



# Congleton Town Council

Historic market town

Town Clerk: **BRIAN HOGAN**



2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012

Dear Councillor,

Community and Environment Committee – Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2012

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Community and Environment Committee, to be held in the Town Hall, High Street, Congleton on **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2012 at 6.30pm.**

**The Public and Press are welcome to attend the meeting.** There may be confidential items towards the end of the meeting which the law requires the Council to make a resolution to exclude the public and press.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE IS A MEETING OF THE AMENITIES AND SERVICES COMMITTEE ON THE SAME EVENING AT 7.15 PM**

Yours sincerely,

TOWN CLERK

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence. (Members are reminded of the necessity to give apologies in advance of the meeting and to give reasons for absence).
2. Minutes of Last Meeting

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 17th November 2011 as a correct record (copy enclosed).

3. Declarations of Interest

Members are requested to declare both "personal" and "personal and prejudicial" interests as early in the meeting as they become known.



Congleton Town Council, Town Hall, High Street, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 1BN

Tel: 01260 270350 Fax: 01260 280357

Email: [info@congletontowncouncil.co.uk](mailto:info@congletontowncouncil.co.uk) [www.congleton-tc.gov.uk](http://www.congleton-tc.gov.uk)

4. Outstanding Actions

**CAE/41/1011**

1. A feasibility report on a possible project be developed for a shelter in Congleton Park. The Youth Committee to be consulted on this project.

5. Speeding on Leek Road

To receive correspondence from Cllr Andrew Thwaite and a report from the Town Clerk concerning speeding on Leek Road. (enclosed)

6. Fire Brigade Control Room

To consider correspondence from the Fire Brigade Union and a report from Cllr David Topping concerning the closure of the local emergency fire control room. (enclosed)

7. Cheshire East Flood Defences

To receive and consider correspondence from the Cheshire East relating to flood defences. (enclosed)

8. Fellowship House Luncheon Club

To receive and consider a report from the Town Clerk on the proposed future structure of the Luncheon Club in Fellowship House. (enclosed)

9. Car Parking

To consider the arrangements that would need to be put in place for car parking in the Town when construction begins on the Scarborough scheme.

10. Mary Portas Review

To receive and consider an Independent Review completed by Mary Portas regarding the future of our High Streets. (enclosed)

11. Ruby's Fund

To receive and consider a report by the Trustees of Ruby's fund requesting support from Congleton Town Council. (enclosed)

12. Resolution to exclude the Public and Press

To consider passing a resolution in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that public and press be excluded from the meeting for the matters set out below on the grounds that it could involve the likely disclosure of private and confidential information or staff matters.

To Members of the Community and Environment Committee  
Appointed Member, Hon Burgess Mrs M M Williamson  
ccs. Other members of the Council and Honorary Burgesses (4) for  
Information; Press (3)

## CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2011

PRESENT:                      Councillors      G S Williams (Vice-Chairman)  
    J S Crowther  
    G R Edwards  
    G P Hayes  
    D A Parker  
    Mrs J D Parry  
    N T Price  
    Mrs M Williamson  
    D Brown

#### 1.      APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Fletcher and Mrs S A Holland.

#### 2.      MINUTES

**CAE/18/1112 RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

#### 3.      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were requested to declare both "personal" and "personal & prejudicial" interests as early in the meeting as they become known.

Councillor D T Brown declared a personal interest in any matters related to Cheshire East Borough Council.

#### 4.      OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

**CAE/41/1011**

A feasibility report on a possible project be developed for a shelter in Congleton Park. The Youth Committee to be consulted on this project.

#### 5.      SCHOOL TRANSPORT

The committee noted that Helen Cadwaller, John Nicholson's P.A. did confirm that Cheshire East had informed the various schools of the changes to subsidies for school transport although the Head Teacher of Eaton Bank did report that she was not informed.

**CAE/19/1112 RESOLVED:** That the update on school transport be noted.



**6. BOAT ON THE RIVER DANE**

A report produced by the Town Clerk and Councillor Mrs A Martin concerning action to resolve the Boat on the River Dane was discussed. It was noted that the Environment Agency is still awaiting information from the boat owner to confirm the status of the anchorage.

**CAE/20/1112 RESOLVED That:-**

1. The report be received.
2. The matter to be referred to the Communities & Environment Committee in three months time.

**7. SPEEDING ON LEEK ROAD**

An analysis of vehicle speeds produced from the Speed Indicator device sited on Leek Road was presented to the committee.

It was noted that 35% of vehicles had exceeded the 30mph limit.

**CAE/21/1112 RESOLVED That:-**

1. The report be received.
2. The Clerk to contact Councillor A Thwaite to provide an update on proposed traffic calming on the road.

**8. PLUS DANE HOUSING PRIORITIES**

It was noted that a number of residents in Congleton had raised concerns at what was perceived to be an influx of families moving in from the conurbations of Manchester and Liverpool into Plus Dane Housing accommodation.

It was also considered that there might be an opportunity to influence CEBC's Cheshire Home Choice Policy.

**CAE/22/1112 RESOLVED That:-**

1. Councillor D Brown will request a summary of the current arrangements that Plus Dane operates when determining housing allocation from the Managing Director, M. Doran.

**9. FUNDING OF PCSO's**

Correspondence from the Chief Constable of the Cheshire Constabulary seeking further support for the funding of PCSO's in Congleton was considered.

**CAE/23/1112 RESOLVED:-**

That the committee recommend that suitable funding be included in the 2012-13 budget and that this then to be referred to Finance & Policy Committee for consideration.

**10. BEAT THE WINTER**

A report from Cheshire East requesting Town and Parish Councils to sign upto 'Help the Vulnerable People this Winter' was considered by the committee.

**CAE/24/1112 RESOLVED:-**

That the Town Council will act as a conduit for reporting vulnerable people and will pass on its details to appropriate organisation and Social Services.

**11. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**CAE/25/1112 RECOMMENDED:** That in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that public and press be excluded from the meeting for the matters set out below on the grounds that it could involve the likely disclosure of private and confidential information or staff matters.

**12. CHESHIRE POLICE**

To receive and consider a verbal report from a representative of Cheshire Police on policing matters affecting Congleton.

There was no representative of the police in attendance.

To consider the problem of drug taking in Congleton.

**CAE/26/1112 RESOLVED:-**

That the Town Clerk contact the Police to request a written report on the problem of drugs in Congleton.

Councillor G S Williams  
(Vice Chairman in the Chair)

## Report to Community and Environment Committee

9<sup>th</sup> February 2012

### Speeding on Leek Road

Cllr. Andrew Thwaite through the Congleton LAP has been pursuing a solution to the problem of speeding on Leek Road.

A suggested solution was to install a refuge in the middle of the road to narrow the lanes and thus inhibit the speed of traffic. However, highway engineers have reported that the road is too narrow to install a refuge and as a consequence this idea has been discarded.

Hatching was also considered, but again the road is too narrow for this to be effective. A possible way forward is to introduce red lines and permanent active speed signs.

Cllr. Thwaite is pursuing this option through the LAP and the CEBC ward councillor system.

Brian Hogan

18.11.11

Data collected between 08:28:51 17/10/11 and 11:20:59 28/10/11

Site Title	MOSS ROAD, CONGLETON
Site No.	C0008
Average Speed	30.0
85th Percentile	35
Standard Deviation	5.7
Total Number Of Vehicles	9571
Speed Limit	30
Number Over Speed Limit	4524
Percentage Over Speed Limit	47.3
ACPO	35
Number Over ACPO	1128
Percentage Over ACPO	11.8

Data collected between 10:55:38 03/10/11 and 15:42:47 12/10/11

Site Title	Leek Road, Macclesfield
Site No.	C0007
Average Speed	28.4
85th Percentile	34
Standard Deviation	6.7
Total Number Of Vehicles	9454
Speed Limit	30
Number Over Speed Limit	3280
Percentage Over Speed Limit	34.7
ACPO	35
Number Over ACPO	862
Percentage Over ACPO	9.1



## Brian Hogan

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**From:** THWAITE, Andrew (Councillor) [Andrew.Thwaite@cheshireeast.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 08 December 2011 17:36  
**To:** Brian Hogan; MASON, Peter (Councillor); BROWN, David (Councillor)  
**Cc:** l.barker@hackingashton.co.uk; russell.thomas@cheshire.pnn.police.uk; Nigel Ogden  
**Subject:** FW: Leek Road, Congleton

Brian,

Please see the attached emails. Having carried out a site visit with Rob Colville I tend to agree with his comments.

For the past six or seven years I have been trying to get the speed limit beyond the ambulance station changed from 40 to 30 miles an hour.

While in some locations there is merit in the idea of chicanes, getting them approved by the central government highways department timescale and cost are probably prohibitive.

I feel that the answer is to ask Rob to go ahead with the VAS scheme and back it up by supporting the Congleton Community Speedwatch scheme, see <http://www.congleton-speedwatch.co.uk/>.

In the meantime can we please carry on irregularly installing the Smilly Sid unit around the problem roads.

I've not seen the results for the Reads Lane installation. Also we should get details of the maximum speed recorded at each location.

It is important that we progress this quickly and I would like to give Rob the go ahead under the Ward members scheme before I go away for Christmas next week. I want to see the scheme underway before the next Congleton LAP's highways meeting in mid February.

Best Regards

Andrew

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**From:** COLVILLE, Rob  
**Sent:** 06 December 2011 11:13  
**To:** THWAITE, Andrew (Councillor); BROWN, David (Councillor); MASON, Peter (Councillor)  
**Cc:** WELCH, Rob; russell.thomas@cheshire.pnn.police.uk; bh@congletontowncouncil.co.uk  
**Subject:** RE: Leek Road, Congleton

Andrew,

To comment collectively on the two emails;

Chicanes – these are dependent on relatively constant traffic flows in both directions to be effective; the traffic flows are too sporadic on Leek Road to make such measures effective, with the likely consequence many vehicles would not slow down at all and some would accelerate towards a deflection to reach it before an oncoming vehicle, especially as the forward visibility is so extensive. This would not be a desirable situation to create.

'Pinch points' – There is limited scope to further narrow the road as such a narrowing would still have to accommodate the largest likely vehicles to use the road (buses and refuse vehicles). I don't think the very slight

narrowing possible would be effective in reducing the speed of cars, who constitute the majority of vehicles exceeding the speed limit.

Vehicle activated signs (VAS) – I maintain these are the best solution for this situation. As the signs only illuminate when a vehicle is approaching and exceeding the speed limit, they never quite suffer from the same level of familiarity as conventional signs can. I have installed numerous vehicle activated signs in the past and experience has shown they are effective in lowering traffic speeds, even years after installation.

I trust this answers the queries raised from Larry Barker and Nigel Ogden.

Regards,

Rob.

Regards,

**Rob Colville BSc (Hons) MCIHT**  
**Senior Technician | Traffic & Road Safety Team**  
**Cheshire East Highways**  
Telephone: 0300 123 5020 | Fax: 01270 375216  
[www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways)



*Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.*

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**From:** THWAITE, Andrew (Councillor)  
**Sent:** 05 December 2011 15:33  
**To:** COLVILLE, Rob; BROWN, David (Councillor); MASON, Peter (Councillor)  
**Cc:** WELCH, Rob; [russell.thomas@cheshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:russell.thomas@cheshire.pnn.police.uk); [bh@congletontowncouncil.co.uk](mailto:bh@congletontowncouncil.co.uk)  
**Subject:** RE: Leek Road, Congleton

Rob,

I forwarded your proposal below to two local residents who have a particular interest in the matter. One Larry Barker is a Town Councillor and the other Nigel Ogden lives in Leek Road.

I receive various replies namely:-

Andrew

Hi Andrew

I would have thought chicanes on both Moss Road and Leek Road, such as are on Padgbury Lane (which is surely no wider than either), will have the desired effect. On long straight road such Moss Road and Leek Road all that will otherwise happen is that traffic might slow down on approach to the VAS's and speed up afterwards.

When the novelty has worn off drivers will ignore the VAS.

See this weeks Chronicle.

Kind regards

Larry Barker (Town Councillor)

Hi Andrew,

Well at first glance I think this will be a good start and I appreciate the efforts gone into making it this far.

It was previously mentioned that a pinch might be suitable, as demonstrated on Padgbury Lane, if the road is not wide enough in this instance, how about (and please excuse my lack of terminology) stepped pinches (chicane) on the road with give way lines, this means the oncoming traffic has to give way to the priority direction.

During my meeting with Sgt Thomas I was asked to stop reporting speeding vehicles as 'nothing will ever be done with the data' - and he suggested that an increased traffic police (motorcycle) presence would help in the short term,



## Brian Hogan

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**From:** COLVILLE, Rob [Rob.Colville@cheshireeasthighways.org]  
**Sent:** 06 December 2011 11:14  
**To:** THWAITE, Andrew (Councillor); BROWN, David (Councillor); MASON, Peter (Councillor)  
**Cc:** WELCH, Rob; russell.thomas@cheshire.pnn.police.uk; Brian Hogan  
**Subject:** RE: Leek Road, Congleton

Andrew,

To comment collectively on the two emails;

Chicanes – these are dependent on relatively constant traffic flows in both directions to be effective; the traffic flows are too sporadic on Leek Road to make such measures effective, with the likely consequence many vehicles would not slow down at all and some would accelerate towards a deflection to reach it before an oncoming vehicle, especially as the forward visibility is so extensive. This would not be a desirable situation to create.

'Pinch points' – There is limited scope to further narrow the road as such a narrowing would still have to accommodate the largest likely vehicles to use the road (buses and refuse vehicles). I don't think the very slight narrowing possible would be effective in reducing the speed of cars, who constitute the majority of vehicles exceeding the speed limit.

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I trust this answers the queries raised from Larry Barker and Nigel Ogden.

Regards,

Rob.

Regards,

**Rob Colville BSc (Hons) MCIHT**  
**Senior Technician | Traffic & Road Safety Team**  
**Cheshire East Highways**  
Telephone: 0300 123 5020 | Fax: 01270 375216  
[www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways)



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**Subject:** RE: Leek Road, Congleton

Rob,

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I receive various replies namely:-

Our Ref: DT/MM

Your Ref:

Contact: Cllr D Topping

Tel No: 01606 868775

Date: 16 January 2012

Email: [david.topping@cheshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:david.topping@cheshirefire.gov.uk)

Dear Councillor

You may recently have received a letter from the Fire Brigade's Union (FBU) regarding the proposed North West Fire Control Centre at Warrington. As the Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority I am writing to you in order to provide you with some additional information and reassurance.

In December 2010 the Government cancelled the national FiReControl Project, to establish nine regional control centres for answering emergency calls and mobilising resources. The failings of the national project centred on the prohibitive costs associated with the development of a new technical mobilising system.

Following the Minister's announcement, the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) wrote to all Fire Authorities in England, including Cheshire, outlining a package of central funding that had been made available to ensure that control arrangements remained fit for purpose and resilient.

Prior to the project being cancelled, elected councillors working collaboratively in the North West, including those from Cheshire, began conversations with the Government around continuing their joint approach in the event of the national arrangements being cancelled, having been convinced of the benefits to both their organisations and communities.

North West Fire and Rescue Services have a good track record of working together in the delivery of projects and enjoy the strong support of the senior fire officers and Members, who are committed to making the arrangements work for staff and the public we serve.

Conversations between the parties have been extensive, and a significant 'offer' of funding to support the collaboration was received from CLG. In September 2011, elected Members in each of the four participating fire authorities agreed to take the project forward and consider the business case further.



Cheshire Fire Authority Members have been clear in our Four Year Strategy 2011-15 and our Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs) that we would only pursue such arrangements if they delivered more effective, efficient and more resilient arrangements than our current systems.

Based upon the current proposals, we believe that the plans will deliver a better system (using existing and proven technology) than the current facilities at Winsford. This includes advanced mapping capabilities that are not currently used by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service. Working together would also provide a significant financial saving and deliver value for money for local council tax payers at a time of financial constraint.

The facility would operate in accordance with the plans agreed by elected Members and processes to ensure local oversight and accountability would remain. Furthermore, use of the new state of the art facilities at Lingley Mere in Warrington means that the control facility will remain within the Cheshire county boundary.

We are engaged in a comprehensive process that includes discussions with the staff involved and also the representatives bodies (FBU). Together we will continue to examine all of the relevant issues, but I hope that in the meantime I have provided some reassurance that the new arrangements will provide a better service and better value to all of the communities of Cheshire.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Topping', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cllr David Topping  
**Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority**

Gwyn Williams  
 Fire Brigades Union Region 5  
 Control Representative (Cheshire)  
 Julia Shutt  
 Branch Chair (Cheshire)  
 112 Chester Road,  
 Huntington,  
 Chester,  
 Cheshire  
 Ch3 6BU  
 E-Mail: [gwyn3338@hotmail.com](mailto:gwyn3338@hotmail.com)  
 Mob: 07827967624

22<sup>nd</sup> December 2011.

Dear Councillor,

Recently Cheshire Fire Authority has agreed to close the local emergency fire control room and instead support a Sub-Regional Fire Control, involving four of the five North West Region Fire Authorities. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority was also involved in the project but subsequently decided to withdraw.

Such a proposal was recently condemned by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee as part of a national project known as 'FireControl'. This was cancelled in December 2010 after numerous delays and at a cost of nearly half a billion pounds.

We as members of the Fire Control at Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service would like to ask for your support in retaining your local fire control room. We believe if the Sub-Regional Control project goes ahead it will be to the detriment of local communities for following reasons:

1. Loss of local autonomy.

The Sub-Regional Fire Control will be run by a Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC), overseen by a Board of Directors, made up of an equal number of representatives of each Fire Authority. Cheshire Fire Authority will therefore relinquish political and financial control of a crucial element of its emergency response capability. Decisions made by the company may become commercial and may not be in the best interest of the Cheshire Fire Authority or the people they represent.

2. Standards of Service.

In 2011, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service won the Service of the Year award in the Emergency Services Awards, the local emergency Fire Control Room being part of this, proving that it provides an excellent standard of service to the public. It is proposed that there will be a 60-70% cut in Control staff employed to respond to



emergency calls in the Regional Fire Control, with 37 operators in total being employed to answer '999' calls and undertake all the subsequent workload they generate. This would inevitably lead to a reduction in standards of service with '999' calls waiting longer to be answered, thus delaying the mobilisation of appliances.

3. Loss of local knowledge.

Control staffs have a tremendous amount of local knowledge and this is often used to assist members of the public and in identifying locations of incidents. This wealth of knowledge will be lost in a move to a Regional Fire Control

4. Cost Implications.

While the government is prepared to offer financial support for the implementation of the current project, it has made clear that no ongoing financial assistance will be available beyond the initial implementation grant, which will be paid out in the financial years 2011/12 and 2012/13. Should further financing be required because, for example, project over run, fire authorities will have to find this themselves (the previous national project over ran by five years before being scrapped).

Fire authorities in the North West are due to contribute £1.24 million in project delivery costs in the year 2013/14, this included £270,000 from Merseyside FRS prior to their withdrawal. It is not yet known how much of this amount will now have to fall on the four remaining fire and rescue services still involved. According to the Outline Business Case (OBC), Cheshire Fire Authority is due to contribute a minimum of £170,000 to the project delivery costs.

When Merseyside Fire Authority withdrew at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2011, it stated:

‘The financial benefits of North West collaboration remain relatively small compared to the risks and the efforts involved in delivering the savings’.

5. Claimed Technology Benefits.

The OBC also claims there will be benefits of enhanced technology. Cheshire Fire Control upgraded its mobilising system in 2009, with the latest available technology, making the present Control fit for purpose, with the technological benefits claimed for the Sub-Regional Control already being used in Cheshire.

6. Sub-Regional Fire Control Building.

The building in Warrington that will house the Sub-Regional Fire Control is what remains of the national project and will be provided by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) at a subsidised rent, by way of a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’. We believe that this does not constitute a legally binding contract and therefore the subsidy could potentially be withdrawn at some point in the future, leaving the taxpayers of Cheshire with a large financial liability. The OBC makes it clear that without this subsidy the Regional Fire Control would not be financially viable. In addition, one of the fundamental principles of having a

Regional Fire Control was that it was founded, and the buildings erected around national resilience. The Sub-Regional merger offers no national resilience, indeed, it could be argued that there is even less local resilience as should there be a system failure; all four FRS would potentially lose their Control room service until a 'fallback' control could be established.

In conclusion, we believe that there are no real operational, technological, political or financial advantages to the move to a Regional Fire Control. Instead, we believe it may lead to a reduction in the standard of service to Cheshire County and the people of Cheshire and ask for your support in our campaign to retain the local fire control room.

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss this matter further with you. If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Gwyn Williams.



January 12, 2012

## **Investment in Cheshire East's flood defences**

Cheshire East Council (CEC) has received £780,000 in funding to improve its flood defences.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has awarded the grant to the authority to carry out flood management works over the next five years.

With the funding, the Council plans to install CCTV on all water courses within Cheshire East to monitor flooding.

CEC has identified three sites, worst affected by flooding. Flood alleviation schemes will begin in these areas over the next five years:

- Eaton Village in Macclesfield in 2012;
- Astbury Marsh, Newcastle Road in Congleton, from 2013; and
- Coppice Road/Wistaston Road in Willaston, from 2013.

The flood alleviation schemes will take five years to complete and will be carried out by Cheshire East Council's highways service.

In addition to this, the authority will use some of the funding to improve the water course running parallel to Liverpool Road West in Church Lawton, which has caused flooding in the surrounding area.

The Flood Defence Grant in Aid funding, via Defra, is granted depending on how it will benefit the local community, for example, how many properties are affected by flooding in these areas.

Cheshire East Councillor Rod Menlove, Cabinet member with responsibility for environmental services, said: "I am sure this funding will go a long way to improving flooding in these areas of Cheshire East. I would like to thank Defra for their support and all the officers involved in bidding for this money.

"The affects of climate change show that we will experience increasingly wet weather and we must be prepared for this. These improvements will take time but they will hopefully have a positive impact on alleviating problem flooding for many years to come."

Ends.

**To arrange an interview or further information please contact:**

**Media Relations Officer: Diane Bramall**

**Direct line: 01270 686577**

**Mobile: 07794 434271**

**Email: [diane.bramall@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:diane.bramall@cheshireeast.gov.uk)**

Congleton Town Council

Report to Community and Environment Committee

9<sup>th</sup> February 2012

Fellowship House Luncheon Club

The Luncheon club has run for over 25 years in Congleton in Fellowship House. Currently the club meets two times per week, Wednesday and Friday lunch time, with an average attendance of 60 members per week.

For many members the club is the only social interaction they are able to enjoy as it provides a warm safe welcoming environment where they are able to meet with friends old and new.

To date the Luncheon Club at Fellowship house has had cooks supplied by Cheshire East, however, the cooks actually work at Nantwich and are about to be subsumed into Nantwich Town Council as part of a devolved service transfer, as a consequence of this change they will no longer be available for Fellowship House

Additionally the finance for this facility was only a temporary arrangement put in place by Cheshire East and this is coming to an end in March 2012.

The club has a core of around 6 volunteers supported by a member from the Women's Royal Volunteer Service.

Cllr. Andrew Thwaite is helping to recruit new volunteer cooks to replace those supplied by Cheshire East. Whilst the Town Trust has agreed to fund the basic costs of running the on-going operation.

At least one person amongst the volunteers would need to take on the responsibility for controlling the operation, which includes ensuring that all staff are properly trained, the appropriate food and hygiene regulations are adhered to, ordering provisions and generally ensuring the smooth running and wellbeing of the facility. This then could become a paid position although the level of remuneration would be relatively modest.

Responsibility for the Luncheon Club as a whole needs to be agreed as this could involve taking on the responsibility of a paid employee and ensuring the Luncheon Club meets all of the required standards and insurance requirements.

Recommended

That Congleton Town Council assumes responsibility for the Luncheon Club and a small working group of councillors is set up to oversee the operation of the Club

Brian Hogan

## Brian Hogan

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**From:** Glen Williams <glen1971@hotmail.co.uk>  
**Sent:** 02 February 2012 16:24  
**To:** Brian Hogan  
**Subject:** Community & Environment Committee

Hi Brian,

Can you please add onto the agenda as discussed a few days ago the car parking situation in the town centre during the Scarborough Development? This is not about free car parking but the appropriateness of short or long stay designation of the remaining car parks.

Regards,

Glen



## Report to Communities and Environment Committee 9 February 2012

### The Portas Review – Summary

#### Background

In December 2011 Mary Portas completed an Independent Review into the future of our High Streets on behalf of the Government. Copies of the 50 page report can be downloaded from: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/business-sectors/docs/p/11-1434-portas-review-future-of-high-streets>

Mary Portas recognises that the problems facing the high streets are complicated and sometimes overwhelming – but not impossible – and has laid down a challenge to encourage shopkeepers, landlords, local councils and consumers to engage with an alternative more optimistic vision of tomorrow.

Below is a copy of the 28 recommendations made in The Portas Review (recommendations in bold are the ones we can have the strongest influence over)

1. **Put in place a “Town Team”: a visionary, strategic and strong operational management team for high streets**
2. Empower successful Business Improvement Districts to take on more responsibilities and powers and become “Super-BIDs”
3. Legislate to allow landlords to become high street investors by contributing to their Business Improvement District
4. **Establish a new “National Market Day” where budding shopkeepers can try their hand at operating a low-cost retail business**
5. Make it easier for people to become market traders by removing unnecessary regulations so that anyone can trade on the high street unless there is a valid reason why not.
6. Government should consider whether business rates can better support small businesses and independent retailers
7. Local authorities should use their new discretionary powers to give business rate concessions to new local businesses
8. Make business rates work for business by reviewing the use of the RPI with a view to changing the calculation to CPI
9. Local areas should implement free controlled parking schemes that work for their town centres and we should have a new parking league table



**10. Town Teams should focus on making high streets accessible, attractive and safe**

11. Government should include high street deregulation as part of their ongoing work on freeing up red tape

12. Address the restrictive aspects of the 'Use Class' system to make it easier to change the uses of key properties on the high street

13. Put betting shops into a separate 'Use Class' of their own.

14. Make explicit a presumption in favour of town centre development in the wording of the National Planning Policy Framework

15. Introduce Secretary of State "exceptional sign off" for all new out-of-town developments and require all large new developments to have an "affordable shops" quota

16. Large retailers should support and mentor local businesses and independent retailers

17. Retailers should report on their support of local high streets in their annual report

18. Encourage a contract of care between landlords and their commercial tenants by promoting the leasing code and supporting the use of lease structures other than upward only rent reviews, especially for small businesses

19. Explore further disincentives to prevent landlords from leaving units vacant

20. Banks who own empty property on the high street should either administer these assets well or be required to sell them.

21. Local authorities should make more proactive use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers to encourage the redevelopment of key high street retail space

22. Empower local authorities to step in when landlords are negligent with new "Empty Shop Management Orders"

**23. Introduce a public register of high street landlords**

24. Run a high profile campaign to get people involved in Neighbourhood Plans

25. Promote the inclusion of the High Street in Neighbourhood Plans

26. Developers should make a financial contribution to ensure that the local community has a strong voice in the planning system

27. Support imaginative community use of empty properties through Community Right to Buy, Meanwhile Use and a new "Community Right to Try"
28. Run a number of High Street Pilots to test proof of concept

Over the past four years the Town Council has introduced a number of initiatives which helps us work towards these objectives including

- a) Developing a Congleton Town Plan – with a strong vision for the Town Centre
- b) Introducing a Town Centre Management role
- c) Setting up and supporting a Traders Group (Congleton Business Association)
- d) Supporting the development of more community events – Food and Drink Festival, Jazz and Blues Festival, Bearmania etc
- e) Working with the Police and CCTV on security issues
- f) Working with the Partnership and Community on a Public Realm Strategy
- g) Being part of the Neighbourhood Planning Process – which included community and business people.
- h) Being a partner in Congleton Means Business and the Congleton Legacy Team which is actively seeking to fill empty business and retail units as well as work with developers and planners to ensure the longer term development of the town.

#### NEXT STEPS

1. (Recommendation 1) – With the Congleton Partnership, Local Area Partnership, Legacy Team and Traders Group and ShopWatch we almost have a Town Team. We now need to look more closely at the communications between the groups and explore if there is more that can be done to have a more effective Town Team.
2. (Recommendation 4) The Government has announced a 'Love your Market Fortnight' from 23 June to 8 July. Congleton Business Association, City Markets and the Town Council have started discussions on how to best to use this fortnight.
3. (Recommendation 10) This is exactly what we are trying to achieve through the Public Realm Strategy.
4. (Recommendation 23) This is something that we don't have for Congleton and could be beneficial to have both for the legacy team and so that we can work with landlords on initiatives.
5. (Recommendations 24 and 25) This is currently happening and will become even more important over the next two months.

#### Recommendation to the Committee

- A) That the report is noted
- B) That we create a Landlord register for shops in Town
- C) That the Town Council has further liaison with the Congleton Business Group on the support it would like from the Town Council and reports back to the Committee.

## CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

### Report to Community and Environment Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2012

#### RUBY'S FUND

Please find attached a report sent to Congleton Town Council by the Trustees of Ruby's Fund requesting support from Congleton Town Council.

#### Background

Ruby's Fund is a local charity which is fund raising to open an inclusive, open access sensory and soft play centre in Congleton for children with additional needs and their families, friends and carers. The charity was formed by two local mums Alison Parr (Ruby's mum and A+E nurse) & Alix Wisener (Congleton Health Visitor) after a lack of such services was identified in the town.

The group has raised £40,000 locally and has the potential to go for large grants if they can secure a property on a lease of at least 7 years.

Involvement requested from the Town Council

1. The Town Council to actively support Ruby's fund by:
  - a) Nominating a Councillor to be part of the Ruby's Fund working group, to attend quarterly meetings and act as a champion for the Fund.
  - b) Advise Ruby's Fund of relevant town events in which the group could participate.
  - c) Advise Ruby's Fund of any funding opportunities.
  - d) Assist with providing advice on project management.
  - e) Assist Ruby's Fund in proving the need for a sensory and soft play centre – essential evidence for capital funders by enabling the group to have a stall in town one Saturday to promote the charity and ask willing participants to complete questionnaires. (Questionnaire attached as appendix 1)



## **RUBY'S FUND**

Ruby's Fund is a local charity who are fund raising to open an inclusive, open access sensory and soft play centre in Congleton for children with additional needs and their families, friends and carers. The charity was formed by two local mums Alison Parr (Ruby's mum & A+E nurse) & Alix Wisener (Congleton health Visitor) after a lack of such services was identified in the town. Please see our website: [www.rubysfund.co.uk](http://www.rubysfund.co.uk)

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

"We will provide a rich variety of learning experiences and leisure time for those with additional needs to ensure that they will meet their full potential. We will uncover and encourage the gifts and talents present in everybody".

In 3 years Ruby's Fund has managed to raise over £40,000 through fund raising events and donations from public, professional and corporate supporters. We have not recieved any large grants as yet, but have several large grant providers interested in helping us once we have secured a long term lease (minimum 7 years).

We have spent the past 3 years trying (and failing) to locate suitable premises within Congleton. We need the site to be centrally located in Congleton and on a bus route. We are looking for ground floor space of approx 3000 sq ft. This would include an entrance with reception, office/workshop, sensory room, soft play room and coffee shop, recreational room, disabled toilets and a changing place (changing room with changing table for up to adult size/weight).

We noticed that Congleton Business Centre was up for let in November 2011. We arranged a viewing with the centre manager in December and were really excited by the space and opportunity that the centre could provide us. The centre manager told us that Age Concern and the Men in Sheds scheme had moved successfully into a Crewe business park and so felt hopeful we could run our charity from the centre. We applied for office space at the centre on the 4th January 2012 with a view to negotiating further space as grant funding was secured, but were devastated to discover Cheshire East had decided to sell the site off without informing us.

Ruby's Fund then contacted several Cheshire East councillors to tell them of our plight and has presented our case at the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee 17th January 2011. As a consequence of this meeting an Inward Investing Officer has tried to match us to 84 vacant properties in Congleton and could find none that suited our needs.

Ruby's Fund has approached the Economic Development Team at Cheshire East to ask for assistance in trying to secure this site ideally on a long term lease. They referred us on to the assets department. We have been told that we will have to buy the site through the formal tendering process as the decision has been made to sell and they cannot change that or just sell it to us. We have very limited funds and do not want a mortgage. We are extremely frustrated with this decision especially as it is suggested the proceeds of the sale will go towards other towns regeneration centres and not back into Congleton.

Ruby's Fund once open will need to employ between 10-20 staff to work in the centre and making our merchandise range. Most of our merchandise is hand crafted by our volunteers. We have been approached to look at this side of the charity as a social enterprise once we have secured premises.



Ruby's fund has had considerable interest from other organisations wishing to use the centre to meet the needs of a variety of groups. Cheshire Carers Charity, the disabled children's toy library, Disabled Children's Music Workshop (Government funded), Cheshire East Parent Partnership, Youth in Action Charity, National Childbirth Trust Charity My Baby Time and Little Stars.

Ruby's Fund will offer its centre as a short break facility as part of the government scheme Aiming High, so that disabled children can try new activities, gain independence and make friends. Ruby's Fund will create a centre that will be a valuable asset to its users, their families, health and social care professionals and the community at large using the short break model and Government funded initiatives. Which ironically Cheshire East Council has commissioned Cheshire Centre for Independent Living to deliver a number of projects for disabled children that fund increased availability of social opportunities to disabled children and young people and also fund 'short breaks' for disabled children.

There is no current, **accessible** research to indicate how many children have disabilities or additional needs specifically in Congleton. So for the requirement of statistics we refer to research by the charity Contact a Family stating in the 2001 census that 7% of all children were disabled. That equates to one child in 20 (DoH, 2000). It is estimated that around 14% of carers look after a disabled child.

To put it simply there is nothing in our town like we propose. We require the help, support and guidance of the town council as we try to bring this much needed service to the town. It would be fantastic if you could purchase this site and Ruby's Fund lease it from you on a long term basis. However we realise that that is extremely unlikely and so ask that any type of support or suggestions that you can offer us will be gratefully recieved. We are not Councillors or knowledgeable about government procedures, but what we are is driven and determined to succeed.

The Trustees of Ruby's Fund

#### A Note from Alison Parr

*To a disabled child and their family a safe environment in which to play and relax, and an accessible space where the size of a wheelchair doesn't matter as you will 'fit in' is essential. You won't have to change your incontinent teenager on the floor of a disabled toilet as there will be a changing place. Nothing will be thought of a child shouting or running about as that is part of them expressing themselves. In other words our centre will be an inclusive, supportive environment where we accept each others imperfections in a non-judgemental manner. Speaking as a mum that knows these are major issues we face in day to day life as a parent of a disabled child. Our families do not want to feel like charity cases they want the opportunity not to be labelled and to have a life and not just exist. Short break centres/opportunities are one of the most lacking, yet most requested services by parents within the borough.*

*Ruby's Fund has massive local support and I believe such a venture will reflect positively upon Congleton and believe that it will attract families to the town. I am regularly contacted from parents around the country asking if we are open yet as they want to visit. As a family accessing such centres we are frustrated to have to have to travel as far as Bury and Preston. Please help us change this.*



Questionnaire to assess the need for a play centre for disabled and able bodied children and young people

Ruby's Fund is a charity which has been set up to provide a fully inclusive play centre in Congleton and the surrounding area. This would incorporate a specialised soft play area suitable for parents/carers to help their disabled children where necessary, and a fully fitted sensory room.

We aim to have a small café and for the session fees to be set at a level which makes the centre affordable to everyone. The facilities would also be used to provide access to professionals who could use the centre to run groups and sessions.

In order for us to proceed with this project, we need to find out how people would use the facilities available. We would appreciate if you could answer the following:

1. Do you think there is a need for a project of this nature in the local area?  
Yes    No
2. Please tell us your postcode and tick the following to advise how far you would be prepared to travel to come to the play centre.  
Postcode.....  
Less than 5 miles    5-10 miles    More than 10 miles
3. Are you the parent/carer of a disabled child?  
Yes (go to question 4)    No (go to question 7)
4. What type of disability does your child/young person have? Please tick all that apply.  
Physical      Sensory      Communication  
Learning      Medical
5. In which age group is this child/young person? If you have more than one child/young person in the age brackets below please state how many.  
Under 5.....      5-10.....  
10-15.....      15-19.....
6. Would you use the centre for your other children or just your disabled child?  
Just my disabled child      My other children
7. In which age group are your other children/young people? If you have more than



one child/young person in the age brackets below please state how many.

Under 5..... 5-10.....

10-15..... 15-19.....

8. How many times a month do you think you would use the centre?  
1-2 times                      3-4 times                      More often

9. How long would you like a session to last?  
30mins                      60mins                      other (please state).....

10. Do you belong to a group that you think may wish to use the centre's facilities?  
If yes please state (with contact details if appropriate).

.....  
.....

11. Would you consider having a birthday party at the centre if this facility was available? (Please remember this facility would be available and fully inclusive for both disabled and able-bodied children)  
Yes    No

12. How much would you expect/be willing to pay to access the centre's sessions?  
(Cost would be per child, per session, parents and carers would not pay to access the centre)  
Under £5                      Up to £8                      Other (please state).....

13. Would you use the café for drinks and snacks?  
Yes    No

14. Would you be prepared to pay an annual membership fee, which would entitle you to discounted rates for entry to the centre?  
No    Up to £40 year                      Over £40 per year

15. In the future the centre could provide more facilities. Please tick any of the following that would be of interest.  
Physiotherapy                      Relaxation therapies for parents/carers  
Speech & language                      Birthday parties

If there is anything else you would like to see offered at the centre, or if you have any further comments please use the space below. Thank you for your time.