

Congleton Town Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday,
11th June 2015 in the Town Hall, Congleton.

PRESENT: Councillors N Adams
 Mrs S Akers Smith
 Mrs D S Allen
 J G Baggott
 L. D. Barker
 P Bates
 R Boston
 C Booth
 P Broom
 G R Edwards
 G P Hayes
 Mrs S A Holland
 Mrs A M Martin
 Mrs A E Morrison
 Mrs J D Parry
 Mrs E Wardlaw (**Town Mayor**)
 G S Williams

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence. (Members are respectfully reminded of the necessity to submit any apology for absence in advance and to give a reason for non-attendance).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D T Brown and Mrs A L Armitt.

2. **MINUTES**

CTC/09/1516 RESOLVED- That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 21st May 2015 be approved and signed by the Mayor.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST**

Members are requested to declare both “non pecuniary” and “pecuniary” interests as early in the meeting as they become aware of it.

Cllrs P Bates, G P Hayes, Mrs E Wardlaw and G S Williams declared a non-pecuniary interest in any matters related to Cheshire East Council.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

None.

5. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Dear Sir,

I wish to put the following question to the elected members of Congleton Town Council at the Town Council meeting June 11th 2015:

Yours truly

Michael Knowles

Question to the Town Mayor, Cllr. E Wardlaw

Is it not the case that, in accordance with accepted democratic procedure, whenever and wherever the policies, decisions and actions of the Congleton Town Council are presented to the public it should be an elected member or elected members of the Town Council, who are responsible for making them, who present them and explain them to the public and answer questions on them?

Response by the Town Mayor

Collectively, members are the ultimate policy-makers determining the core values of the Council and approving the authority's policy framework, strategic plans and budget.

Members represent the community, act as community leaders and promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the community often in partnership with other agencies. At Council meetings Officers are responsible for giving advice to members to enable them to fulfil their roles, whilst members will be responsible for articulating justifying and determining policy in the Council Chamber.

Under the direction and control of the Council, officers, led by the Town Clerk, manage and provide the Council's services within the framework of responsibilities delegated to them. Thus once the Council has taken a policy decision it is normally the role of the Town Clerk and his officers to implement that decision. The Town Clerk when dealing with the implementation of more complex decisions will as a matter of course provide progress reports and updates to the Council.

The policy decision to produce a Neighbourhood Plan was approved by the Town Council on the 18th September 2014 and delegated to the Town Clerk together with 3 councillors to implement. Where a parish or town council chooses to produce a Neighbourhood Plan or Order it should work with other members of the community who are interested in, or affected by, the neighbourhood planning proposals to allow them to play an active role in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan or Order, as the essence of a Neighbourhood Plan is that it should be community led. The relationship between the formal functions of the Town Council then is via delegated authority to the Steering Group of the Neighbourhood Plan Team.

The Annual Town Meeting which was held on the 28th May is not a council meeting it is a meeting of the electors and could involve other organisations should they wish to be involved, such meetings often celebrate local activities and debate current issues in the community such as the Neighbourhood Plan.

Officers have a duty to implement decisions of the Council, committees and sub-committees which are lawful, and which have been properly approved in accordance with the requirements of the law and the Council's constitution, and are duly minuted. Thus the presentation given by the Town Clerk was a progress report on implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan. Policy was not mentioned at any point in the presentation as the policy decision to produce a Plan had already been taken.

Response by the Town Mayor continued.....

At the Annual Town Meeting other than the requirement to have the Town Mayor chair the meeting, no other councillor is required to attend except as an elector. Nor does any councillor at such a meeting have an obligation to present the progress report, or indeed respond to any questions, as it is the Neighbourhood Planning Team who has the delegated authority to produce a draft report which then will be subject to approval by the Town Council as the responsible body and more importantly ultimately it will be the electorate who approve the Plan.

6. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor drew attention to the various engagements that she and the Deputy Mayor had fulfilled since the last Council meeting.

7. PLANNING COMMITTEE

CTC/10/1516 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 12th March and 2nd April 2015 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

8. FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

CTC/11/1516 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2015 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

9. COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT & SERVICES COMMITTEE

CTC/12/1516 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5th February 2015 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

10. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items raised.

11. CESHIRE EAST COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Councillor G P Hayes commented that he would circulate the report on Cllr Michael Jones's Strategic Plan for Cheshire East Council for the forthcoming year.

12. YOUTH COMMITTEE

CTC/13/1516 RESOLVED that the minutes of the Youth Committee meeting held on 13th April 2015 be received.

13. CONGLETON ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES

CTC/14/1516 RESOLVED that the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 28th May 2015 were received.

14. ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

CTC/15/1516 RESOLVED that the Annual Report for 2014-15 was received and approved.

15. **ANNUAL RETURN, ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2014-15**

CTC/16/1516 RESOLVED that:-

1. The Annual Governance statement for the year ended 31st March 2015 was received and approved.
2. The Annual Accounts for 2014-15 were received and approved.

16. **GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE**

The members reviewed the eligibility criteria for the General Power of Competence and noted that the Council met the criteria.

CTC/17/1516 RESOLVED that the Council adopt the General Power of Competence.

17. **HONORARY BURGESS**

A proposal to invite a distinguished former member of the Town Council, Mr Gordon Baxendale to become an Honorary Burgess was considered.

CTC/18/1516 RESOLVED that:-

1. The Council approve of conferring the title of Honorary Burgess on Mr G Baxendale.
2. To invite Mr G Baxendale to become a member of the Community, Environment & Services Committee, as a lay member, which confers no voting rights.

18. **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP**

The Council considered which 4 Councillors should represent the Council on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

CTC/19/1516 RESOLVED that Cllrs P Bates, D T Brown, G R Edwards and Mrs A M Martin be elected to represent the Town Council on the Steering Group.

Mrs E Wardlaw
TOWN MAYOR