

Congleton Town Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday,
18th September 2014 in the Town Hall, Congleton.

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs D S Allen
 L D Barker
 G Baxendale
 D T Brown
 J S Crowther
 G R Edwards
 G P Hayes
 Mrs S A Holland
 D Murphy (Town Mayor)
 D A Parker
 N T Price
 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 P Bates, Ms L Bours, R I Brightwell, Mrs A M Martin, Mrs J D Parry, Miss R K Williams and Mrs E Wardlaw.

2. **MINUTES**

CTC/23/1415 RESOLVED- That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 10th July 2014 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 G Baxendale and D T Brown declared a non-pecuniary interest in any matters related to Cheshire East Borough Council.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

None.

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

Question from Member of the Public – Mr G Goodwin

Question to the Town Mayor, Cllr D Murphy

In the response to a question provided at the council meeting of 10th July 2014 it was stated that a meeting between one of my Ward Councillors and the Town Clerk was solely to provide advice to my Ward Councillor on the council complaints procedure. The response actually said that " the Councillor concerned mentioned that he had been in discussion with you (Graham Goodwin) about the complaint you made against the Town Clerk and asked advice on whether he should declare this matter at the Town Council meeting; he was advised that he should and that was the end of the discussion."

If, as stated, that was "the end of the discussion":-

- why, then, did the Town Clerk consider it necessary or proper to immediately ring the council leader?
- why, within minutes, did the council leader arrive at the Town Hall to discuss the complaint with my Ward Councillor in the presence of the Town Clerk?
- and why, some short time later, did the council leader ring my Ward Councillor, an Independent Councillor, at his home to ask him how he intended to vote even though, at that time, the debate over the complaint had yet to take place

Response by the Town Mayor

The response to the first two points that you raise is very simple as far as the Town Clerk is concerned.

He is aware that you manage to misinterpret and misconstrue every action taken by him and the Town Council and as such wanted a witness to any information or advice concerning you Mr Goodwin given to Cllr Crowther.

Insofar as the question that you raise relating to Cllr Edwards is concerned again there is a very simple explanation to this.

Cllr Edwards before meeting with Cllr Crowther and the Town Clerk was concerned to ensure that Cllr Crowther was not in a compromised position before meeting him.

Cllr Edwards then during a brief telephone conversation he had with Cllr Crowther prior to meeting with the Town Clerk, asked him if he had decided how he was going to vote on the matter. Cllr Edwards didn't ask him which way he was going to vote, but, asked him if he had decided how.

This was an important question to ask prior to meeting with Cllr Crowther because if the response was that he had already decided how he was going to vote then Cllr Crowther would have been guilty of pre determination and as a consequence neither Cllr Edwards nor the Town Clerk would have been able to meet him or provide any advice on process and procedure.

Mr G Goodwin asked the following supplementary question

Why would Cllr Edwards ask my Ward Councillor, or any other Councillor for that matter, if they had decided how they were going to vote?

I was clearly under the impression that my Ward Councillor was asked how he intended to vote but, even if the question was had my Councillor decided how he was going to vote, it is, largely immaterial.

The complaint had not yet been heard in Council therefore no Councillor could have made their mind up on either question, so what is Councillor Edwards doing by asking any Councillor, particularly an independent Councillor, if they have made up their mind on how they are going to vote? How could they?

6. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

It was also noted that at Visyon's AGM they had thanked Chris Jones and his team for all of the help and support they have received recently.

7. **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

CTC/24/1415 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th June, 17th July and 21st August 2014 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

8. **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

CTC/25/1415 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30TH January 2014 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

9. **COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE**

CTC/26/1415 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5th June 2014 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

10. **FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE**

CTC/27/1415 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 29th May 2014 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

11. **URGENT ITEMS**

Cllr Mrs S A Holland requested that a different way of dealing with two Committee meetings on the same evening with long agendas be considered.

Cllr D T Brown provided an update on some recent concerns raised relating to highways, footpaths and streetlights.

Footpaths

1. Sandbach Road between Ulswater Road and Heath Avenue.
2. Damaged kerbs Cross Lane and Leek Road.
3. Brook Street to be done will be done by April.

Street Lighting

New LED street lights on Holmes Chapel Road.

Gullies

Remedial work planned for Cross Lane on one gully, others cleared.

Roads – Work in September

Rejievo Patching

Buttermere Court
St Johns Road
Buxton Old Road
Bailey Crescent
Beatty Drive
Bromley Road
Edinburgh Road

Traditional Patching

Waggs Road
Fol Hollow

Highways Improvement

Wagg Street is on the Highways Improvement Programme for the future.

Brook Street will be done in September.

12. **YOUTH COMMITTEE**

CTC/28/1415 RESOLVED that the minutes of the Junior Council meeting held 15th July 2014 be received.

The Youth Committee mentioned that their website was now live and requested Councillors assistance in publicising this to other groups and organisations. The Young Persons report 2014 has also been completed.

The Youth Committee is arranging to visit the Houses of Parliament and to meet Fiona Bruce MP, it was also suggested that they should arrange to meet a Junior Minister to discuss funding for Youth Organisations. Funding for the visit to be referred to the Finance and Policy Committee.

13. **FLY A FLAG FOR THE COMMONWEALTH**

The Council considered correspondence from NALC concerning flying the Commonwealth Flag on 9th March 2015 which is Commonwealth Day.

CTC/29/1415 RESOLVED that:-

1. The Town Council will fly a flag on Commonwealth Day 9th March 2015.
2. The Town Council will purchase a Commonwealth Flag.

14. **PENSIONS DISCRETION POLICY.**

CTC/30/1415 RESOLVED that the amended Pensions Discretion Policy be adopted as a policy document by the Town Council.

15. **ST PETER'S CHURCH**

St Peter's Church have a Town Heritage Committee who are overseeing 3 major projects, the Town Mayor is a member of this Committee.

CTC/31/1415 RESOLVED that Cllrs Mrs D S Allen act as a Deputy to Cllr D. Murphy when he is unable to attend this Committee.

16. **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The notion of producing a Neighbourhood Plan for Congleton was considered.

CTC/32/1415 RESOLVED that the Town Council produce a Neighbourhood Plan.

17. **SIGNAGE**

A comprehensive signage policy which states what signage is allowed to be put up in and around the Town and from what source was discussed.

CTC/33/1415 RESOLVED that the Banners, A-Boards and Signage policy be approved and adopted.

D Murphy

TOWN MAYOR