

Congleton Town Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday 19th September 2019 Town Hall Congleton

PRESENT: Sally Ann Holland (Town Mayor)
Suzie Akers Smith
Dawn Allen
Martin Amies
Russell Chadwick
Suzy Firkin
Margaret Gartside
Robert Hemsley
Rob Moreton
Mark Rogan
James Smith
Kay Wesley

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, Duncan Amies, David Brown, Robert Douglas, Paul Duffy, George Hayes, Denis Murphy and Jean Parry.

2. **Minutes**

To approve the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11th July 2019 and the Emergency meeting of the Council on 1st August 2019.

CTC/28/1920 RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11th July 2019 and the Emergency meeting of the Council on 1st August 2019 be approved and signed by the Town 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 Suzie Akers Smith and Sally Ann Holland declared a non- pecuniary interest in any matters relating to Cheshire East Council.

4. **Outstanding Actions**

None.

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

Heather Seddon – use of Peat based compost - see appendix 1

6. **Mayor's Announcements**

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

7. **Youth Committee**

To receive questions from members of the Youth Committee present at the meeting.

The Youth Committee advised that they had attended a climate change event in Manchester and expressed an interest in any emerging local initiatives relating to this subject.

8. **Community, Environment & Services Committee**

CTC/29/1920 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th June 2019 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

9. **Finance & Policy Committee**

CTC/30/1920 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2019 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

10. **Planning Committee**

CTC/31/1920 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 20th June, 18th July and 8th August 2019 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

11. **Town Hall & Assets Committee**

CTC/32/1920 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 4th April 2019 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted.

12. **Climate Emergency**

To seek approval for Congleton Town Council to declare a Climate Emergency

CTC/33/1920 RESOLVED to declare a climate Emergency for Congleton and to –

- Publicise this initiative to at the Congleton Green Fair on 26th October 2019;
- Appoint Cllr Margaret Gartside as Lead Councillor on Climate Emergency;
- Pledge to make Congleton Town Council carbon neutral by 2025;
- Call on Cheshire East, and the national government to provide the powers and resources to make the 2025 target possible;
- Continue to work with partners across the town and region to deliver this goal through all relevant strategies and plans;
- In all discussion, debate and decision-making procedures ensure that climate impact is thoroughly considered and recorded;
- Report to Council within three months with the initial actions the Council needs to take to address this emergency.

13. External Auditor Report and Certificate 18/19

To receive the External Auditor Report and Certificate 18/19 and to note any comments

CTC/34/1920 RESOLVED to receive the External Auditor Report and Certificate 18/19

14. Removal of Standing Order 31

To approve the removal of Standing Order 31 from the Constitution.

CTC/35/1920 RESOLVED to defer the removal of Standing Order 31 from the Constitution until the next meeting of the Council giving time for the Standing Order to be reviewed and incorporated into the emerging Draft Civic Protocol

15. White Ribbon

To approve the progression of the White Ribbon campaign including funding and associated commitments.

CTC/36/1920 RESOLVED to

- Authorise annual payment of £300 for White Ribbon Accreditation.
- Train Councillors and Council staff.
- Councillors and Council Staff to take the simple White Ribbon Pledge.
- Launch the White Ribbon campaign on a community stall at the Congleton Maker's Market
- Authorise the White Ribbon Working Group to action the other parts of the Implementation Plan

16. Urgent Items

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

17. 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. - **see appendix 2**

**Cllr Mrs S A Holland
(Town Mayor)**

Appendix 1

Questions from members of the Public

1. Heather Seddon

It has come to my attention that the Congleton In Bloom planters are using peat based compost in the majority of their hanging baskets and boxes. Although the flower displays are very beautiful and now a cultural part of Congleton Town, could it please be investigated as a matter of urgency before the winter planters are prepared to ensure that only peat free compost is used in the planters.

I'm sure that all the Town Councillors are aware that rising carbon dioxide levels are contributing to global warming. Peat bogs store carbon and support biodiversity and we have a responsibility to preserve our natural habitats, not to destroy them.

It would certainly be a positive news story if Congleton in Bloom could make this change to peat-free composts in all their planters. It would show residents that Congleton Town was taking sustainability and care of the environment seriously. And be a great start in the launch of Congleton's Climate Emergency action plan.

I would also like to formally request that Congleton Town Council follows Cheshire East Council and other local councils such as Alsager Town Council in announcing that they also will also commit to ensuring that carbon emissions are reduced as per the Cheshire East climate emergency conditions.

Mayor's Response

Thank you for your questions relating to our floral displays and your concerns about the environmental impact.

I am aware that the In Bloom working group are keen to discuss and explore any environmental improvements they can with regards to our floral displays.

Currently we have approximately 250 Town centre hanging baskets, these are lined with moss and then filled with plants, the soil used is the root ball of the plants. We source our plants locally from a major supplier but we will need to check what soil they use for their plants

We have 30 solid baskets filled with recycled compost from previous year's plants which have been composted down, then filled with plants

We have 30 Large Planters and 180 troughs - this is currently a mix of normal compost and peat compost, we currently use peat compost as it has the benefit of holding moisture well and releasing nutrients slowly and over a long period of time, which is ideal for planters and containers, however we are keen to explore any other options that achieve the same results

Our roundabouts and park beds used to be totally peat beds as this was something that Cheshire East and the former Congleton Borough maintained. When topping up the flower beds over the last 10 years we have used peat free compost which is ultimately replacing the previously 100% peat beds.

As a general principle Congleton in bloom is looking towards more sustainable beds and wildflower areas on grass verges but recognises there is still other options that need to be explored.

Ruth Burgess our Streetscape manager will be returning to work following maternity leave on September 23rd and would be happy to meet with you to discuss the matter further if you so wish.

With regards to you second point you will notice on tonight's agenda that we are covering the Climate Emergency situation on item 12 of the agenda, hopefully you will be able to stay to listen to that debate

Appendix 2 - Cheshire East Councillor Reports

1. Councillor George Hayes extended congratulations on the recent news that nearby Jodrell Bank Observatory has been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site; welcoming the recognition of this world-class facility which will also promote an increase in visitors.

He went on to promote the Summer Reading Challenge which is being run at Congleton Library in partnership with The Reading Agency to promote reading for children during the forthcoming summer holidays. The theme of this year's challenge is "Space Chase" and is being appropriately supported by Jodrell Bank with participants receiving vouchers to visit the Observatory's Discovery Centre.

2. Councillor Suzie Akers Smith advised that there would be a review of the Local Transport Plan and the Economic Strategy and that as a council we should make comment and asked individual councillors to feedback their thoughts to herself. Also proposed that there could be a Strategy Group meeting to discuss and that it should also be passed through to the relevant Congleton Neighbourhood Plan group for comment.