



**AUDLEM**  
PARISH COUNCIL

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**Clerk: Carol Bell**

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### **Minutes of meeting of Audlem Parish Council held in the Methodist Church, Shropshire St. Audlem on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July at 7.00pm.**

Present: Councillors Geoff Seddon (GS) (Chair), Stephen Hopkins (SH), Lynette Hopkins (LH) Steve Elliott (SE), Kate Down (KD), George McLaren-Brown (GMB), Nick Brennan (NB), Carl Dovey (CD), Ryan Jones (RJ)

In attendance: Carol Bell (Clerk to APC) Rachel Bailey (Ward Councillor)

#### **Part A**

GS opened the meeting at 7 pm and advised that the meeting was being recorded.

Members of public in attendance: 9

#### **24/48 Apologies for absence**

Cllr Keith Nord

#### **24/49 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest received.

#### **24/50 Requests for Dispensation**

No requests for dispensation received.

#### **24/51 Co-option of Councillor**

MOP Dave Siddorns was co-opted onto the Council.

#### **24/52 Public participation**

A MOP queried the precept figures for the past 2 years. GS advised he would arrange a meeting with the MOP to discuss further.

A MOP read out a statement regarding the purchasing of Turnpike Field and questioned the amount of money being spent currently on legal fees.

A MOP asked whether it would be sensible to have a trial run of parking on Turnpike Field to gauge how many people would use it prior to implementing a permanent structure.

A MOP asked for an update on the police investigation. The Clerk gave an update.

#### **24/53 Confirmation of Minutes**

Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the meetings held on **3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024**  
Proposed CD, seconded SH, all in favour

#### **24/54 Councillors **AGREED** to adopt the Communications Policy subject to the following amendments and additions**

To continue with newsletter on a 6 monthly basis. RJ to format newsletter ready for printing

To adopt a social media policy to tie in with communications policy. Clerk to source.

To consider adopting a Facebook page for Council. RJ, SE and Clerk to meet to discuss.

To delete communications portfolio holder and replace with paragraph on Council groups and committees. Clerk to draft

Proposed SE, seconded CD, all in favour

#### **24/55 Councillors **AGREED** to adopt the Risk Assessment policy.**

Proposed KD, seconded SH, all in favour

**24/56** Councillors **AGREED** to adopt the Code of Conduct  
Proposed CD, seconded SH, all in favour

**24/57** **Planning Matters**

Councillors **RESOLVED** the following planning application.

24/57 (i) **24/2099N – land off Cheshire Street, Audlem –** change of use from agricultural field to dog exercise enclosure area. APC **OBJECTED** due to the following reasons;

- (a) The proposed business entrance to the site on a busy part of Cheshire Street, would significantly exacerbate traffic creating a health and safety risk.
- (b) Proximity to residential areas, particularly Cheshire Street, would lead to significant noise issues and privacy concerns especially with car users directly overlooking 54 Cheshire Street when leaving the field.
- (c) The project does not align with Policy B1 of the Audlem Neighbourhood Plan which states development for small businesses will be supported on brownfield sites. This is not a brownfield site.
- (d) The business plan lacks clarity on the maximum number of dogs allowed, whether there will be lighting installed and the management of users' adherence to the rules of the field all of which raise concerns about safety, light pollution and compliance monitoring. If no lighting is to be installed, then during the winter months this could pose a health and safety risk. If there is to be lighting, there is a potential for light pollution for the residents on Cheshire Street.

Proposed KE, seconded RJ, all in favour

Councillors **NOTED** the following planning decisions.

24/57 (ii) **24/1239N – Pheasants Rise, Damson Lane, Cox Bank –** proposed bungalow. – **CE have refused this application. Audlem Parish Council objected to this application.**

24/57 (iii) Councillors **AGREED** to the setting up of a group, to include residents of the village, to review the Audlem Neighbourhood Plan.

Proposed GS, seconded SH, all in favour

**24/58** **Financial Matters**

24/58 (i) Councillors **NOTED** the income and expenditure statement as of the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024

24/58 (ii) Councillors **NOTED** budget statement as of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024

24/58 (iii) Councillors **APPROVED** the payment agenda below.

Proposed SH, seconded CD, all in favour

Invoice Date	Invoice No.	Supplier	Goods	Amount (£)
28.05.2024	22	D R Jones Construction	Turnpike Field flailing, 7 <sup>th</sup> & 27 <sup>th</sup> May	150.00
01/06/2024	16511	Then Media	Website and domain names	43.00 +VAT
10/06/2024	099	Audlem Methodist Church	Room Hire TFWG car park meeting Room Hire - VMC meeting	50.00
18/06/2024		GiffGaff	Clerk mobile phone	10.00
24/06/2024	20467	Rostons	Valuation for Turnpike Field	1250.00 + VAT
30/06/2024		Lengthsman	Lengthsman's duties	521.40
30/06/2024		Parish Clerk and RFO	Parish Clerk duties	1231.47
30/06/2024		HMRC	Tax and NI contributions	1616.84

24/58 (iv) Councillors **APPROVED** the retrospective payments below.

Proposed SH, seconded SE, all in favour

Invoice Date	Invoice No.	Supplier	Goods	Amount (£)
31/05/2024	490526	Freeths Solicitors	Legal advice for Turnpike Field	800.00 + VAT
01/06/2024	6176	Scribe	Accounting Software	55.00 + VAT

06/06/2024	5914092	Water Plus	Water supply to toilet block	112.23
08/06/2024	768	3 Counties Cleaning	Cleaning of public toilet block	420.00
10/06/2024	6176	Starboard Systems (Scribe)	Accounting Software	55.00 + VAT
15/06/2024	70638068	PHS	Clinical waste removal public toilets	299.77 + VAT
18/06/2024		Lloyds Bank	Service Charges	7.00
20/06/2024		EDF	Electricity to toilet block	60.66

24/58 (v) Councillors **NOTED** the following receipts

Payment Date	Supplier	Goods	Amount
05/06/2024	Lloyds Bank	Refund of bank charges for old bank account	27.34
21/06/2024	Tenant	Payment for tenancy of Longhill Moss from 01.01.2024 – 25.12.2024	630.00
24/06/2024	Scribe	Refund for duplicate payment in June	55.00 + VAT

#### 24/59 **Correspondence**

24/59 (i) The Clerk's update on meeting with police in relation to alleged fraud of parish funds was covered in her response to the MOP's question earlier in the meeting

24/59 (ii) Councillors **AGREED** to renew their subscription to Cheshire Community Action at a renewal fee of £50.

Proposed GS, seconded RJ, all in favour

24/59 (ii) The Clerk advised there was no further correspondence to update Councillors on, since the publishing of the agenda.

#### 24/60 **Turnpike Field**

24/60 (i) SE provided an update from TFWG meeting held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June  
SE advised there was still a fair amount of Himalayan Balsam on the field that needed pulling up. Discussions were held over the best way to deal with the removal, pull up and leave to rot or remove from site. It was **AGREED** that the advice of an agronomist would be sought for the best way to dispose of the plant.  
Proposed GS, seconded SH, all in favour.

24/60 (ii) Councillors deferred to **CONSIDER** the initial car parking strategy

24/60 (iii) Councillors deferred to **CONSIDER** link bridge surface and fencing plans

24/60 (iv) GS advised the due to ongoing legal advice the Village Fete would not be able to be held on Turnpike Field. The option of using the village playing field was discussed. Clerk to make contact with ADAS.

24/60 (v) SE advised that the tree work undertaken by Benbow brothers and Martin treecare had now been completed.

#### 24/61 **Village Management (VMG)**

24/61 (i) LH gave an update from the VMC meeting held on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June

- (a) In the last VMC meeting 3 MOPs were in attendance and discussions were held over alternative land for the children of the village to use as a cycle area due to concerns raised by CE as to the safety of children in the current bike scramble area at the rear of the playing field. LH advised that once APC had resolved the current legalities with Turnpike Field, APC could consider whether part of the field could be given over to the children.
- (b) The Clerk was asked to contact Cheshire East in relation to overgrown hedges on Whitchurch Road which were compromising the public's safety. GS advised that he had spoken to the householders and as a result, one property had cut their hedge back and the other property owner planned to cut the hedge back this week.
- (c) A resident had queried whether the Council knew of any planning requests for a new mobile mast due to the switch off of 3g by the end of the year and his concern that there was only one mast to serve the area of Audlem and Buerton. The Clerk advised that as far as she was aware there were no planning applications for additional masts.
- (d) The search for the water meter for the public toilet continues. Cllrs SH and GMB had lifted all grid covers near the toilets and no meter was found. Clerk to contact Waterplus again.
- (e) GMB advised that the gates and fencing supplied by APC on Longhill Moss had been removed. Clerk to contact tenant to instruct for them to be replaced.

- (f) LH thanked GMB for the updated assets register and advised the Council that some assets were in a poor state of repair and would benefit from an annual maintenance plan.
- (g) The locking of the public toilets over night was discussed. New doors with electronic locking devices would cost around £5,000. Clerk to contact an electrician to see if the current electronic locking system could be repaired.
- (h) LH advised that the Clerk had contacted a local company to obtain the cost of annual maintenance for the car park CCTV. GMB had also arranged for new locks for the CCTV cabinet
- (i) LH advised that a meeting was to be held with Chief Inspector John Forshaw, of the Cheshire Police Road and Crime Unit, to discuss road traffic management in the village and the installation of SIDs
- (j) LH advised that the road sign that was demolished in the centre of the village during the road closures was to be replaced by CE under an insurance claim.
- (k) GS reminded the public that the 2<sup>nd</sup> July was the final date for members of the public to have their say on the local bus services consultation.

**24/62 Report by Ward Councillor**

- (i) Cllr Bailey thanked those who had completed the bus consultation and reiterated the impact it would have for residents living in the outlying areas to Audlem.
- (ii) Cllr Bailey advised that the report from the Local Government peer review that she had forwarded a motion for in late 2023 would be available to read on the 12<sup>th</sup> July.
- (iii) Cllr Bailey informed the Council that CE had approved a stud crossing for Cheshire Street, the cost of which she could not disclose at this present moment. Cllr Bailey asked the Council if they could consider using some Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds to help finance the project.

LH expressed concerns about the safety of children crossing the street, questioning how drivers would be made aware of the stud crossing, as children might assume it is safe to step out into the road. Cllr Bailey suggested that installing Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) near the crossing reminding drivers of the 20mph speed limit could encourage vehicles to slow down.

**24/63 Office Matters**

- 24/63 (i) LH requested Councillors to consider an August meeting due to the number of issues the Council were dealing with at the current time. Due to the inability to decide whether a full council meeting or extraordinary meeting was needed, this topic was deferred to Part B
- 24/63 (ii) Councillors **AGREED** to move to .gov e-mail addresses as recommended by internal auditor and also an alternative provider to IONIS once the current legal issues had been resolved.  
Proposed GS, seconded NB, all in favour
- 24/63 (iii) Councillors **DISCUSSED** shared access portal for back up of council documents and agreed to investigate this along with updating the website at a later date.
- 24/63 (iv) Councillors **REVIEWED** and **APPROVED** the asset register subject to the removal of the laminator, ballot boxes and printer which GS advised he did not hold.

**24/64 Date of Next Meeting**

To be confirmed

At this point the Chair closed the meeting at 20.58 and thanked the members of the public for attending.

**Exclusion of Public**

At this point the Council will ask that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of an item pursuant to Section 100 (A) 4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

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**Part B**

- 24/65** Councillors **AGREED** that all council correspondence should be received and distributed through the Clerk. Councillors also **AGREED** that the number of e-mails sent should be minimised. When e-mails are sent, they should be addressed directly to the intended recipient, with a copy (CC) sent to others who need to be informed but do not need to respond.

**24/65 (i)** Councillors **AGREED** that, after receiving the land valuation and solicitor's advice, GS, LH, RJ and the Clerk would draft a letter. Once the draft is finalised it will be circulated amongst Councillors for review before being sent to APC's solicitor.

Councillors agreed that whilst legal advice was being sort regarding Turnpike Field, maintenance of the field would continue but a pause would be made on meetings for the TFWG and the application for Fields in Trust. GS and SE to disseminate this information to TFWG.