

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held at the Methodist Church, Shropshire St, Audlem,
on Thursday 10th April 2025 at 7.00pm**

Present:

Councillors:

Phillip Baker
Charles Cavill
Carl Dovey
David Jones
Ryan Jones
Paul Smart
David Lambourne

Absent:

Tim Brooksbank
Will Pearson
Rachel Bailey

In Attendance:

Sarah Windridge (Clerk)
13 members of the public

24/160 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Brooksbank and Pearson and Cheshire Ward Cllr Rachel Bailey

24/161 Declarations of Interest

24/162 Requests for Dispensation

None received.

24/163 Co-Option

The Parish Council reports that no applications have been received. The position will continue to be advertised.

24/164 a) Public Session

It was RESOLVED that Standing Orders of the Council be suspended, to allow public participation in accordance with Standing Orders 3e-j.

A number of members of the public asked questions which are summarised below along with responses

1. Question:

Can the Parish Council explain why Cheshire East have deemed it unnecessary to undertake an EIA assessment on the development on Moorsfield Avenue?

Response:

Cllr Lambourne answered that the application for the EIA screening schedule was considered under the selection criteria for schedule 2 development. The application is not considered schedule 1 which is major development and should come under Schedule 2 however the application was assessed under Schedule 3 and it is not clear as to why Cheshire East has not stated it is necessary.

Cllr Dovey confirmed that when the full planning application is submitted, The Parish Council will raise the environmental impact as part of the planning application.

The Chairman confirmed that it is vital that the Parish Council does not air a view on this until the planning application comes through. The Parish Council is arranging an open public meeting at 6pm on 24th April with the developers to allow questions to be asked by residents. Cllr Dovey agreed that this would be publicised on throughout the village including on Audlem online.

2. **Question:**
Is there any progress on the police investigation?

Response:
There is no further news to add.

3. **Question:**
The Clerk should be in touch with the police every month so why is there no news?

Response:
The Clerk is in touch with the investigating officer every month and there is no progress at the moment. Cllr Baker confirmed that he has been in touch with the Police and Crime commissioner to ask him to look into the investigation further.

4. **Question:**
Another member of the public suggested that the Police and Crime Commissioner would probably not be able to intervene, and suggested that, as individuals, people can complain about the police officer who is investigating this matter.

Answer: The Parish Council will look into this possibility. The role of the commissioner is to be that voice on behalf of the public which is why the Parish Council has looked into it.

24/164 b) Cheshire East Ward Councillor

In the absence of Councillor Rachel Bailey the Clerk shared the following report:

1. Householder Support Fund (HSF) was approved at the Children & Families Committee recently. Over the next six months, Cheshire East Council will distribute £3.88 million through the Government's Household Support Fund. This funding, covering the period from 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025, aims to provide essential crisis support to the most vulnerable households and will offer financial assistance in various forms, including supermarket vouchers, cash for energy vouchers, help with boiler repairs or replacements, and housing cost support for those in rented accommodation.
2. The Local Transport Plan consultation is still ongoing and requires a response by 21st April.
3. The commercial bus service between Leighton Hospital, Nantwich and Audlem has been a success in the early stage and Cheshire East would like the Parish Council to promote the bus service on the Parish Council website
4. Chapel End Woore Road Temporary Traffic Lights : works to repair the pavement should finally be underway this week albeit will likely require a temporary road closure.

It was RESOLVED to reinstate Standing Orders at 19:13pm.

24/165 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20th March 2025

24/166 Planning Applications

- a) No planning applications were received
- b) There were no updates on planning applications
- c) A public meeting regarding the proposed development at Moorsfield Avenue will be held on 24th April at 6 pm.

24/167 Bank Reconciliation

The bank reconciliation as of 31st March 2025, and copies of the corresponding bank statement were circulated to members ahead of the meeting. Hard copies of invoices/receipts were inspected at the meeting by two members of Council.

Members noted that as of the 31st March 2025, the bank account balance stood at £48,379.36

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the bank reconciliation for March 2025. The bank reconciliation is attached to the minutes as appendix A.

24/168 Payments for Approval

- a) Members **RESOLVED** to approve a list of payments totaling £5005.46.
- b) Members **RESOLVED** to approve the improvement works to the village noticeboards. Costs are not expected to exceed £250 for materials, subject to costs of signwriter. The Clerk will provide further details when quotes are received.

The bank reconciliation is attached to the minutes as appendix A.

24/169 To confirm progress regarding annual accounts and audit process

Locum Clerk Lee Jakeman previously circulated a report to Councillors. The Clerk read out a summary of the internal report. There is £8000 underspend compared to the budget.

The Internal Audit report will show that the Parish Council accounts were not left in order when the Locum Clerk started to work with the Parish Council in August. The locum clerk will close down the accounts and send everything to the Internal Auditor. It will be noted that the bank balance does not match the declaration on the Annual Governance Audit Review form, due to funds not being written off. The Locum Clerk has suggested that the Parish Council appoints an accountant to go through the accounts for the previous two years, at which point the accounts can then be submitted to the External Auditor and closed.

It was noted that the existing discrepancy will be recorded in the internal audit report and published on the website.

Councillors agreed to appoint an accountant to review the previous two years of accounts. The Clerk will provide quotes to the Council when received.

24/170 To receive a report from the Clerk

The clerk report is attached as appendix c to the minutes. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase of work boots for the Lengthsman up to £50.

24/171 To Consider/ Approve Terms of Reference for A Finance Working Group

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the terms of reference for the finance working group.

24/172 Parish Matters

- a) **To confirm the Parish Council response to the Cheshire and Warrington Devolution consultation as reported by Councillors Baker and Lambourne**

This was circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting. Cllr Lambourne attended the community liaison meeting, and it was confirmed that the responses from the consultation will help to shape the outcome. Cllr Bailey expressed her concerns about the possible outcome of the consultation. Cllr Lambourne asked the Parish Council to note that he needs to rephrase a particular statement to ensure it is apolitical.

It was **RESOLVED** that the completed consultation would be submitted on behalf of the Parish Council. The Clerk to add this to the website in conjunction with the consultation document.

- b) **To review the Longhill Moss Lease**

Cllr Dovey informed members that he has drafted a tenancy agreement and will deliver this to the tenant.

c) To receive an update from Cllr R Jones regarding maintenance on Turnpike Field

Cllr Jones reported that he, Cllr Dovey and Mr Jakeman walked around Turnpike Field earlier in the year to ascertain which areas need improvement. Cllr Jones has contacted multiple agencies regarding funding for the field.

Cllr Jones is drafting a four-year maintenance plan which includes a wildflower meadow memorial area and potential funding for the bridge over the two fields, to put a drain in there so large machinery can be moved across the field easily. Cllr Jones is exploring uses for the field which will maximise enjoyment for all residents. Cllr Jones notes that the Parish Council needs to adhere to advice from external agencies regarding wildflowers, plants and animal habitats, as well as mowing frequency.

The comprehensive plan will include community engagement and at this point the Parish Council will contact members of the previous Turnpike Field Working Group. Cllr Jones is particularly keen to engage the youth of the village.

It was **RESOLVED** to agree a yearly maintenance contract for the maintenance of Turnpike Field and the Churchfields conservation area, at a cost of £1390. Cllr Dovey had obtained three quotes and this was the most cost effective.

d) To receive an update from Cllr Dovey regarding maintenance in the Conservation area

Cllr Dovey has been talking to ADAS regarding the proposed works and has confirmed that contractors need public liability insurance and to make sure there are risk assessments in place. Cllr Dovey suggested that a plan might be to create a generic risk assessment for future work.

Cllr Cavill asked about the tree surgery works proposed and Cllr Dovey confirmed that as the work has already started so the Parish Council does not need to re-apply for planning permission. Cllr Dovey confirmed that he is still obtaining quotes for the work.

e) To consider organising a village 'Spring Clean'.

It was decided that Cllr Cavill will liaise with the Clerk and Cllr Baker regarding litter picking and a general village tidy up.

f) To confirm the Parish Council response to the Local Transport Plan consultation as reported by Councillors Cavill.

The response to the consultation was confirmed at the meeting and submitted by the Clerk.

24/173 Exclusion of the Press and Public

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It was **RESOLVED** that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded for the proceeding agenda items

24/174 Turnpike Field Update

An update was received relating to Turnpike Field.

As soon as further information is received which can be published, the Parish Council will publish a report.

Meeting closed at 20:30 pm

DRAFT