



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> MAY 2024, 19:00pm, LAWTON MEMORIAL HALL**

**Present:**

CLRs: G Mitchell (chair), Cllr M Whittle, Cllr M Grocott, Cllr L Bowler, Cllr R Giltrap, Cllr E Mitchell, Cllr I Johnston, Cllr P Redstone and Cllr R Young

Cheshire East Councillor – represented by Cllr P Redstone

Clerk – Sue Davies, Deputy Clerk – Clare Withington

The meeting started at 7:00pm

Cllr Mitchell, as outgoing chair, opened the meeting.

**24-25/1 Election of the Chairman of the Council for the 2024-2025 Civic Year.**

To receive nominations for and to elect a chairman of the Council for the 2024-2025 civic year. For the elected chairman to sign a declaration of office.

Nominations were received and seconded for Cllr G Mitchell and Cllr M Whittle.

**Resolved:** Cllr G Mitchell was elected as the Chairman for the 2024-25 Civic year by a majority show of hands.

Cllr Mitchell signed his declaration of acceptance witnessed by the Clerk.

**24-25/2 Election of the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2024-2025 Civic Year.**

To receive nominations for and to elect a vice chairman of the Council for the 2024-2025 civic year. For the elected vice-chairman to sign a declaration of office.

Nominations were received and seconded for Cllr Ian Johnston and Cllr M Whittle.

**Resolved:** Cllr I Johnson was elected as the Vice-Chairman for the 2024-25 Civic year by a majority show of hands.

Cllr I Johnston signed his declaration of office witnessed by the Clerk.

**24-25/3 To receive apologies for absence.**

Apologies received from Cllr M Blease-Bourne.

Signature of the Chairman of the meeting where the minutes were approved:

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**24-25/4      Declarations of Interest: To receive any disclosable pecuniary or other disclosable interests as required under Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011**

None declared.

**24-25/5      Public Speaking - To allow any members of the press or public the opportunity to speak in accordance with Standing Orders.**

None present.

**24-25/6      Approval of Minutes: To approve the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024.**

**Resolved:** The minutes of the meeting of the 15 April 2024 were approved by those present.

**24-25/7      Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities.**

**Resolved:** To continue with the current Committee structure and the delegated authorities which are contained within the policies for staff. It was noted that Congleton Town Council provide streetscape services only with no delegation in place.

**24-25/8      Planning and Projects Committee:**

**a) To agree and approve the Terms of Reference subject to any agreed changes.**

It was noted that the Chair and Vice Chair have Ex Officio roles including voting rights and to be counted in the quorum. The Committee budget limits are also set out. The Committee is open to all members (but requires at least 4 Cllrs with a quorum of 3).

**Resolved:** The Terms of Reference were agreed.

**b) To agree membership of the Planning Committee.**

**Resolved:** The membership of the committee was agreed to be:

Cllr P Redstone, Cllr G Mitchell, Cllr I Johnston, Cllr L Bowler, Cllr M Whittle.

**c) To receive nominations for and appoint a chair for the Planning Committee.**

**Resolved:** Cllr P Redstone was elected by majority show of hands.

**d) To receive nominations for and appoint a vice-chair for the Planning Committee.**

**Resolved:** Cllr M Whittle was elected by majority show of hands.

**24-25/9      Staffing Committee:**

**a) To agree and approve the Terms of Reference.**

It was noted that the membership criteria are changed to read either 3 or 4 members. The delegated powers has changed to include the role of Trustee and the power to recruit subject to final agreement by Council.

**Resolved:** The Council approved the proposed terms of reference.

**b) To agree membership of the Staffing Committee.**

**Resolved:** The membership of the committee was agreed to be:

Signature of the Chairman of the meeting where the minutes were approved:

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Cllr M Blease-Bourne, Cllr L Bowler, Cllr P Redstone and Cllr R Young.

**c) To receive nominations for and appoint a chair for the Staffing Committee.**

**Resolved:** Cllr M Blease-Bourne was elected chair by a majority show of hands.

**d) To receive nominations for and appoint a vice-chair for the Staffing Committee.**

**Resolved:** Cllr L Bowler was elected vice-chair by a majority show of hands.

**24-25/10 To agree members to do in-house audits during 2024-2025.**

**Resolved:** The following councillors to conduct 'in-house- audits was approved:

Q1 – Cllr Young, Q2 - Cllr Blease-Bourne, Q3 - Cllr Redstone, Q4 - Cllr Mitchell

**24-25/11 To consider the continuation or otherwise of any working groups and agree membership.**

**a) Neighbourhood Plan Group. (Reporting to Planning and Projects)**

**Resolved:** It was agreed that Council members of this group be: Cllr Redstone, Cllr Whittle, Cllr Johnston, Cllr Young, Cllr G Mitchell and Cllr Giltrap.

**b) Community Liaison Group – meeting with other organisations (e.g., All Saints Church) regarding events. (Reporting to Full Council)**

**Resolved:** It was agreed that Council members of this group be: Cllr Blease-Bourne, Cllr Mackinnon, Cllr Grocott and Cllr Redstone.

**c) Footpaths working group. (Reporting to Planning and Projects)**

**Resolved:** It was agreed that Council members of this group be: Cllr Mitchell, Cllr Giltrap, Cllr Redstone, Cllr Johnston, Cllr E Mitchell and Cllr Whittle. It was further agreed that the group should draft a term of reference for agreement by the Planning and Projects Committee.

**24-25/12 Appointment of Members to the outside bodies, committee, and community groups:**

**a) Lawton Memorial Hall Operating committee.**

It was agreed Cllr Blease-Bourne as current chair to formally feedback to the Council.

**b) To confirm Police liaison representation and Speed Watch lead councillor(s).**

It was noted to invite the Police and Crime Commissioner to a future meeting and invite other councillors in Odd Rode ward. Cllrs Johnston and Redstone were named as the police liaison and Speedwatch representatives.

**c) SMASH/Connected Communities.**

It was noted that Connected Communities is a group set up to discuss issues in the town and surrounding areas with the community groups and partners, set up by Cheshire East Council. SMASH is Sandbach, Middlewich, Alsager, Scholar Green, Haslington and is led by NHS. It was agreed that Connected Communities to be invited to future meeting and to decide what role the Parish Council will have before nominating. Odd Rode Parish Council to be invited also.

Signature of the Chairman of the meeting where the minutes were approved:

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**d) Representation on Alsager Town Council’s task group relating to car park charges.**

Alsager Town Council are just working through the T of R. It was agreed that Cllr Redstone supported by the Clerk and Cllr Giltrap be put forward. The Clerk was asked to verify the membership.

**24-25/13 To review and approve Standing Orders dated May 2024.**

**Resolved:** To approve the standing orders with the amendment of changing the word assistant assistant to deputy.

**24-25/14 To review and approve Financial Regulations dated May 2024.**

**Resolved:** To approve, with the word assistant replaced with deputy throughout, only until the NALC new template can be considered and a revised set of regulations brought back to Council.

**24-25/15 To review and approve the Council’s Policy for dealing with the press and media.**

Deferred to next meeting.

**24-25/16 Insurance Provision: To receive a report from the clerk on the Council’s insurance provision and to consider and approve quotes received for renewal.**

The clerk summarised the current policy with Zurich: £12m public liability and £250k fidelity. The clerk reported that the increase in precept has pushed it into another and further quotes are required.

**Resolved:** Authority delegated to Clerk in consultation with the Chair to approve, and report back to the Council at the next meeting.

**24-25/17 To review and approve the Council’s subscriptions:**

- a) ChALC due April 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 – Approved £700 approx.
- b) SLCC – contribution to the Clerk’s subscription (shared with Prestbury PC) – Approved.
- c) CVS Subscription – paid for 2023-2024 – Agreed not to resubscribe at the present time.
- d) ICO – compulsory. – Approved.

**24-25/18 To resolve to approve the following services for 2024/2025:**

**a) Payroll- continued use of Shire Pay Service –**

**Resolved:** The continued use of Shire was approved for 2024-2025.

**b) Internal Auditor – JDH Business Services –**

**Resolved:** The continued use of JDH Business Services was approved for 2024-2025.

**c) Website hosting and provision – NetWise**

**Resolved:** It was agreed that an exercise to consider options and cost should be considered prior to renewal.

**d) Microsoft 365 provision – Recoded Solutions.**

**Resolved:** It agreed to continue using Recoded Solutions for Microsoft 365 provision.

**e) Accountancy Package (Scribe) –**

**Resolved:** The continued use of Scribe as an accountancy package was approved.

**f) Mapping Software – Parish Online –**

**Resolved:** To continue the subscription for Parish Online. It was noted that councillors should ensure they have access by contacting the clerk.

**24-25/19 Review of the Council’s expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence.**

It was noted that the General Power of Competence is in place.

**24-25/20 To agree a calendar of meetings for the 2024-2025 Council year.**

It was agreed that the schedule to be publicised. It was agreed that a set date each month would help.

**Resolved:** That meetings take place on the first Monday of the month, alternating between Planning and Projects Committee and Full Council.

**24-25/21 Cheshire East Feedback**

Cllr Redstone provided feedback to the Council.

**24-25/22 Finance (Clerk)**

**a) To receive the draft 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 end of year accounts and to note any significant budget variances.**

Deferred.

**b) To receive a 31st March 2024 reserves report.**

Deferred.

**b) To approve payments to be made (including some retrospective payments).**

It was agreed that the Clerk process urgent payments but otherwise this item be deferred.

**c) To note receipts to date in the current financial year.**

Deferred.

**d) To note payments to date in the current financial year.**

Deferred.

**e) To receive bank reconciliations and statements dated 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024.**

Deferred.

**f) To review earmarked reserves and to and agree any recommendations from the RFO.**

Deferred.

**24-25/23 Banking Arrangements for 2024-2025**

To consider and agree banking arrangements for 2024-2025 – to agree full signatories and online signatories for the Unity Trust accounts.

**Resolved:** Cllrs G Mitchell, L Mackinnon, M Blease-Bourne, I Johnson and the Clerk be full signatories.

**Resolved:** The clerk and deputy clerk be able to input payments. Further to the full signatories, Cllr Young, Whittle and Grocott to be added to online authorisation.

**24-25/24 Audit 2023-2024**

**a) To receive updates from the Clerk on the Internal Audit Arrangements:**

The internal audit is ongoing and will be brought to the next meeting.

**b) To receive updates from the Clerk on the timetable on External Audit Arrangements:**

A brief outline was given of arrangements with details deferred until the next meeting.

**24-25/25 Planning Matters: To consider and agree responses to the following applications:**

**24/1312C Alsager Court Care Centre, Sandbach Road North, Church, Stoke on Trent, ST7 3RG**  
Advertisement Consent for signage design proposals for the new care home building.  
Comments deadline – 10<sup>th</sup> May 2024 – extension requested.

**Resolved:** No objection

**24-25/26 Cheshire East consultations, to agree a Council response:**

[Consultations in Cheshire East](#)

**a) Air Quality Strategy –**

No comment.

**b) Carbon neutrality Action Plan**

No comment.

**c) Statement of Licencing**

No comment.

**d) Household Waste Recycling Centre**

All to ensure to read to enable a response to be agreed at the next meeting.

**e) New Local Plan Issues Paper –**

It was agreed that the Clerk request a quote from Urban Vision for assistance. Cllr Johnson also offered to look over the documents and offer some views.

**f) Review of Supported Local Bus Services Consultation. – 3<sup>rd</sup> July**

Deferred to the next meeting.

**24-25/27 To receive any items or correspondence or other matters from the Clerk and Deputy Clerk.<sup>1</sup>**

Leaflets are to be delivered to all households in every house in Church Lawton regarding the beacon, fish and chips night (6<sup>th</sup> June) and 1940s night (8<sup>th</sup> June).

*All to contact the Clerk and inform where they can deliver to.*

**24-25/28 To receive any other reports from the chair including an update on actions raised at the Annual Parish Meeting.**

It was noted that 20 members of public attended. Key points:

- Parking in the Spinney:  
It was noted the individual to attend Neighbourhood Plan meeting and for the Clerk to contact Cllr Wardlaw. The issue may be brought to a future meeting.
- Knutsford Road and Liverpool Rd West: State of path – Cllr G Mitchell offered to walk the affected areas and report back. Additional services to Streetscape need to be considered due to their limited availability.
- Potential tipping on land adjacent to the canal to be followed up and contact planning enforcement for an update.
- A Speedwatch update requested: reported that retraining via police is awaited.
- Woodgate Drive: problems were raised during refreshments and informal chat at the meeting – Cllr Giltrap and the Clerk to speak to residents to find out what they wish to do about it regarding parking issues and it was suggested a letter be circulated asking for resident feedback. It was noted that grass cutting is not possible due to state of verge.

**24-25/29 To receive any reports or items from Members.<sup>1</sup>**

A request to consider a location for a bench in the vicinity of the Horseshoe pub was raised.

Christmas tree in three areas were suggested – future agenda and agree locations. The Clerk and deputy clerk will start to look at this.

**24-25/30 Training/meetings and courses:**

**a) To consider any training requirements –**

The clerk to circulate list from CHALC and it was requested to attempt to attend one course.

**b) To note training attended.**

None attended.

**24-25/31 Future Agenda Items**

As above. Christmas next Full Council

**24-25/32 To agree Date of next meeting: To be agreed**

3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024.

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Signature of the Chairman of the meeting where the minutes were approved:

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