



# Congleton Town Council

Historic Market Town

Chief Officer: David McGifford CILCA

18<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Councillor,

## **Town Hall, Assets & Services Committee – 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Town Hall, Assets & Services Committee, to be held on **25<sup>th</sup> February 2021** commencing at **7.00pm**.

This will be a virtual meeting which needs to be accessed via Zoom.

[Use this link to open the Town Hall, Assets & Services Committee meeting via Zoom on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021.](#)

Meeting ID: 970 7947 9771

Passcode: 016334

- **The Public and Press are welcome to attend the meeting, please note** - There will be 15 minutes at each meeting to receive any questions from Members of the Public, either verbally or at the meeting, including those which have been received in writing 7 days prior to the meeting.
- There may be confidential items towards the end of the meeting which the law requires the Council to make a resolution to exclude the public and press in accordance with Section 100 (B) (2) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Yours sincerely,

David McGifford  
Chief Officer

Congleton  
**beartown**  
where friends are made

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## AGENDA

### **1. 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.

### **2. Minutes of Previous Meetings (Enclosed)**

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Town Hall, Assets and Services Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

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

### **4. Outstanding Actions**

To review any outstanding actions from previous meetings and to provide an update on any work in progress.

### **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.

### **6. Urgent Items**

Members may raise urgent items related to this committee but no discussion or decisions may be taken at the meeting

### **7. Town Hall Trading Account (Enclosed)**

To accept the Town Hall Trading account to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 and to note the content of the summary report.

### **8. Streetscape Trading Account (Enclosed)**

To accept the Streetscape Trading account to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 and to note the content of the summary report.

### **9. Paddling Pool Rescheduling of 2020 repairs (Enclosed)**

To receive an update from the Town Hall Manager on matters relating to the Paddling Pool Rescheduling of 2020 repairs

**10. Update on Streetscape Works (Enclosed)**

To receive the Update on Streetscape works and to note the content of the summary report

**11. Fire Audit - 2020 (Enclosed)**

To receive an update from the Town Hall Manager on matters relating to the Fire Audit -2020

**12. Cenotaph Update (Verbal Update)**

To receive an update on the Cenotaph project

**13. Resolution to exclude members of the press and public from item 13 due to Commercial Sensitivities**

**14. Challenging Behaviour from Members of the public**

To receive a report on Challenging Behaviour from Members of the public

**15. Town Hall and Public Toilets Cleaning Contract (Enclosed)**

To receive a report on Town Hall and Public Toilets Cleaning Contract

**16. Update on Future Use of the Town Hall (Enclosed)**

To receive an update from the Chief Officer on matters relating to Congleton Market

**17. Provision of Services at the Town Hall (Enclosed)**

To receive an update from the Chief Officer on matters relating the provision of services at the Town Hall

**18. Update on Visitor Information Centre. (Enclosed)**

To receive an update from the Chief Officer on matters relating to the Visitor Information Centre

**To:** Members of the Town Hall, Assets & Services Committee

**Cllrs:**

**Suzy Firkin (Chair), George Hayes (Vice Chair),**

Suzie Akers Smith, Dawn Allen, Duncan Amies, David Brown, Robert Douglas,  
Robert Hemsley, Rob Moreton, Denis Murphy.

**Ccs:** Appointed Member - Mr D A Parker (Honorary Burgess)

Other members of the Council and Honorary Burgesses (2) for Information; Press (3),

Congleton Library, Congleton Visitor Information Centre

## CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of the Town Hall, Assets & Services Committee held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020

Conducted via Zoom – Meeting ID: 962 4894 8344

**\*\*Please note – These are draft minutes and will not be ratified until the next meeting of this Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

For the papers discussed at the meeting, [please see the Meeting Agenda of the Town hall, Assets and Services Committee held on 3rd December 2020](#)

In attendance:

Committee members:

Suzy Firkin (Chair)  
George Hayes (Vice Chair)  
Duncan Amies  
David Brown  
Robert Douglas  
Robert Hemsley  
Denis Murphy (Deputy Mayor)  
Suzie Akers-Smith

Ex Officio: Sally Ann Holland (Mayor)

Non-Committee members: Amanda Martin, Kay Wesley, James Smith, Margaret Gartside, Paul Duffy

Also present: Press - Tom Avery, James Connolly,  
CTC - David McGifford, Mark Worthington, Ruth Burgess

### Minutes

#### **1. 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 Non-Committee member Councillor Russell Chadwick.



## **2. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

**THAS/36/2021 Resolved to** approve and sign the minutes of the Town Hall, Assets & Services Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

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

Declarations of interest were received from Councilors Suzanne Akers Smith, David Brown, George Hayes, Sally Ann Holland (Town Mayor), and Denis Murphy, all non-pecuniary on 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.

There were no questions from members of the public.

## **6. Urgent Items**

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

There were no urgent items raised.

## **7. Town Hall Trading Account**

**THAS/37/2021 Resolved to** receive the Town Hall Trading account to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020 and to note the content of the summary report.

## **8. Streetscape Trading Account**

**THAS/38/2021 Resolved to** receive the Streetscape Trading account to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020 and to note the content of the summary report.

**9. Minutes of the Town Hall Development Working Group**

**THAS/39/2021 Resolved to** receive the minutes of the Town Hall Development Working Group held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

**10. Minutes of the Streetscape Development Working Group**

**THAS/40/2021 Resolved to** receive the minutes of the Streetscape Development Working Group held on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

**11. Minutes of the Business Support Working Group**

**THAS/41/2021 Resolved to** receive a verbal update of the Business Support Working Group meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

**12. Garden of Reflection Relocation Proposal**

**THAS/42/2021 Resolved to** accept the proposal of re-siting the Garden of Reflection at the Community Garden.

**Action** –To agree design, layout and new signage

**13. Town Hall Energy Survey**

**THAS/43/2021 Resolved to** receive the report, when time allows seek to find an additional company to provide their thoughts for energy savings

**14. Town Hall Acoustic Absorption Survey**

**THAS/44/2021 Resolved to** receive the report and hold the information on file until time allows for further investigation into reviewing acoustic / equipment options.

**15. Update on the Congleton Cenotaph**

**THAS/45/2021 Resolved to** receive a verbal update report on the Congleton Cenotaph.

**16. Resolution to exclude members of the press and public from item 17 due to Commercial Sensitivities**

**THAS/46/2021 Resolved to** exclude members of the public and press from item 17 due to commercial sensitivities.

**17. Update on the Future use of the Town Hall**

**THAS/47/2021 Resolved to** receive the report on the future use of the Town Hall.

**CLlr Suzy Firkin  
(Chair)**



## CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

### COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

<b>COMMITTEE:</b>	Town Hall, Assets and Services		
<b>MEETING DATE AND TIME</b>	25/02/21 7pm	<b>LOCATION</b>	Remote via Zoom
<b>REPORT FROM</b>	Support Manager RFO		
<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	7		
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Town Hall Trading account April – January 2021		
<b>Background</b>	Variance analysis of the Trading Account to January 2021 to accompany the spreadsheet.		
<b>Updates</b>	<p>This trading account is for 10 months of 2020/21 – so 83% of the budget would be used if expenditure was regular monthly. Due to the effects of the Corona Virus pandemic currently 134% of the budget has been used to 31/01/2021. The estimate for the end of this exceptional pandemic year is for a trading deficit of £135,000</p> <p><b><u>Income</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The figures show 38% of budgeted income (should be 83% by January) The Town Hall has been largely closed since the lockdown at the end of March. NHS Blood have still been using the Grand Hall for blood donation sessions and a key worker company had a training session. Between lockdowns a few groups did manage to meet and hire the hall including a line dancing group and a choir. The NHS has been using the Grand Hall since January as a GP vaccine hub so I estimate that at year end (31/03/21) the Town Hall income will be half the budgeted amount (£65,500)</li></ul> <p><b><u>Expenditure</u></b></p> <p>Largely as expected for M10. 74% of the budget has been used so a slight underspend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No spending yet on training and PPE</li><li>• Maintenance contracts have increased slightly over inflation, so a slight overspend is expected for this financial year.</li><li>• No catering.</li></ul>		
<b>Decision Requested</b>	To receive the Town Hall Trading Account for M10 April – January 2021		

# Congleton Town Council

	2020/21 Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	% of Budget Used	2019/20
	£	£	£		£
<b>Town Hall</b>					
4000 Staff Costs (re-allocated)	55,259	66,019	10,760	84%	49,074
4008 Training	0	1,000	1,000	0%	320
4009 Protective Clothing\H & Safety	0	500	500	0%	0
4010 Cleaners	4,925	8,000	3,075	62%	3,617
4011 Rates	22,827	27,530	4,703	83%	22,470
4012 Water	6,265	6,000	265	104%	3,999
4014 Electricity	13,160	20,125	6,965	65%	14,775
4015 Gas	7,411	13,750	6,339	54%	8,843
4016 Cleaning materials	1,745	2,000	255	87%	1,682
4017 Refuse Disposal	2,521	3,000	479	84%	2,497
4020 Miscellaneous Office Costs	771	1,200	429	64%	827
4025 Insurance	6,293	8,000	1,708	79%	6,285
4033 Marketing/Promotions	1,693	3,500	1,807	48%	526
4040 Maintenance Contracts	6,165	6,500	336	95%	5,600
4041 Property Maintenance	12,231	15,000	2,769	82%	12,290
4064 Legal & Professional fees	595	100	495	595%	0
4068 Licences (incl PRS)	2,917	3,500	583	83%	2,299
3020 Catering Supplies (rechargeable)	0	10,000	10,000	0%	6,289
6000 Central Overheads Reallocated	4,355	6,046	1,691	72%	5,124
<b>Congleton Town Hall:-Expenditure</b>	<b>149,132</b>	<b>201,770</b>	<b>52,638</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>146,517</b>
1009 Rent Rec'd - Museum Notional	3,750	4,500	750	83%	3,750
1010 Rent Received - 3rd Party (TIC, Partnership & rear office)	7,528	11,033	3,506	68%	9,194
1011 Rent Received - Internal CTC	14,181	17,017	2,836	83%	14,181
1013 Letting Income - Grand Hall	16,786	30,400	13,614	55%	21,966
1014 Letting Income - Bridestones	1,240	13,200	11,960	9%	6,151
1015 Letting Income -Spencer Suite	919	4,950	4,031	19%	2,435
1018 Letting Income - Campbell Suite	0	0	0	#DIV/0!	160
1016 Letting Income - Brasserie, Kitchen and Bar	0	15,000	15,000	0%	12,500
1021 Letting Income - Internal	1,749	9,000	7,251	19%	8,679
1022 Letting income - F&F	0	5,000	5,000	0%	1,000
1030 Service Charges - TIC	1,209	1,700	491	71%	1,109
1035 Service Charges - CTHEP	0	4,500	4,500	0%	3,409
1051 Catering Sales (recharges)	0	10,000	10,000	0%	6,684
1199 Misc Income	292	0	292	#DIV/0!	292
<b>Congleton Town Hall :- Income</b>	<b>47,653</b>	<b>126,300</b>	<b>78,647</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>91,510</b>
<b>Net Expenditure over Income</b>	<b>£101,479</b>	<b>£75,470</b>	<b>£26,009</b>	<b>134%</b>	<b>£55,007</b>

**CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

<b>COMMITTEE:</b>	Town Hall, Assets and Services		
<b>MEETING DATE AND TIME</b>	25/02/21 7pm	<b>LOCATION</b>	Remote via Zoom
<b>REPORT FROM</b>	Support Manager RFO		
<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	<b>8</b>		
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>Streetscape Trading Account April – January 2021</b>		
<b>Background</b>	Variance analysis of the Trading Account to January 2021 to accompany the spreadsheet.		
<b>Updates</b>	<p>This trading account is for 10 months to January 2021 – so 83% of the budget would be used if expenditure was regular monthly. 71% of the budget has been used to 31/01/2021 so a slight underspend.</p> <p><b><u>Income</u></b></p> <p>The income for Streetscape is largely fixed by the SLA payment that is received from CEC £366,702. The external work is budgeted to bring in £15,000. This was stopped during April and May due to Coronavirus but has started up again from June so should not have a significant effect on the income by the end of the financial year.</p> <p><b><u>Expenditure</u></b></p> <p>Largely as expected for M10 at 78% of the budget being used, so a slight underspend to date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agency staff is showing an overspend – this is a seasonal worker covering for staff sickness. Taken with the Staffing budget it is still within budget.</li><li>• Nothing spent to date on training.</li><li>• Horticultural Supplies is showing an underspend as there were fewer hanging baskets this year due to the pandemic which were made up by Streetscape not bought in as in previous years.</li><li>• Vehicle maintenance/servicing underspent to date but this mostly takes place in the quieter winter months.</li></ul>		
<b>Decision Requested</b>	To receive the Streetscape Trading Account for M10 April – January 2021		



## January 2021

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Budget	Variance Annual Total	% of Budget
<b><u>Streetscape</u></b>				
Staff Costs	346,304	438,814	92,510	79%
Agency Staff	16,541	6,000	10,541	276%
Training	0	3,000	3,000	0%
Protective Clothing\H & Safety	3,518	4,500	982	78%
Office rent	2,556	3,067	511	83%
Cleaning Materials	3,070	5,000	1,930	61%
Mobile Phones	563	700	137	80%
Insurance	5,663	6,000	337	94%
Property maintenance	618	1,200	582	52%
Horticultural etc Supplies	8,479	18,000	9,521	47%
Winter Bedding	624	1,000	376	62%
Vehicle maintenance/Serv etc	5,291	10,000	4,709	53%
Vehicle fuel and oil	7,988	13,000	5,012	61%
Vehicle rental charges	29,942	39,000	9,058	77%
Street Cleansing	1,334	3,500	2,166	38%
General expenditure	2,589	4,000	1,411	65%
Central Overheads Reallocated	28,947	40,188	11,241	72%
Rechargable expenses	360	0	360	#DIV/0!
<b>Streetscape Expenditure</b>	<b>464,387</b>	<b>596,969</b>	<b>132,582</b>	<b>78%</b>
CEC - Income	-305,585	-366,702	-61,117	83%
External work income	-5,235	-15,000	-9,765	35%
Other income	-278	0	278	#DIV/0!
Astbury Mere Income	-750	-900	-150	83%
	<b>-311,848</b>	<b>-382,602</b>	<b>-70,754</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>Net Expenditure over Income</b>	<b>152,539</b>	<b>214,367</b>	<b>61,828</b>	<b>71%</b>

## CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

### COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

<b>COMMITTEE:</b>	Town Hall, Assets and Services		
<b>MEETING DATE AND TIME</b>	25th February 2021	<b>LOCATION</b>	Zoom
<b>REPORT FROM</b>	Town Hall Manager – Mark Worthington		
<b>AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>Agenda Item 9: Paddling Pool – Re-scheduling of 2020 repairs</b>		
<b>Background</b>	<p>The repairs to the paddling pool, agreed at the Town Hall &amp; Assets Committee meeting 14/11/2019 and scheduled to be carried out in preparation of the 2020 season, were cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The work was scheduled to take place during April 2020 and the repairs involved sandblasting the pool surface to remove damaged paint, refilling the surface expansion joints, and repainting the pool surface. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic these works were cancelled along with the recruitment of new paddling pool attendants. The paddling pool remained closed throughout the 2020 season.</p>		
<b>Updates</b>	<p>The paddling pool is scheduled to opened on the Bank Holiday weekend 29/05/21.</p> <p>The mechanics of making the paddling pool operational are the same as any normal year, however, we are waiting on Government Guidelines as to whether paddling pools or water parks can open during Summer 2021.</p> <p>The repairs to the pool surface, which were cancelled in 2020, will need to be confirmed by the end of February so that the company carrying out the work can schedule the work for early/mid-April 2021. Costs for the pool surface repairs are £21,010 + VAT. Work would take one week to complete, and the surface would require a further week to stabilise before refilling with water. The annual service and media change can be scheduled for after the pool surface repairs at a cost of £1284 + VAT. As a temporary alternative to the pool surface repairs, it would be possible for CTC Streetscape staff to carry out a thorough cleaning of the paddling pool surface and local, patch repairs to the expansion joints. Obviously, this would not give the impact at opening of a freshly painted pool, but it could be an option if Government Guidelines are not confirmed as the opening date approaches. Annual servicing and media change will be required for the pool to open regardless of whether the pool surface is professionally repaired and painted.</p> <p>Until Government Guidelines are confirmed we have no way of knowing how the paddling pool will operate under Covid restrictions. This was discussed by Officers during last Summer as there was the possibility of paddling pools and water parks opening towards the end of the season. This did not transpire; however, details are below of how the pool may need to operate during Covid restrictions.</p> <p>Under normal circumstances the pool operates with a maximum number of 300 members of public being allowed to enter on a first come first served basis, with two members of staff on site during the busiest periods. One member of staff would be operating at the gate to control the number of people entering, the other member of staff would be dealing with operational issues such as pool attending, pool water testing, emptying the bins, cleaning the toilet. Under social distancing guidelines the number of people entering the pool facility may need to be reduced to around 50 people to allow for social distancing (based on 2020</p>		



	<p>guidelines) Members of the public would need to book in advance to control the number of people entering the facility, avoiding the probability of 300 people turning up and only 50 people being allowed in. Booking in advance would also help for Track and Trace purposes. Regardless of these measures we believe members of the public would still attend the paddling pool with the hope of gaining access. Operating under these circumstances we believe the number of staff on site at the pool would need to increase from 2 pool staff to 5 pool staff, their roles are detailed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 x staff member to admit members of the public and check their details/ticket</li> <li>• 1 x member of staff to permanently operate the toilets including the possibility of installing additional temporary toilets</li> <li>• 1 x member of staff to carry out pool checks, water tests, empty bins</li> <li>• 2 x SIA licensed security officers to deal with issues arising from members of the public trying to gain access without a ticket</li> </ul> <p>These measures may sound extreme but under normal circumstances and a limit of 300 people we have members of the public climbing over the fences around the pool perimeter to gain access.</p> <p>Northwich Town Council have been contacted as they have a similar paddling pool facility as Congleton. If Government Guidelines permit, Northwich are also be looking at a capacity of 50 people using pre booked tickets and additional staff.</p>
<b>Decision Request</b>	<p>To receive this report and agree to either progress with work to professionally repair and paint the paddling pool surface or have the pool thoroughly cleaned and patched by CTC Streetscape staff while awaiting Government guidelines for pools and water parks.</p>

**CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

<b>COMMITTEE:</b>	Community and Environment Committee		
<b>MEETING DATE AND TIME</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	<b>LOCATION</b>	Virtual Council Meeting
<b>REPORT FROM</b>	Ruth Burgees – Streetscape and Development Manager		
<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	<b>10</b>		
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>Streetscape Work</b>		
<b>Current Situation</b>	Due to current COVID-19 pandemic, some works have had to be postponed, as they are not classed as either essential travel or the project involves group working. However this has helped up to get on top of other work.		
<b>Going Forward:</b>	<p><u>Private Works</u></p> <p>The Streetscape team have been unable to fulfil all requests from our outside clients, due to government guidelines, there are some we have been able to fulfil, which we have received a lot of positive feedback for. We are hoping to get back on top of all our private works and start promoting our services more once we are out of lockdown and the government advise allows us to travel out of area.</p> <p><u>Congleton in Bloom Monthly volunteer events</u></p> <p>Due to the current pandemic we had to stop with our monthly litter picks due to government guidance stating that none essential volunteering was not allowed to carry on. However we are aware that some of our key and keen volunteers have carried on with some weeding, pruning and litter picking on their own or with family members. Which is a great help to our community and we appreciate all their continuous work.</p> <p><u>Tree project</u></p> <p>Our intentions were to progress a number of in-town schemes this winter. However Covid 19 has effectively stopped us in our tracks. Whilst following government guidelines we have taken legal advice in respect of the insurance cover needed for both group members and other volunteers who might have been involved with tree planting. The advice from both partner organisations (Congleton Partnership and Cheshire Wildlife Trust) is that we would not be able to proceed until government social distancing restrictions have been eased. With this we are slightly behind on our plans, but have many plans in place ready to kick in and work on once we are allowed.</p> <p><u>Route Reviews</u></p> <p>With the help of the tracking system and routes all ready in place we have been able to carry out a route optimization for the both the grounds and street cleaning vehicles. The process of improving our routes is to make us more efficiency and cost-effective. Effective route optimization will hopefully help the business maximize, completed ad hoc job requests, while incorporating many other tasks which we need to ensure we full fill; including driver schedules, available hours, total stops, job fulfilment and legal requirements</p>		

<p><b>Environment</b></p> <p><b>Finance</b></p> <p><b>Equality</b></p>	<p><u>Link Rd Roundabouts</u></p> <p>We now have 4 designs which have been sent across to Cheshire East Highways to comment on. From this we will make any necessary changes and provide costings to the relevant parties.</p> <p><u>Garden on Remembrance – Community Garden</u></p> <p>A suggested design has been put together by The volunteer gardening group : A gently curving path to be created starting just beyond the Tree of Light, moving between the two large Fatsia japonicas up towards two Beech trees, where the Arch could be built. The path could be delineated with Golden Euonymus. These would complement the low hedges of golden Euonymus already planted on the other side of the garden.</p> <p>Through the trees/arch is an area of approx. 4m x 4m. Currently this area is derelict, filled with lots of old branches, bricks, stones, ivy and shrubby elder trees and litter. two benches and planters can be sited to be sited within the 4 sqm x 4 sqm. A suggestion of a central circular paved area to be laid in light pavers (to lighten the area, which is fairly shady in summer when the mature trees surrounding this area are in leaf). [Paving maximum 1.5m diameter]. Planting could be an interesting foliage and white flowers where possible. The following suggestions would make start.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Border (approx. 3m, left through the arch) between the Cenotaph garden and Memorial garden, a mix of perennials/shrubs bearing white flowers, e.g. Veronicastrum virginium, Thalictrums, Choisya, Viburnum tinus</li> <li>• Rockery slope: add a mix of ferns, Astartia major, (v. large white, snow star, white angel); Epimedium (various white varieties); Hellebores, Lily of the Valley, Geranium macrorrhizum</li> <li>• Ivy covered stone wall: plant Hydrangea anomala petiolaris, this is a climbing Hydrangea bearing large white flowers. We will need to add wire to train the plant along and up.</li> <li>• The remaining perimeter is to the right of the new arch and could be left unfenced, i.e. open, with perhaps a few new shrubs planted to mark the Memorial garden edge.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Proposal</b></p>	<p>To receive the update report</p>



## CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

### COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

<b>COMMITTEE:</b>	Town Hall, Assets and Services		
<b>MEETING DATE AND TIME</b>	25th February 2021	<b>LOCATION</b>	Zoom
<b>REPORT FROM</b>	Town Hall Manager – Mark Worthington		
<b>AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>Agenda Item 11: Fire Service Audit - 2020</b>		
<b>Background</b>	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service carry out a Fire Safety Audit every 5 years at Congleton Town Hall, the most recent audit, and my first as Town Hall Manager, was carried out in November 2020. The Fire Safety Audit is an examination of our business' premises and relevant documents by fire safety inspectors, to ascertain how our premises are being managed with regards to fire safety.		
<b>Updates</b>	<p>Following the Fire Safety Audit carried out in November, an Action Plan was prepared by the Inspector. The Action Plan highlighted the need for a Fire Risk Assessment of the Town Hall to be carried out by an assessor with expertise in assessing heritage and listed buildings. The Action Plan specifically stated that the existing Fire Risk Assessment did not adequately address the requirements to evacuate disable persons from the upper floors or balcony, this was an area the heritage Fire Risk Assessment must address. Recommendations were to implement Refuge Points on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors where possible and investigate options available for evacuation from the balcony. Progress of the Action Plan would be reviewed by the Inspector on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021.</p> <p>A FRA was carried out by an external company who specialise in heritage and listed buildings on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020, with the completed Fire Risk Assessment being received by Congleton Town Council on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021.</p> <p>Since receiving the heritage FRA we have been working towards implementing the advice within the report regarding the Refuge Points on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors, options for evacuation of the balcony, along with other recommendations around signage, storage, and lighting.</p> <p>Locations identified within the FRA for the Refuge Points are the Bridestones Suite on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and the landing area on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (outside Chief Officers office). Each location would require an evacuation chair and two-way communication point which would need to link between each Refuge Point and a central communication point, identified in the FRA as being in the foyer entrance to the Town Hall. An external company has visited the Town Hall to discuss which evacuation chair would be best suited to the Town Hall. The Refuge Point on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor Bridestones Suite would benefit from 300H EVAC+CHAIR MK 5 MODEL (£670 + VAT see image 1) to allow evacuation down the main stairway to the ground floor. The stairway leading from the Refuge Point on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is too narrow to accommodate the above-mentioned evacuation chair so another option is the IBEX TRANSEAT (£1500 + VAT see image 2) This evacuation chair requires two people to operate and we will receive a demonstration at the Town Hall on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January to clarify if the chair is suitable for use in the narrow stairway from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Training in the use of both chairs would be provided by the supply company at a cost of £980 + VAT. Chubb, who provide our fire and intruder alarms, have visited the Town hall to provide a quote for a two-way communication system between the Refuge Points and a central communication point at a cost of £4989.06 + VAT and annual service cost of £200 + VAT(see image 3)</p>		

Access onto the balcony for wheelchair users and other mobility impaired people is via the passenger lift. In the event of a fire, when the lift would be unavailable, all escape routes involve stairs – two exits have stairs going up and one has stairs going down. Therefore, stairs must be navigated even before a safe refuge area can be reached. There is no possibility of a refuge area in the staircase as there is only a narrow landing area. Due to the prevalence of staircases, as indicated above, there are only three viable options to ensure the safe escape from the balcony, in the event of a fire, for people who are unable to climb stairs:

- Prohibit wheelchair users and people with severe mobility restriction from accessing the balcony
- Purchase a stair climber and have staff trained in its use
- Convert the passenger lift into a lift that is suitable for evacuation and complies with the requirements of BS EN 81-76.

Prohibiting disabled access to the balcony is the easiest and cheapest option, but it is not a decision that can be made on those factors alone, as it is important to consider the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Section 20 of the Act states that, *where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, the person on whom the duty is imposed must take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage*. This does not mean that we must make changes, only that the required changes have been given serious consideration. Adjustments only have to be made if it is reasonable to do so. A number of factors can be taken into account, including, how practicable the changes are (including the age and listed status of the building), the cost effectiveness (how often the balcony is occupied by a physically disabled person), the cost of making the changes and how much money and resources are available, and will a disabled person be substantially disadvantaged if changes are not made. One option to overcome the issue of evacuation from the balcony would be to purchase a stair climber (see image 4). A stair climber is a portable wheelchair lift designed to attach under most manual wheelchairs. It has a powerful motor which allows the safe transport of a passenger both up and down stairways. They cost in the region of £5,000. Staff would need to be trained in its use and it would need to be stored in a location that does not cause an obstruction but is close to where it would be required to be used.

Otis, who installed and service our hydraulic passenger lift, have visited the Town Hall to look at the feasibility of converting our existing passenger lift to an emergency evacuation lift for use during fire evacuations. It would be possible to convert our existing passenger lift to an emergency evacuation lift (approx. £8 - £10k) however, to comply with regulations an emergency evacuation lift requires there to be a fire protected lobby at the entrance to the lift. It is not possible to create a fire protected lobby in the area in front of our passenger lift therefore, converting our existing passenger lift to an emergency evacuation lift is not an option.





Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4

Following a review by the Inspector on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021, the Action Plan has been extended to 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021 as significant progress has been made. Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service appreciate the current vaccination programme at the Town Hall may cause some difficulties with the installation of the Refuge Point two-way communications system but will assess progress again on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Our local conservation officer has been contacted to discuss how these additions to the Town Hall may impact on the Grade 2\* Listing of the building.

#### Decision Request

To receive this report and agree to move forward with the recommendations to install the following:

- 1 x evacuation chair on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor Bridgestones Suite
- 1 x evacuation chair on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (if possible)
- Two-way communication points between the Refuge Points and a central communication point preferably in the foyer entrance.

To discuss the options available relating to evacuation from the balcony.