwright, Mr R Warburton.

1. Apologies

Cllr Loweth and Cllr Higham due to holidays, accepted.

2. Declaration of Interests

After a discussion, those interests in local groups due to Councillors' voluntary membership (as opposed membership on behalf of the PC) were noted:

Cllr Christie CAB and ADCA

Cllr Jones CAB

Cllr Furber & Cllr G Seddon Public Hall Committee

Cllr Siddorns asked for it to be minuted that he had requested for the APHEx request to be on the agenda; whilst it would be discussed as part of the meeting, it was agreed for it to be an agenda item at the next council meeting.

3. Review of financial procedures & internal audit arrangements

RFO asked for a small amendment to the Financial Regulations – that the Clerk AND the RFO have responsibility for checking timesheets

RESOLVED Unanimously

4. Review of revised asset register and budgeting for renewals

The RFO explained the revisions made to comply with the auditors' new guidelines.

There was a discussion concerning the renewals of assets and RFO commented that an amount of say £2,000 for such purposes could be assigned in the budget.

Cllr Siddorns suggested a survey of conditions.

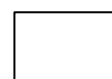
5. Review of staff pay

RESOLVED to increase the lengthsman's pay if required so that it maintains at 50p above the minimum wage. It was agreed to wait and see what legislation will be brought in concerning the living wage.

6. Budget 2014/15

The budget was discussed. The playing field costs and the seedcorn money for APHEx were discussed as major projects involving major financial investment.

Cllr Siddorns explained that commitment was needed to help the APHEx project progress as



well as a contribution of up to £500 as part of the seedcorn money to commence the funding search.

RFO explained that the income from Longhill Moss is ring-fenced for maintenance. The other ring-fenced funds are donations previously allocated but not claimed.

There was a discussion of revising the projections within the budget and donations generally and Cllr Langston commented that a decision needed to be made on whether donations should be carried over in future.

RESOLVED: Money will no longer be carried over to the next financial year for donations and grants. Unanimously carried.

It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the parties affected by this to advise them of the change.

RESOLVED: An amount of £10,000 will be put in the budget for grants and donations. Unanimously carried.

RESOLVED: To budget a ring-fenced amount of £2,000 for a rolling programme of renewal of assets. Unanimously carried.

RESOLVED: That a small grant policy be introduced. Unanimously carried.

Cllr G Seddon proposed that there be an amount budgeted for planning issues in the next financial year, this was discussed but not carried. The budget for the public conveniences was also discussed due to the significant underspend last financial year and the projected underspend this financial year. There was a consensus that a figure of £4,500 would be more appropriate than the previous £6,000. RFO explained that the apparent 10% in audit fee was due the charging process employed should queries be raised. RFO noted the previously minuted (13.110) precept holiday announced by Audlem Burial Board. The Clerk explained the council tax benefit support grant.

7. Small grants/donations, including recent applications

Audlem Football Club request for £386.35, the costs charged by CEC for use of the playing field. There was a discussion between the councillors and Mr Ralph Warburton was invited to answer their questions.

RESOLVED: To pay the requested amount of £386.35 to Audlem Football Club. Carried by a majority vote.

Audlem Carnival Committee request for an additional of £279 next year, this is the amount that they have been advised they will be charged to use the field, a new cost.

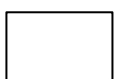
RESOLVED: To make decision on this grant in addition to the £500 usually granted once the Carnival accounts have been seen. Carried.

Request from Mr & Mrs Silvester for £600 to support the Historic Boats event that they run alongside The Audlem Transport Festival (an ASET event). This was discussed.

RESOLVED: The Clerk will write to the applicants and advise them to approach ASET with the view of working collaboratively. Carried Unanimously.

It was agreed to discuss the Community Projects Committee's requests for funding for Public Information Displays and the Crime Prevention Fund application until December's Council Meeting. It was noted that the committee had withdrawn its request for funding for the 2014 Audlem Tourist Leaflets due to the kind offer of Allan & Jo Brown of The Lord Combermere to sponsor the leaflets.

ADAS/Audlem in Bloom request for £1,000 as in previous years was considered. There was a



discussion about whether CEC fund planting schemes in towns and Cllr Rachel Bailey will be asked about this.

RESOLVED: To award £1,000 for planting to ADAS/Audlem in Bloom in the next financial year. Carried.

RFO brought up the issue of accounts being sought from groups such as the First Responders. The Clerk is to produce a draft small grant policy by the January council meeting. Cllr Jones suggested publicity and an application date once a policy has been adopted.

ASET's request for money will be decided at the December council meeting.

8. Projects for Consideration

Cllr Siddorns has yet to receive a response from CEC regarding the possible devolving of the playing fields etc, it was agreed for this to be an item on the December council meeting agenda. Cllr Hill commented that he had again reviewed the costings and that they were likely to be in the order of £11,500 as CEC are likely to clawback the legal costs. He also mentioned that there was little chance of recouping any of CEC's precept to reflect the transfer of costs of upkeep etc.

It was agreed that supporting APHEX with the development of this community facility should be considered as a possible project.

Cllr Christie asked that at the December meeting ADCA's Community Transport funding application be discussed as an indication of support from the Parish Council (as opposed to cash) may be required.

Allotments may be taken off the projects list as not current work is being down to this end by the allotment group at present.

Cllr Hill suggested the improvement of security cameras in the village. This however might be included in the renewals budget previously discussed.

Cllr Furber suggested the funding of a mobile speed indicator like that used in Hankelow which indicates a driver's speed. It was agreed that this was an interesting possibility and required further research. The previous funding of a speed gun and the Police's current usage of it was discussed and it was agreed that Cllr Siddorns would take this matter to the Law & Order LAP meeting.

In accordance with the financial regulations, Cllr G Seddon offered to look at the trial balance with the RFO.

9. To agree precept for 2014/15

The precept could not be agreed because, as explained previously by the clerk, the council tax benefit support grant awarded by CEC has not been set yet and this amount has to be deducted from the precept in order to maintain it at the same level as 20112-2013; the grant awarded last year had not been deducted which had created the increase in the precept paid by residents in 2013-14 (current year). The grant amount for 2013-2014 (£2,633) will also be deducted from the precept for 2014-2015 in order to reimburse the residents as previously agreed (minute 13.10.9).

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____

