

Congleton Town Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday 20th September 2018 Town Hall Congleton

PRESENT: Councillors

Mrs S Akers Smith (Town Mayor)
Mrs D S Allen
L D Barker
P Bates
C H Booth
R Boston
P Broom
G R Edwards
Mrs S A Holland (Deputy Town Mayor)
Mrs A Martin
M A Walker
Mrs E Wardlaw
G S Williams

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

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs A L Armitt, D T Brown J G Baggott, G P Hayes, Mrs A E Morrison and Mrs J D Parry.

2. **Minutes**

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2018.

CTC/24/1819 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2018 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.

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

4. **Outstanding Actions**

None.

5. **Questions from Members of the Public**

To receive any questions from Members of the Public including those received in writing 7 days prior to the meeting.

The council received one letter from Mr R Walton who asked

Dear Madam Mayor,

I write regarding the expected continued closure of the Minor Injuries Unit at Congleton War Memorial Hospital at weekends and Bank Holidays.

As reported on the front page of the Congleton Chronicle last week, a report was presented by the East Cheshire NHS Trust at a meeting of Cheshire East Adult Social Care & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13/9/2018. Summarizing the report, Kath Senior, Director Of Nursing & Quality at East Cheshire NHS Trust stated 'Continued staffing challenges during weekends at Macclesfield is leading to the closure of the MIU and this is expected to continue throughout the winter period'

In June, I highlighted the serious concerns of the residents of Congleton with this unacceptable situation through a letter to this council. Quoting directly from the Mayor's reply, she stated

'With the planned development of over 4,000 dwellings in Congleton there is a case to enhance accessible services rather than reduce them, so in answer to your question in my opinion we would be opposed to any further withdrawal of services or its eventual closure.'

Since that meeting, I have written to and visited the NHS Eastern Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) where I was referred to the East Cheshire NHS Trust. Further to this, I have organised and submitted a petition to East Cheshire NHS Trust, via the Leader of Cheshire East Council, Cllr Rachel Bailey, signed by 4200 deeply concerned Congleton residents opposed the withdrawal of services at the War Memorial Hospital. Once again, I was promised a meeting with and written response from their Chief Exec, John Wilbraham. Up until last week, nothing had been forthcoming until I raised concerns with Councillor Bates, whose intervention has led to efforts being made to arrange this meeting.

I should further acknowledge, at this point, the support of Cllr Bates and yourself for attending the meeting at Cheshire East where the petition was handed in, and for making both personal and reading prepared statements by several other Councillors.

However, since that meeting, up until Monday 17th September, we had heard nothing further at all. Had it not been for the Congleton Chronicle contacting me directly, we would have been totally unaware of last Thursday's meeting at Cheshire East, where it was announced that despite the near complete closure of the MIU unit over extended periods last Winter, nothing has changed because of our actions and that the closure of the MIU is expected to continue throughout the winter period.

Much as I understand that responsibility for this matter ultimately lies with East Cheshire NHS Trust, the members of Congleton Town Council are clearly not without influence. As the elected representatives of the people of Congleton, I believe they should be taking every and any opportunity to oppose this reduction in services as it so deeply affects the people of Congleton.

I do not believe the Council can ignore this matter or simply refer it to the East Cheshire NHS Trust, as they are clearly currently ignoring the wishes of over 4000 residents. I was therefore extremely encouraged to see the headlines in this morning's Congleton Chronicle, where Councillor Bates called for a party public demonstration in opposition to this reduction in operating hours at the MIU.

So, to my simple question

'What further actions can Congleton Town Council take to oppose and halt the reduction in operating hours of the Minor Injuries Unit at Congleton War Memorial Hospital?

The Mayor responded

Mr Walton

Thank you for your letter and your ongoing commitment to this issue which is a concern to us all as both residents and as a Council.

As you have alluded to in your letter we have received a belated response from John Wilbraham the Chief Executive Officer of the NHS Eastern Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

For the benefit of councillors and residents present Mr Wilbraham wishes to meet with Mr Walton and myself to discuss the provision of services at the War Memorial Hospital as soon as is convenient for us both.

With regards to actions we can take, I am sure we can all agree that this matter is above local politics and I would suggest that following the meeting we have with Mr Wilbraham we meet again to discuss a joint approach on this matter.

6. Mayor's Announcements

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

7. Finance & Policy Committee

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 5th July 2018.

CTC/25/1819 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5th July 2018 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

8. Planning Committee

To receive the minutes of the meetings held on 14th June, 19th July and 9th August 2018.

CTC/26/1819 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 14th June, 19th July and 9th August 2018 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

9. Community, Environment & Services Committee

To receive the minutes of the meetings held on 28th June 2018.

CTC/27/1819 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th June 2018 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

10. Urgent Items

Members may raise urgent items but no discussion or decisions may be taken at the meeting.

There were no urgent items.

11. Cheshire East Councillors' Reports

To suspend Standing Orders to allow Councillors from the principal authority to report on relevant issues and to receive questions from members.

Cllr Bates advised councillors that -

- The Town and Parish Conference will be taking place on the 26th September 2018.
- The new homes bonus scheme has now been launched and that Congleton should start to consider projects that meet the funding criteria.
- The Local Hero awards will take place in Crewe at the Crewe Hall Hotel, on Thursday, November 9 2018.

Cllr Mrs E Wardlaw advised councillors that-

- Cheshire East Council had bid for £500k to help children and families who have been impacted through alcohol and substance misuse.

12. Youth Committee

To deal with Questions from Members of the Youth Committee present at the meeting.

There were no questions from members of the Youth Committee

**Cllr Mrs S Akers Smith
(Town Mayor)**