

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Planning Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	14 th October 2021 7.00pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall
REPORT FROM	Councillor Robert Douglas		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	13 Tree Preservation Orders		
Background	<p>Trees are great allies in the fight against the cruel effects of climate change by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Naturally absorbing CO₂, a key greenhouse gas, through the process of photosynthesis. Trees then release oxygen which helps us all to breathe.• Cooling the temperature in cities and dissipating wind speeds.• Reducing the adverse impact of heavy rains and soil erosion.• Providing natural habitat for our wildlife including insects, birds, bats and squirrels. Fruits from our trees also provide food for our wildlife. <p>A Tree Group has been established in Congleton with the aim of planting 30,000 trees in the Congleton area over a five-year period. By August 2021, 3,521 trees, 2,153 hedgerow plants and 2,999 shrubs have already been planted.</p> <p>It is also crucial to preserve our existing trees and it is better to secure their protection while trees are healthy and under no threat of removal.</p> <p>Congleton Town Council wishes to actively encourage our residents to protect our trees by obtaining a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) which protect all types of trees. Anyone can apply for a TPO and importantly, the applicant does not have to own the land where the tree is situated. There is no charge to apply for a TPO.</p> <p>Anyone who thinks that a tree or trees should be considered for a TPO, should contact their Local Planning Authority. To apply for a TPO in Cheshire East, an E-mail should be sent to PlanningTrees@cheshireeast.gov.uk with details of the location of the tree(s) and why it/they should be considered. The Local Planning Authority will determine whether a TPO should be issued. If a TPO is issued and there are no objections, the TPO will become permanent. If there are objections, an appeals process will take place.</p> <p>TPOs make it an offence to cut down, uproot, top, lop, wilfully damage or wilfully destroy a protected tree without the consent of the Local Planning Authority. There are some exceptions such as urgent action required if the tree is causing safety concerns. Serious penalties can be imposed on anyone who commits an act in contravention of a TPO.</p>		

	<p>There are currently 76 designated Conservation Areas in Cheshire East of which three are in Congleton – Lawton Street/Moody Street, Park Lane, West Street.</p> <p>Anyone proposing to cut down or carry out work to a tree in a Conservation Area, which has a trunk measuring in excess of 75 millimetres in diameter at a height of 1.5 metres above ground level is required to give the Local Authority six weeks prior notice of their intent to carry out the work. The Local Authority then has the opportunity to give consideration to the tree’s contribution to the character and amenity of the area and if necessary, make a Tree Preservation Order to protect it.</p> <p>Additional information about TPOs can be found on the Cheshire East website via : https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment/heritage_natural_environment/trees,_woodlands_and_hedges/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas.aspx</p>
Financial Considerations	There are no financial implications for the Council.
Environmental Considerations	Given trees are great allies in the fight against the cruel effects of climate change, there will be significant benefits for our environment if the number of trees within the Congleton boundary protected by a TPO increases significantly.
Equality Considerations	There is no inequality as anyone with a computer or who has a relative or friend with a computer can apply for a TPO by sending an E-mail to Cheshire East Council.
Proposal	Town Councillors and Officers to actively encourage residents to apply for Tree Preservation Orders via all means including greater prominence given to TPOs on the Council’s website, in Bear Necessities, on the Council’s Facebook pages, newspaper articles/letters and on other social media outlets.