



Congleton Town Council

Historic Market Town

Chief Officer: **David McGifford CiLCA**

3rd August 2023

Dear Councillor,

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Council on **Thursday 10th August 2023** to be held at Congleton Town Hall commencing at **7. 00pm**.

- **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.
- Please note that the Mayor's Chaplain will be holding prayers at 6.55pm prior to the commencement of the meeting at 7.00pm

Yours sincerely,

D McGifford
Chief Officer



Congleton
beartown
where friends are made

Congleton Town Council, Town Hall, High Street, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 1BN

Tel: **01260 270350**

Email: info@congleton-tc.gov.uk www.congleton-tc.gov.uk



AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

Members are respectfully reminded of the necessity to submit any apologies for absence in advance and to give a reason for non-attendance.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings (Enclosed)

To approve and sign the [minutes of the Council meeting held on the 15th and 29th June 2023](#)

3. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

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

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 Council Business, but no discussion or decisions may be taken at the meeting.

6. Town Mayor’s Announcements and Engagements (Enclosed)

To receive any announcements by the Town Mayor and to receive a list of the Mayor’s engagements.

7. Outstanding Actions

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

8. Community Committee (Enclosed)

To receive the minutes of the Community Committee meeting held on [29th June 2023](#)

9. Planning Committee (Enclosed)

To receive the [minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on the 22nd June 2023.](#)

10. Vale Allotments grant application (Enclosed)

To consider a grant application from the Vale Allotment Association

11. Cheshire East Councillors' Reports

To suspend Standing Orders to allow Councillors from the principal authority to report on matters relating to or impacting on Congleton.

12. Policy Reviews (Enclosed)

To approve the updated ICT Policy and Grants Criteria Policy and adopt into the constitution as recommended by the Finance and Policy Committee at its meeting on the 20th July 2023

13. Use of Ukraine Earmarked Reserve (Enclosed)

To approve the use of the balance of funds held in the Ukraine Earmark Reserve

14. Councillor Attendance Records (Enclosed)

To consider the publication of councillor attendance at Council and committee meetings on the councils website

15. Remote access to meetings (Enclosed)

To approve the use of technology for remote access to committee and council meetings

16. Reassignment of Lease for Congleton Town FC Ground (Enclosed)

To approve the proposal to open discussions with Cheshire East Council with regards to the re assignment of the lease for Congleton Town Football Club

17. Congleton Library (Enclosed)

To receive the feedback from Cheshire East Councils consultation on reduced opening hours for Congleton Library and agree the Town Councils position.

18. Christmas lights replacements (Enclosed)

To approve the funding for replacement Christmas lights

19. Resolution to Exclude the Public and Press

To consider passing a resolution in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that public and press be excluded from the meeting due to private staffing matters and commercial sensitivities .

20. Congleton Market Quarter (to follow)

To approve a proposal for creating a formal working arrangement with Congleton Market Quarter

21. Drug and Alcohol Policy (to follow)

To approve the proposed Drug and Alcohol Policy

To: All Members of the Council

CC: Burgesses (3), Congleton Information Centre,
Congleton Library, MP and Press (3)

Congleton Town Council

Minutes of the Council Meeting held at Congleton Town Hall on 29th June 2023

Please note – These are draft minutes and will not be ratified until the next meeting of the Council.

For the papers discussed at the meeting, please see the
[Meeting Agenda of the Council 29th June 2023](#)

Present:

Councillors:

- Rob Moreton (Mayor and Chair)**
- Suzie Akers Smith
- David Brown
- Charles Booth
- Robert Brittain
- Mark Edwardson
- Suzy Firkin
- Sally Ann Holland
- Amanda Martin
- Susan Mead
- Shaun Radcliffe
- Richard Walton
- Liz Wardlaw
- Kay Wesley
- Glen Williams

Congleton Town Council Officers: David McGifford (Chief Officer)
and Jackie MacArthur, Communities and Marketing Manager and DCO

- There were no members of the press in attendance.
- No members of the public in attendance

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Dawn Allen, Russell Chadwick, Robert Douglas, Emma Louise Hall, Arabella Holland, Heather Pearce and Heather Seddon

2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

Declarations of Interest were received from Councillors Rob Moreton (Mayor) David Brown, Sally Ann Holland and Liz Wardlaw

3. Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the public

4. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items

5. To formulate a Congleton Town Council response to CEC Library Consultation

CTC/28/2324 Resolved that the Town Council's response to the CEC Library Consultation should be as follows

Congleton Town Council rejects the need for Congleton's library to be closed for 1.5 days per week based upon the vital support this service provides for our growing community, as stated within the information that Cheshire East Council has provided.

With Cheshire East Council and other potential partners, Congleton Town Council wishes to explore mutually beneficial ways in which we can keep Congleton Library fully functioning across the 6 days per week. Our ambition is to protect the benefits for our community but also support the CEC officers who work within the library service in Congleton.

**Robert Moreton
(Town Mayor)**

Engagements since the 14 June 2023 - Mayor Cllr Rob Moreton

17 June	New Life Church, Nursery Sports Day
17 June	The Bromley Farm Hub, Big Plant Up
17 June	White Ribbon, Awareness Day in the town centre
24 June	Congleton Lion's – Defibrillator Launch, West Heath Precinct
24 June	Greengables Care Home, Open Day
28 June	Everybody Leisure, Leisure Centre official opening
28 June	Congleton Girls Rugby Club, Training session
1 July	Congleton Lawn Tennis Club, Open Day
2 July	Congleton Town Council, Civic Parade
4 July	The Cheshire Fire RESPECT team, Graduation for Congleton High School
5 July	Congleton schools, Town Sports
7 July	Ruby's Fund, Wear Red for Ruby day
8 July	Congleton Youth Orchestra, Summer Concert
9 July	Congleton Lion's, Duck Race
15 July	Congleton Choral Society, Summer Concert
16 July	Macclesfield Town Council, Civic Service
20 July	Phoenix Theatre Company, The Memory of Water
21 July	Knutsford Town Council, Family BBQ Fundraiser
22 July	Congleton Pride
22 July	Priesty Fields Care Home, Summer Fayre
28 July	Caitlin's Wishes, Fundraiser for the SSAFA (Armed Forces Charity)
28 July	V Bar, Grand Re-opening
1 Aug	Congleton in Bloom, Town Tidy before judging
2 Aug	Astbury WI, Commemorative Tree Celebration & Plaque Unveiling

Deputy Town Mayor – Cllr Kay Wesley

2 July	Congleton Town Council, Civic Parade
16 July	Biddulph Town Council, Civic Service
30 July	Leek Town Council, Civic Service

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY COMMITTEE HELD ON
29 JUNE 2023**

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

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

For the papers discussed at the meeting, please see the [Agenda and Papers of the Community Committee on 29 June 2023](#)

PRESENT:

Committee members

- **Cllr Kay Wesley (Chair)**
- **Cllr Emma Hall (Vice Chair)**
- Cllr Dave Brown
- Cllr Mark Edwardson
- Cllr Suzy Firkin
- Cllr Arabella Holland (from item 7)
- Cllr Sally Ann Holland
- Cllr Susan Mead
- Cllr Shaun Radcliffe
- Cllr Glen Williams

Ex Officio Members: Cllr Rob Moreton (Mayor)

Non-Committee Members: Cllr Amanda Martin, Cllr Richard Walton, Cllr Liz Wardlaw

Officers: David McGifford CO, Jackie MacArthur DCO & Communities & Marketing Manager

Also in attendance: one Police Office (until item 10), one Burgess, three members of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

None received.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

CO/01/2324 resolved to approve and sign the [minutes of the Community and Environment Committee held on the 16 February 2023](#) as a correct record.

The minutes will also be considered at the first Environment Committee on July 13 which was also formed from this previously combined committee.

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Dave Brown, Cllr Emma Hall, Cllr Sally Holland and Cllr Robert Moreton declared a non-pecuniary interest as Cheshire East members. Cllr Emma Hall and Cllr Mark Edwardson declared an interest in item 15.

4. Questions from Members of the Public

None – one question was submitted two weeks in advance as this was approved as a paper for discussion after conversations with the Committee Chair.

5. Urgent Items

None

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

This item was postponed until the next meeting (3 August 2023)

7. Cheshire Police

Sergeant John Roberts updated members on the paper issued with the agenda.

Action: For the police to look at visiting nurseries as well as schools

Action: To assist with publicising the importance and ways to communicate with Congleton police

8. Updates from Previous Community and Environment Committee

CO02/2324 resolved to note the updates from the Community and Environment Committee held on 16 February.

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

CO03/2324 resolved to approve the Terms of Reference for the following:

- 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

CO04/2324 resolved to approve the paper introduced by Congleton Sustainable Travel and to write to Cheshire East Council asking them to investigate and resolve the issue of the restricted access to the Biddulph Valley Way from Bromley Road and access to Bromley Play Park from Community Centre from Ayrshire Way.

Action: Write to Cheshire East Council regarding the two issues raised

Action: Write to Cheshire East to review barriers used across Congleton with the aim of making all areas accessible to all.

11. Understanding Town Centre Access Issues

CO05/2324 resolved to approve the report to organise practical awareness sessions allowing councillors to experience the Town Centre as faced by those with physical or visual challenges and to draw up a list of improvements needed.

Action: To liaise with councillors and organise a number of sessions.

12. Update on Potential Wellbeing Hub for Congleton

CO06/2324 resolved 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.

13. Congleton Town Council Website Update

CO07/2324 resolved to approve that Cllrs Brown, Edwardson and Wesley work with officers in a task and finish group to review the current website, make recommendations for a new site and develop a brief to create a site that will be good for the next 5 or more years.

14. Town Crier Role for Congleton

CO08/2324 resolved to appoint Cllr Suzy Firkin to be part of a small task and finish group with officers tasked with leading on the appointment of the Town Crier. A volunteer agreement was attached to the paper.

Action: To agree on a communication plan to make the process as inclusive as possible

Action: To ask Burgess Douglas Parker to be an advisor to the group.

15. Bear Necessities Newsletter

CO09/2324 Resolved to approve that Bear Necessities should continue as a stand-alone newsletter at least twice a year. For officers to investigate the best value within the budgets for print and design and the potential to use other ways to get the Council message to residents.

Action: Check print and distribution costs for Bear Necessities

Action: Consider alternative ways to publicise ensuring inclusivity.

16. Beer and Gin Festival

CO10/2324 Resolved to note the report and authorise the officers to take the project to the next stage of seeking sponsorship and testing the market for ticket sales.

Action: Build awareness of Health and well-being within the festival and consider offering a non-alcoholic beer and gin option.

Meeting closed 21.07

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Thursday 22nd June 2023

In attendance:

Committee Members: Councillors Amanda Martin (Chair)
 Robert Brittain (Vice Chair)
 Charles Booth
 Robert Douglas
 Suzy Firkin

Ex Officio Rob Moreton (Mayor)
 Kay Wesley (Deputy Mayor)

Non-Committee member: Heather Seddon

Congleton Town Council Chief Officer David McGifford

01 Members of the press

10 Members of public

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Committee Members: Cllrs Suzie Akers Smith, Dawn Allen and David Brown

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

PLN/01/2324 Resolved to approve and sign the [minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on the 16th March 2023](#).

3. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

Declarations of “non-pecuniary” (NP) and “pecuniary” (P) interests were received from Councillors: Robert Douglas (P) Planning application 23/2249C Rob Moreton (NP) matters relating to CEC

4. Outstanding Actions

Date	Reference	Issue	
22.6	Astbury Place /Congleton park bridge Section 106	Developer delaying installation of an agreed bridge linking Astbury Place to Congleton Park	No progress, noted that CEC Ward Cllr Heather Seddon would liaise with CEC Planning and report back to the Chief Officer
22.6	Tree Preservation Order Church House Public House on Buxton Road	Request for a TPO to be placed on the largest tree at the	No updates, Noted that Ruth Burgess would liaise with CEC on this matter

		front of the Church House.	
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5. Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the public

6. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items

7. Neighbourhood Plan update

The next stage is to draw the document into a format that can be used for the Regulation 14 Consultation. Due to the delay since the examination in 2019 it was agreed that the Regulation 14 Consultation would need to be as comprehensive as possible to enable residents current views to be integrated into the plan for the next stage Regulation 15 and then through to the referendum and hopefully adoption.

Officers undertook some research into Towns who have developed and had their Neighbourhood Plans adopted, In terms of size we focused on the Knutsford and Wilmslow plans. Whilst reviewing the plans we noted that the same company had developed both of their plans, the company is based in Macclesfield. Officers met with representatives of the Company and they have provided an outline of their thoughts on how they can help us progress the plan which will need further discussion. When these discussions have taken place we will arrange a meeting with The N Plan development group to discuss the detail in readiness to bringing it back to this committee at the next meeting

Noted from the report the environmental considerations need to be given to both the consultation and the Neighbourhood Plan

8. Planning Applications Section 1

23/ 2249C was reviewed, comments below in agenda item 11 item 35

9. Planning Appeals

No planning appeals noted

10. Licensing Applications

No licensing applications noted

11. Planning Applications Section 2

PLN/02/2324 Resolved that no proposed stars be removed and that applications with stars being noted as no objection

Planning lists 10-17-24 April & 1-8-15-22-29 May 5-12 June 2023				
1*	23/0984C	Lawful development certificate proposed 14 solar panels built onto rear facing road	62, HAREBELL DRIVE, CW12 4FA	No Objection
2	23/1168T	WORKS TO TPO TREES	21 LONGDOWN ROAD, CONGLETON,	No Objection to the works on the Sycamore, no other trees identified for works
3*	23/1543D	Discharge of condition 12 on application 21/5642C:	The Robin Hood, BUXTON ROAD, CONGLETON,	No Objection
4*	23/1635D	Discharge of conditions 4 & 6 on approved application 22/3527C:	41, BIRCH ROAD, CONGLETON, CW12 4NN	No Objection
5*	23/1726C	Variation of Condition 2 - approved plans on approval 20/1624C.	LOWER PARK STREET MILL, LOWER PARK STREET, CONGLETON,	No Objection
6*	23/1741D	Discharge of Condition 5 on approval 21/5642C for demolition of existing public house & outbuildings	The Robin Hood, BUXTON ROAD, CONGLETON, CW12 3PE	No Objection
7*	23/1771C	First Floor Side Extension with Garage Conversion	14, MALHAMDALE ROAD, CONGLETON, CONGLETON, CHESHIRE, CW12 2DA	No Objection
8	23/1812C	Re-submission of application 23/0016C New building	BACK PARK STREET, CONGLETON	Fully support
9	23/1861C	Proposed sub division of existing dwelling to create two separate dwellings.	Oak Lea, CROUCH LANE, CONGLETON, CHESHIRE, CW12 3PT	No Objection
10 *	23/1865C	Certificate for existing lawful use for confirmation the use of the property as an independent school	Dane Valley Mill, 59, HAVANNAH STREET, CONGLETON, CW12 2AH	No Objection
11	23/1868T	[T1] Yew - Reduce height and lateral spread by 1-1.5m and prune to clear wires by min 30cm.	37, SANDBACH ROAD, CONGLETON, CW12 4LB	No Objection
12	23/1870T	T1 - Cedar - Crown reduction	17, ISIS CLOSE, CONGLETON, CW12 3RT	No Objection

13*	23/1893C	Non-material amendment to application 20/5760C plot rotation due to easement	Land At, BACK LANE, CONGLETON	No Objection
14*	23/1901C	Proposed two storey extension to front and rear.	1, RUSSELL CLOSE, CONGLETON, CHESHIRE, CW12 3UD	No Objection
15*	23/1904C	Single storey side and rear extension	105, KESTREL CLOSE, CONGLETON, CW12 3QX	No Objection
16	23/1905C	Proposed loft conversion and internal alterations.	36, HOWEY HILL, CONGLETON, CHESHIRE, CW12 4AF	No comment
17*	23/1907D	Discharge of conditions 1,2,3,7,9,10,11 and 12 to application 22/2417C:	35-37, HIGH STREET, CONGLETON,	No Objection
18	23/1911C	Proposed two storey rear extension and internal alterations.	18, TAMAR CLOSE, CONGLETON, CW12 3RU	No Objection
19*	23/1953C	Installation of new spiral fire escape stair to rear of existing property.	Kings Arms, 1, HIGH STREET, CONGLETON, CHESHIRE, CW12 1BN	No Objection
20*	23/1954C	Listed building consent for the installation of new spiral fire escape stair to rear of existing property.	Kings Arms, 1, HIGH STREET, CONGLETON, CHESHIRE, CW12 1BN	No Objection
21*	23/1979C	larger home extension extending 5m from the rear elevation, max height of 3.6m and 2.45 to the eaves	24, LINKSWAY, CONGLETON, CW12 3BS	No Objection
22	23/1928W	The extraction of industrial sand, pipeline to transfer minerals to the existing bent farm plant site associated ancillary development, retention of the Bent Farm plant site and pressive restoration	SOMERFORD FARM, HOLMES CHAPEL ROAD,	Objection on the grounds of <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. highways safety for the proposed new access road for HGV's – road currently single white lined. 2. This new access road will also result in an unnecessary loss of trees and hedgerows 3. Significant concerns about air and water quality monitoring information and the need for it being made available

23*	23/1941C	Proposed Rear Porch	21, CHURCHILL CLOSE, CONGLETON, CHESHIRE,	No Objection
24*	23/2044D	Discharge of conditions 5, 6, 7 & 10 on existing permission 22/4041C; demolition of existing bungalow and its replacement with 2 No. semi detached dwellings.	24, GIANTSWOOD LANE, CONGLETON,	No Objection
25*	23/2135C	Prior approval to take down existing PVCu conservatory and build new single storey extension in its place, extending 4.50m beyond the rear wall, maximum height of 3.50m and eaves height of 2.65m	3, BRIDGEWATER CLOSE, CONGLETON,	No Objection
26*	23/2137C	Proposed single storey rear/side extension.	64, THAMES CLOSE, CONGLETON, CW12 3RL	No Objection
27*	23/2144C	Single storey infill extension, to replace former incomplete extension at rear of property, to provide larger kitchen area.	1, SEFTON AVENUE, CONGLETON, CW12 3DB	No Objection
28	23/2145C	Creation of a new 2 classroom modular building.	Eaton Bank Academy, JACKSON ROAD, CONGLETON, CW12 1NT	Support this proposal
29*	23/2166C	Modifications to rear (east facing) elevation: Removal of existing timber eternal door and adjacent sash window, to be replaced with timber bi fold doors. Structural opening modifications.	St James House, 14, Moody Street, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 4AP	No Objection
30*	23/2167C	Listed building consent for modifications to rear (east facing) elevation: Removal of existing timber eternal door and adjacent sash window, to be replaced with timber bi fold doors.	St James House, 14, Moody Street, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 4AP	No Objection

		Structural opening modifications.		
31*	<u>23/2173C</u>	Advertisement Consent for the erection of illuminated and non-illuminated signs to the exterior of the building	The Cheshire Tavern, WEST ROAD, CONGLETON, CW12 4FY	No Objection
32	<u>23/2200C</u>	Prior notification of proposed erection of roof over existing silage pit.	Smithy Farm, BUXTON ROAD, CW12 3PG	No Objection
33	<u>23/2078C</u>	Construction of 7No. self-contained 1-bedroom apartments (Use Class C2) with associated parking and landscaping.	22, NEWCASTLE ROAD, CONGLETON, CW12 4HJ	No Objection but would like there to be consideration on how more parking could be provided and to have clear signage on the A34 with regards to elderly people crossing
34*	<u>23/2240C</u>		35-37, HIGH STREET, CONGLETON,	No Objection
35	<u>23/2249C</u>	Proposed erection of 3no. dwellings off Thistle Way / Padgbury Lane. Land previously identified for 180sq/m health related development (class D1 use)	Land west of PADGBURY LANE, CW12 4LR	OBJECTION DUE TO – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overdevelopment - Out of keeping with the area - Loss of Trees which have a requested TPO against them - Already a dangerous junction/access – highway issues, lack of visibility - Loss of green space - Existing Problems with United Utilities services in the area - Arboriculture report is out of date - previous application 22/0304C substantially the same was objected to by the council
36*	<u>23/2275C</u>	prior approval for a larger home extension	26, MELTON DRIVE, , CW12 4YF	No Objection
37*	<u>23/2279C</u>	Discharge of conditions 7 an 8 on application 20/1934C	20, 20a, 22, 22a Mill Street, Cross Street Garage, 2 and 4 Cross Street, CW12 1HQ	No Objection

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Council						
MEETING DATE AND TIME	10 th August 2023 7.00pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall				
REPORT FROM	David McGifford Chief Officer/Serena Van Schepdael – Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)						
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	10. Vale Allotments Association Grant Application						
Background	<p>The Vale allotments were bought by Congleton Green Spaces Trust in 2016 and supported by a campaign led by Congleton Sustainability Group.</p> <p>The Vale Allotments Association which currently manages the Vale Allotments are looking to purchase them from its current investors/owners. The total amount required is £37,000 and an application was presented to the Finance and Policy Committee for £5,000 to go towards the total required.</p> <p>Finance and Policy can only approve grants up to £3,000 and due to the nature of the request on the purchase of land the application needs to be presented directly to Council. Our Grant Fund Policy states we do not cover core costs so the application does not fit under these rules, however, we hold General Power of Competence and can forward this application for discussion under that power.</p> <p>There is a significant shortage of allotments in Congleton however the proposal will only contribute to protecting what is currently at the Vale Allotment site rather than contribute towards potential new sites which are currently quite difficult to identify within our town boundary.</p> <p>We are aware that grants are currently being sought from various sources to achieve the amount required, ordinarily when seeking grant support you need to be able to demonstrate where the match funding will come from.</p>						
Options	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Do nothing as it is not generating additional allotments and the funds requested would be used to repay original investors and protect the site.2. Initially agree to underwrite up to £5,000 as this will demonstrate support when making other funding applications. Up to £5,000 would be released once the balance of £32,000 or more has been achieved via other sources. If this is agreed we would need the council to agree to a transfer from The Capital Contingency Earmarked Reserve into a short-term Allotment Reserve of £5000						
Updates	<p>An update on the application details was received from the applicant on 27th July 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section 2.3: The target figure given of £37,000 includes £35,900 for the land purchase itself, and an estimated figure of £1,100 for legal costs and expenses.• Section 2.5: The pledges and grants received to date are as follows: <table border="1"><tr><td>█ grant</td><td>£375</td></tr><tr><td>█ grant</td><td>£250</td></tr></table>			█ grant	£375	█ grant	£250
█ grant	£375						
█ grant	£250						

	██████████ pledge	£2,000	
	██████████ pledge	£25,000	
	██████████ pledge	£2,500 (to be confirmed)	
	Other pledges	£150	
	Total	£30,275	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are therefore £6,725 short of our target, so would be very grateful for support from the Town Council to help close that gap. <p>(NB: Redacted names of Grants/Pledge groups redacted)</p>		
Decisions Requested	For Council to consider the options provided or agree an alternative solution		

Congleton Town Council
Application for Financial Assistance

Part 1: Applicant(s) and Project Details

Application Reference Number (office use only)	GR06-2324
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1.1	Applicant(s):	Peter Lane
1.2	Representing:	Vale Allotments Association
1.3	Email Address:	██
1.4	Tel No.	██
1.5	Project Title:	Purchase of Vale Allotments site
1.6	Project Objectives:	To enable the purchase of the Vale Allotments site by the Vale Allotments Association Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) for community benefit. Through ownership by a CIO, the site would be preserved in perpetuity as an open space in the centre of Congleton providing allotments for members of the Congleton community, including provision for those who are disadvantaged.
1.7	Brief Project Description:	The Vale Allotments Association has the opportunity, up to the end of 2023, to purchase the site from the current owner, the Congleton Sustainability Group, which wishes to sell.
1.8	Details accounts/budgets	See below. As a new organisation the VAA has no accounts to submit. Future income will consist of allotment rents which are currently around £500 per annum in total.

Part 2: Cost Details / Resources / Timescale

2.1	Total Cost of Project:	£37,000
2.2	Total contribution sought:	£5000 on an "all or nothing" basis – if the purchase is not achieved then the contribution would be returned
2.3	What will the money be spent on?	Purchase of site from the present owner, Congleton Sustainability Group
2.4	Any ongoing costs:	No

2.5	<p>Details of confirmed match funding include source</p> <p>Cash:</p> <p>In kind:</p>	<p>£375 was awarded in April 2023 by the [REDACTED] Fund.</p> <p>Grants are also being sought from [REDACTED] the [REDACTED] and other grant-giving bodies, while donations will be sought from businesses and private individuals and potentially through crowd-funding.</p>
2.6	Resources needed:	None other than funding.
2.7	Estimated timescale of project from start to finish:	<p>Approximately 14 months. The VAA was set up in November 2022, with the initial aim of gaining Charitable Incorporated Organisation status. An application to the Charity Commissioners was made in January 2023 and confirmation of CIO status was received on 9th May 2023 (Registered Charity Number 1202990). There are many precedents for allotment groups setting up as CIOs. The current owner, Congleton Sustainability Group, has agreed to sell the site to the VAA if the purchase price can be raised by the end of December 2023.</p>

Part 3: Potential Benefits / Outputs

3.1	<p>What are the potential benefits/outputs to residents of Congleton</p>	<p>The objectives/purposes of the CIO are:</p> <p>“To benefit the residents of Congleton and the surrounding area without distinction of gender, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious or other opinions by providing allotment facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreational leisure time occupation with the objective of improving life for the residents”.</p> <p>The VAA also places great importance on promoting for the benefit of the public the conservation protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in, and bordering allotments, in particular through the conservation of natural resources, the improvement of wildlife diversity and providing opportunities for learning about sustainable horticulture.</p> <p>Furthermore, the VAA intends as landlord to ensure that a restrictive covenant on the land is fulfilled to allocate at least two of the allotment plots for the use of those with learning difficulties and other special needs, young offenders and others in society who may benefit from the experience of working on an allotment, also to ensure that allotments are provided at reasonable rates, with concessionary rates for disadvantaged members of the community including those on low income (defined as those in receipt of Universal Credit).</p> <p>Two full plots are also set aside as a community orchard, the produce of which is offered to the Old Sawmill (a community benefit organisation), Congleton Foodbank, or other similar organisations.</p>
3.2	Are there similar services/projects provided in the area	<p>The only similar allotment site is the Hillary Avenue allotment site, owned by Congleton Town Council. Both the Hillary Avenue Allotments and the Vale Allotments have long waiting lists despite including half or third size plots to help reduce the number of people waiting. The Town Council is currently setting up a Landsharing scheme (Community Food</p>

		<p>Project/Airbnb Gardens) which hopes to match those wishing to grow food with homeowners or tenants who have gardens they would be happy for someone else to make use of.</p> <p>Due to the very significant under-provision of allotments in Congleton compared with other towns in Cheshire East, there is a need for existing allotments to be retained as well as for many more opportunities to be created. The Vale Allotments has the advantage of a very accessible location, close to the older and more densely built areas of Congleton where many residents do not have space to grow food. The site is open, sunny and well-drained with good soil, set within the ecological corridor of the Howty Valley and adjoining a Local Wildlife Site.</p> <p>A further advantage is that the land has been in horticultural use for as long as records can be found, and the current allotments have been present for over 60 years, so there is well-established use and management, currently by the Vale Allotments and Gardening Association (VAGA). Members of the Vale Allotments have a strong social and community ethos as well as there being a background of decades of experience.</p> <p>The closure of the site between 2014 and 2015 by a former owner was devastating and the VAA and VAGA now have a strong wish to put the ownership of the site on a much sounder footing than at present.</p>
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Part 4: Evaluation

4.1	<p><i>How will the project be evaluated and who will carry out the evaluation?</i></p>	<p>The project will be evaluated by VAA but all information (other than the names of individual donors) will be made publicly available through the VAA website (currently in preparation) and through an end of year report. A grant activities monitoring form will be completed and submitted to the Town Council.</p> <p>A Business Plan is in preparation by VAA and this will include provision for annual reviews and reporting by the Trustees following purchase. The accounts and all activities, income and expenditure will be made transparent and publicly available.</p> <p>The project will be successful if the money required to purchase the land is raised.</p> <p>Purchase of the site by the VAA CIO would open up opportunities for enhancement of the Vale Allotments which have been very constrained by uncertainty over future ownership and the debts incurred in saving the site from development or other uses.</p>
4.2	<p><i>Describe how you will promote the Town Council in your project.</i></p>	<p>The Town Council will be listed as a backer, including on any future crowd funding page, on the VAA website (currently in preparation) and on the Vale Allotments Facebook page, where agreed to be appropriate by VAGA. It will be included in future press releases or when other public information is provided. The Town Council logo can be added where appropriate.</p> <p>The Vale Allotments lies within a few minutes' walk of the Town Hall. VAGA members already take an active part in town centre activities</p>

		<p>including the Congleton Food and Drink Festival, Congleton Green Week and Congleton in Bloom, and it is expected they would continue to do so. The support of the Town Council would be very gratefully acknowledged and mentioned in any publicity by VAA and it is anticipated that even stronger links with the Town Council and its green initiatives could be developed in future, including through open days, educational visits, training sessions and so on.</p> <p>The Vale Allotment site and its cultural and natural heritage is a major asset to the town, particularly at a time when the social, recreational and health benefits of food-growing in a supportive and tranquil environment are recognised more than ever.</p>
4.3	<i>Please acknowledge you have read our Grant Application Criteria</i>	<p>Please see the Policy on our Grants page on our website: Grants - Congleton Town Council (congleton-tc.gov.uk)</p> <p>I/we have read the policy: YES</p>



Signature:

Date: 30.05.2023

p.p. Peter Lane (Chair, Vale Allotments Association)

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Council		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	10 th August 2023 7.00pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall
REPORT FROM	Serena Van Schepdael – Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	Agenda item 12 Policy Reviews		
Background	Council Policies need to be reviewed on a regular basis, two Policies were presented to the Finance and Policy Committee on 20 th July 2023 for approval: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grant Criteria Policy• ICT Policy		
Details	<p><u>The Grant Criteria Policy</u> was last reviewed on 28th April 2022. Current policy can be found here: CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL-GRANTS & FUNDING POLICY</p> <p>Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 sections to the Grant Scheme<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Individual Grants up to £150○ Small Grants up to £250○ Larger Grant £251 to £1,000• Maximum of £1,000 with Committee Discretion, no previous maximum limit• Will fund up to a maximum of 50%, previously stated will normally only fund up to a maximum of 50%• Removal of requirement to have Public Liability Insurance, as this is not a legal requirement.• Added that applicants cannot use the grant to apply to pay for our own room hire fees. <p><u>The ICT Policy</u> was last reviewed in 2018. Current policy can be found here: CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL ICT POLICY</p> <p>Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated dates of the Acts noted in the report.• Added information regarding Cyber Security: Section 1 and 2 and new Section 3.• Added Passwords Section• Updated Virus Controls Section		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added information regarding Social Media accounts the Council run in Website section. <p>The draft updates were presented to Finance and Policy on 20th July 2023 and approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants Criteria Policy FAP/10/2324 • ICT Policy FAP/11/2324 <p>Suggested next review date for both Policies: July 2024</p>
<p>Decisions Requested</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the updated Grants Criteria Policy as recommended by Finance and Policy Committee and adopt it into the Constitution. 2. To approve the updated ICT Policy as recommended by Finance and Policy and adopt it into the constitution.

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

GRANTS & FUNDING POLICY

There are 3 sections with regards to our Grant Scheme

Individuals: a maximum award of £150

Small Grants: A maximum award of £250

Large Grants: £251 to a maximum of £1,000 (With Committee discretion)

All grants are considered by the Finance and Policy Committee.

Requests for grant aid or sponsorship of an event will only be considered from the following categories of applicant:

- A Congleton Town based charity.
- A Congleton Town based Community group.
- A Congleton Town based Voluntary group.
- A Congleton Town Not for Profit community businesses
- Citizens of Congleton requesting grant aid with a project/event, which will be for the benefit of a wider group in Congleton.
- A Charity or Group based outside of Congleton Town as long as the project benefits resident of Congleton.

We will not fund/ consider:

- Incomplete applications
- General running costs: Utilities, Rent/Lease fees, staffing or salary costs.
- Applications from a National Body without a proven direct link to Congleton Town
- Applications over £1,000 (with discretion)
- Retrospective applications
- Applications from Schools funded by the Local Authority

INDIVIDUAL GRANTS

There is maximum grant of £150 for individual of Congleton Town, for an application to be accepted the applicant must prove that other fundraising to taking place to fund their project. We will only fund up to 50% of the project cost. The applicant must be part of an established Congleton Based Organisation which is supporting the project.

SMALL GRANTS UP TO £250

A financial breakdown of the project must be provided for this criteria and the applicant must prove that other fundraising is taking place to fund their project. We will only fund up to 50% of the project cost.

LARGE GRANTS £251 to £1,000

A financial breakdown of the project must be provided for this criteria and the applicant must prove that other fundraising is taking place to fund their project. We will require quotes for items over £251 details in the main criteria and financial statement or accounts of relevant bodies. We will only fund up to 50% of the project cost.

CRITERIA

1. The maximum grant Congleton Town Council award is £1,000 with Committee discretion.
2. An award of a grant must give direct benefit to all or some of the inhabitants of the Town, and the size of grant should be commensurate with the benefit delivered.
3. Grant forms will be scrutinized to ensure they meet the criteria set out in the Grants and Funding Policy before being put forward for decision at the Finance and Policy Committee. Applications which do not meet the criteria will be rejected and returned.
4. The Town Council as a body does not affiliate to any political party and legally cannot provide grant or support to any party political activity.
5. The Town Council does not affiliate to any religious group; however, applications will be considered where there is a clear community wide benefit.
6. Applications will only be considered when made on a formal application form with all relevant sections completed.
7. Applicants will need to demonstrate how their activities or the particular project for which financial support is being sought, will benefit the residents of Congleton Town.
8. The Council will give priority to the projects/organisations which progress one or more of its corporate objectives.
9. The Council will normally require details of the structure and funding of the organisation, and will probably request copies of budget/accounts and business plans for applications over £250.
10. The Council will require details of any project which is the subject of the application, including standards to be attained, costs, timescales and how the remainder of the funding will be provided.
11. Council will only fund the up to a maximum of 50% of a project cost and priority will be given to requests for grants of £250 or less. Any request above £250 will require detailed justification for the project including matched funding as a prerequisite.
12. Sponsorships - When there is a request for sponsorship, it needs to be clearly demonstrated how the Town Councils' support will be recognised.

13. Grant requests for tangible products or services.

Quotes are required for grant applications as follows:

- Under £250 No quotes
- £251 - £500 One quote
- £501 - £1,000 Two quotes

14. Applicants will be required to state the amount of grant sought from the Council and provide details of other grants or awards applied for or gained, which must be disclosed in full.

15. Where projects cross financials years, the Council may “ring fence” an approved amount of grant. It will reserve the right to withdraw approval where a project does not look likely to go ahead within a 12-month period from the grant approval date.

16. Payment will not normally be made until a project has been completed. Payments will then only normally be made against a formal receipt or invoice. Stage payments may be approved for larger projects.

17. The Council will usually only consider requests for specific projects, not on-going or core costs. You are not able to use the Grant to pay for Room Hire for Congleton Town Council bookings, for Charities and Local Groups a Subsidised Grant exists and is dealt with separate to this Grant budget.

18. The Council may, where it appears to be a more cost effective or efficient use of resources, prefer to act in partnership with another organisation, or provide support “in kind”, rather than provide grant assistance.

19. An evaluation of the project must be provided once the project is complete to provide evidence that the benefits and outputs have been achieved. The Grant Monitoring form must be returned to the Council within 4 weeks of completion of the project. Future requests for grants may be rejected if this is not completed.

20. The Council will advertise its Grant and Financial Assistance Scheme widely to ensure an equitable distribution of resources.

21. For grants and sponsorship, the applicant will acknowledge the contribution made by the Council when arranging promotional activity or literature, including press releases relating to the application.

22. The applicant acknowledges and agrees that all decisions made by the Council for such a grant request are solely a matter for and at the discretion of the Council. The applicant will provide to the Council all such assistance as is reasonably necessary to enable the Council to comply with its requirements under the Freedom of Information Action.

23. Per Group/Charity there may be only two successful applications per financial year.
24. There is a 10 working days deadline prior to a meeting for all information to be submitted in order for an application to be presented.
25. Grants awarded by Congleton Town Council should only be used for the original project in the application.
26. Congleton Town Council actively encourages applicants to attend the meeting to support the application to enable any queries /presentation.
27. The applicant acknowledges and accepts when competing an application that supporting documentation may be included in the public agenda, documents will be redacted where necessary. Our Data Privacy Policy and Information and Data Policy can be found at: [Constitution - Congleton Town Council \(congleton-tc.gov.uk\)](https://congleton-tc.gov.uk)

DRAFT

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

I.C.T. POLICY Including Cyber Security

1. Introduction

The Council uses its computer network, software packages and the internet, (including e-mails), to further the efficiency of its business and to provide the best service possible to its customers and partners. Any disruption to the use of these facilities will be detrimental to the Authority and may result in actual financial loss. This Policy sets out how the Council intends to regulate the use of those facilities.

The Council has a duty laid down in the Data Protection Act 2018, to ensure the proper security and privacy of its computer systems and data. All users have, to varying degrees, some responsibility for protecting these assets. Users also have a personal responsibility for ensuring that they and, where appropriate, the staff they supervise or have control over, comply fully with this policy – See also the Council’s Information and Data Protection Policy.

For the purposes of this document the terms “computer” (or “computer system”) and “computer data” are defined as follows:

- “Computer” (or “computer system”) means any device for automatic storing and processing of data and includes mainframe computer, minicomputer, microcomputer, personal computer (whether hand-held laptop, portable, standalone, network or attached to a mainframe computer), workstation, word processing system, desk top publishing system, office automation system, messaging system or any other similar device;
- “Computer data” means any information stored and processed by computer and includes programs, text, geographic, pictures, video, and sound.

Cyber security is how The Council can effectively aim to reduce the risk of a cyber-attack.

2. Procedures

2.1 General Operation

All hardware, software, data, and associated documentation produced in connection with the work of the Council, are the legal property of the Council.

The Council will maintain an external support contract for the hardware, major items of software and provision of internet facilities.

The Council will not knowingly breach copyright of another person.

The Council will include an assessment of risks from its use of IT in its Business Risk assessment.

The Council will include an assessment of risks from Cyber Security in its Business Risk assessment.

The Council will routinely back up its essential data and organise contingency plans.

The Council will make a detailed inventory of its ICT equipment on its Asset Register.

The Council will consider the location of equipment and provide documentation to ensure optimum physical security.

The Council will maintain a record of training to each individual user.

The disposal of any ICT equipment, software, waste, or data must be authorised, undertaken safely and properly documented.

2.2 Compliance with Legislation

The Council's policy in respect of the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 including General Data Protection Regulations is set out in its Information and Data Protection Policy.

Under the Computer Misuse Act 1990, the following are criminal offences, if undertaken intentionally.

- unauthorised access to a computer system or data;
- unauthorised access preparatory to another criminal action;
- unauthorised modification of a computer system or data;

All users should be made aware that deliberate unauthorised use, alteration, or interference with a computer system or its software or data, whether proprietary or written "in-house," will be regarded as a breach of the Council policy and may be treated as gross misconduct. In some circumstances such a breach may also be a criminal offence.

It is an offence under the Copyright, Design and Patent Act to copy licensed software without the consent of the copyright owner. All copying is forbidden by the Act unless it is in accordance with the terms and condition of the respective licence or contract.

2.3 Security

Consideration must be given to the secure location of equipment and documentation to help safeguard the Council's ICT assets. Portable equipment must be locked away when not in use and must not be removed from the premises without permission.

Only persons authorised by the Chief Officer may use Council computer systems. The authority given to use a system must be sufficient but not excessive and users must be notified that the authority given to them must not be exceeded.

Operating procedures are required to control use of ICT equipment.

Security incidents relating to any aspect of this policy must be reported to the Chief Officer immediately.

Avoid using public wi-fi connections that are not secure.

2.4 Passwords

Access to the Computers is subject to a password, which is periodically changed.

System led passwords will be stored in a secure manner and be available in a business continuity event.

Passwords must not be inserted into email messages or any other form of communication, or saved onto a shared computer.

Ideally separate passwords should be used for each account.

Additional Information:

The National Cyber Security Centre Website provides information on passwords.

2.5 Virus Controls

Viruses are undesirable pieces of computer code that can corrupt systems, equipment, and data. They are a serious, increasing threat to the computer systems of the Council.

If a virus is suspected, the equipment should be switched off and isolated and the Council's support contractor should be contacted.

Viruses are easily transmitted via email and internet downloads. In particular, users must:

- not transmit by email any file attachment which they know to be infected with a virus.
- not download data or programs of any nature from unknown sources
- not forward virus warning
- contact the Councils IT providers of any scam emails that arrive.

All computer and servers will have loaded and operate the Council's standard virus detection software for scanning diskettes and fixed drives.

Diskettes of unknown origin should not be used in the Council's computers.

No software should be located onto the Council's equipment without the permission of the Chief Officer.

2.6 Misuse

This Policy applies to the activities which constitute unacceptable use of the network operated by the Council. The policy applies equally to employees, councillors, clients, visitors, and others who may be allowed to use the facilities on a permanent or temporary basis.

All misuse of the facilities is prohibited including specifically but not exclusively the following:

1. The creation or transmission of any offensive, obscene, or indecent images, data or other material or any data capable of being resolved into obscene or indecent images or material.
2. The creation of material which is designed or likely to cause annoyance, inconvenience, or needless anxiety.
3. The creation or transmission of defamatory material.

4. The transmission of material in any way that infringes the copyright of another person.
5. The transmission of unsolicited commercial advertising material to networks belonging to other organisations.
6. Deliberate actions or activities with any of the following characteristics:
 - Wasting staff effort or networked resources
 - Corrupting or destroying another user's data
 - Violating the privacy of other users
 - Disrupting the work of other users
 - Other misuse of networked resources by the deliberate introduction of viruses
 - Playing games during working hours
 - Private use of the facilities without specific consent
 - Altering the set up or operating perimeters of any computer equipment without authority

2.7 World Wide Web (WWW) resources

These facilities are provided for use to achieve Council objectives. Any use for unauthorised purposes will be regarded as gross misconduct. If you are unsure whether use would be authorised, you must seek advice from the Chief Officer in advance.

2.8 Health and Safety

Computers are now a part of everyday life. If they are not used correctly, they can present hazards. Computers may be called Display Screen Equipment (DSE), Visual Display Units (VDU's) and the immediate environment where they are used i.e., desk/chair etc. is referred to as a workstation.

The Display Screen Equipment Regulations, 1992 regulate the use of computers at work and refer to the persons affected as "users".

"Users" are persons who "habitually use VDUs as a significant part of their normal work and regularly work on display screens for two/three hours each day or continuously for more than one hour spells." The Regulations also apply to employees working at home.

To meet the requirements of the Display Screen Equipment Regulations, the Council will provide a free eye test for all staff who use VDU equipment as a major part of their job role.

It is the Council's intention to optimise the use and application of display screen equipment within the Organisation, whilst safeguarding the health, welfare and job satisfaction or learning experience of those involved in using such equipment.

Staff "users" will have their name entered onto the list of "Designated Computer Users."

Risk assessments of all workstations are carried out to highlight any problems - this is done using the Workstation Assessment Questionnaire which is also a useful training tool.

If you are a "defined computer user": -

- Your workstation must be designed for computer use. There must be sufficient space to position your keyboard so that you can rest your wrists in front of it.
- The screen should be fully adjustable and must be positioned to avoid glare from lights, windows etc.
- Your chair must be of the fully adjustable type with five castors and must be adjusted to support your lower back. It must be set at the correct height for your desk. Your feet should rest on the floor, and you may need a footrest.
- Report eyestrain, headaches, or aching limbs to your manager.
- Ensure your computer has an adjustable keyboard.
- Ensure your working environment is comfortable. Problems with ventilation, temperature or lighting should be reported to your manager.
- Take a few minutes break every hour.

3 Cyber Security

Implementing effective ICT security measures is a key part of safety controls and risk management of running the Council. Following the ICT Policy procedures will help to keep awareness of cyber security and protection.

- Compulsory training and awareness course should be made available to all Staff and Councillors.
- Current and up to date information should be shared with all Staff and Councillors.
- Cyber Security must be included as part of the Councils Risk Management Policy.

Additional Information

National Cyber Security Centre: Toolkit for Public Bodies:

- <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/information-for/public-sector>
- <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/board-toolkit/toolkits-toolbox>

Appendix 1.

PROTOCOL FOR USING CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL'S WEBSITE (Feb 2013)

Background

The Councils website can be found at www.congleton-tc.gov.uk.

Updating the Site

The site will be updated by Town Council staff as required. It is important that the site remains fresh, relevant, and current. Should Councillors wish to have any content added or amended, please inform the Chief Officer.

Agendas will be uploaded onto the site at least 3 days prior to meeting dates; Minutes will be uploaded within 1 week of meeting dates.

Councillor details can be found on the 'Meet the Councillors' page of the site, personal contact details are listed with the permission of each Councillor. Also listed are any Appointments to Outside Bodies and any Declarations of Interests, if any changes need to be made the Chief Officer must be informed.

The Home page of the site has a 'twitter' feed which shows the 5 most recent 'tweets' sent from @Congleton Town, this can only be updated by the Town Centre & Marketing Manager and Town Council staff. Any 'tweets' sent out must be non-political, uncontroversial, and used to promote/highlight events in the Town.

The Council also have social media presence via Facebook, there are 2 accounts, Congleton Town Council and Congleton Information Centre. Any posts must be non-political, uncontroversial, and used to promote/highlight Town Council business (Such as meeting notices, grant schemes and events) and events in the Town.

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Council		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	10 th August 2023 7.00pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall
REPORT FROM	Serena Van Schepdael – Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	Agenda item 13 Ukraine Support Earmark Reserve		
Background	<p>For the financial year 2022-2023 Council approved an Earmark Reserve of £5,000 to be set aside for Ukraine Support, it was agreed some of this reserve could be used for English Lessons for that financial year. Initially, the projected costs for lessons were £2,200 but less was spent during 22-23. At the end of the year a balance of £1,948 remained in the reserve fund.</p> <p>The Congleton Area Ukraine Support Network submitted 2 applications for Financial Assistance for their English Language Lessons project which is split over 1-2-1 sessions and group sessions, 1 application for each type of lessons provided. The applications were presented to Finance and Policy on 20th July 2023 who approved a grant of £2,475 to be used against lessons.</p>		
Details	Finance and Policy approved the use of £527 from the Grant Fund Budget and the remainder to be funded from the balance of the Earmark Reserve that was carried forward from 2022-2023.		
Decision Requested	As recommended by the Finance and Policy Committee, approve the use of the balance from the Ukraine Earmark Reserve of £1948 to fund English Lessons for 2023-2024. Payment of the grant is to be delegated to the RFO.		

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

COUNCIL REPORT

MEETING DATE AND TIME	10 th August 2023 7.00pm	LOCATION	Bridestones Suite Town Hall
REPORT FROM	David McGifford Chief Officer		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	Agenda item 14 Councillor Attendance Records		
Background	Attendance figures for all Councillors are already available and in the public domain by review of all committee and full council meeting minutes. However, collating this data is time-consuming for the public to access and is not tabulated. Officers do keep these records as they have to monitor attendance due to the six-month ruling on councillor attendance		
Points for consideration	Members and officers of the Council have been approached by residents requesting that we make this information more accessible for members of the public, as is done by some town councils and local authorities. It needs to be noted that some councillors may have work, health, mobility or childcare issues which prevent them from attending therefore attendance at meetings should not be seen in isolation as councillor attendance figures may not reflect the quality or impact of councillors' work, for example some councillors - <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. may contribute more outside of meetings than others, such as supporting officer work and council events, campaigns, or community engagement.2. may attend a lot of meetings but not contribute anything during those meetings3. Being a town councillor is an unpaid role unlike within a local authority		
Finance	There is minimal cost involved in recording attendance at meetings as this is already done and a simple table could be accessed through the website		
Environment	There are no environmental implications		
Equality	The information which is available on the website could be forwarded to or collected by residents who do not have access to IT		
Proposal	That Councillor attendance at all committee meetings for which they are a member along with full Town Council meetings should be recorded and published on the Congleton Town Council Web Page in a way that is easily accessible to the public.		

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

COUNCIL REPORT

MEETING DATE AND TIME	10 th August 2023	LOCATION	Town Hall
REPORT FROM	David McGifford, Chief Officer		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	Agenda item 15 – Remote public access to meeting		
Background	<p>On the 28th April 2022 the Council agreed to the procurement of the DTEN Conference system.</p> <p>CTC/75/2122 RESOLVED to approve the procurement of hybrid meeting equipment as recommended by the Town Hall, Assets and Services Committee.</p> <p>The principle for the procurement of the system was to enable high-quality hybrid meetings for the council, businesses and individuals.</p> <p>The early usage of this system was mainly for council and partnership working groups to be able to have hybrid meetings which could not be accommodated in the Spencer Suite.</p> <p>During this time the high-quality screen has been used for council and committee meetings rather than projecting onto walls, more recently officers were working with the suppliers to understand how this could be more efficiently used by all parties concerned.</p>		
Trials	<p>More recently we have gained a better understanding of its capability and how we can best link people into meetings as well as establishing what it is like for those that join remotely. In principle it is no different to a zoom meeting but on a larger scale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Previous trials have taken place with either a councillor or an officer remotely joining the meeting with the settings programmed as muted and not visible – the feedback was positive in terms of being able to hear what was being said and able to follow the meeting and view the papers as they were on screen.• At a Strategy Working Group it was noted that a couple of councillors could not be heard properly mainly due to the fact they appeared not to be using the microphones properly or were too quietly spoken.• The Partnership held a working group meeting using the system and also utilised the integrated recording system following agreement with all the attendees. When the meeting was finished there were 2 downloads as options for the recordings, one just audio the other audio and visual, both were of a good standard		
OPTIONS FOR USE FOR COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS	<p>Now we have a better understanding of the system we need to agree how we wish to use this for our Council and Committee meetings.</p> <p>Should we wish to consider having remote access for residents, all residents would need to be muted on entry and remain muted at all times, those wishing to speak</p>		

	<p>will need to provide advance notice so the officer in control can let them in to speak at the appropriate time.</p> <p>From the officers perspective when they are supporting the meeting, which includes presenting reports, managing the system and taking minutes it presents an additional pressure which in time should become manageable.</p> <p>Recordings of meetings is possible through this system however this is not currently being proposed but could be considered at a future date.</p>
Finance	There are no/ minimal financial implications for this decision.
Environment	With residents attending the meetings remotely it is potentially beneficial with regards to their carbon footprint
Equality	Those who are unable to get to meetings for varying reasons, ie childcare, no transport, a disability, will be given the opportunity to observe meetings.
Decision Requested	<p>For council to decide upon</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing remote access for residents to all Committee and Council meetings

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

COUNCIL

MEETING DATE AND TIME	10 th August 2023	LOCATION	Town Hall
REPORT FROM	David McGifford, Chief Officer		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	Agenda item 16 – Reassignment of the lease for Congleton Town FC		
Background	<p>Due to the significant increase in grassroots football Congleton Town FC, in conjunction with other junior teams have been looking to develop more and improved facilities either at the ground or using the development value of the current ground to a sports hub for the town.</p> <p>Their current lease is with Cheshire East Council but they feel that they would rather be linked to the Town Council due to the lack of ambition and capacity within Cheshire East Council to improve sports facilities within Congleton</p> <p>This links to our Corporate Business Plan which states within the Key Issues Facing Congleton we have <i>Insufficient and poor-quality sports and recreation facilities</i></p> <p>Initial discussions have taken place with CEC and they are informally suggesting the current lease is transferred to the Town Council and we would sublease the ground to Congleton Town FC .</p> <p>For the ambitions to be realised for CTFC an agreement would need to be included about the potential sale of the ground and the condition that all revenue is re-invested into additional facilities. Alternatively, there would need to be a significant investment into the current location and the provision of an all-weather pitch which would facilitate more games than is currently possible on grass.</p> <p>Within their current lease CTFC are responsible for all grounds maintenance inclusive of the perimeter fencing, buildings such as the clubhouse, stands changing rooms, floodlights and pitch maintenance.</p>		
Proposal	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. For officers of the council to formally engage with Congleton Town Football Club and Cheshire East Council to explore a change in the leasing arrangements for Congleton Town FC ground at IVY Gardens.2. Report back to the relevant committee.		

**CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

COMMITTEE:	Council Meeting		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	10 August 2023 7.00pm	LOCATION	Town Hall, Bridestones
REPORT FROM	Jackie MacArthur, Communities and Marketing Manager & Deputy Chief Officer		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	Agenda item 17 Cheshire East Libraries' next step		
Background	<p>At an Emergency Council Meeting on 29 June 2023, Councillors considered its response to a Cheshire East Council's consultation regarding the reduction in library hours (click this link for the original paper). CEC was proposing to reduce the opening hours of Congleton Library from 46 hours to 34 hours (a reduction of 12 hours). The saving was to be done by closing half a day on a Wednesday and all day on a Friday. Similar cuts were being made to libraries across the borough.</p> <p>Congleton Town Council, like other towns and parishes across the borough, was given the option to top up the service by paying for one, two or three of the half-day closures.</p> <p>The decision taken at the Emergency Council on 29/6/23 was:</p> <p><i>CTC/28/2324 Resolved that the Town Council's response to the CEC Library Consultation should be as follows:</i></p> <p><i>Congleton Town Council rejects the need for Congleton's library to be closed for 1.5 days per week based upon the vital support this service provides for our growing community, as stated within the information that Cheshire East Council has provided.</i></p> <p><i>With Cheshire East Council and other potential partners, Congleton Town Council wishes to explore mutually beneficial ways in which we can keep Congleton Library fully functioning across the 6 days per week. Our ambition is to protect the benefits for our community but also support the CEC officers who work within the library service in Congleton.</i></p> <p>Following the consultation, which ended on 9 July, CEC amended its plans. This was discussed at CEC's Community and Environment Committee on 27 July. (click this link for the Cheshire East Committee Paper)</p> <p>Following further research and comments from the towns, CEC has amended the proposed closing hours for Congleton and the four other largest libraries. At its Community and Environment Committee on the 27 July CEC accepted proposals to reduce the closing hours for Congleton from 46 hours to 37-</p>		

reinstating 3 hours from the original proposal. This would see the reduction in closing hours in Congleton reduced by 9 hours of service per week with the opening hours amended as shown on the table below.

At a meeting with the Chief Officer, Deputy Chief Officer and Cheshire East Officers we were advised that CEC would begin the negotiations with staff about the new hours unless there was a serious intention from the Town Council to enter into a three-year contract to boost the opening hours. This contract would need to be in place by early October.

Table taken from the Cheshire East Community and Environment Paper

Group	Library	Opening Hours	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Proposed Hours Reduction
B	Congleton	Current	09:00 - 19:00	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 17:00	N/A
		Consultation	09:00 - 19:00	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 13:00	09:00 - 17:00	CLOSED	12 hours
		Final Proposal	10:00 - 19:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 13:00	9 hours
		<p>Consultation proposal to close full day Friday and Wednesday afternoon would have impacted 2 out of 14 regular activities</p> <p>Mitigations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Crafternoon tea currently alternate Wednesdays 2.00-3.30pm could move to Monday, but would clash with another event 2. Crafty natter currently alternate Wednesdays 2.30-3.30pm could move to Tuesday, but would clash once per month with another event <p>Final proposal to open at 10am and close at 1pm on Fridays doesn't impact any of the regular activities.</p>						

Next Steps

Cheshire East Council is planning to make the 9 hour savings in Congleton by

1. Opening an hour later each day – saving five hours per week
2. Closing on half day Friday – saving four hours per week.

CEC's research indicated that the first hour of the day tends to be the quietest in numbers using the library. ([data showing times and usage for Congleton Library can be downloaded here](#))

The considerations raised in the initial paper in the Emergency Town Council meeting when Congleton Town Council discussed its response are still relevant, although the scenario for the town is slightly better with 9-hour reduction (20%) rather than 12-hour (26%) reduction and the library will still be accessible for six days per week. It is not clear if all the services delivered via Congleton library can be condensed into 80% of the opening times.

In the paper to the Emergency Council CTC consideration was given to:

- **Impact on the Well-being of the Community.**
- **Impact on learning of young people**
- **Impact on Equality and Inclusion**
- **Impact on the Town Centre**
- **Long-term viability of the Building**
- **Is Friday the best day to close? (now refers to half day not full day)**
- **Growing and Expanding Town**

<p>Options</p>	<p>Councillors need to decide what actions they wish to take on behalf of Congleton and report back to Cheshire East Council on the actions proposed.</p> <p>CEC will start staff consultations in October about the reduced hours to put the new hours in place as soon as possible. If CTC does wish to 'buy back' some or all of the hours a funding agreement will need to be in place by early October. Cheshire East would cover the additional hours agreed until the start of the new financial year, when the Town Council would start to pay for the additional hours.</p> <p>The cost to the Town Council is £20,413 for the Friday afternoon and circa £5k for each weekday morning that we wanted the library to open at 9am rather than 10am. This will increase in years 2 and 3 to reflect staffing costs.</p> <p>Adding £25k to the budget, for a comparison, based on current year budgets would equate to an extra 2.4% on the Precept, an additional 4p per year to each Band D household.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accept CEC's new proposed opening hours for the library. This sees the library opening hours reduced by 9 hours. 2. CTC agreed to fund the additional hours on a Friday afternoon. This would be a three-year agreement which starts in April 2024 but contracts would need to be in place by October 2023. Cost £20,413 for the first year with pay increases added to the following 2 years to enable the library to open on a Friday afternoon. 3. CTC investigates funding the Friday afternoon, as in option 2, but seeks funding support from the surrounding parish councils and other partners. 4. CTC looking to fund the Friday afternoons plus an additional hour per weekday to enable the library to open at 9am rather than 10am. Note the cost per day per year will be approximately £5k. (three-year contract). This could be looked at for 1,2,3,4 or 5 days. Eg/ Councillors may believe it is worth opening up early on a Tuesday as people come into town early for the market? 5. Option 4, (with an agreed number of additional mornings) but include seeking support from surrounding parish councils and other partners to support the additional hours.
<p>Financial Implications</p>	<p>The figure for the half-day closure is £20,413 (22 hrs of staff time). This would be for a 3-year period starting in the financial year 2024/25. The following 2 years will be increased and take into account national pay increase.</p>

	<p>The figure for each additional hour of library time is approximately £5k per year (subject to increases for year 2 and 3).</p> <p>Adding £25k to the budget, for a comparison, based on current year budgets would equate to an extra 2.4% on the Precept, an additional 4p per year to each Band D household.</p>
Environmental Implications	<p>Minimal environmental footprint saving by closing for 1.5 days as the building is still heated and the resources are still purchased for the service. Loss of facility for the Community is the main issue.</p>
Equality and Diversity Impact	<p>The closure is likely to disproportionately affect those with the greatest needs. The library is the town's biggest warm space and safe space for people. Many people rely on the computers for form filling, job searching and the advice given by the staff acting as the 'one-stop-shop' for all Cheshire East related enquiries. Congleton library is one of the busiest libraries per head of population.</p>
Decision Required	<p>For Councillors to agree how it would like to proceed based on the options above, or potentially a new option, they wish to follow so that Cheshire East can be advised.</p> <p>If Council accepts option one – which is accepting the new opening hours that CEC is prepared to fund – then CEC will start discussions with staff so that the new hours can start asap in the Autumn.</p>

**CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	3 August 2023 7.00pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall
REPORT FROM	Rachel McCarthy, Town Centre and Events Officer and Jackie MacArthur, Communities and Marketing Manager and DCO		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	Agenda Item 18 Christmas Lights Replacements – for decision		
Background	<p>In February 2023 the Community and Environment Committee considered a paper for the replacement of the last of the 2013 Christmas Lights in the town centre. These lights have now started to fail and we have been advised are not repairable. The Committee resolved:</p> <p><i>CE/52/2223 resolved to ask officers to produce a detailed plan for Council to consider.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A replacement for the Merry Christmas Congleton sign at the bottom of Moody Street</i> • <i>Replacement for the two cross street banners used on Swan Bank</i> • <i>Replacements for the two lamp post banners on Mill Street</i> • <i>Replacements for the six lamp post banners on West Street</i> • <i>Replacement for the cross street banner in Lawton Street</i> • <i>Consider some festive lighting for the Market Area</i> <p>The previous administration did not want to make the decision to bind the new Council just ahead of the elections, so it was agreed that a paper would come to an appropriate Council meeting for discussion and decision.</p> <p>Since the Community and Environment Committee, officers have spent considerable time looking at lights from various professional companies and comparing their spec, suitability for location, fit with current lights, due diligence on the suppliers etc to come up with suggestions and recommendations.</p> <p>Note we have not included a new cross-street light for Lawton Street. There was not a cross street light in this location in 2022 (due to the light failing) and as long as the lamp post lights are dramatic we believe this expense could be spared.</p> <p>Officers believe the lights purchased for Lawton Street last year would be better suited to West Street and Mill Street due to size, so are recommending the 8 lights in Lawton move to West Street and Mill Street and the new lights are placed in Lawton Street.</p>		

Discussions are taking place with the Congleton Market Quarter about lighting for the market area.

Background for new Councillors

Congleton Town Council provides the Christmas lights for Congleton. This currently consists of lights on Lawton Street, High Street, Market Street, Pedestrian area, Victoria Street, Little Street, Mill Street, Swan Bank and West Street.

The Christmas lights are installed to create a sense of pride in the town, encourage people into the town for the festive season, create a positive atmosphere and to help create festive cheer. The Town Council has taken responsibility for the Christmas lights since 2012 and in 2013 carried out a major replacement of the town's lights when it purchased new lights at a cost of £19,893 plus one-off hardware costs of £7,200 to convert lamp posts and fit anchor points. (The payback on purchasing to renting was around 2.9 years). The lights we are looking to replace are the last of the 2013 purchases.

Since 2020 the Town Council has replaced a number of the 2013 Christmas lights including:

- 2020 the Town Council replaced the lights on the pedestrian area – including Victoria Street and Little Street, Market Street and the tree lights at a cost of £8682
- 2021 the Town Council replaced the lights on the High Street at a cost of £1950
- 2022 the Town Council replaced the lights in Lawton Street at a cost of £3100

Now the remaining lights from 2013, which have served us for 10 Christmases are in need of replacement and are classed as 'beyond economically viable repair'. Usually lighting companies guarantee the lights for 1 or 2 years and will not repair them. Independent electrical companies may repair, but the costs of the parts and labour exceeds the cost of replacement.

The lights that need to be replaced to maintain the same level of decoration are:

- A) The Merry Christmas Congleton sign at the bottom of Moody Street
- B) The two cross street banners used on Swan Bank
- C) The two lamp post banners on Mill Street
- D) The six lamp post banners on West Street
- E) The Cross Street banner that has been displayed in Lawton Street (this failed before installing and was not used for Christmas 2022)

In addition there has been a request to consider more festive lighting for the Market Area.

Timing

If lights are to be replaced ahead of the 2023 season the order needs to be placed in August as there is minimum of 6-8 week delivery period.

Capital Expenditure

Purchasing new lights would be a capital expenditure. We are advised that lights can be expected to last 5-6 years, we have managed to keep the previous lights working

	<p>for 10 years. The RFO has confirmed that we do have capital contingency funding available for this project.</p> <p><u>Rent v Purchase</u></p> <p>As the Town Council has previously always opted to own rather than rent the lights, we have assumed the same principle will apply. Most large companies give an option to purchase lights outright or hire cross-street banners and lamp post lights. The cost of renting for three years is slightly higher than purchasing outright.</p> <p>The benefit of hire is that after three years you can completely change your lighting scheme as the town would have no ties – or ownership – of lights.</p> <p>The benefit to purchasing outright is a saving to the public purse if the lights are robust and looked after. Our current lights lasted between 7 and 10 seasons. If Councillors are interested in the hire options prices can be given in advance of the meeting.</p>
Details and options	<p>Potential lighting schemes - see 18.Options and Prices</p> <p>Looking to replace</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Moody Street – officer preference either a Merry Christmas Congleton from Company B or the Rhapsody or Quadrille Chain from Company C 2. Swan Bank x 2 cross street lights – officer preference – Grand Blizzard from company c (needs to be 5m) 3. Lamp post banners – x 8 – will add these to Lawton Street where it needs to be brighter and believe the ones purchased last year will look good on Mill Street and West Street. Sterling Pole – Company A looks good but is expensive. Company C Blizzard looks bright – but is half the width.
Financial Implications	<p>The total cost of the project, if Councillors wish to go with the officer recommendations the cost would be £11,568.96 if having a Merry Christmas Congleton banner on Moody Street or £9,458 if having the Quadrille banner on Moody Street.</p> <p>This will come from the Capital Contingency budget.</p> <p>Costs associated with installation, removal, storage, anchor testing, minor repairs in advance of installation and on-site repairs come from the Lights Budget.</p>
Environmental Implications	<p>All lights are now LED and the electricity usage is low. The lights are on timers where there are usually street lights so there is no significant light pollution.</p>
Equality and Diversity Impact	<p>Decorating the town has a positive impact for traders and the town, which has a good reputation for Christmas lights and atmosphere. Other activities are being organised to bring more people into town for free activities where they can enjoy the lights.</p>
PROPOSALS	<p>For the Committee to agree on a course of action.</p> <p>The Officers' recommendation is below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moody Street – Merry Christmas (A) (£11,567) or Quadrille (B) (£9458) • Swan Bank – Grand Blizzard • Lamp post banners – Blizzard

Christmas Lights – options and prices - Appendix A

Company A :

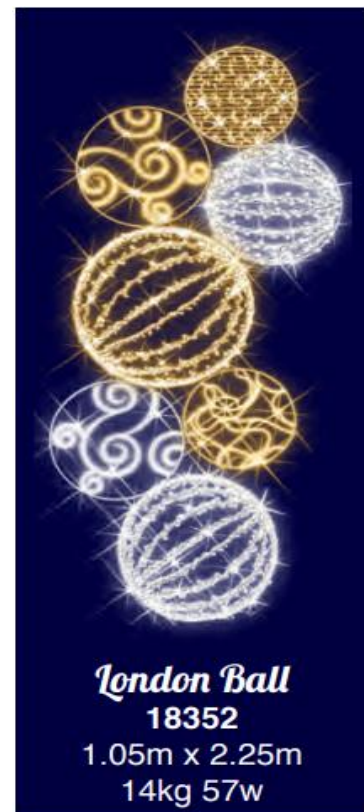


Symphony Scroll £1,151 each

8 new lamp post lights needed



Aura = £569 each



London Ball £890 each



£1278 each (Swan Bank) – Crystal Snowflake (2 needed)

Need

8 x lamp post lights eg/ London Ball – £7,120

2 x cross street banner – Crystal Snowflake - £2,556

1 x something special for Moody Street -

Company B

For Moody Street



550 x 150cm, warm and cool static white @ £3706.96



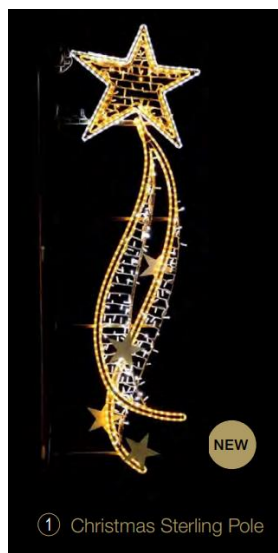
560 x 150cm, warm and cool static white @ £3668.90



Winter Wing Cross Street,
warm and cool white static
£1,023.08 each



104cm x 237cm - £797.06



80cm x 240cm £1534.58



133cm x 256 £936.04

COMPANY C

Option 1

Three options for Moody Street



Moody Street – Rhapsody Double – 6ft - £1491 per banner
Swan Bank – Grand Blizzard – 5ft - £1535 each
Lamp post Banner - £599 each

Option 2



Quadrille Chain – Moody Street - £1595 – 1.6m x 6m 28.5kg – slow flash

Grand Blizzard - Swan Bank - £1535 - 5m
Lamp post – Bolero - £628 – 2.30m x 0.70m



Option 3



Bolchoi - Moody Street - £1567 - 1.2m x 6m - 23.3kg - slow flash

Grand Blizzard - Swan Bank – 5m - £1535

Lamp post banner – Mazurka - £472 each



Options Table

	Moody Street	Swan Bank Cross Street	Lawton Street (6)	TOTAL
A	1 x 3706.96 Merry Christmas Congleton	2 x 1023.08 Star design 2046.16	8 x 723.22 Comet 5785.76	£9738.88
A	1 x 3668.90 Merry Christmas		8 x 1534.58 Sterling Pole 12,276.64	
A			8 x 963.04 Star string 7704.32	
		2 x 1278 Crystal snowflake Total 25556	8 x 1151 Symphony Scroll 9208	
B			8 x 596 Aura Total 4768	
B			8 x 890 London Ball Total 7120	
B				
C1	Rhapsody 1 x 1491	Grand Blizzard 2 x 1535 Total 3070	Blizzard lamppost 8 x 599 Total 4792	£ 9353
C2	Quadrille Chain 1 x 1595		Bolero lamppost 8 x 628 Total 5024	£ 9689
C3	Bolchi 1 x 1567		Mazurka 8 x 472 Total 3776	£ 8413

Officers preferred Choice

Moody Street – either Merry Christmas Congleton or Quadrille Chain

Swan Bank - Grand Blizzard x £3070 for 2 (believe need to be the same)

Lamp post - Sterling Pole looks spectacular, but high price. Blizzard lamp post more reasonable!
(think should be the same in the same area)