

Congleton Town Council ("the Town Council")

Youth Committee Constitution (March 2014)

1. Constitution

- 1.1. The Congleton Town Council Youth Committee ("the Youth Committee") shall consist of a maximum 12 youth councillors ("the Youth Councillors").
- 1.2. The Youth Committee is not a formal committee of the Town Council, but is designed to mirror as closely as possible the workings of the Town Council's formal committees.
- 1.3. All elected Youth Councillors shall be given a copy of the Town Council's Constitution to help them understand the roles, responsibilities, vision and decision making processes of the Town Council.
- 1.4. The Youth Committee is committed to full inclusion of and full representation of and by its Youth Councillors. Every young person who stands for election but is not elected shall be encouraged to attend meetings in an advisory capacity.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of the Youth Committee is;
- 2.2. To provide access for young people to the Town Council's decision makers and where practicable processes.
- 2.3. To represent the views, issues and opinions of young people living in or around Congleton Town.

3. Membership

- 3.1. Youth Councillors are not official members of the Town Council but shall be included as much as is practicable in the Town Council's decision making and processes.
- 3.2. Eligibility for election to the Youth Council shall be open to:
 - 3.2.1. Any young person residing in or around Congleton Town and/or who is a pupil of Congleton High School (CHS) or Eaton Bank High School (EBHS);
Or
 - 3.2.2. Any young person residing in or around Congleton Town and/or who is a pupil or member or employee of Approved Organisation at the date of election.

and who has reached their 11th but not yet reached their 18th birthday.

- 3.3. Nomination of candidates deemed suitable for election to the Youth Committee and who are:
 - 3.3.1. Attending CHS and EBHS shall be at the discretion of the respective school;
 - 3.3.2. Those from an Approved Organisation shall be subject to approval at the sole discretion of the Town Council.

- 3.4. A candidate shall achieve full membership of the Youth Committee by democratic election.
- 3.5. Where practicable elected membership of the Youth Committee shall consist of but not be limited to:
 - 3.5.1. Four (4) Youth Councillors to be elected from pupils attending Congleton High School (**CHS**); and
 - 3.5.2. Four (4) Youth Councillors to be elected from pupils attending Eaton Bank High School (**EBHS**); and
 - 3.5.3. Two (2) Youth Councillors to be elected from pupils attending other schools or members of other organisations or employees of businesses approved by the Town Council acting reasonably from time to time (**Approved Organisation**).

4. **Elections**

- 4.1. In all cases the term of office shall run to 31st October in each year ("the year").
- 4.2. Election to the Youth Council (**Elections**) shall be held in October or at other times as may be determined from time to time at the sole discretion of the Youth Committee.
- 4.3. Election, except in circumstances referred to in 4.6, shall be by public vote on a date (**Election Date**) to be determined by the Youth Committee.
- 4.4. The Election Date shall be advertised at the school or Approved Organisation and published in the Congleton Chronicle not less than 28 days before the Election Date.
- 4.5. Elections at CHS, EBHS and an Approved Organisation, where deemed appropriate by the Youth Council, shall be organised and scrutinised by the respective school or organisation.
- 4.6. Where a candidate stands un-opposed, such as where the candidate attends a small Approved Organisation, membership of the Youth Council shall be by the number of votes cast by members of the Youth Council attending the first suitable meeting of the Youth Council following the date of nomination of such candidate.

5. **Term of office**

- 5.1. Elected Youth Councillors serve a maximum of four years before standing for re-election.

6. **Re-election**

- 6.1. Provided they are under 18 years old at the date of election Youth Councillors are eligible to stand for re-election at the end of their term of office but in all cases they must retire on their 19th birthday, if this is before the end of a 4 year term.
- 6.2. Alumni membership will be available to current or past members of the Committee who are aged 18 to 24 years old. Alumni members will not have any voting rights but will be able to participate in discussions and be invited to Civic and Town Council events. Existing members will vote to elect Alumni members. Alumni Members will be in addition to the maximum number of 12 members.

7. Vacancies

- 7.1. If a seat becomes vacant during the year such vacancy may, at the sole discretion of the Youth Committee, be offered to those candidates who previously but unsuccessfully stood for election for the year in the order of the number of votes polled at the time of election.
- 7.2. If a vacancy cannot be filled as set out above then the Youth Committee shall take all reasonable steps to procure suitable candidates.

8. Chairmanship

- 8.1. The Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson of the Youth Committee shall be serving Youth Councillors and shall be elected to office at the first meeting of the year.
- 8.2. As with Town Council committees, the nominees for Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson of the Youth Committee shall be subject to verification by the Town Council sitting at the next full Council meeting following the date of nomination.
- 8.3. In the absence of both the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson, a temporary chairperson shall be elected by those Youth Councillors who are present at such meeting, this being the first item of business.

9. Non-Members

- 9.1. The Youth Committee may from time to time co-opt young people to act in an advisory capacity so as to enable the Youth Councillors to make informed judgements relating to issues to unrepresented and/or individualist groups.
- 9.2. Co-opted members have no voting rights.

10. Town Council Officers (Council Officers) and Town Councillor (Town Councillors)

- 10.1. Council Officers and Town Councillors have a number of roles and responsibilities towards the Youth Committee these include but are not limited to:-
 - 10.1.1. Providing all reasonable and necessary support to enable the Youth Committee to operate effectively.
 - 10.1.2. Supporting Youth Councillors and co-optees to ensure their full participation in the Youth Committee particularly where they have special needs or issues which may otherwise limit or inhibit their participation in the Youth Committee.
 - 10.1.3. Supporting and encouraging the development of the Youth Committee.
 - 10.1.4. Ensuring that the Youth Committee operates in an inclusive and democratic way,
 - 10.1.5. Ensuring that the Youth Committee encourages diversity and challenges prejudice.

10.2. No Council Officer or Town Councillor shall express their views or opinions unless invited to do so by the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson.

10.3. A Council Officer may only intervene uninvited in debates and discussions where there has been:

- 10.3.1. A violation of Human Rights; or
- 10.3.2. A breach of The Equal Opportunities Policy; or
- 10.3.3. A breach of the Town Council's Code of Conduct; or
- 10.3.4. A breach of the Laws of England and Wales

and a member of the Youth Committee has not challenged this breach. Such intervention must go through the Chair.

10.4. Council Officers and Town Councillors have no voting rights and may not override a decision of the Youth Committee, except where such decision contravenes:

- 10.4.1. Human Rights; or
- 10.4.2. The Equal Opportunities Policy; or
- 10.4.3. The Town Council's Code of Conduct; or
- 10.4.4. The Laws of England and Wales

in which case a Council Officer or Town Councillor may advise the Youth Committee of the breach and/or where known the consequences of its decision.

11. Meetings

11.1. The Youth Committee shall sit in formal session nine (9) times during the year in the Congleton Town Hall to coincide with each Town Council meeting. There shall be at least one training day in the year.

11.2. Youth Committee meetings shall normally be held in public. The press may also attend. The Youth Committee may resolve to exclude the press and public if a confidential matter is to be discussed.

11.3. Where the Youth Committee considers at its sole discretion that adult presence might inhibit debate the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson may request that adults, excluding Council Officers and Town Councillors leave the meeting for short periods. On their return such adults may be fully advised of the decisions and/or actions which the Youth Committee has made in their absence.

11.4. From time to time sub and other ad-hoc groups may be established the Youth Committee to address specific issues and tasks.

11.5. Otherwise than in exceptional circumstances, determined at the sole discretion of the Town Clerk, Youth Councillors are expected to attend a minimum of six (6) meetings throughout the year unless the Town Clerk has been given notice of absence.

11.6. Youth Councillors shall be expected to send apologies and reason for non-attendance prior to all meetings which they are unable to attend.

11.7. At the sole discretion of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson acting in cooperation a Youth Councillor who fails to attend three successive Youth Council

meetings without good reason may be evicted from the Youth Committee and informed of their eviction without prior notice and their seat offered to another candidate selected as set out herein.

11.8. A Youth Councillor shall be asked to leave a meeting if that Youth Councillor continually ignores requests from the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson to allow others to contribute to a debate or discussion.

11.9. The procedures, rules of debate and order of business shall follow the principles of the Town Council's Standing Orders.

12. Quorum

12.1. The quorum required for decision making purposes shall at all times be 4 people.

13. Plan of Action

13.1. At the beginning of the year the Youth Committee shall create a Plan of Action for the year based on the current issues expressed by their electorate.

14. Political Views

14.1. The Youth Committee is non-party political and issue based. It shall work on behalf of young people of Congleton Town and in partnership with Council Officers and Town Councillors.

14.2. A Member of the Youth Councillors may hold allegiance or membership of a political party but shall not express party political views when acting in the capacity of Youth Councillor or representing the Congleton Town Council.

15. Voting

15.1. The Youth Committee shall make decisions by simple majority voting, being either a show of hands or secret ballot, where deemed appropriate by the majority of its members present.

15.2. In the event of an equal vote, the Chairperson or, if appropriate, Vice Chairperson has casting vote.

15.3. Except where proposed by the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson all motions and proposals must be "seconded" by another Youth Committee member.

16. Equal Opportunity

16.1. Members of the Youth Committee are equal in status regardless of sexuality, race, culture, age, gender, religion, academic ability, disability or any other issue, which might affect a person's life such as parental separation or financial status.

16.2. Members of the Youth Committee are expected to respect themselves and each other equally and to uphold the Equal Opportunities Policy and follow the principles of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

17. Principal Council-Area Forums

17.1. Congleton Town Council is committed to establishing effective communication channels with the principal council(s) and shall seek ways to work in partnership with them in order to promote local issues at all levels and to support each other in promoting active youth participation.

18. Delegated Authority

18.1. The Youth Committee shall have delegated authority given to it by the Town Council. All decisions not delegated to it shall be submitted to the full Town Council for approval.

18.2. All requests for funding shall be submitted to the Town Council or its Finance and Policy Committee for consideration.

19. Attendance at Full Council

19.1. All Youth Councillors shall be invited to attend full Town Council meetings but will have to leave such meetings for any confidential items following resolution by the Town Council to exclude press and public.

20. Honorary Burgess

20.1 The Youth Committee may award a title "Honorary Burgess" in recognition of service to the Youth Committee. There is no legal significance to this title nor does it confer any rights or privileges. Burgesses are however, invited to Youth Committee meetings and events.

March 2014