

MINUTES OF THE MEETING – REGENERATION WORKING GROUP

19TH AUGUST 2024 10AM – 11.30AM

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

1. PRESENT:

Committee Members

- Cllr Russell Chadwick (Chair)
- Cllr Kay Wesley (via phone call)
- Cllr Amanda Martin
- Cllr Robert Douglas

Non-Committee Members: Bob Edwards

Officers: David McGifford, Jackie MacArthur, Rachel McCarthy

- APOLOGIES:

2. Draft agenda approved

3. Minutes from previous meeting approved held 3rd June 2024

Approved.

4. **Neighbourhood Plan**

The plan is progressing well and is now out for a six-week consultation starting on 7th October 2024. We are working with Urban in Print, a new company based in Macclesfield. Given that we are now under a Labour government, the plan will need to be reorganized to reflect new priorities.

The plan will be circulated to group members for review and comment before scheduling a separate meeting for discussion. **Action: DMCG**

A key issue within the plan is waste management in the town centre and surrounding areas, particularly on Buxton Road and Lawton Street. Accessibility for wheelchair users, parents with prams, and visually impaired individuals is problematic, as they are often forced to walk in the road due to obstructions. There is a need for communal bins, similar to those used abroad, and this should be considered in the planning phase. **Action: JMAC**

Sheldon Avenue and Biddulph Road also struggle with people leaving bins out. There is a desire to make this enforceable, but the mechanism for doing so is unclear. Fly-tipping is on the rise, and enforcement remains a challenge with Cheshire East Council (CE).

CE is attempting to transfer responsibility for fly-tipping to local councils. However, housing associations like Sanctuary Housing are difficult to contact and do not take responsibility for removing large items (e.g., chairs, sofas) from social housing areas. This is unacceptable for residents living with this issue on their doorstep.

The Neighbourhood Plan should also focus on encouraging new businesses to set up in the town centre. Barn Road, which has not been included in the plan, is an important part of the town and should be added. The group is also opposed to large new builds outside the town centre. Bob raised the possibility of reintroducing wardens to enforce fines for violations. Can we ask CE to supply an officer, with the council covering the costs?

5. Town Centre Repairs

Deep cleans on the pedestrian area, jet washing takes place twice a year. Ruth has got quotes for painting the lamp posts, bins and benches.

We have to have business planning first, public realm agreement needed then look at budgets.

Russell has discussed with CE, line painting and repairs, CE won't complete line painting unless its safety issue. Wall on Mill Street has been reviewed but CE won't take action, Kay has pointed out a road sign that is completely wrong, CE won't change this, unless there are health and safety concerns.

There are bi-annual deep cleans and jet washing in the pedestrian areas. Ruth has obtained quotes for painting the lamp posts, bins, and benches. Before proceeding, we need to finalize the business plan, secure a public realm agreement, and review budgets.

6. Totally Locally

Kay is meeting with Mike from Gazer agency, helping to promote Totally Tenner Wednesdays, where a new venue is featured weekly.

Knutsford mayor has launched a new initiative to promote businesses with awards for the peoples favourite shop, 'High Street Awards', which recognises various achievements.

Russell has proposed a new idea 'Love my Street', the idea is that the community participates in volunteer-led weed clearing days to take pride in their local areas.

Kay is meeting with Mike from Gazer Agency to promote "Totally Tenner Wednesdays," where a new venue is featured weekly.

7. Toilets

We will know more regarding the lease on 14th September from CE regarding Capital Walk, the building hasn't sold yet either, its currently up for auction.

8. A.O.B

- The Communities Committee will be discussing Cheshire East (CE) libraries. A consultation will determine whether Congleton will be affected.
- The signage for the Elizabeth statue has been altered and needs to be corrected.
- There is a question of whether car park charges will continue until 10 p.m.
- Flags in the town centre looked great during the summer. Can we locate the flags and check their condition for reuse? **Action: RMCC**
- The summer play days were highly successful in the town centre. We should plan to repeat this next year but will need to explore funding sources.
- The bins at the bus station are rusty and do not open. Are these CE assets?
- The paving near Wetherspoons is in poor condition, with chunks of tarmac missing. Ideally, this should be replaced, but only with tarmac in that area.
- The benches in the town centre are rusty and need proper refurbishment. Invite Ruth to the next meeting. **Action: RB**
- The strip lights near the benches by Peacocks are not working. We will ask the town hall electricians to inspect them. ****Action: DMCG****
- Send out the repair list to Robert Douglas. **Action: RMCC**