

**CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

<b>COMMITTEE:</b>	<b>Community &amp; Environment</b>		
<b>MEETING DATE AND TIME</b>	<b>22<sup>nd</sup> September 7.00pm</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>Town Hall</b>
<b>REPORT FROM</b>	<b>Jackie MacArthur – Deputy Chief Officer - Communities and Environment</b>		
<b>AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>15 Cost of Living Crisis</b>		
<b>Background</b>	<p>Over the past few weeks, the soaring price of both food and energy costs has created concern for many residents and businesses. As we head into the autumn and winter months the consequences of these increased costs are likely to have a greater impact.</p> <p>Recognising that these rising costs are likely to have a big impact on the quality of life within our community, the various groups which worked together during the COVID-19 crisis (Congleton Town Council, Cheshire East Council, Plus Dane, Congleton Partnership, Church Groups, Community Groups, Doctors Surgeries, Congleton Community Projects and Charities) have reformed as <i>Congleton Cares - Cost of Living</i>.</p> <p>The first virtual meeting was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September and the next is planned for the 15<sup>th</sup> of September. Verbal reports from these meetings will be given to the Community and Environment Committee.</p>		
<b>Groups Remit</b>	<p>National solutions are going to be needed to tackle the financial crisis. The group will not be able to pay anyone's bills. However, by working together and pulling resources and knowledge, the group hopes to help alleviate some of the concerns and be better placed to advise and guide residents on the help that is available. The group is considering five main areas:</p> <p><b>FOOD</b> – including the social supermarket, Congleton Food Bank, Big Heart Meal delivery, luncheon clubs and the Food and Friendship sessions at the Town Hall.</p> <p><b>HEATING</b> – pulling together community spaces and places where people can go for a warm welcome as well as physical warmth.</p> <p><b>MENTAL HEALTH</b> – financial worries can be a big contributor to poor mental health.</p> <p><b>FUNDING</b> – by working together can we unlock any grant money or other benefits to help our residents.</p> <p><b>COMMUNICATIONS and ADVICE</b> – getting the messages out – ways to communicate and help residents.</p>		

	<p>A Cost of Living Impact survey was written and issued on the 8<sup>th</sup> September. The ability to promote this survey during the National Period of Mourning has been limited. Responses received by the 21<sup>st</sup> September will be summarised and reported at the Community and Environment Committee meeting.</p> <p>The Cost of Living Impact Survey was geared at residents. However, the rising cost of energy, products, transport and wages coupled with many residents having less money to spend on any non-essential items is a huge concern for many businesses in town. Especially following a couple of difficult years trading through COVID-19.</p>
<b>Financial Implications</b>	It is not clear at this stage what financial support the Town Council may need to make available. The luncheon clubs, Social Supermarket and Food Bank are likely to come under additional pressure, especially if regular donators feel that they are less able to donate. Costs of marketing materials to communicate messages can be met from the Community Development Marketing budget.
<b>Environmental Implications</b>	The Environmental Impact of any project will need to be measured against the benefits of the project.
<b>Equality and Diversity Impact</b>	The people with least in our community are most likely to be impacted by this Cost of Living Crisis.
<b>PROPOSALS</b>	That this report is noted and that Councillors and Officers support actions developed by Congleton Cares to benefit residents in need. Where funding is needed, it will be subject to the usual Financial Regulations.