

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 30th July 2020

Conducted via Zoom – Meeting ID 860 9871 8135

For the papers discussed at the meeting, please see the [Meeting Agenda](#)

PRESENT:

Committee members:

Kay Wesley (Chair)
Martin Amies
Paul Duffy
Margaret Gartside
Suzy Firkin
Amanda Martin
Denis Murphy (Deputy Mayor)
Jean Parry

Non-Committee Members:

Suzie Akers Smith (13)
Duncan Amies
David Brown
Robert Douglas
Robert Hemsley
Robert Moreton
James Smith (joined item 7)

Also present: CTC Officers David McGifford, Jackie MacArthur and Ruth Burgess (until item 6)
2 Members of the Press, 1 officer from the Police and 6 public.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received Councillors Dawn Allen, and Mark Rogan and from non-committee members Councillors Russell Chadwick and Cllr Sally Ann Holland (Town Mayor).

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 4th June 2020 a correct record.

CE/13/2021 Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4th June 2020 as a correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

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

Councillors Denis Murphy, David Brown and Rob Moreton declared an interest as Cheshire East Councillors.

4. Outstanding Actions

Agenda Item 9 provides an update paper from 4th June 2020.

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.

There were questions from two members of the public – Lisa Miller and Olga Whitmore. This can be seen in Appendix A.

6. Cheshire Police

To receive and consider a verbal report from a representative of Cheshire Police on Policing matters affecting Congleton.

PC Helen Weeks from Cheshire Police provided updates to the Committee see Appendix B for details.

7. Monthly Domestic Abuse Clinics in Congleton

To give support to a new initiative which would see a monthly Domestic Abuse Clinic introduced to Congleton.

CE/14/2021 Resolved that Congleton Town Council would work in Partnership with Cheshire Police and MyCWA to deliver a monthly Domestic Abuse Clinic at The Old Saw Mill starting in September 2020. Cost of venue to be £40 per month, funded from the Crime Prevention Budget. The clinic to be reviewed after 6 months.

8. Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group

CE/15/2021 Resolved to receive the notes of Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group from the 16th July 2020.

9. **Updates Paper 4th June 2020 C&E Committee**

CE/16/2021 Resolved to receive an updates paper highlighting issues raised at the Community and Environment Committee meeting on 4th June 2020.

10. **Update from Working Groups**

CE/17/2021 Resolved to receive a brief update from the Working Groups on progress being made by the groups.

11. **Congleton in Bloom Working Group**

CE/18/2021 Resolved to receive the notes of the Congleton in Bloom Working Group held on 3rd June 2020.

12. **Congleton Green Working Group**

CE/19/2021 Resolved to receive the notes of the Congleton Green Working Group held on 23rd July 2020.

13. **Health and Wellbeing Working Group**

CE/20/2021 Resolved to receive the notes of the Health and Wellbeing Working Group held on the 2nd July 2020.

14. **Glyphosate use in and around Children's Play Areas**

To consider a report into stopping using glyphosate in and around children's play area and fencing the areas which surround them in Congleton.

CE/21/2021 Resolved that Congleton Town Council formally confirms the verbal commitment made by officers that glyphosate will not be used in children's play areas and the fencing areas which surround them.

15. **Edinburgh Road Telephone Box**

This paper was withdrawn. A future report will come to committee updating on plans for a 24/7 defibrillator for the Bromley Farm area.

16. **Increasing Walking and Cycling in Congleton**

To discuss a report from Councillor Suzanne Akers-Smith and the Integrated Transport Working Group about efforts to increase walking and cycling to school in Congleton this autumn.

CE/22/2021 Resolved that Congleton Town Council will support the need for Congleton schools, focussing on the secondary schools but also considering the opportunities for the primary schools, to create safer routes for cycling and walking to school. To actively encourage Cheshire East Highways officers to explore ways that this can be done safely in Congleton drawing on Government Active Travel funds where possible.

17. Request for support A34 Astbury Junction Road Safety

To consider a request to support Astbury Parish Council in their campaign to make A34 Astbury junction safer for all users.

CE/23/2021 Resolved to offer our condolences to the families involved and give our support to Astbury Parish Council in their efforts to negotiate improvements to the safety of the junction with Cheshire East Highways.

18. Proposed Closure of Rope Walk Car Park

To receive a report and update from Councillor Amanda Martin on concerns from local residents about the potential loss of Rope Walk car park in Congleton.

CE/24/2021 Resolved to make representations to Cheshire East Council Parking services and to the Head of Planning about the serious highway problems that the proposed closure of Rope Walk car park will cause and seek parking solutions for the area. Also to raise concerns that Congleton Town Council was not consulted about possible solution.

19. Request to use the Community Garden for Addition Tables and Chairs

To consider a request to put tables and chairs in the Community Garden in Lawton Street.

CE/25/2021 Resolved to delegate responsibility to officers to draw up an agreement with Mr Hilrup from Congleton Kitchen to allow Congleton Kitchen and other businesses working with him to put tables and chairs in a COVID-19 secure and socially acceptable way in the Community Garden, initially for a four week trial.

20. An Interim Report on the Congleton COVID-19 Health and Wellbeing Survey

To consider an interim report in the findings of a COVID-19 Health and Wellbeing survey of Congleton residents.

CE/26/2021 Resolved to note the report and to continue the survey until the end of August.

**Cllr Kay Wesley
(Chair)**

Appendix A Public Questions

Question from Lisa Miller

“Firstly, I’m thrilled that the amount of pesticide/herbicide usage in Congleton has been reduced, I’m wondering if there’s any further plans to reduce/eradicate its use anymore? Also, I know that streetscape/ANSA are having meetings to review each individual area that is mown to see if they can be left/rewild. I’m wondering how this is progressing, are there more grass verges being left to nature now?”

RESPONSE BY CHAIR:

Congleton Town Council was set to try out a new approach to grass cutting in an attempt to preserve wildflowers and the wildlife who rely on them.

The Town Council had announced that some of the roadside verges and open spaces – will be cut in a different way in order to encourage the growth of wildflowers. However, this has been put on hold until next year 2021, as it was difficult to set up the scheme whilst in COVID lockdown. The Scheme will happen next year and is something we are all looking forward to doing and carrying out.

Under this new approach, the grass which the Town Council is responsible for will not be cut fortnightly which is the current schedule but will be left, the parts which will be left will be cut only once a year, between mid-July and mid-August, with the grass cuttings removed.

This will prevent aggressive plant species from dominating the areas and will allow for the growth, flowering and seeding of wildflowers. This in turn will provide the ideal habitat for bees and other pollinating insects.

Congleton Town Council is determined to protect and improve Congleton’s natural environment and this fairly simple change to how we cut our grass will help increase the habitats and food that our pollinating insects rely on.

Congleton Town Council’s progressive move towards a better management of their grass areas is part of their Sustainable Strategy and Climate Responsibility.

Questions from Olga Whitmore:

- 1. “CTC declared climate emergency in September 2019, is CTC planning to reduce the fortnight mowing of the verges in Congleton?”***

Happy with the same response as question from Lisa Miller.

2. *“In Bloom Committee aka Floral Arrangement Group plays an important role in Greening the town, but still resists the change to sustainable planting, why are such prominent members of the planting community not invited to the committee?”*

As far as the current In Bloom team are aware the three mentioned have never asked to join the In Bloom working group itself, although they are already actively involved with In Bloom activities and also separate green Initiative groups.

Val works with the streetscape team roughly once a Month as well as maintaining the food for free bed which we present and show to the judges each year.

Ruth is part of the tree initiative group and has been carrying out work on Congleton’s Green Open Spaces for the Town Council. She is also working with Ruth Burgess from the Town Council on plans to develop wild areas on council owned land.

Sandra runs the Buglawton in bloom group, which is one of nine Its Your Neighbourhood areas that makes up the bigger In Bloom campaign. Congleton in bloom supports and provides plant, labour and equipment to the group. We actively seek out meetings with the local groups each year and support where possible.

The Town Council is very grateful to them and the many other volunteers who support these initiatives across Congleton.

3. *“Correct me if I am wrong, perhaps In Bloom Committee has endorsed sustainable planting in view of CTC declaration of climate emergency in September. Since the minutes of October 2019 In Bloom Committee meeting were never published, I can’t tell for sure if any changes in planting scheme took place.”*

Streetscape and Congleton in Bloom has many changes planned this year however a lot has been put on hold due to Covid and will be put in place next year. This includes sustainable planting schemes, wild flowers, reduced grass cutting. Copies of the Congleton in Bloom Working Group minutes - along with all the Working Groups, can be viewed on the Congleton Town Council website in the section on Working Groups.

4. *“Will planting roundabouts be using perennial plants, or will CTC decide on using annuals which have high environmental impact? Only one roundabout has permanent planting.”*

We have 5 roundabouts which we are responsible for there is currently two sustainable and three with bedding plants however in the autumn there is plans for one more roundabout to be made sustainable with perennial planting to be done

5. *“Considering the cost of labour to replant those roundabouts, perhaps CTC will consider to reduce the carbon footprint and the money expenditure at the same time?”*

Financial, Environmental and Equality & Diversity as well as Safety concerns have to be considered for all our projects and this will certainly be taken into account.

APPENDIX B Item 6 - Report from Congleton Police

Summary of the report given by PC Helen Weeks to the Community and Environment Committee
30th July 2020

General Police Update

Congleton Beat Priorities

Road Safety

in addition to the PCC promise Congleton Beat Team are undertaking Operation Assembles focussing on Road Safety, it will last 6 weeks and will include:

- 1 Trucam per day
- 1 Police Traffic Enforcement Operation per week
- Increasing our Community speed watch groups and their activity
- A focus on our Road Traffic Collision hotspots as well as those areas highlighted by the community
- Road Safety messaging

Request for members to utilise their platforms to push the messaging.

Drug Dealing in Town - Op Little

Organised Criminal Gang members targeted as well as enforcement at street level. All-encompassing approach - Businesses, landlords, dealers and customers.

Previous Priorities Updates:

- Meadow Mill Court – ASB/Crime. 1 Injunction (arrestable), 1 custodial
- Anti-Social Behaviour Issue – Shaw Close – Eviction
- Astbury Mere ASB – Increased patrols there. Bike marked 100 bikes and are returning for more.
- Buxton Old Road – Harassment: partner working resolution
- Robert Hughes charged with blackmail and remanded in prison – Vulnerable victim reassurance being provided

Summer Plans

Summer Activity Program supporting Youth Services – targeted youth project

Panna football has been made available to Glenn Williams