



Congleton Town Council

Historic market town

Chief Officer: **David McGifford**

22 June 2023

Dear Councillor,

Community Committee – Thursday 29 June 2023

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Communities Committee to be held at Congleton Town Hall on **Thursday 29 June 2023 at 7.00 pm**.

- **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

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

Members are reminded of the necessity to give apologies in advance of the meeting and to give reasons for absence.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings (enclosed)

To approve and sign the [minutes of the Community and Environment Committee held on 16 February 2023](#) as a correct record. Note these will also go to the first Environment Committee on the 13th July.

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. Questions from Members of the Public

There will be 15 minutes at each meeting to receive any questions from Members of the Public, either verbally at the meeting, including those which have been received in writing 7 days prior to the meeting.

5. Urgent Items

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

6. Safer Streets - Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Update (Verbal Update)

To receive and consider a presentation from Superintendent Claire Jesson on the Cheshire East Safer Streets Strategy

7. Cheshire Police (enclosed)

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

8. Updates from Previous Community and Environment Committee (enclosed)

To receive updates from the Community and Environment Committee held on the 16th February and outstanding items.

9. Terms of Reference from Working Groups feeding into this Committee (enclosed)

- a) Community Safety Working Group
- b) Health and Wellbeing Working Group

- c) White Ribbon Working Group
- d) Integrated Transport Working Group

10. Request from Congleton Sustainable Travel Group (enclosed)

To consider a request for help from the Congleton Sustainable Travel Group to resolve two areas which are causing issues for non-standard bikes, buggies and wheelchairs.

11. Understanding Town Centre Access Issues (enclosed)

To consider an opportunity for Councillors accept a challenge to experience the Town Centre as experienced by those with physical or visual challenges and to draw up a list of improvements needed.

12. Update on Potential Wellbeing Hub for Congleton (enclosed)

To receive a report highlighting progress on a cross-organisation project to create a well-being hub in Worrall Street.

13. Congleton Town Council Website Update (enclosed)

To approve setting up a small working group to work on the brief for a revamped website for the Town Council.

14. Town Crier Role for Congleton (enclosed)

To consider and approve a scheme to audition for a Congleton Town Crier.

- a. Volunteer Agreement

15. Bear Necessities Newsletter (enclosed)

To consider alternative formats for the Town Council's newsletters and make a recommendation.

16. Beer and Gin Festival (verbal update)

To receive a verbal update on the progress of this festival in October.

To: Members of the Community Committee
CLrs: Kay Wesley (Chair), Emma Hall (Vice Chair)
David Brown, Mark Edwardson, Suzy Firkin, Arabella Holland, Sally Holland, Susan Mead, Shaun Radcliffe, Glen Williams.

Ex Officio: Cllr Rob Moreton (Mayor)
Other members of the Council for Information, Police, Honorary Burgess (5), Press (3), Congleton Library, Congleton Information Centre.

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY 2023

Please Note – These are draft minutes and will not be ratified until the next meeting of this Committee

For the papers discussed at the meeting, please see the [Meeting Agenda of the Community & Environment Committee 16th February 2023](#)

PRESENT:

Committee members:

Cllr Kay Wesley (Chair)

Cllr Suzy Firkin

Cllr Robert Hemsley

Cllr Sally Ann Holland

Cllr Amanda Martin

Cllr Mark Rogan

Ex Officio Members: Cllr Margaret Gartside (Mayor) and Cllr Rob Moreton (Deputy Mayor)

Non-Committee Member: Cllr Suzie Akers Smith

Also present: Congleton Town Council Officers: David McGifford - Chief Officer and Jackie MacArthur - Communities and Marketing Manager and Deputy Chief Officer
Five members of the public. One member of the press

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Committee Members Cllr Jean Parry, Cllrs Dawn Allen and Cllr Denis Murphy

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

CE/44/2223 Resolved to approve the [minutes of the Community & Environment Committee held on 3rd November 2023 as a correct record.](#)

Change of Order to the Agenda

CE/45/2223 Resolved to note that item 6 will be postponed due to the speaker not being able to attend and agreed that item 17 would be taken after item 7.

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Rob Moreton, Sally Ann Holland and Suzie Akers Smith declared a non-pecuniary interest on matters relating to Cheshire East Council.

4. Questions from Members of the Public

Questions were received from:

- Val Scaresbrook on behalf of the Climate Action Group Sustainable Travel Group about the condition of the Town Centre
- Sharon Neild re actions to protect the Swans at Astbury Mere and an update following the dog attack on a swan last year. [Full questions and Answers here.](#)

5. Urgent Items

No items were raised

6. Safer Streets – Violence Against Women and Girls Update

This item was postponed to a future meeting due to the presenter not being able to make the meeting.

7. Cheshire Police

Sergeant John Roberts gave a verbal update on Policing, see Appendix 1.

17. Case for Dog Agility Site in Congleton

Jack Boyce and Cllr Sally Ann Holland made a short presentation on the benefits of setting up a dog agility area within Congleton. This would use funds available from Cheshire East Council. **CE45/2223 Resolved** in principle the committee would support the idea, but would need a more detailed plan before making any commitment to any scheme.

8. Updates from Previous Community and Environment Committee

CE/46/2223 Resolved to receive updates from the Community and Environment Committee held on 3rd November 2022. This included: Chatty Benches, 750 round-up, Biodiversity Plan update, Ukraine Christmas party, Ukraine Hosts meeting, Tree Planting Update and Bromley Farm Hub.

Action: To check whether a Chatty Bench should have been added to the Bee Garden

Action: To look into a request to sponsor a bench in the town

9. Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group

CE/ 47/ 2223 resolved to accept the notes of the Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group [3rd November](#) 2022 and [12th January](#) 2023

10. Congleton Community Safety Charter update

The committee received a brief verbal update on the progress being made on the Community Safety Charter. The committee was pleased to learn that the ASB Working Group has been successful in obtaining £680 towards work in this area.

Actions: Add the Community Safety Charter to the website
Resend the email to Councillors on Bystander Training

11. Congleton Green Working Group

CE/48/2223 resolved to receive the notes of the Congleton Green Working Group held on [December 1](#) 2022 and the Green Calendar which evolved from the Wider Green Marketing Meeting held on January 18. The group received a verbal update from the working group held on February 16 2022

Action: Notes of February 16 2023 to next meeting

12. Low Mow Town

The committee noted a report about Congleton Town Council's plans to evolve into a Low Mow Town, which following actions agreed upon at the Town Hall and Assets Committee.

13. Congleton in Bloom Working Group

CE/49/2223 resolved to receive the minutes of the Congleton in Bloom Working Group from [November 4 2022](#) , [December 13 2022](#) and [January 20 2023](#) .

14. Integrated Transport Working Group

CE/50/2223 resolved to receive the minutes of the Integrated Transport Working Group held on [November 17 2022](#) and to receive a short report from the Chair.

15. White Ribbon Update

CE/51/2223 resolved to accept the recommendations by the White Ribbon Working Group to:

- Run a White Ribbon public awareness session in the Town Hall during June/July 2023.
- Organise a face-to-face Active Bystander session for officers and councillors

16. Congleton Christmas Lights

CE/52/2223 resolved to ask officers to produce a detailed plan for Council to consider.

- A replacement for the Merry Christmas Congleton sign at the bottom of Moody Street
- Replacement for the two cross street banners used on Swan Bank
- Replacements for the two lamp post banners on Mill Street
- Replacements for the six lamp post banners on West Street
- Replacement for the cross street banner in Lawton Street
- Consider some festive lighting for the Market Area

18. Congleton Cares – survey two update

The Committee received a short update on the interim results of the second Congleton Cares Survey. **Action:** Numbers of respondents were low so promote the survey to get a more representative view.

19 Events plans for 2023

The committee noted a report highlighting the key events for the town in 2023.

**Cllr Kay Wesley
(Chair)**

APPENDIX 1 - UPDATE FROM CHESHIRE POLICE - ITEM 7

Police Overview:

The overall incidents logged for the Town are slightly down from 660 in 2022 to 600 this year.

Anti-social Behaviour:

- 22 ASB incidents have been reported this year to date for Congleton, compared to 36 for the same period in 2022.

The overall Force Objective remains the same with the priority given to Violence against Women and Girls. During the review of figures for the ASB working group in January, for the period of November to January, Domestic Violence incidents were down from 101 during the same period to 89 for our current period. Arrests were up from 16 to 23.

The Force also has one of the best charge rates in the country for Domestic Violence offences. There were 10 reported sexual offences (3 x from schools). One of which was of significant local public interest. A suspect was arrested within a few hours. This is an on-going investigation. The suspect was charged and remanded for this matter. PC Andy CORNELL will be working with the local schools over the coming weeks and months to deliver preventative awareness.

Burglary :-

There have been 3 reported Residential Burglaries for 2023 this is compared to 12 during the same period last year. We now have a team of 2 x Sgts and 8 x DC's who are based at Congleton to look at Burglary for Cheshire East. This has only started this week.

Drugs:-

As with all areas, there are issues within Congleton with Drugs and Drug dealing, however, compared to neighbouring towns we perform very well, we have been working with our undercover proactive teams to disrupt the supply of drugs in our town, going forward we are looking to target street dealers, this will be in the form of visible patrols in key locations where there has been specific intelligence/information around dealing. As always with Drugs my main ask is we encourage our community to feed that information either via you as Councillors or through Crime Stoppers or directly to the Police.

PCSOs:-

We have 3 PCSOs for Congleton. I am pleased to report that Hannah THOMPSON has been successful in her application to become a Police Constable with Cheshire Police. She will be leaving us in the next few weeks. At this time there are no plans to replace her.

The PCSO Team's focus is on Primary School engagement and Parking with the New PCSO for the Area Carole HOLMES taking the lead on the engagement with the Schools. Speed enforcement is undertaken by the PCSO's on their respective areas.

Scooters:-

I am aware that E- SCOOTERS used by youths are and can be an issue. The law around these is not clear, we are confident that we can seize scooters using 2 legislation Section 59 Warnings and for

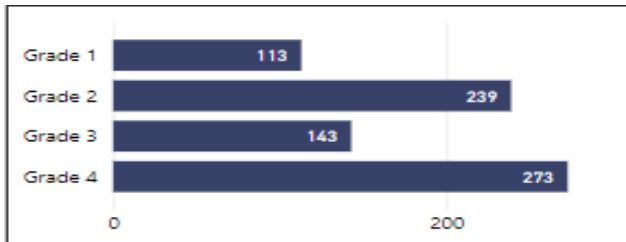
No Insurance. If you see anyone riding around or confident, we know where they are coming from please let me know and the team will look into getting them off our streets.

Congleton Police Report – for Community Committee

This report provides Congleton Town Council with key stats and figures for the period between 27/03/2023 – 26/05/2023. It will also give the figures for the same period for 2022 for comparison.

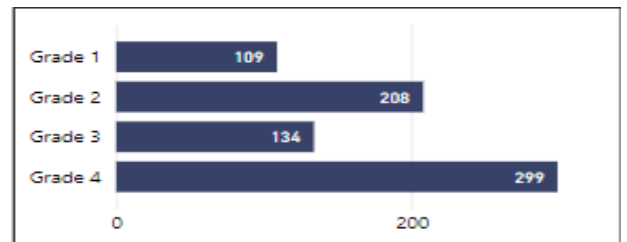
Total Reported Incidents for Congleton:-

2023



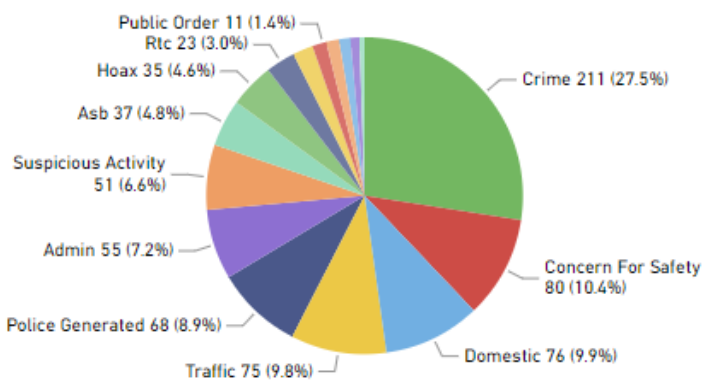
Opening Group	No. of Incidents
Admin	55
Advice	4
Alarms	7
Asb	37
Concern For Safety	80
Crime	211
Domestic	76
Hoax	35
Misper	16
Other	10
Police Generated	68
Public Order	11
Rtc	23
Sudden Death	9
Suspicious Activity	51
Traffic	75
Total	768

2022

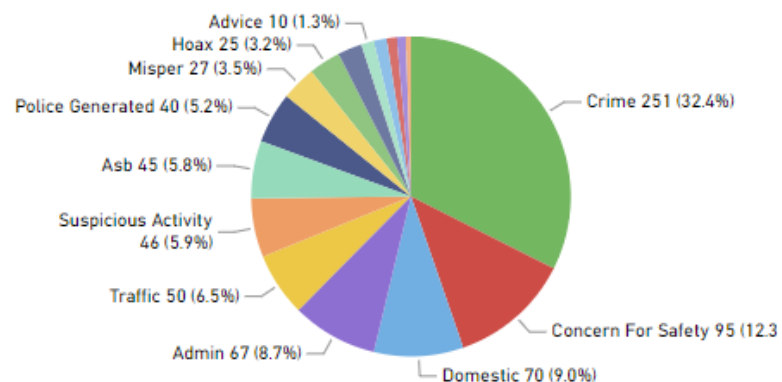


Opening Group	No. of Incidents
Admin	67
Advice	10
Alarms	7
Asb	45
Concern For Safety	95
Crime	251
Domestic	70
Hoax	25
Misper	27
Other	4
Police Generated	40
Public Order	8
Rtc	19
Sudden Death	10
Suspicious Activity	46
Traffic	50
Total	774

2023



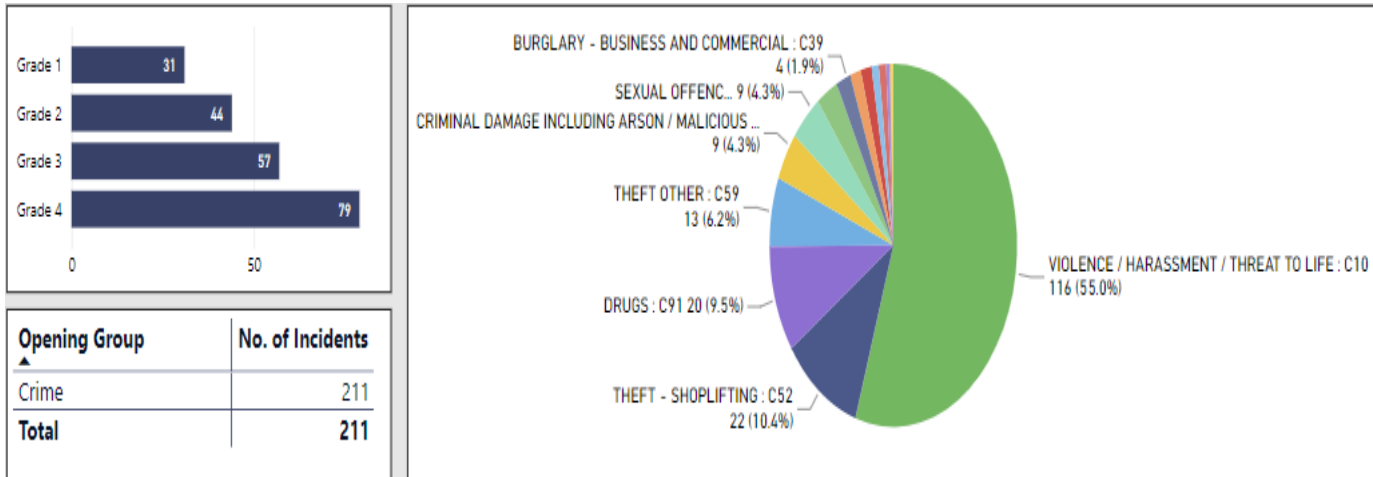
2022



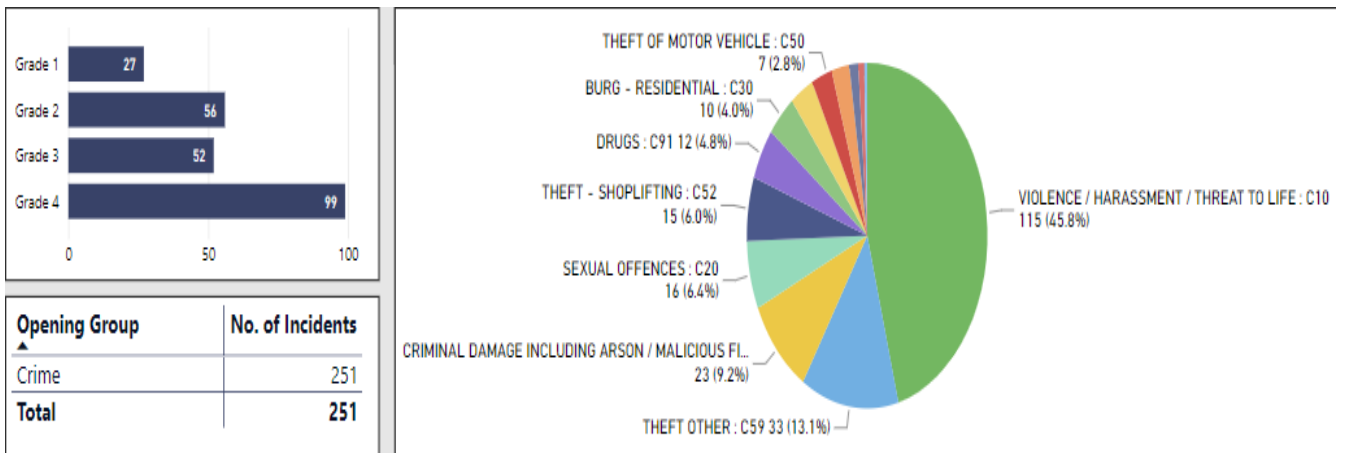
Overall the reporting volume for the town is similar to the previous year. The report will break down crime categories further.

Breakdown of Crime Category:-

2023 211 incidents logged in this category the breakdown is:-



2022 251 incidents logged in this category the breakdown is:-



Sexual Offences:-

2022 Saw 16 Sexual offences recorded, in 2023 there has been a decrease to 9 which in percentage terms is significant. 4 of these incidents were Reported by Congleton High School reporting incidents around their students. All other incidents are **not** linked to Congleton’s Nighttime Economy.

Domestic Violence:-

From 27/03/2023 - 26/05/2023 There have been 76 Domestic Incidents in Congleton this has resulted in

During the same period last year, there were 70 incidents. Arrest data for these is not accurate as it also counts in arrests for other areas also.

Burglary Dwelling/Vehicle Thefts:-

This period in 2023 in Congleton We have had:-

13 – Thefts

5 – Burglary Dwellings

4 – Theft of Motor Vehicles

1 – Robbery

1 – Theft from Motor Vehicle

In 2022 This was :-

33 – Thefts

9 – Theft From Motor Vehicles

6 – Burglary Dwellings

5 – Theft of Motor Vehicles

ASB

In 2023 we have had 37 ASB incidents reported, compared to 45 ASB incidents reported during the same time last year. The team continue to focus on areas ensuring we patrol regularly, engaging and challenging any unacceptable behaviours. Ensuring that we keep a focus on keeping Congleton Safe and making sure residents feel safe.

The repeat locations and focus remain to be; Bromley Park and Congleton Park, these will be the continued focus during the lighter evenings.

Congleton Beat Team

The Congleton Team is now as follows:-

Beat Sergeant John Roberts

Congleton East:-

PC 4776 Helen WEEKS

PCSO 23440 Karen LINTON

Town Centre:-

PC 3842 Helen HOOD

Congleton West:-

PC 30501 Anna JENKINSON

PCSO 34153 Carol HOLMES

**CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	29 June 20223 7.00pm	LOCATION	Town Hall, Bridestones
REPORT FROM	Jackie MacArthur, Communities and Marketing Manager & DCO		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	8. Updates Paper		
Background	<p>This paper gives members an update on actions from items discussed at the previous Community and Environment Committee. These items do not need a full paper and are either ongoing issues or confirmation of completion or resolution.</p> <p>The paper is for noting and is an opportunity to feedback on issues from the previous committee(s). Community is a new committee and was formed from the Community and Environment Committee. Any actions from the February Community and Environment Committee meeting relating to environmental issues will be dealt with via the Environment Committee on the 13th July 2023.</p>		
Updates	<p>CE45/2223 Resolved in principle the committee would support the idea of a dog agility area within Congleton, but would need a more detailed plan before making any commitment to any scheme. This action is still pending awaiting further information from CEC on possible funding available for such a project.</p> <p>Community Safety Charter – there were two actions. One involved the induction of new councillors into the purpose of the charter, which still needs to be arranged. The other is adding the Community Safety Charter to the website which is scheduled to happen before the Community Meeting in June.</p> <p>CE/51/2223 resolved to accept the recommendations by the White Ribbon Working Group to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Run a White Ribbon public awareness session in the Town Hall during June/July 2023 b) Organise a face-to-face Active Bystander session for officers and councillors - which will happen as part of the Community Safety Charter induction. <p>CE/52/2223 resolved to ask officers to produce a detailed plan for Council to consider the Christmas Lights that need to be replaced. This will go to Council on the 10th August.</p>		
PROPOSALS	To Note this Report		

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	29 June 20223 7.00 pm	LOCATION	Town Hall, Bridestones
REPORT FROM	Jackie MacArthur, Communities and Marketing Manager and DCO		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	9. Terms of Reference for Working Groups associated with Community Committee		
Background	<p>The Community Committee has four main Working Groups which report to the committee. Minutes from these groups will regularly be reported into this Committee. As the 'Parent' committee it is important for members of this committee to agree on the outline Terms of Reference for the Working Groups. To create an understanding of what the groups will be working on.</p> <p>Working groups are not decision-making groups and recommendations from the groups will be elevated to this committee.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 9a Community Safety Working Group 9b Health and Wellbeing Working Group 9c White Ribbon Working Group 9d Integrated Transport Working Group </p>		
Recommendations	You are asked to vote on the final proposed Terms of References for each Working Group - note these may be subject to proposed amendments at the meeting of the Working Group		
Financial Implications	The Working Groups do not have budgets.		
Environmental Implications	All discussions carried out by the Working groups must consider the Environmental aims of the Town Council of increasing biodiversity and working towards being carbon neutral.		
Equality and Diversity Impact	All discussions within the working groups should be mindful of actively addressing the need to improve equality and diversity within Congleton.		
PROPOSALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) That the community approves the terms of reference for the Community Safety Working Group. b) That the community approves the terms of reference for the Health and Wellbeing Working Group. c) That the community approves the terms of reference for the White Ribbon Working Group. d) That the community approves the terms of reference for the Integrated Transport Working Group. 		

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9a COMMUNITY SAFETY WORKING GROUP

(previously the Antisocial Behaviour Working Group)

Members include councillors and co-opted members (e.g. Police)

Purpose

To monitor, address and reduce crime and its underlying causes in Congleton. This Working Group reports to the Community Committee, where any significant policy or funding decisions are made. This group meets in private, but members of the public may be invited or co-opted to take part, and minutes are made public.

This group monitors crime incidence in Congleton over time with a goal of year-on-year reduction. Crimes and activities covered include (but are not limited to):

- Antisocial behaviour
- Street crime including violence and criminal damage
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Domestic abuse/violence and sexual offences
- Hate crime
- Burglary and theft
- Road traffic, speeding and parking offences

Delegation of Functions of the Working Group

- This working group takes on tasks assigned by the Community Committee and conducts research, analysis and brainstorming to come up with potential solutions and ideas to reduce crime and improve community safety in Congleton.
- This is not a decision-making body; all solutions, ideas and funding requirements must be presented as proposals to Council Committee (usually the Community Committee), together with all relevant analysis, for the Committee to make a decision.
- All proposals taken from this Group to Committee must explain the impact on Community Safety and the financial, environmental and equality impact of the decision.

Membership, Voting and Roles

- Town Councillors, and co-opted members from
 - Cheshire Police, especially the Congleton Beat Team
 - Cheshire East Council Anti-Social Behaviour Team
 - Relevant local community leaders
- Co-opted members will sign a volunteer agreement and be in post for one year, after which their agreement can be renewed if desired.
- On an as-needed basis, others may be invited to meetings, for example from the CCTV team, Cheshire Fire Service, CEC Domestic Abuse team, Congleton ShopWatch , Congleton PubWatch etc.
- The Chair (and Vice-Chair if wanted) will be elected by a vote of the Working Group Town Council members only.
- The secretariat for the meeting will be a member of CTC staff.

9a COMMUNITY SAFETY WORKING GROUP

(previously the Antisocial Behaviour Working Group)

Members include councillors and co-opted members (e.g. Police)

Activities of Working Group

1. Monitoring and Tracking Crime

- 1.1 Identify ASB and drug/alcohol 'hotspots'
- 1.2 Track domestic violence and sexual offences over time.
- 1.3 Understand the incidents of hate crime and reporting rates in Congleton.
- 1.4 Measure year-on-year theft and burglary data.
- 1.5 Monitor speeding/traffic/parking offences
- 1.6 Consider specific reports from the public of crimes in Congleton and input these to the Police and other agencies to help them develop tactics and strategies.

2. Dealing with and Preventing Crime

- 2.1 Implement the Community Safety Charter in Congleton
- 2.2 Tackle ASB and drug/alcohol hotspots with Policing, CCTV, PSPOs and other strategies as required.
- 2.3 Understand and support the cross-agency approach to domestic and sexual violence and offer local support for these services.
- 2.4 Consider tactics to challenge hate crime such as local Reporting Centres and publicity campaigns.
- 2.5 Support the local Neighbourhood Watch team in helping householders prevent burglary and property theft.
- 2.6 Support efforts to prevent and punish speeding and other traffic offences, including making recommendations to the Integrated Transport Working Group where appropriate.
- 2.7 Support the daytime and night-time economy by supporting initiatives to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and its negative impact on Congleton's businesses

3. Reporting to Committee

- 3.1 Working Group minutes (with confidential elements removed) will be approved at the Community Committee and published on the Town Council Website.
- 3.2 All crime statistics, trends, Policing priorities and high-level strategies to prevent or combat crime will be reported to the Community Committee at each meeting.
- 3.3 Any decisions will be referred to the Community Committee, or another Council Committee as required.

9b. HEALTH AND WELLBEING WORKING GROUP

Members include councillors and co-opted members

Purpose

To monitor, address and work with groups that improve the opportunities for improved health and well-being for Congleton residents. The group is concerned with making sure that Congleton has adequate Primary Health Care facilities that relate to the growth of the town and promoting initiatives or events relating to improving physical and mental health within Congleton. This Working Group reports to the Community Committee, where any significant policy or funding decisions are made. This group meets in private, but members of the public may be invited or co-opted to take part, and minutes are made public.

This group works with health and well-being providers to promote better physical and mental health, as well as lobbying for better physical and mental health services and opportunities in Congleton.

This may include:

Areas of work include but are not limited to:

- Mental health provision
- Physical health provision
- Promotion of national, regional, and local campaigns promoting good health
- Measuring well being
- Drafting consultation responses on health and well-being issues.

Delegation of Functions of the Working Group

- This working group takes on tasks assigned by the Community Committee and conducts research, analysis and brainstorming to come up with potential solutions and ideas to improve the physical and mental health of residents and to make the committee aware of opportunities to improve local access and provision of physical and mental health services.
- The Committee may delegate the responsibility for working with partner organisations on campaigns or initiatives which promote positive mental or physical health.
- This is not a decision-making body; all solutions, ideas and funding requirements must be presented as proposals to Council Committee (usually the Community Committee), together with all relevant analyses, for the Committee to make a decision.
- All proposals taken from this Group to Committee must explain the impact on the financial, environmental and equality impact of the decision.

Membership, Voting and Roles

- Town Councillors and co-opted members may be invited to attend the meetings from user or provider groups as and where appropriate.

9b. HEALTH AND WELLBEING WORKING GROUP

Members include councillors and co-opted members

- Co-opted members will sign a volunteer agreement and be in post for one year, after which their agreement can be renewed if desired.
- On an as-needed basis, others may be invited to meetings, for example social prescribers, NHS Trust, mental health providers.
- The secretariat for the meeting will be a member of CTC staff.

Activities of Working Group

- 1.1 Support projects and initiatives that will enhance the health and well-being of people in Congleton.
- 1.2 Consider ways to improve access to and co-ordination of local services, provided by the NHS or VCSEs, that will contribute to the improvement of the physical and/or mental health of local people.
- 1.3 Make recommendations and with the support of the Committee lead on CTC's involvement in national or local campaigns that encourage people to live healthier lives, for example by being more active, eating well, reducing alcohol intake or stopping smoking.
- 1.4 As directed by the Community Committee engage and work with local people, businesses and VCSEs to develop initiatives and events to promote healthy living.
- 1.5 Work with the NHS to lobby for more and improved physical and mental health services in Congleton.
- 1.6 To work with others to achieve a safe, professionally staffed, drop-in mental health centre for adults in Congleton
- 1.7 To raise awareness of the importance of mental health and accessible rapid help for those with poor mental health
- 1.8 To promote services and organisations aimed at helping reduce poor mental health
- 1.9 To reduce the stigma attached to mental health
- 1.10 To understand, promote and where possible strengthen the primary health care offer within Congleton
- 1.11 To make sure that the service provided at Mountview continues to be offered in Congleton

2. Reporting to Committee

- 2.1 Working Group minutes will be approved at the Community Committee and published on the Town Council Website.
- 2.2 Any decisions will be referred to the Community Committee, or another Council Committee as required.

9c WHITE RIBBON WORKING GROUP

Members include councillors and co-opted members of the public

Purpose

To promote the White Ribbon values and behaviours as a White Ribbon Town Council. White Ribbon UK was founded in 2005 and is part of a global movement to end men's violence against women.

It is a charity that works with men and boys to challenge those cultures that lead to harassment, abuse and violence. Congleton Town Council is White Ribbon Accredited which requires us to take certain actions – it is the job of this Working Group to ensure these happen.

Our Congleton White Ribbon Goal is:

'To eradicate men's violence against women and all gender-based violence and abuse'

Our White Ribbon Priorities are:

- **Strategic Leadership**- Ensuring policy and practice is compatible with the behaviours required, and creating White Ribbon Ambassadors
- **Engagement**- Training Councillors and staff initially, then reaching out more widely e.g.- through Congleton Partnership
- **Culture**- Taking action to stamp out sexism and a willingness to report and deal with inappropriate behaviours
- **Raising Awareness** - Outreach into the wider community through a broader Communications Plan, encouraging other organisations to become White Ribbon Accredited

Delegation of Functions of the Working Group

- This working group takes on tasks assigned by the Community Committee and works on awareness, engagement and leadership activities to promote White Ribbon and associated causes
- This is not a decision-making body; all solutions, ideas and funding requirements must be presented as proposals to Council Committee (usually the Community Committee), together with all relevant analysis, for the Committee to make a decision.
- All proposals taken from this Group to Committee must explain the impact on Community Safety and the financial, environmental and equality impact of the decision.

Membership, Voting and Roles

- Town Councillors, and co-opted members of the public
- All members must have made their White Ribbon Promise, registered as White Ribbon Ambassadors or Champions, and taken (or are taking) relevant training.
- Co-opted members will sign a volunteer agreement and be in post for one year, after which their agreement can be renewed if desired.
- On an as-needed basis, others may be invited to meetings, for example from the CEC Domestic Abuse team, the Police, etc.
- The Chair (and Vice-Chair if wanted) will be elected by a vote of the Working Group Town Council members only.

Activities of Working Group

9c WHITE RIBBON WORKING GROUP

Members include councillors and co-opted members of the public

1. Strategic Leadership

- 1.1 Qualify as White Ribbon Ambassadors and Champions.
- 1.2 Ensure Councillors and employees are given the opportunity to attend a White Ribbon Awareness session and make their White Ribbon Promise’.
- 1.3 Ensure that partners and providers embody the principles of behaviour required in their own policies and procedures.

2. Engagement

- 2.1 Work with schools, businesses, night-time economy and youth groups to spread the message about White Ribbon and challenging harassment and abuse
- 2.2 Present White Ribbon to other organisations interested in becoming accredited or supporter organisations, such as neighbouring Councils, PubWatch, sports clubs, etc.
- 2.3 Join in with White Ribbon events such as the CEC White Ribbon Conference and Police awareness trainings/events.

3. Culture

- 3.1 Take personal action to challenge inappropriate behaviours and engage with ongoing training to improve skills in this area.
- 3.2 Ensure that CTC Policies and practice embody the values and best practices of White Ribbon, for example by challenging sexism and negative behaviours.

4. Awareness

- 4.1 Multichannel Campaign for White Ribbon Day and the ‘16 days of activism’ each year, including the WR Flag, social media, press and outdoor. Town-centre stalls and social media awareness throughout the year.
- 4.2 Ongoing awareness-building amongst the public such as sharing data about domestic abuse and sexual violence, and messaging to encourage reporting.
- 4.3 Sharing evidence showing how changes to culture, and interventions like perpetrator programmes, can reduce these crimes.
- 4.4 Town-centre stalls throughout the year (including White Ribbon Day).
- 4.5 Social media activity throughout the year including the Congleton White Ribbon Facebook Group and sharing regional and national news of progress on domestic/sexual violence.
- 4.6 Signposting the public, especially survivors of domestic/sexual violence to services like myCWA, Refuge, Mankind and Rape Crisis.
- 4.7 Including awareness that men and boys can also be victims of domestic/sexual violence and experience particular barriers in reporting, due to the same societal prejudices and pressures regarding masculinity.

5. Reporting to Committee

- 5.1 Working Group minutes will be approved at the Community Committee and published on the Town Council Website.

9c WHITE RIBBON WORKING GROUP

Members include councillors and co-opted members of the public	
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- 5.2 The Working Group chair will report activities verbally to the Community Committee and opportunities for the Council and the public to get involved will be highlighted.
- 5.3 Any decisions will be referred to the Community Committee, or another Council Committee as required.

9d INTEGRATED TRANSPORT WORKING GROUP

Members include councillors and co-opted members of the public

Purpose

Ensure that the town's transport infrastructure is integrated and sustainable. CTC wants a sustainable, flexible transport system that meets the needs of all residents and creates a cleaner, better-connected Congleton.

This is closely connected with CTC's initiative to reduce our carbon footprint and improve air quality. Reducing the number of cars on our roads and using more environmentally friendly transport options is a key part of our agenda.

Objectives:

- Develop a Sustainable Transport Plan for Congleton and surrounding parishes.
- Promote and improve infrastructure for and provision of sustainable modes of transport.

Delegation of Functions of the Working Group

- This working group takes on tasks assigned by the Community Committee and works on activities to promote sustainable travel and transport. Some of its work will also be reported to the Environment Committee, where relevant.
- This is not a decision-making body; all solutions, ideas and funding requirements must be presented as proposals to Council Committee, together with all relevant analysis, for the Committee to decide.
- All proposals taken from this Group to Committee must explain the value to the community and the financial, environmental and equality impact of the decision.

Membership, Voting and Roles

- Town Councillors, and co-opted members of the public, such as Congleton Active Travel group.
- Co-opted members will sign a volunteer agreement and be in post for one year, after which their agreement can be renewed if desired.
- On an as-needed basis, others may be invited to meetings, for example bus companies or CEC transport officers
- The Chair (and Vice-Chair if wanted) will be elected by a vote of the Working Group Town Council members only.

Activities of Working Group

1. Active Travel

- 1.1 Work with CEC to develop routes for cycling, walking, wheelchairs and mobility scooters to ensure off-road access to all parts of Congleton without long detours.
- 1.2 Ensure these routes are sustainable and accessible for all including those using mobility aids or with visual impairment.

9d INTEGRATED TRANSPORT WORKING GROUP

Members include councillors and co-opted members of the public

1.3 Encourage active travel with schemes and campaigns such as ‘walk to school’ weeks.

1.4 Lobby for road safety measures such as ‘20s Plenty’, crossings and speed-reduction initiatives, to reclaim residential and shopping areas for people instead of traffic.

2. Public Transport

2.1 Review bus and train provision and develop proposals with Cheshire East Council (CEC) for better services.

2.2 Identify sources of national and regional funding (where available) to improve public transport

2.3 Work with and lobby transport companies to develop and promote new services.

3. Transport Infrastructure

3.1 Reinforce the need for housing developers to create and implement high quality transport plans, including active travel routes and access for bus services

3.2 Review provision for car drivers including electric charging points and Car Parking strategy

3.3 Ensure all travel routes across and within Congleton, by whatever means, are accessible to all and safe to use.

4. Strategy

4.1 Work to create short- and long-term integrated travel plans for Congleton

4.2 Prepare proposals for Congleton Town Council to input to Cheshire East Council’s strategic travel plans.

5. Reporting to Committee

5.1 Working Group minutes will be approved at the Community Committee and published on the Town Council Website.

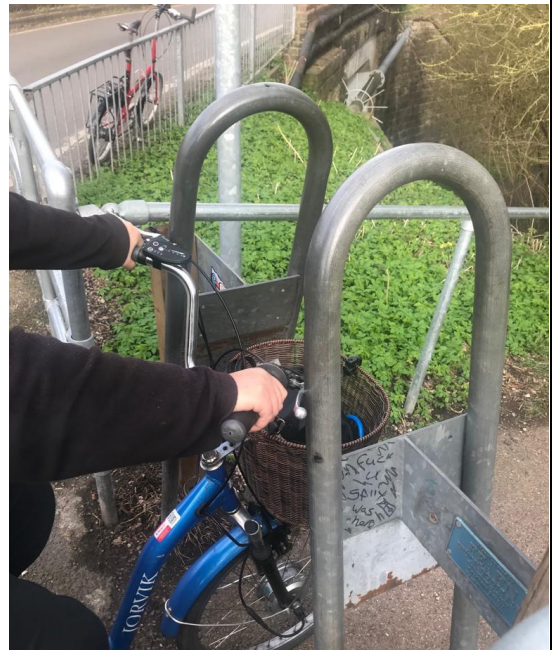
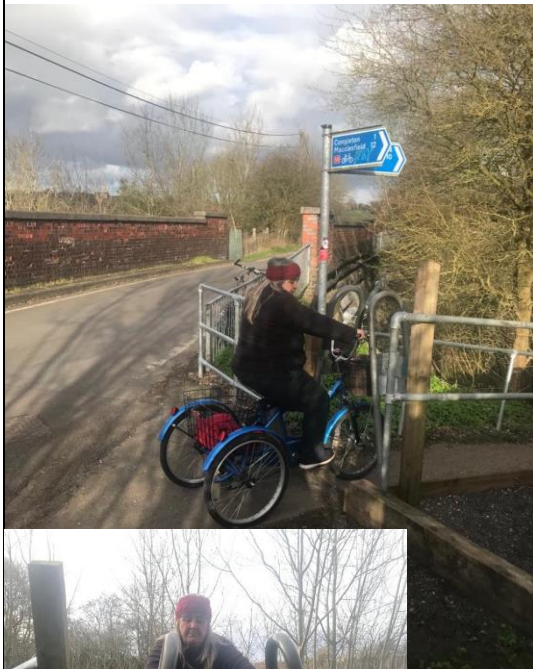
5.2 The Working Group chair will report activities verbally to the Community Committee and the Environment Committee when relevant.

5.3 Any decisions will be referred to the Community Committee, or another Council Committee as required.

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	29 June 20223 7.00 pm	LOCATION	Town Hall, Bridestones
REPORT FROM	Congleton Sustainable Travel Group (part of Congleton Climate Action Group)		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	10. Improving Accessibility at two sites in Congleton – request from Congleton Sustainable Travel Group		
Background	<p>Congleton Sustainability Travel is part of the Congleton Climate Action Group. The group asked if they could submit a question to the Community Committee about inclusion issues that they have encountered that are preventing people with disabilities and young children in double buggies from accessing safe routes for sustainable travel from Bromley Road/Biddulph Valley Way and Ayrshire Way/Bromley Community Centre.</p> <p>As the question was submitted in advance of the papers being sent out, the Chair approved accepting the question as a paper. This enables Councillors to consider the request in advance and to discuss potential action at the meeting.</p>		
Issue (information submitted by the Congleton Sustainable Travel Group)	<p>Congleton Climate Action Group - Congleton Sustainable Travel would like the town council's help in resolving two issues of obstructed access to those with disabilities, and also to young children in double buggies.</p> <p>The group has notified Cheshire East Council (CEC) officers of these breaches of its public sector equality duty (contained in the Equality Act 2010), and its own equality policy but have made little progress to date. These obstructions also breach Congleton town council's equality and inclusion policy.</p> <p><u>The problems:</u></p> <p>1. National Cycle Route 55. Bromley Rd/Biddulph Valley Way access point.</p> <p>An A-frame and motorbike trap obstructs mobility scooters, non-standard cycles (eg trikes), and double buggies, and forces them onto unsuitable local roads to access the route off Brook St (A54, a heavily used main road with many HGVs). This diversion involves a steep hill with parked cars on one side and narrow pavements, plus crossing an A road twice.</p> <p>Sustrans, the custodians of the National Cycle Network, are working to make all these routes fully accessible by removing A frames since they no longer prevent motorbike access, do not prevent access by modern high-powered electric motorbikes used at inappropriate speed, but meanwhile prevent access by legitimate users.</p> <p>The group first contacted CEC's Countryside Services regarding this on 27 March 2023 and their most recent response dated 3 May 2023 states they are waiting for Highways/Legal dept input.</p>		

1. Bromley Rd/Biddulph Valley Way



Map key:

Red dot = access point on Bromley Rd for the former railway line (Biddulph Valley Way) towards Biddulph and beyond.

Black line=Biddulph Valley Way – also part of National Cycle Route 55 from the red dot eastwards

Blue line=Bromley Rd – part of National Cycle Route 55

Red line=the nearest option for those obstructed to access the railway line and ultimately the 55.

2. Bromley play park and community centre access point on Ayrshire Way

The kissing gate is now left open after the Sustainable Travel Group and Cllr Suzie Akers Smith spoke to Ansa, who maintains the site, to remove the jammed RADAR-operated lock. However, the residual structure obstructs wider double buggies and mobility scooters, and other mobility aids such as trikes, including the Beartown Rickshaw. This obstruction forces users on a long diversion including Park Lane (A527, a busy main road) so the group would like to see the structure removed.

The response on 24 April 2023 from CEC via a Freedom of Information request was that there was no plan to change the situation. A month previously, Cllr Akers Smith had received a response stating that removing the residual railings would open up access to an unfenced play park, and that there would need to be a replacement gate that involved cost. However, the play park already has open access with a permanently open vehicle gate on the Edinburgh Rd/Cloud View entrance, a gappy boundary hedge adjoining Bromley woods, and the now permanently wide open kissing gate.



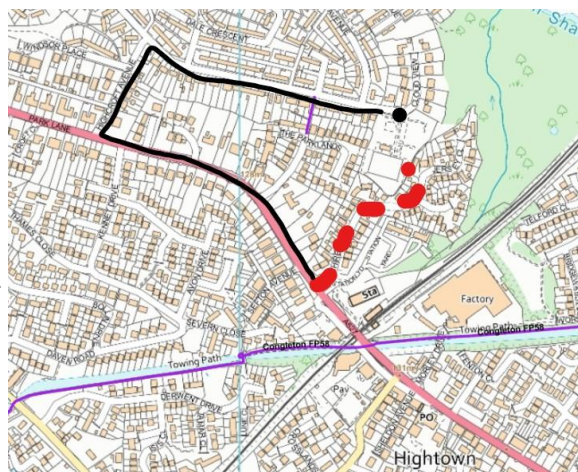
Map key:

Purple line between Edinburgh Rd and The Parklands=footpath (but with steps at one end).

Red dashed line=Ayrshire Way

Red dot=kissing gate access point for the play park

Black dot=access point for play park



	<p>Black line=only option between Hightown/park (at the black dot) for those obstructed at the red dot.</p> <p><u>The solutions as suggested by the Sustainable Travel Group</u></p> <p>1. The removal of the A-frame and the adjoining motorbike trap at the Bromley Rd access point would give access to legitimate users.</p> <p>There would probably need to be a strategically placed bollard to restrict car access, while allowing tricycles, wider non-standard bicycles and double buggies through.</p> <p>2. The removal of the two protruding kissing gate railings would cost little since they are only held in place by padlocks that could be cut through if the keys are lost. Railing removal would leave one trip hazard – a socket that could be removed or cut flush with the ground.</p> <p>REQUEST</p> <p>Could Congleton Town Council assist CEC in meeting its public sector equality duty by providing its own staff to remove these obstacles as a matter of urgency?</p> <p>If not can it reiterate to CEC officers that CEC is in breach of equality laws and policies, and needs to implement changes as a matter of urgency?</p>
Recommendations	That CTC Officers investigate this issue to see if the solution requested by Congleton Sustainable Travel Group is achievable.
Financial Implications	Costings will need to be obtained from CEC/Ansa if work needs to be commissioned and to understand if CTC staff are able to assist. If costings are involved this will need to be submitted to the relevant committee. CEC is ultimately responsible for this area and will need to carry out a risk assessment.
Environmental Implications	Actions which make sustainable travel for all more accessible is in line with the Town Council's current business plan. Care needs to be taken to make sure in solving one problem it doesn't create other problems.
Equality and Diversity Impact	Making safe routes accessible to all is in line with the Town Council Equality and Diversity impacts, as long as it remains safe for all. .
PROPOSALS	For officers to investigate the costs and implications of carrying out the actions and report back to the committee in August.

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	29 June 20223 7.00 pm	LOCATION	Town Hall, Bridestones
REPORT FROM	Jackie MacArthur, Communities and Marketing Manager and DCO		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	11. Understanding Town Centre Access Issues By Experience		
Background	<p>Over the past decade, there have been a number of concerns raised by people with visual impairments and/or mobility disabilities about the difficulty of negotiating their way around Congleton.</p> <p>Issues raised include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of dropped kerbs (Buggies, people with mobility difficulty) • Difficulty in negotiating street clutter (people with visual impairment) • Lack of markings/ definition at kerb edges (people with visual impairment) • Lack of appropriate safe crossing points (both mobility difficulty and visual impairment) <p>At the beginning of this new administration, I have been asked to see if Councillors would be prepared to experience the town centre as a person with visual impairment or mobility challenges (e.g. using a wheelchair) may experience the town to better appreciate the challenges they face.</p> <p>This would be organised in association with the Macclesfield Eye Society and other disability groups.</p>		
Recommendations	That Councillors wishing to get involved let the Deputy Chief Officer know and for her to organise an appropriate programme with the user groups.		
Financial Implications	There is no cost at this time other than time, however, the experience may lead to a list of actions that may require funds to be raised.		
Environmental Implications	There is no additional carbon footprint associated with this project. Ultimately it is hoped the experience may help lead to a more accessible town centre.		
Equality and Diversity Impact	This proposal is designed to help councillors better understand the needs and difficulties experienced by those with mobility and visual impairments with the aim of making the town centre more accessible for all, which the Town Council has committed to do as part of its Equality and Inclusion Policy.		
PROPOSALS	That the Community Committee delegates responsibility to staff for organising a practical awareness session for councillors on this committee and any other councillor who wishes to take part.		

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	29 June 20223 7.00pm	LOCATION	Town Hall, Bridestones
REPORT FROM	Jackie MacArthur, Communities and Marketing Manager & DCO		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	12 Potential Health and Wellbeing Hub for Congleton		
Background	<p>Pre- Covid-19 a key driver for the Congleton Town Council health and wellbeing working group was to establish a physical place in Congleton where people needing help with their self-defined emotional or psychological health could receive support. This followed numerous reports of the difficulty people were having getting timely support. The group visited Café 71, run by the Spider Project in Chester, the first crisis café in Cheshire and discussions were started with NHS Trust and Clinical Commissioning Group about whether Congleton could be a pilot for something like this in Cheshire East. Then the NHS priorities had to turn to COVID-19.</p> <p>Improvements have been made over the past four years to support people’s emotional health. The NHS opened a dedicated Mental Health Crisis line on 0800 145 6485. There are two Full Time Equivalent (FTE) mental health practitioners working in the Congleton and Holmes Chapel GP surgeries and every GP surgery has a FTE equivalent Social Prescriber.</p> <p>Having a physical hub is still an aspiration. In February this year, an opportunity presented itself following a Cheshire East Congleton Connected Communities meeting. Funding was being made available to improve the mental health support of residents and Plus Dane Housing Group indicated that it was willing to explore gifting the use of its unoccupied 2nd floor in its building in Worrall Street Congleton for such a hub.</p> <p>A collaborative funding bid was submitted led by Plus Dane. This was not successful, however in the process of putting together the bid several groups and organisations involved in the field of providing emotional and psychological support came together and thought the project was worth pursuing.</p> <p>Work is continuing behind the scenes with the intention of creating a Well Being Hub where the various groups involved in providing mental health support services can make use of the space for 1-2-1 counselling or group work and benefit from the synergy of being in a shared space. The following organisations have said that they would like to be a delivery partner within the hub.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aura 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daisy’s Dream Cheshire East Hub ▪ Friends for Leisure ▪ Mentell ▪ Picture House Consultancy ▪ Swans CIC ▪ Visyon ▪ Wirral Community Service NHS Foundation 0-19 service ▪ Your Purple Life ▪ Congleton and Holmes Chapel Social Prescribing Link Workers <p>In addition Cheshire East Council, Plus Dane Housing, Congleton Partnership, Congleton Community Projects, Congleton Police and Congleton Town Council have helped with the initial shaping of the project.</p>
Next Steps	<p>A Project Development steering group made up of people interested in making the project happen is being put together. This group will bid for funding and set up the agreements for the Hub. There is also a matrix of users being established. Officers from Congleton Town Council and the partnership have been involved in the initial stages of this project.</p> <p>This report is to inform and update Councillors and seek support to remain part of the process via the Health and Wellbeing Working Group and to keep Councillors informed.</p>
Recommendations	That the Town Council supports the project in principle and remains part of the development team.
Financial Implications	None at present.
Environmental Implications	This is in line with the Council’s policies of wherever possibly providing services within Congleton.
Equality and Diversity Impact	This is a positive project aimed at helping those in our community obtain timely and quality support for their emotional or psychological health in a local setting.
PROPOSALS	To support the idea of a Congleton Wellbeing Hub in Worrall Street and to continue to take an active part in the development of the project.

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	29 June 20223 7.00 pm	LOCATION	Town Hall, Bridestones
REPORT FROM	Jackie MacArthur, Communities and Marketing Manager & DCO		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	13. Forming a Project Group for Congleton Town Council Website Development		
Background	<p>www.congleton-tc.gov.uk is in need of a refresh and overhaul. An earmark reserve for this work was set aside in 2022/23 but work commitments did not allow time to concentrate on this major piece of work. The reserve was carried into the 2023-24 budget process.</p> <p>The Town Council’s first website was built in 2008 by a Congleton company that went into liquidation in 2010. It was a basic site developed in Dreamweaver and quickly looked dated.</p> <p>In 2011 Cyberzia won the bid to create a new site for the Town Council. This was built using concrete 5 and worked well but was not mobile-responsive. The content was not easily transferrable, and it was agreed the future website should be in a universal programme that could be moved to another supplier.</p> <p>In 2015 TMC Creative was awarded the contract to build the current site with the directive to make the site more easily navigable and responsive for mobile. The website is built using WordPress and CTC owns the site.</p> <p>The site has grown organically over the years and now is difficult to navigate. There is duplication, old content, broken links and some pages not used at all. The information architecture is not optimised for the various types of users we have in the town, and the site, although responsive, was not designed ‘mobile-first’ which is the new standard. Currently, 85% of views are on a mobile phone.</p> <p>The site requires a thorough review of content and navigation. It is also important to bring the Congleton Information Centre online (a new service for CTC since April 2021), to make it easier to view calendars and make bookings and create an online shop.</p> <p>The site will need to continue to meet all the accessibility criteria demanded of a public sector website.</p>		
The Plan	<p>With the agreement of the Committee, I would like to set up a small project group to drive this project forward. Work of the group will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An in-depth review of the current site using Google Analytics • Research into the best of other award-winning Town Council sites 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make recommendations for the future structure and content of the CTC website – and create a project brief (to be approved at Council) • Going out to tender in line with our Financial Regulations • Work with the Council’s chosen supplier on the creation/modification of www.congleton-tc.gov.uk <p>Officers on the group will consist of Debbie Coxon, Cathy Dean, Paolo Pinto and Jackie MacArthur. Ideally, 2-3 Councillors would like to get involved with this group.</p>
Recommendations	That the Committee agrees to set up a task and finish group to explore and make detailed recommendations and a brief on the future of the Town Council Website. This will go to the appropriate Committee for approval so that the work can be placed out to tender.
Financial Implications	CTC has anticipated that this work is needed and created an Earmarked reserve in 2022/23 for a new website. This reserve was carried forward into 2023/24 and CTC staff believe it should be sufficient for the works.
Environmental Implications	Access to all information online can save paper and wasted journeys. There is a lot of research into actions that can be taken to reduce the carbon footprint of websites, and this will be researched as part of the project to redevelop the site.
Equality and Diversity Impact	As a Public Sector website, every effort must be taken to make the site accessible to all. Redesigning our site is an opportunity to improve accessibility and this will be an objective of the project. There are several national schemes to help people to afford to get online.
PROPOSALS	To approve Councillors (To Be Confirmed) to join a task and finish group tasked with reviewing the current site, making recommendations for a new site and developing a brief to create a site that will be good for the next 5 or so years. www.congleton-tc.gov.uk

**CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	29 June 20223 7.00 pm	LOCATION	Town Hall, Bridestones
REPORT FROM	Jackie MacArthur, Communities and Marketing Manager and DCO		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	14. Recruiting a Voluntary Town Crier (voluntary agreement attached)		
Background	<p>Congleton Town Council has a long tradition of having a Town Crier. The Town Crier Bell dates back to 1732 and many Town Criers have been in post for many years. Douglas Parker MBE retired from the role in 2019 having served for 34 years. A brief history of Town Criers in Congleton can be viewed on the Congleton Heritage and Antique Festival Website.</p> <p>Since the resignation of Douglas Parker, Paul Bates, Rob Moreton and Paul Duffy have all performed the role, with the role being approved at the Annual Town Council Meeting (mayor-making).</p> <p>At an informal meeting of the Council in May this year it was agreed that rather than the Councillors electing a fellow councillor to be the Town Crier, as they do with appointments to outside groups, the Council would open the role up to the community to apply for the role on a minimum of a 4-year period.</p> <p>A Town Crier adds a sense of place. It adds to the historic nature of our town and can help create interest in the town. It is a voluntary role.</p> <p>It is believed having the role for at least four years will enable the person taking on the role to opportunity to establish themselves in the role, give the opportunity to join the guild of Town Criers and also make it worth the commitment to getting a proper fitting costume for the Crier.</p> <p>Local towns with a Town Crier include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandbach • Leek • Macclesfield • Biddulph <p>Sandbach, Biddulph and Leek have long-standing Town Criers. Macclesfield was appointed in 2017.</p> <p>If Councillors are minded to recruit a voluntary Town Crier the suggested process would be:</p>		

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form a small task and finish group to work with the Communities and Marketing Team on the recruitment of the post. 2. Advertise the post through July and August to interview in early September 3. The Information Centre to keep their diary. <p>Suggested Voluntary Agreement Attached.</p>
Recommendations	To recommend that the Town Council starts the process to recruit a voluntary Town Crier from the community of Congleton.
Financial Implications	As a Volunteer representing the Town Council, the Town Council should pay for travel expenses for approved events. The Town Council should also be prepared to provide a costume, insurance and membership of the Guild of Town Criers.
Environmental Implications	This will be a local role, so the Carbon Footprint will be minimal. Every effort will be made to recycle the costume.
Equality and Diversity Impact	The role will be open to all local people, increasing the opportunity for more people to engage in civic roles in Congleton.
PROPOSALS	That the Committee appoints *****(to be agreed at Committee) to be part of a small task and finish group tasked with taking the project to the appointment of the Town Crier.

**CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee										
MEETING DATE AND TIME	29 June 20223 7.00 pm	LOCATION	Town Hall, Bridestones								
REPORT FROM	Jackie MacArthur, Communities and Marketing Manager & DCO										
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	15. Bear Necessities – Newsletter of the Town Council and Community Groups										
Background	<p>Congleton Town Council has been producing a quarterly newsletter called Bear Necessities since 2007. In the past year paper costs have increased significantly, making officers question if there is a better way to produce the newsletter/ communicate our messages.</p> <p>Editions usually come out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January – covering January, February and March • April – covering April. May and June • July – covering July, August and September • October – covering October, November and December <p>(note this financial year due to the Elections and pre-election period, the editions are June, late September, early Jan and late March (Easter end of March))</p> <p>This paper has been written to seek guidance from Councillors on whether they wish officers to some time and effort into exploring one or more alternative options for the future of Bear Necessities, or if the Council wishes to continue with the same format. Regardless of changing the format, a new round of quotes to ensure best value for print and distribution will be necessary in line with our financial regulations.</p> <p>Currently – the Town Council produces 4 copies of the newsletter per year. This used to be one of the criteria for applying for ‘Quality Council’ status. Checking the NALC guide to Local Council accreditation it is no longer a specification and the guidance is more about showing how the council actively communicates with its residents.</p>										
Options	<p>Officers believe there are five potential options which councillors may wish to consider. A simplistic guide is below</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Summary of Action</th> <th>Pros</th> <th>Cons</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Stop producing a newsletter.</td> <td>Save money and staff time</td> <td>Lose a key and established means of communicating CTC activities to residents. Not everyone online.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Summary of Action	Pros	Cons	1	Stop producing a newsletter.	Save money and staff time	Lose a key and established means of communicating CTC activities to residents. Not everyone online.
	Summary of Action	Pros	Cons								
1	Stop producing a newsletter.	Save money and staff time	Lose a key and established means of communicating CTC activities to residents. Not everyone online.								

	2	Carry on doing the same but go out for quotes to ensure best value, including online and paper delivery.	Residents will continue to receive the quarterly newsletter.	Paper prices rising means that budgets will need almost certainly need to increase to maintain status quo.
	3	Take out 8 or 12 pages as a standalone pull-out section within Beartown Voice with branding on the front cover to say incorporated.	Cost saving – could do every other month. Plus run-ons for other centres. The two publications are usually delivered at the same time.	May risk losing some of our identity. Need to understand public reaction to Beartown Voice and to Bear Necessities.
	4	Produce 3 editions per year rather than 4	Looks the same, should be able to produce within budget	Already struggling to include all the information requested within the space.
	5	Produce online version only	Save costs. More environmentally friendly.	Will people read an online-only version? Already online and page does not get many views.
Recommendations	For the next 12 months officers think the Town Council should explore options 2 and 3 in more detail and report back to the August committee.			
Financial Implications	Looking to ensure best value and that a newsletter can continue within the budget allocated for the task. Note in June the paper quality was reduced from 170grms to 115 grms to save money.			
Environmental Implications	Carbon footprint considerations for both digital and print copy. Bear Necessities is printed on carbon-neutral accredited paper.			
Equality and Diversity Impact	The Town Council pays to deliver Bear Necessities to all households in CW12 (except where there is a no cold calls or unsolicited mail notice.) There is an opportunity to increase inclusion by offering the newsletter in multiple channels – print, web and email, for example.			
PROPOSALS	To be agreed at the committee.			