

BUERTON PARISH COUNCIL

1st February 2024

Commenced: 7.15 pm

Terminated: 8.40 pm

**Present: Councillor Baddley (Chair)
Councillors Black, Bonell, Mansell, Mort, Myers and Shaw
Councillor Farrealey sat in the Public Gallery**

There were 11 Members of the Public in attendance

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence from Members of the Parish Council

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest from Members of the Parish Council.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 16th November 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. PUBLIC FORUM

The Chair reported on a resident's concern regarding bin emptying, branches and twigs on the playing field. The Members of the parish council looked into this, and the Working Party will do this work.

5. ASSET REGISTER 2024-2025

Members considered the 2024-2025 Asset Register.

RESOLVED

That the 2024-2025 Asset Register, as appended to these Minutes as Appendix 1, be approved.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT 2024-2025

Members considered the 2024-2025 Risk Assessment.

RESOLVED

That the 2024-2025 Risk Assessment, as appended to these Minutes as Appendix 2, be approved.

7. BUERTON PARISH COUNCIL PUBLICATION SCHEME

Members considered a Publication Scheme for Buerton Parish Council and discussed considerable time taken over the recent months answering numerous email correspondences, that were aggressive in tone, sent by an individual requesting information much of which was publicly available. The Clerk reported that another email had been received that day from the same individual and the Chair agreed that the information was publicly available, so the Clerk should not spend her time researching.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Publication Scheme for Buerton Parish Council be approved;**
- (ii) That for any excessive requests for information, a reasonable charge is made;**
- (iii) That the Clerk is not authorised by this Parish Council to spend further time investigating matters for the particular individual.**

8. HIRE OF BUERTON PLAYING FIELD

Members discussed the introduction of a charge for the hire of Bueron Playing Field.

RESOLVED

- (i) That Members of the Parish Council to draft and circulate a questionnaire to the electorate who will be given an opportunity to make a decision on the future use of Bueron Playing Field;
- (ii) That the questionnaire to be made available via a postal drop and online access;
- (iii) That a Mailbox to be made available in the phone box which houses the defibrillator;
- (iv) That the Chair be authorized to purchase a secure Mailbox up to £100.00;
- (v) That the cost of printing and posting survey be approved.
- (vi) In the meantime, any booking requests under consideration will be subject to a booking fee in the sum of £30.00, per event.

9. FOOTPATH

Members received a verbal report from Councillor Black on Footpaths 7, 21 and 22.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

10. FINANCES AND BUDGET 2023-2024

- (i) Members noted that at the 23rd January 2024, the budget expenditure for 2023-2024 was as follows (including the January 2024 salary/HMRC payments):

Budget Head	Total	BUDGET ALLOCATED	DIFFERENCE
Salary	£2,568.00	£2,850.00	90.11%
Administration including Payroll	£461.11	£600.00	76.85%
Training	£205.00	£100.00	205.00%
Expenses	£249.74	£300.00	83.25%
Internal Audit	£120.00	£100.00	120.00%
Insurance	£546.42	£530.00	103.10%
Room Hire	£235.00	£180.00	130.56%
Audlem OnLine	£115.20	£115.00	100.17%
Field Caretaker	£910.00	£1,100.00	82.73%
Field Maintenance	£1,830.00	£3,760.00	48.67%
Annual Playground Inspection	£162.00	£175.00	92.57%
Asset Inspection	£0.00	£50.00	0.00%
Subscriptions	£161.32	£173.00	93.25%
Donations	£0.00	£175.00	0.00%
Coronation Crown	£95.00	£100.00	95.00%
Flowers	£131.81	£200.00	65.91%
Proposed Projects	£1,124.78	£2,500.00	44.99%
	£8,915.38	£13,008.00	

- (ii) Members received the following Bank Reconciliation at the 23rd January 2024 (this included the January salary payment):

Bank Reconciliation 23rd January 2024	
BUERTON PARISH COUNCIL	
Financial year ending 31 March 2024	
Prepared by: Muna Clough, Parish Clerk & RFO	
Balance per bank statements as at 23rd January 2024	
Current Account	£13,923.31
Net bank balances as at 23rd January 2024	£13,923.31
The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows	
CASH BOOK	
Main @ 01.04.2023	£12,332.47
Opening Balance	
Add: Receipts in the year	£10,506.22
Less: Payments in the year	£8,915.38
Closing balance per cash book [receipts and payments book] must equal net bank balances above	£13,923.31

- (iii) Members were asked to consider the opening of a bank account with Unity Bank. The annual management fee was £72.00 (£6 per month) and Members were asked to agree signatories for the account (in addition to the Clerk).

RESOLVED

That the Clerk makes arrangements to open a new bank account with the Unity Trust Bank, with signatories of the Clerk (to request payments only), Chair, Deputy Chair (confirmed in Minute 12(ii) below) and Councillor Myers.

11. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Councillor Black provided an update on the following planning matters:

- New Planning Applications
 - (i) Application No: 23/3878N Spout Farm, Longhill Lane, Audlem (Previous application number – 21/5453N (26/10/21) – Variation of Condition 2 on approval 21/5453N or proposed rear extensions, internal remodelling and external reconfiguration. The Parish Council noted this application.
 - (ii) Application No: 24/0125N Tithe Barn, Woore Road. (Previous Applications - 21/0247N (19/01/21) 20/2230N (02/06/20). Variation of condition 2 on approved application 21/0247N – raising the height of the existing garage roof to 6300 mm, to allow for the introduction of additional internal floor space. Resubmission of application 20/2230N. The Parish Council noted this application and agreed that no objections be forwarded to Cheshire East Council.

- Ongoing Planning Applications
- (iii) Application No: 23/3404N Orchard Barn, Longhill Lane, Hankelow – proposed garage block to house private collection of vintage vehicles, resubmission of application 21/1097N . Members noted that this application had been approved with conditions.

- **Neighbourhood Plan**

Following a recent announcement regarding changes to national planning policy, Members discussed the need to review the Neighbourhood Plan.

RESOLVED

That the Chair and Deputy Chair discuss the possible review of the current Neighbourhood Plan and report back to a future meeting of the Parish Council.

12. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair reported on the following matters pertaining to the Parish:-

(i) Resignation of Deputy Chair

Councillor Farrealey had submitted her resignation from her position as Deputy Chair to the Parish Council due to bullying and intimidation from residents in Buerton. Members agreed that such behaviour towards Councillors was unacceptable as it had occurred on numerous occasions.

RESOLVED

That a Vexatious Policy and a Complaints Policy be introduced.

(ii) Appointment of Deputy Chair

RESOLVED

That Councillor Black be appointed as Deputy Chair for the remainder of this Municipal Year.

(iii) Oak Tree update

The Chair had been speaking to an Arborist who had advised that planning permission was not required to strap the tree, as the proposed strapping was not bespoke. She had therefore contacted Cheshire East Planning Department who had confirmed that the application was a desktop matter and that a decision would be given within the week. She added that the last tree survey was completed around three years ago.

RESOLVED

That the Chair to contact the Arborist (from Turnpike Field, Audlem) and arrange a survey.

(iv) Road Safety Survey

The Chair reported on a road safety matters highlighted by Dodcutt-cum-Wilkesley Parish Council

RESOLVED

That residents be encouraged to report issues to Cheshire East Highways Department.

(v) Dedicated Parish Council Website

The Chair reported on her enquiries to purchase a website that was dedicated to Buerton Parish Council.

Members agreed to retain the Parish Council page on Audlem on Line for 12 months, but add a link to the new website, where all documents would be kept.

RESOLVED

That a website purchased from the Parish Council Web Design Company in the sum of £569 (plus VAT), plus £120 (plus VAT) for a “.gov” domain, be approved.

(vi) Small Gambling Licence

The small gambling licence was now active for 12 months. The first competition was the Oak Tree 100 draw.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

(vii) Playground Risk Assessment

RESOLVED

That the Annual Risk Assessment be arranged.

(viii) Buerton Events Committee

RESOLVED

That the following dates requested in 2024 be approved subject to the payment of a booking fee of £30.00 per event:

Saturday, 30th March 2024

Saturday, 24th August 2024

Saturday, 26th October 2024

13. FEEDBACK FROM ADDITIONAL PARISH MEETINGS

Councillor Shaw reported on the following:-

(i) Buerton Parish Council Working Party

The Working Party had met four times since its inception in October 2023. It met most Sundays to carry out parish maintenance including cleaning gutters. There was now an Events Sub-Group, which wished to extend an invitation to Buerton Events Committee to hold a joint summer event.

The village postbox was in need of a paint, and it was agreed that permission be sought from the post office to complete this work.

A volunteer had offered £100 to sponsor a flower trough.

A Fund Raising Sub-Group was to look at potential grants for projects by the Working Party.

(ii) Burial Board

The Burial Board was looking to raise funds for the upkeep of cemetery in Audlem, and had had to reduce the hours of some paid staff. The cost of purchasing burial and cremation plots had increased and the feasibility of a Garden of Remembrance was being considered.

The Cemetery car park was being used as an overflow car park and there was an increasing problem of dogs being allowed to run loose by owners. Both matters were being investigated.

RESOLVED

That the reports be noted.

14. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

It was agreed that the following items be included on the next Agenda:-

Land Rent Review;

Playing field questionnaire review;

Neighbourhood plan update.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted that the date of the next meeting would be held on Thursday, 4th April 2023 at 7.15 pm at Hankelow Church Hall, 11 Old School Lane, Hankelow, Crewe, CW3 0JN

16. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair wished to raise the following item of business as a matter of urgency as it was a concern for a resident.

17. RESIDENT CONCERNS

A resident had reported that fallen leaves on the playing field were affecting her property.

RESOLVED

That the following solutions be suggested to the resident:-

- (i) The owner be asked for solutions;**
- (ii) That the owner be asked to purchase gutter guards, and the Parish Council will arrange to fit them;**
- (iii) That the Parish Council arranges to prune the tree nearest to the property;**
- (iv) That consideration be given to the planting of a laurel hedge on Parish Council land to act as a barrier, along the chainlink fence.**

BUERTON PARISH COUNCIL 2024-2025

REGISTER AND VALUATION OF ASSETS AS OF 1ST FEBRUARY 2024

Asset	Location	Purchase/Acquisition Date	Initial Cost/Value	Associated Life Years	Notes
Goal posts and nets	Playing field	01/05/2004	£180.00	10 to 15	Nets replaced in December 2022
War Memorial original	Audlem Cemetery	1922 approx	£1.00	100	Remounted in Audlem Chapel 2013
War Memorial new	Windmill Lane/A625 jct	01/10/2012	£2,240.00	100	Erected Oct 2012. Restored June 2020
Notice Board	Windmill Lane	01/06/2010	£960.00	10	Erected May 2011
Playing Field	Village Centre	01/11/2010	£1.00	80	7047 sqm for public
Playing Field fencing	Perimeter fencing	07/07/1905	£10,000.00	20	Fencing repaired March 2021
Rubbish Bin	Playing field	01/06/2011	£359.00	10	
Rubbish Bin	Playing field	31/03/2015	£347.00	10	
Seats	Bus Stop/Village Sign	01/11/2006	£700.00	15	
Seats	Playing field	31/03/2015	£195.00	15	
Picnic Bench	Playing field	31/03/2015	£420.00	15	
Picnic Bench and Bench	Playing field	20/03/2023	£1,772.00	40	
Gate	Playing field	21/03/2023	£284.00	15	
Playground equipment	Playing field	16/05/2013	£25,000.00	15	Asset value amended due to equipment replaced/repared in 2021
Parish Land	off Woore Road	01/04/1904	£1.00	100	47 acres let for agriculture
Phone Box	A525 by Playing Field	01/09/2010	£1.00	25	Landmark only. Restored November 2020
	Defibrillator	31/03/2015	£1,600.00	7	
Laptop	Clerk	17/08/2023	£350.00	5	
Outdoor Gym	Playing field	02/02/2019	£2,640.00	10	
Bus Shelter	Windmill Lane	19/08/2019	£1,474.00	25	
Layby and Playground Signs	Woore Road and Playing field	16/07/2021	£350.00	25	Installed February 2022
Millenium Sign	Windmill Lane	22/06/1905	£500.00	25	Restored and remounted May 2021. Asset value amended.

Inspections and Comments

All assets inspected regularly and in general good order.

Buerton Parish Council
RISK REGISTER AND MANAGEMENT POLICY 2024-2025

	Risk	Score H/M/L	Measures to reduce likelihood/control impact	Evidence
1	Failure to comply with legal obligations applicable to Parish Council, in respect of financial, business & procedural matters, e.g. budgeting & reporting, Customs & Excise, accuracy of minutes, members' interests, declarations of gifts and hospitality	L	Compliance with external and internal financial regulations, standing orders & Code of Conduct Completion of VAT returns Minutes numbered and paginated Annual audit Regular review of financial status and position Scrutiny of financial records by internal auditor	Minutes Register of interests Financial records. Internal Audit Minute book Audit certificates Minutes Report
2	Fraud & corruption	L	Insurance - fidelity guarantee	Policy
3	Libel & slander	M	Insurance cover against libel & slander Members to be particularly mindful on Social Media	Insurance Cover Minutes
4	Parish Land loss of value	L	Maintenance of asset register	Asset Register
5	Playing Field personal injury and damage to fixture and fittings including Phone box and defibrillator	M	Programme of inspection and repair. Insurance cover against loss or damage and public liability 6 monthly inspections and report by independent qualified Inspector	Minutes Asset Register Policy Reports

REVIEWED ON 1ST FEBRUARY 2024