## **CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL**

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

COMMITTEE:	Council		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	7pm Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> October 2021	LOCATION Town Hall	
REPORT FROM	Chief Officer		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	20 Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy Statue		
Background			

Previous Resolutions of	MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 21st JANUARY 2021	
the Council		
	14. Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy Statue	
	<b>CE/51/2021</b> Thanked members of the Elizabeth Group for a professional presentation and	
	Resolved to approve points 1,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 as set out below 1. Agreement in principle that a statue of Elizabeth (without plinth) should be placed in the	
	centre of Bridge Street at Victoria Street junction, subject to Planning Permission and	
	ground assessment. 3. CTC to Investigate with Cheshire East Council the possibility of Cil/ S106 contributions	
	4. CTC take responsibility for Planning Permission submission	
	<ul><li>5. When appropriate CTC co-ordinate the Investigative groundwork</li><li>6. CTC to support Elizabeth's Group with promotion</li></ul>	
	7. CTC to supply and install a commemorative plaque or board	
	8. CTC to help to organise the Statue Unveiling Event	
	9. CTC to commit to maintaining the statue	
	Point 2 – the recommendation made for financial support was withdrawn from the proposal	
	and will be submitted to the Council to consider at a future date. Note CE meeting on 11/3/21, before the minutes were approved, it was agreed that point	
	one would be discussed at a future Council meeting	
	Congleton Town Council Minutes of the Council meeting 22nd April 2021	
	Conducted via Zoom	
	<b>9. CTC/52/ 2021 Resolved</b> to receive the minutes of the Community and Environment	
	Committee held on 21st January 2021.	
	<b>14 Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy statue CTC/56/ 2021</b> Resolved to request officers create	
	a criteria for the location of the statue to enable an independent review of any proposed	
	sites. This resolution was agreed following a named vote which was recorded as follows In favour of the proposed resolution Cllrs- Brown, Chadwick, Douglas, Duffy, Gartside,	
	Martin. Parry and Smith (8)	
	<b>Against the proposed resolution</b> Cllrs-Akers Smith D Amies, M Amies, S Firkin, Hemsley, Moreton, Wesley (7)	
	Abstentions Cllrs Holland, Murphy (2)– due To CEC planning committees	
	Not in attendance Cllrs Allen, Hayes, Rogan (3)	
Updates	When drawing up criteria for considering sites, conversations were held with or	
	reference made to	
	Cheshire East Highways	
	Cheshire Police	
	<ul> <li>The Artist, Hazel Reeves</li> <li>The Elizabeth Group as the commissioning group</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>The Elizabeth Group as the commissioning group</li> <li>The Cultural Economy Development Team at Cheshire East</li> </ul>	
	National Government's Strategy <u>Re-Imagining Urban Spaces to Help</u>	
	<u>Revitalise our High Streets</u> .	
	The criteria is shown in Appendix A.	

Checks were made on the utilities services and the foundations required for the statute. Note the studs for the statue do not reach the depths of any of the utilities. Once a preferred site has been agreed Highways will commission someone to scan the area for the exact location of the underground utilities.

Preliminary discussions have been held with Ansa about the potential movement of street furniture to make more space for the statue in the Town Centre if that was the desire of the community/ Council.

The Artist has completed the maquette of the statue which has been approved by Elizabeth's Group. She is now working on the life-size statue, starting with a metal armature.



The Maquette

The Armature

The Congleton Link Road has been named Wolstenholme Elmy Way. This further<br/>raised the profile of Elizabeth Elmy Wolstenholme and resulted in more than 450<br/>Congleton residents expressing approval for the road name on Facebook and over<br/>850 'Loves' or 'Likes' for Elizabeth, the road naming and the statue project.The Town Council has received several emails and letters from members of the<br/>public about this subject. The Chief Officer will give an update on the content at the<br/>meeting.Other StatuesThe Elizabeth Statue, once installed in Congleton, will become part of a national trial<br/>of statues across the country celebrating the role of women. During the research for<br/>this paper the location of some of these other statues were considered along with<br/>the consideration that was given to their installation. See Appendix B

	Cultural Economy Team at Cheshire East Council	
Comments from	The Cultural Economy Team will respond through the planning application process	
outside Bodies	at the relevant time. Should an application be proposed in respect of the statue being placed in a town centre location, the response would be supportive.	
	This would be on the basis that the artist's intention is for it to be 'amongst the people', which a town centre location would assist, maintaining the integrity of the	

piece. A response to such a planning application is also likely to note that a town centre location would provide for maximum interest and engagement with the statue and would attract residents into the town centre.

Equally, a town centre location has the potential to support tourism and visitor economy. Should an application come in for another site that would be considered on its own merits and comments made accordingly, but that is not intended to undermine the case for a town centre location. Without full details of specific locations through a planning application, it is difficult to comment in any detail at this stage, other than to say that a town centre location has clear merits in respect of the artist's intentions and its accessibility. The Cultural Economy Team is likely to be able to support such an application subject to the details submitted.

## Artist

The statue needs to be accessible to everyone. The statue should not be located where people with mobility problems cannot access it. The statue needs to be accessible 24/7 – The statue should not be located in a building or place which is closed to the public at times of the day

The statue should be able to be appreciated from all angles (360<sup>°</sup>) The statue needs to be in a location where people can interact with the statue, take photos / selfies

The artist recommends a 'interpretation' board for the statue

The Statue should be located where you might come across it (rather than seek it out)

The statue should be at ground level rather than elevated or on a plinth

**Police** - **Design out Crime officers** – consideration needs to be given to protection of the statue –ideally the Police would like to see the statue in a well-lit area, with CCTV, and good footfall..

**Highways** - wherever the statue is located, it should not impede the flow of traffic or pedestrians. Based on the options put forward all the sites should be achievable following detailed scans to allocate the exact location of any underground services.

**Ansa** – The planters can be moved and the electricity sorted – and once we are able to say what we want they will give a cost.

**National Government Strategy** draws on expertise from the Arts Council and Outdoor Arts UK in recommending art on high streets:

- "The Arts Council believes that art and culture has an important role to play in helping to bring about positive change in local communities and we look forward to supporting ventures which will help revitalise our high streets while getting people involved with the great things the arts have to offer." *Arts Council England*
- "Outdoor arts create a rationale for visitors to make extra effort to attend, bring diverse communities together and help contribute to a destination's 'sense of place'. [This strategy ]offers both the vision and the know-how to

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	improve high streets and town centres through creative solutions from
	simple design enhancements through to outdoor arts." Outdoor Arts UK
	<b>Public</b> many people have written to the Town Council about the statue location or expressed their views on social media or in the local press. This includes local and national historians and art experts. More than 95% have stated they would like the statue to be located in the centre of Congleton in Bridge Street.
	The locations have been considered in more detail taking on board the criteria
Options	under consideration for the statue. The criteria can be seen in Appendix A
	A number of locations could be made to work in Congleton. There is not a right or wrong answer. The best fit locations depends on the which criteria is given the most weighting.
	From the artist, the CEC cultural development team and the Elizabeth Group this is about locating the statue in a busy area where people will come across the statue and for it to become part of the streetscape. The Elizabeth Group, who have raised 100% of the costs of the statue, want to see the statue in the pedestrian area.
	The Police want to see consideration given to the protection of the statue –they would like to see it in a well-lit area, with CCTV, and good footfall. Across the UK damage rather than theft is more commonly reported, so be mindful that the statue is protected from vehicle movements.
	<ul> <li>Appendix C explores various options which have been raised as suggestions.</li> <li>Option 1 – Centre of Bridge Street near the planters and Congleton finger post, on near Victoria Street, where the phone box use to be.</li> <li>Option 2 – On Bridge Street at the end of the row of large planter outside Crema</li> <li>Option 3 – On the High Street outside B&amp;M</li> <li>Option 4 – In the Community Gardens</li> <li>Option 5 – On a roundabout along Wolstenholme Elmy Way</li> <li>Option 6 – On Bridge Street at the bike rack end of the planter area</li> <li>Option 7 – Moody Street Gardens</li> <li>Option 8 – Royal Bank of Scotland' area</li> <li>Option 10 – Congleton Museum</li> <li>Option 11 – Congleton Park opposite the pavilion</li> <li>Option 12 – Swan Bank end of the pedestrian area near Peacocks</li> <li>Option 13 – Elizabeth's Garden on West Street</li> </ul>
Decision needed	For Council to discuss and agree its preferred location for the Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy Statue.
Proposal	<ol> <li>For the Council to eliminate 5,7,8,9,10,12 and 13 as options that least meet the criteria for the site</li> <li>For the Town Council to discuss and agree its preferred location for the</li> </ol>
	statue.

# Criteria for siting of Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy Statue

Category	Criterion	
Artist's	Aspect – 'Among the people'	
intention		
	Accessible to all, can stop to have a chat	
	Able to walk round	
	Ground level, no plinth	
	Good lighting to enhance appearance	
Statue Donors	Feedback by email, letter or on SM posts	
Heritage/Art	Relevance to Elizabeth	
	Congleton Historical Context	
	Views of national statue/art experts	
	Close to other relevant historical sites	
	National significance - role as part of trail of women's statues	
Tourism/Trade	rade Easy to find for non-residents	
	Accessibility from Elizabeth's Heritage Trail	
	Close to cafes and shops to draw trade	
	Somewhere to sit close by	
	Likelihood of photos identifying Congleton	
	High footfall area – will 'promote itself'	
	Opinions received from outside Congleton	
	Supporting Town Centre regeneration	
Education	Practical/safe to stand around with a class or group	
	Space nearby for plaque or information board	
	Opportunity for people who don't know about Elizabeth to 'discover' her	
	and learn more	
	Noise – quiet enough to teach and discuss	
Health & Safety	Don't impede pedestrian flow	
	Risk of statue being hit by a vehicle	
	Safe for tour group to stand around and discuss	
	Ability to place ground warnings (corduroy paving) for people with sight-	
	impairments	
Practical	Suitable ground – firm, not damp	
	Absence of utilities – ability to drill and put steel posts in	
	Ability to access for installation	
	Access for cleaning	
Crime	CCTV area	
	Reduce likelihood of theft	
	Reduce likelihood of criminal damage	
Public opinion	General evidence from comments in press and social media, letters to	
	councillors and Elizabeth's Group	

## Appendix B :

#### Similar statues

There are a number of suffragette statues in towns and cities across England, below are four recent statues to be unveiled and their proximity to the town hall.

## Emily Wilding Davison – Unveiled Jun 2021 (Epsom marketplace)

Emily Wilding Davison was killed when she stepped into the racetrack at the Epsom Derby in 1913. The statue is located just round the corner from the Town Hall in a large pedestrianised area. As shown in the picture of her, there is a lot of open space around the statue for group photos to be taken.



#### Emily Wilding Davison – Unveiled Sept 2018

Emily Wilding Davison, from Morpeth, was killed when she stepped into the racetrack at the Epsom Derby in 1913. Northumberland County Council commissioned the statue which was unveiled in the town's Carlisle Park just under half a mile from the town centre.

The leader of the Northumberland County Council who is also the cabinet member for Culture, Creative and Rural said that they used a place where the statue would be seen most and which would also encourage more people to enjoy the surroundings of the park, other locations were considered but they wanted it to be a location where it couldn't get knocked over. As shown in the picture of her, there is a lot of open space around the statue for group photos to be taken, the location also provides a nice back drop for pictures.





More information can be found on the Emily Wilding website

### Emmeline Pankhurst – Unveiled Dec 2018

The statue of Emmeline Pankhurst is a bronze sculpture in St Peter's Square, Manchester, depicting Emmeline Pankhurst.

As shown in the picture of her, there is a lot of open space around the statue for people to admire the statue and for group photos to be taken. The statue has a Portland stone circle around it which provides seating and protection from vehicles



#### Alice Hawkins – Unveiled Feb 2018

The statue of Alice Hawkins is 7 feet tall made from bronze which stands on a 4-foot granite plinth erected near to the spot Hawkins would have stood when she addressed the public on the topic of women's suffrage. It portrays Hawkins speaking and gesturing with her right arm raised.

As shown in the picture of her, there is a lot of open space around the statue for people to admire the statue. The statue is located in a pedestrianised area which is separate from vehicles by lamp posts and bollards.



### The Elizabeth Elmy Trail

The Elizabeth Elmy Trail is a 4.5 mile walk around Congleton which passes places which are connected to Elizabeth and her husband Ben. Several of the options listed in this paper appear on the route of the trail. On page two of the document there is a detail explanation of the locations and their link to Elizabeth.



Below is the list of the 13 sites that have been given further consideration against the criteria and also discussed with the Police, Highways, Cultural Team at Cheshire East. All sites are achievable. Some are more desirable that others. Officers recommend that based on the criteria that councillors may wish to eliminate 5,7,8,9,10,12 and 13 as options that least meet the criteria for the site

Option 1 – Centre of Bridge Street on the edge of the square where it meets Victoria Street, where the phone box once stood.

This is to locate the statue where the former telephone box was located in the centre of Bridge Street close to the planters or to relocate the end planter to make more space for the statue.

This location has a number of underground services crossing it, the services are considerably deeper than the recommended studs required to fix Elizabeth. There is an option to move the first planter which will create even more space.

This is the Elizabeth's group, the artist and the Culture Team at Cheshire East's preferred option.



### Benefits –

- This location has high footfall in the town centre
- It's a town centre location
- The area is covered by CCTV
- This location has the necessary space to allow people to move around the statue
- This location could draw people into the centre to town
- There is space for the statue and 'interpretation' board
- It is next to the Congleton Finger post which helps to place the statue in photos

Disbenefits -

• This location is not on the Elizabeth Elmy trail – although close to the trail which

includes Moody Street.

• Traffic is allowed on the pedestrian area for loading and unloading so attention needs to be paid to making sure statue is not in the line of any rogue vehicle.

Considerations -

• There are underground utilities in this area which although deeper than the statue's foundations are an issue that professional installers must work around. (Appendix E)

# Option 2 – On Bridge Street at the end of the row of large planter outside Crema

This is to locate the statue outside Crema where the planters are located. Locating the statue in this location would affect the amount of seating Crema and Chatwins could have outside as this space would be needed for 'free space' around the statue. This part of Bridge Street is the narrowest part of the street and frequently has queues of people waiting to go into food shops. To work one of the bike racks would need to be moved.

This location had a number of underground services crossing it which the installers would need to be mindful of.



Just to the left of this picture is Costa Coffee who also have tables on the street.

Benefits –

- This location has the highest footfall in the town centre
- It's a town centre location
- This location could draw people into the centre of town

- This location is a 'bottle neck' in Bridge Street
- A number of cafes have outside seating areas in this part of Bridge Street as well as four big planters, two benches and bike racks

- This location could affect the outdoor seating used by Crema and Chatwins
- This location is close but not immediately on the Elizabeth Elmy trail
- Moving around the statue could disturb people enjoying alfresco dining
- It is not immediately obvious where an 'interpretation' board would be sited Considerations -
  - There will be a cost to moving the planters as there is an electricity power box situated next to one.
  - There are underground utilities in the area

# Option 3 – On the High Street outside the empty B&M

This option is to locate the statue outside the former B&M, this may require altering the position of the bench. This area has quite high footfall as the bus station is located just round the corner and the pelican crossing exits next to the letter box in the picture, however there is considerable vehicle noise.



Benefits -

- The location is covered by CCTV
- It would be in a location where there could be space around it for groups to study the sculpture
- It's a naturally busy location as there is a pelican crossed close by
- It would be located on the route of the Elizabeth Elmy trail
- There is space for the statue and 'interpretation' board

Disbenefits -

• Due to the location being near a pelican crossing there would be road noise and pollution from cars and buses

• It would be located a short distance from a night club so might attract 'attention' in the evening

Considerations -

• Not many of the services maps covers this location, however the power cables look to run this side of the bollards pictured above.

# **Option 4 – Locate the statue in the Community Gardens**

Within the Community Gardens there are several locations where the statue could be located such as in the centre of the grass in the picture below, at the end of the left-hand branch of the path in the picture below or in the grass triangle to the top right of the picture.



Benefits –

- It is close to the Elizabeth Elmy trail
- There is plenty of space around it so groups can stand back and paint / draw.
- There is no risk of vehicle damage
- The location is covered by CCTV
- A safe area for children
- There would be space for the statue and the 'interpretation' board

- The location is not as prominent and doesn't meet the artist brief of amongst the people in a town centre location.
- The artist intent is for the statue to be a piece of street art, rather than in a garden
- People would have to seek out the statue
- The area is used for people to exercise their dogs and for children to play.

## Option 5 – Locate the statue on one of the roundabouts on the Wolstenholme Elmy Way

This option is to locate the statue on one of the roundabouts on the new link road where it would be seen by passing motorists. Locating the statue on a roundabout would not meet the location criteria and would also put people in danger. For these reasons this option is discounted.

Benefits –

• Visible and definite link to Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy through the road name.

Disbenefits -

- People would be unable to get close to the statue
- People might get injured when crossing the road attempting to see the statue
- Highly unlikely Cheshire East would support the planning application

## **Option 6 – Cycle Rack end of the Planters on Bridge Street .**

This option is to rearrange some of the of the street furniture and removal of two of the bike stands and moving the planters out towards the edge of the road to make more room for the pavement cafes culture

This could create an area near Max Spielman's that would eliminate the risk of the statue being hit by a vehicle (greatest risk) and would be out of any pedestrian flow so should stop that risk too.

However this removes any 'pavement' space to step onto if a vehicle were using the pedestrian area for loading/unloading or to cut through to Swan Bank rather than going around via Mountbatten Way.

A budget would also need to be found to do the work and for any materials which might be needed.



Benefits –

• This location has the highest footfall in the town centre

- It's a town centre location
- This location would draw people into the town centre

Disbenefits -

- A number of cafes have outside seating areas in this part of Bridge Street as well as four big planters, two benches and bike racks
- This location could affect the amount of outdoor seating for Al fresco use
- This location is not on the immediate Elizabeth Elmy trail although close by
- There might not be space for the statue and the 'interpretation' board
- Cost for completing the work
- It may be expensive to move the planters as there is an electricity power box situated next to one, and power cables which supply power to the lights in the planters.

Considerations -

• There is an underground utilities in the area which the installer would need to be mindful of.

# **Option 7 – Moody Street Gardens**

The Moody Street Garden is just down the road from Moody Hall which is where Elizabeth moved her school to in 1867. During 2017 the Partnership completed a project to make the Gardens more accessible (DDA compliant) including new benches and raised beds.



Benefits -

- The Elizabeth Elmy trail passes the location
- The Garden is a safe location for groups of people to congregate
- The location is close to the centre of Congleton

- This location does not have the necessary space to allow people to move around the statue
- No CCTV
- Local schools use this garden for nature activities
- The artist intent is for the statue to be a piece of street art, so not to be located in a garden
- People would have to seek out the statue

# Option 8 – Area near Higher Ground Café /former Royal Bank of Scotland area

This option is to locate the statue on the raised platform outside the former Royal Bank of Scotland near the railings.

This location had a number of underground power cables crossing it, finding a location which does not affect them could be difficult.



## Benefits –

- The Elizabeth Elmy trail passes the location
- There is a CCTV camera which overlooks this area
- It could not be accidentally driven into by a vehicle
- This location has the necessary space to allow people to move around the statue, however it would be on different levels

- This site is used for the Annual Christmas Tree and Easter Service.
- The is an application for a café to have an outside seating area on the raised area which hinder access to the statue.
- The 4 ft 11 inch statue would be partially hidden by the railings
- The Artist intention is to interact with people on their level, not elevated and preaching.
- It would be located a short distance from a night club so might attract 'attention' in the evening

#### Considerations -

• This location has underground power cables running across the front of the raised platform and across the platform itself

### Option 9 – Locate in the foyer of the Town Hall

This option is to locate the statue in the foyer of the Town Hall. In 1875 Ben Elmy asked Annie Besant to speak in the Town Hall, and in 1892 Ben asked a parliamentary candidate if he would be in favour of granting women the vote. Locating the statue in the Town Hall would be protected from the weather and the possibility of vandalism, it would only be accessible when the Town Hall is open. For this reason this option recommend discounted.

Benefits –

- Would be protected from vandalism and damage
- The Elizabeth Elmy trail passes the front of the Town Hall
- There is a connection to Elizabeth

## Disbenefits –

- It would only be accessible when the Town Hall is open
- It wouldn't be in a location where you could stand back and admire it
- It could impede access to the Town Hall, the Information Centre and the Cotton Club.
- May impact on functionality of the Town Hall by limiting access for large items such as hospital beds for blood donation sessions into the Town Hall.

## **Option 10 – Locate in the Congleton Museum**

This option is to locate the statue in the museum, while it would be protected from the weather and the possibility of vandalism, it would only be accessible when the museum is open. For this reason this option is discounted. Benefits –

- Would be protected from risk of vandalism and damage
- It could draw people into the museum

- It would only be accessible when the museum is open
- It wouldn't be in a location where you could stand back and admire it
- Completely against the aims and objectives of the artist and commissioning group.

# Option 11 – Located in Congleton Park opposite the pavilion

This option is to locate the statue in the park opposite the pavilion. This location has the most amount of free space around than any other option, this could allow for benches to be located facing the statue or a Portland stone seating ring around the statue similar to the Manchester statue. Although more funding would need to be raised for this. There is also space for an information board.

This location has a connection to Elizabeth, in 1886 Ben Elmy donated money to the park pavilion fund which open in 1887 for the Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. Ben Elmy also presented prizes at a sporting event at the park held in 1887.



### Benefits –

- The Elizabeth Elmy trail passes the location
- Elizabeth had a connection with the Pavilion
- There is a CCTV camera which overlooks this area
- It could not be accidentally driven into by a vehicle
- There is space for an information board
- The park is a safe location for groups of people to congregate

- The location is not in the centre of Congleton
- Not bring people into the town centre
- The artist intent is for the statue to be a piece of street art that people interact with so not to be located in a garden

- People would have to seek out the statue
- No discussions have taken place with Friends of Congleton Park or Cheshire East on this option. People are not encouraged to walk on the grass around the formal planting and putting a statue her would encourage and likely to create unofficial paths to it.

## Option 12 – Peacocks end of the Pedestrian area

This option is to locate the statue at the far end of the pedestrian area, where it meets West Street. West Street was where the Co-operative Society Building stood where Elizabeth gave talks in 1893.

This location had a lot of street furniture already and finding a suitable site that would not impede the normal flow of pedestrians is difficult.



Benefits –

- The Elizabeth Elmy trail passes the location
- There is a CCTV camera which overlooks this area
- There are already benches

- It could be accidentally driven into by a vehicle
- There are a lot of services which run under this area
- It would be located a short distance from several pubs so might attract unwanted 'attention' in the evening

• There is currently quite a lot of existing items of street furniture

Considerations -

• Not all of the underground services maps cover this location, however the one map that covers this location shows three underground power cables cross the site at different points.

#### Option 13 - Elizabeth's Garden

## West Road Congleton



Benefits –

- The statue would be part of an already established location dedicated to Elizabeth
- It could not be accidentally driven into by a vehicle
- There is a lot of vehicular traffic passing along the A34
- The location is next to a cycle lane, footpath and children's play park.

- The Elizabeth Elmy trail does not pass the location
- There is no CCTV camera which overlooks this area
- This location is not in the town centre
- This location has little footfall compared to other options
- There might not be space for the statue and the 'interpretation' board
- The artist intent is for the statue to be a piece of street art, so not to be located in a garden
- People would have to seek out the statue