

# Congleton Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday,  
14<sup>th</sup> January 2010 in the Town Hall, Congleton.

**PRESENT:** Councillors E Clarke (Town Mayor)

D Brown  
N J Bayley  
G Baxendale  
Mrs L Bossons  
R Boston  
Mrs L Daniels  
G R Edwards  
Mrs S A Holland  
D Martin  
P Mason  
D Murphy  
C Nield  
D Parker  
A Thwaite  
Miss R Williams  
Mrs J Whitehurst  
M Carey

As a mark of respect of the passing away of Dorothy Barnett, Town Burgess and former Town Mayor one minutes silence was observed followed by a prayer from The Mayors Chaplain, Reverend Paul Withington.

## **1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: C R Anstice and P C Smith.

## **2 MINUTES**

**CTC/97/0910 RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2009 be approved and signed by the Mayor.

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were reminded to declare both “personal” and “personal and prejudicial” interests as early in the meeting as they become aware of it.

Councillors D Brown, G Baxendale, P Mason and A Thwaite declared a personal interest in item 12 by virtue of being Councillors for Cheshire East.

## **4. MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Mayor drew attention to the various engagements that he and the Mayoress had fulfilled since the last Council Meeting. A list of all engagements undertaken by the Town Mayor and the Deputy Town Mayor was circulated.

## **5. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

There were no outstanding actions.

## **6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no questions from members of the public.

## **7. CHESHIRE EAST COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

Councillor G Baxendale commented that the Licensing Committee would be considering a request to review the number of Hackney Cab Licences in Congleton. At the moment they are restricted to 42, but the Licensing Manager was proposing that this restriction should be removed to harmonise Congleton with the rest of Cheshire East and perhaps the Town Council should consider how they want to respond to this proposed change.

Also commented that there are a number of burglaries taking place on the Bromley Farm Estate, where the police have said that most are opportunistic because householders are leaving doors or windows open.

Councillor Thwaite reported that he was confident that Cheshire East were doing a good job on gritting the roads around Congleton. The Rood Hill incident was unfortunate, but, the road had been gritted in the early morning, but, the heavy down pour of snow in the afternoon and subsequent traffic gridlock prevented gritters from getting through.

Councillors expressed their concern at the number of school closures and requested information on Cheshire East's policy in this area.

Councillor Baxendale stated that school closures are the responsibility of the school board and board of governors and stated that Cheshire East schools had done well and many had managed to stay open.

## **8. TOWN HALL COMMITTEE**

**CTC/98/0910 RESOLVED-** That the minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2009 and 16<sup>th</sup> December 2009 which included the Town Hall Lettings Policy be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

## **9. FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE**

**CTC/99/0910 RESOLVED-** That the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2010 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

## **10. PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**CTC/100/0910 RESOLVED-** That the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2010 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

## **11. ACCOUNTS**

**CTC/101/0910 RESOLVED-**

- (a) That the Council approve the payment of the accounts listed in Appendix A.
- (b) That the Council approve payment of any expenditure agreed at the meeting.

## **12. URGENT MATTERS – Members Items**

The Council considered a press release on car parking charges produced by Cheshire East and a response sent to Wesley Fitzgerald by the Leader of the Council Nigel Bayley and subsequent reply from Wesley Fitzgerald.

A lengthy discussion took place on car parking charges and the following comments were noted:-

- Car parking charges should be withdrawn in Congleton to match the rest of the former Borough.
- Wesley Fitzgerald suggested the traders were in favour of car parking charges, there is no evidence for this comment.
- The Town Council have never stated that we have a car parking problem.
- Cheshire East have consistently talked about harmonisation, how can singling out Congleton be called harmonisation.
- Not all the traders are against car parking charges, some want to see some sensible parking management.
- Charges are being introduced at relatively modest rates.
- Car parking charges have been withdrawn in Alsager, Sandbach, Middlewich and Holmes Chapel because of legal and land ownership difficulties.

**CTC/102/0910 RESOLVED-** That the Council request Cheshire East to agree to a moratorium on car parking charges for a period of two years (2 abstentions)

## **13. YOUTH COMMITTEE**

(a) Questions from members of the Youth Committee:

. Can a member of Cheshire East Council clarify who is responsible for gritting roads and playgrounds around the schools, is it Highways or the schools themselves.

Councillor Mason stated that the responsibility for this rests with Cheshire East,

. A question was raised about car park blocking particularly those arranging to car share. It was thought though that very little of this went on, most parking all day actually worked in Congleton.

. A further question was raised about the state of the car park at Congleton Station. In responding it was pointed out that repairing the car park was not an easy problem to solve as there are some ownership difficulties between Northern Rail and Network Rail, if the car park was upgraded, Network Rail would then probably implement car parking charges.

(b) Report on the bowling evening.

The Council received a report on the Bowling Evening and noted that it was well attended.

**14. REGENERATION STRATEGY**

A report produced by the Management Consultant outlining the need to undertake an Employment Land Review was considered by the Council.

**CTC/103/0910 RESOLVED-**

- (a) Not to review recommendations in the Regeneration Strategy, but to reconsider this after the results of the Employment Land Study are known.
- (b) To authorise the progression of the Congleton Employment Land Study and to authorise the Community and Environment Committee to agree a brief prior to tender and to award a contract in due course.

**15. LOCAL COUNCIL FINANCE**

A presentation on Local Council Finance was considered by the Council which outlined the powers, duties and responsibilities of local councils when considering finance matters.

**16. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2010/11**

The council considered the budget and precept for 2010/11. It was noted that Cheshire East will fund a basic level of service to the Citizens Advice Bureau, though the £15,000 provided by the Town Council will go towards providing enhanced services.

**CTC/104/0910 RESOLVED- (2 abstentions)**

- a) That the budget for 2010/11 as recommended by Finance & Policy Committee be approved.
- b) That the following items of expenditure and subsequent powers be approved.
  - Grant and Donations LGA 1972 S37
  - PCSO costs of S92 of the Police Act
  - CAB Contribution LGA 1972 S142

**CTC/105/0910 RESOLVED-**

That the Precept for 2010/11 be set at £635,908

**17. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

The Medium Term Financial Strategy was considered by the council and the profile operation costs for the next 5 years duly noted.

**CTC/106/0910 RESOLVED-**

That the Medium Financial Strategy be approved.

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

There was no resolution required to exclude the press and public.

ERNEST CLARKE  
MAYOR