

NORTHWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Town Clerk: Chris Shaw

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Northwich
town council

DATE: 2nd November 2023

To: The Members of Northwich Town Council

Dear Councillor

You are summoned to attend the meeting of the at the **Council Chamber, 78 Church Road, Northwich, CW9 5PB** held on **Monday 6th November 2023 at 6.00pm.**

Yours Sincerely

Chris Shaw

Chief Officer

AGENDA

1. To receive a presentation from Milton Winpenny on Wild About Stockton Heath.
2. To receive a presentation from Cheshire Fire & Rescue on their draft 2024-2028 Community Risk Management Plan
3. Apologies for absence or absence – Members to agree an extended absence for Cllr Amy Lockett.
4. **Declaration of interest**
Members to declare any interest under the following categories:
 - *Pecuniary interest
 - *Outside bodies interest
 - *Family, friend, or close associate interest
5. **Open Forum**
Members of the public will be allowed to speak at the Open Forum section of this meeting on the understanding that any topics raised will have been forwarded in writing to the Town Clerk at the above address prior to the date of the meeting.
Public Question Time to be a maximum of 10 minutes.
6. **Signing of the Minutes**
6.1 Of the Town Council meeting held on Monday 9th October 2023. Minutes attached.
Members are required to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record
7. **Reports of Committees**
 - 7.1 To note Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 16th October 2023. Minutes attached.
 - 7.2 To note Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 17th October 2023. Minutes attached.
8. **Town Mayor's Communication**
List of Civic Events that the Town Mayor has attended during October 2023 (attached)

- 9. Chief Officers Report**
Report attached
- 10. Police Update**
To receive a report from Northwich Police
- 11. Council Codes**
To review and approve attached codes following on from the Situation Analysis.
[Decision of the Council is requested.](#)
- 12. Remembrance Weekend**
To note report attached.
- 13. Christmas Extravaganza**
To note report attached.
- 14. CW&C Councillor Updates**
To receive updates from Members
- 15. Outside Bodies**
To receive an update from any member attending meetings of outside bodies
- 16. Date of next meeting**
The next meeting will be Monday 4th December 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Part B

[In accordance with Local Government Act Public Admittance to Meetings Act 1960, the following agenda items are to be considered in the absence of Press and Public](#)

- 17. Draft Strategy**
Report to be given at the meeting.
[Decision of the Council is requested.](#)
- 18. Staffing Report**
Report to be given at the meeting.
[Decision of the Council is requested.](#)

NORTHWICH TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 9th OCTOBER 2023

Present:

Cllr Jane Thomas

Town Mayor

Councillors:

Cllr Joanne Callaghan

Cllr Kate Cernik

Cllr Catherine Fox

Cllr Amy Lockett

Cllr Bob Cernik

Cllr Rachel Waterman

Cllr Sam Naylor

Cllr Lee Siddall

Cllr Andy Stott

Cllr Arthur Neil

Also present:

Chris Shaw

Cath Kirwan

Chief Officer

Deputy Chief Officer/Responsible Finance Officer

NTC 23/47 PRESENTATION FOR 150th MILTON WINPENNY ON WILD ABOUT STOCKTON HEATH

Apologies received.

NTC 23/48 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE OR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Andrew Cooper, Cllr Graham Emmett, Cllr Julie MacDonald, Cllr Olwyn Dean, Cllr Alison Gerrard, Cllr Janet Illidge, Cllr Andy Kent, Cllr Catriona Stewart, and Cllr Tom Melville. Cllr Patrica Parkes and were not present.

NTC 23/49 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members to declare any interest under the following categories:

- Pecuniary Interest
- Outside Bodies Interest
- Family, Friend or Close Associate interest

Cllr Arthur Neil and Cllr Sam Naylor declared an interest in any matters relating to Cheshire West and Chester Council.

NTC 23/50 OPEN FORUM

There were no speakers.

NTC 23/51 SIGNING OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 11th September 2023 be confirmed and approved as a true and accurate record.

Proposed by Cllr Arthur Neil and seconded by Cllr Lee Siddall all agreed.

Minutes to be signed by the Dept Mayor.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas Town Mayor

NTC 23/52 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

NTC 23/53 TOWN MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

September has been a wonderful month where there have been a number of events which I have had the pleasure of attending

03/09/23	Butterfly Trail We started this month with a Mayoral event – a butterfly trail and BBQ at Vickersway park. The event was quite well attended, but as the weather was unexpectedly hot, there were less children attended than we anticipated. A small sum was raised which will go towards celebrating those who have been affected by breast cancer. Many thanks to Toppers who provided wonderful prizes and to Chris and Cath who supported me at the event.
10/09/23	Parkinson Walk. There are over 153000 people in the UK living with Parkinsons. This is a degenerative condition which presents in many different ways. I was invited to support the walkers in Marbury Park for this national events and was privileged to meet many people who worked with / lived with and were affected by this disease.
15/09/23	The Northwich Beer Festival. I was invited to join the start of this weekend of festivities and sample a non-alcoholic beverage. It was thriving and it is another event which puts Northwich firmly on the map! Many thanks to Rotary for running it.
16/09/23	Warrington Police Museum Open Day. Peter Hampson, the curator of the museum gave me a tour of the station. It is a really excellent event and worth a visit. It is another example of the police working with local communities to break down barriers. If you are in Warrington, it is certainly worth a visit.
16/09/23	Northwich Rowing Club Presentation Evening. The rowing club is another example of a successful group of inclusive individuals who are helping put Northwich on the map. I was joined by Chris Atherton, Principal of Sir John Deans to award prizes to members. It was a wonderful evening which celebrated success of many individuals and groups.
22/09/23	Opening of the Sheeran Skate Park. What a privilege to be able to open this skatepark! It looks incredible and was enjoyed by many on the day and is going to be an asset for the community in the future. A huge thank you to Chris who worked extremely hard to see this vision to fruition, both to generating the funding, working with the community and supporting and incredibly hard-working team from Wheelscape who worked long hours to get it open. It is also important to mention Ross and Shaun from the Skatepark community who tirelessly campaigned for this to happen.
21/09/23	Dementia Friendly, Northwich – Deputy Mayor attended.
22/09/23	The Butterfly Breast Cancer Awards. I was invited to attend the first awards ceremony celebrating those who lived with or where affected by this awful disease. Sarah Pickles who launched these awards spoke about how this disease transforms people which is why the butterfly is the logo. It

	shows growth and change. It was a deeply moving evening and a privilege to join these wonderful guests.
23/09/23	Opening of the Northwich Rugby Clubhouse. It was a privilege to join the #teamofthetown for the opening of the clubhouse. The transformation of the meeting room was incredible – especially when it has only been 11 months since the arson happened. It is wonderful to see this community working together. I was honoured to present many awards, but especially the Cap to the new life presidents, Chairman Colin Johnson and our wonderful freeman of the town, Derek Bowden.
23/09/23	Macmillan's Coffee Morning and Art Gallery. I was thrilled to be able to revisit some of the incredible artists that I had met during the Art Trail in August and have an afternoon tea with them. The art was yet again, incredible and if you are looking for some exceptional Christmas presents, these pieces would be really worth considering. Tom and Carey Hillier will be in Blakemere in November and Carol Dooley, Lorraine Blundell and Susan Treeton are showing their work in town. The artists raised over £400 for Macmillans. An incredible achievement
28/09/23	Freedom Fibre Awards for Communities – Deputy Mayor attended

Cllr Sam Naylor would like to praise the Mayor for her attendance at events

NTC 23/54 CHIEF OFFICER REPORT

Church Walk Paddling Pool

The pool is now closed for the season and we will begin the annual shut down of the site, 2 of the pumps developed faults at the end of the season and these will need to be looked at and repaired or replaced.

Rose Meadow Play Area

This initiative is progressing, and the landscape architect is in receipt of the consultation responses. They will now come up with a design and this will be presented to the residents and the house builder for approval.

Remembrance Sunday 12th November 2023

Preparations are underway for this years Remembrance Parade, as in previous years we will march from Crumb Hill to St Helens Church for a service before the Act of Remembrance at the Cenotaph and parade back to Brio for refreshments.

Further details will be sent to all members this week.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas Town Mayor

Christmas Extravaganza

The Christmas Extravaganza will take place on Saturday 25th November and will again see a whole list of activities throughout the town including the very popular ice rink. Again, further details will be sent out this week regarding the range of activities that will be showcased throughout the day.

NTC 23/55 POLICE UPDATE

Sergeant Brundell and PCSO Karen Nixon came and presented the Council with information about Summer 2023 – Youth Local Neighbourhood Policing Unit. There has been a range of activities which

have been free and they have included Football Sessions on a Friday evening at Moss Farm where approx. 400 children had attended. There has been a Summer Sports Camp for children aged 6-11 years and Pitch up and Play Camps for children aged 12-16 years and climbing sessions for children 10-16 years. All these sessions have been very popular and have been a great success. PC Panda has attended various events in Northwich and is welcomed by all. Mini Police has been launched at Rudheath Primary School and will also be launched at Kingsmead Primary School. These include 35 mini police officers who will be sworn in at the end of November. Feedback from parents has been very positive and residents have also commented of the life skills that these children are learning.

County Lines Drug Activity took place on 13th – 20th September. In this time there have been a number of arrests in the area and also out of the area and drug related stop searches have happened too. There will be another dedicated action in October 2023.

There will be a Halloween and Bonfire Disco at The Venue, Rudheath and presentations at local primary schools. There will also be Awards at Christmas time where children will be awarded with a Hamper.

ASB has been reduced by 26.5% this summer in the Town Centre and 34.6% overall in Northwich. Compared to 2022 ASB has reduced by 90% at Moss Farm in 2023.

Thanks were given from Cllr Lee Siddall, Cllr Kate Cernik, Cllr Rachel Waterman suggested funding options. NTC awarded the Police with £500 towards the Christmas Awards. And we will be having an Indian Night to raise funds for the summer activities.

Sergeant Brundeet thanks all the Working Partners who have been involved.

NTC 23/56 NORTHWICH SKATEPARK

Following a 10 week build programme Northwich Skatepark is now fully open for our community to use. Users have been extremely positive following the opening of the facility with many posting pictures on social media expressing their delight in the new park.

CCTV is now installed on the park to reduce ASB on the site and local police officers are engaging with users to build up relationships going forward to ensure the facility is well looked after and respected by all.

Many thanks to all who funded the project including FCC Communities, Rudheath & Witton Together, Cheshire West & Chester Council, Spacehive and Northwich Town Council.

The team from Wheelscape worked so hard throughout the build especially at the end to ensure the facility opened on time, the weather was against us at the end, but they worked long days and weekends to finally deliver the project.

The local skating community were inspirational in pushing this project and we thank them for being so patient while we raised the funds to deliver the scheme.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas Town Mayor

We hope that this facility will give many years of enjoyment to our community as we look at our next project for residents.

NTC 23/57 OLD HALL ROAD PLAY AREA CCTV

Background

Old Hall Road Play Area was totally refferbished in 2022 following consultation with residents. The facility is a firm favourite with the local comunitty and is in constant use throughout the year.

Unfortunately over the last few months we have seen an increase in ASB on the site with some slight damage to equipment. Local PCSO has been informed and is making regular visits to the site but following the success of the recently installed CCTV in Verdin & the skatepark consideration should be given to install the same equipment at this site.

Proposal

CO to look at options for installation of CCTV and bring costs back to Amenities Committee for consideration.

Council agreed that CCTV is a good deterrent. Costs are approx. £3000

Proposed Cllr Ms Joanane Callaghan, Seconded by Cllr Arthur Neil, all in favour

NTC 23/58 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM CLLR LEE SIDDALL ON DYSLEXIA AWARENESS WEEK

2nd – 8th October, This week highlighted the awareness of Dyslexia. Lee Siddall was diagnosed with Dyslexia at the age of 10 and felt like a weight had been lifted with being diagnosed. Cllr Siddall was prescribed glasses which helped but unfortunately the other school children would make fun of him and that stopped him wearing them for a few years. There are lots of symptoms with Dyslexia and it isn't just reading and writing that can be affected. There can be an overlap with Dyslexia and ADHD. Due to the brain having to work harder this can leave you feeling exhausted at the end of the day. 10% have Dyslexia and 30% have both ADHD and Dyslexia. At least 4-5 children will leave school without being diagnosed and can't be diagnosed until after 7 years old.

Councillor's thanked Cllr Lee Siddall for sharing his experience.

NTC 23/59 CW&C COUNCILLOR UPDATES

Cllr Arthur Neil – many complaints about Potholes in the area. Number of volunteers cleared the woods at Hunts Lock and Moss Lane and are quite keen to do more areas. Residents in Winnington will be forming a Residents Group to discuss with the developers problem areas. Alley ways in Winnington and Castle residents want to improve them.

Cllr Sam Naylor – two issues to make NTC aware of are that we need to take action towards Winnington Solar Panel Project which will have big implications in the long run as there is no car parking and a large amount of HGV delivering the soil to the site.

Cllr Arthur Neil also commented his concerns on the impact of the infrastructure. Cllr Lee Siddall agreed with both Cllr Neil and Cllr Naylor with regards to the impact of the traffic.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas Town Mayor

Cllr Sam Naylor continued to comment on the impact of this possible development.

Cllr Catherine Fox left 7.35pm

Cllr Sam Naylor second issue was that he has spoken with the Cheshire Fire Authority who will be losing some fire officers and is concerned as the response won't be as efficient. A consultation will be coming out. Unions are willing to come and speak with Northwich Town Council to raise their concerns. Sam would like to propose we ask the union and fire officers to our upcoming Full Council to raise their concern.

Proposed Cllr Andy Stott, Seconded by Cllr Lee Siddall, all in favour

Cllr Bob Cernik, had attended Sir John Deanes trustee committee and would like to take a lead of Ethical Investment.

Proposed Cllr Bob Cernik, Seconded by Cllr Ms Rachel Waterman, all in favour

Lee Siddall met with United Utilities and Pete from Grozone with regards to doing a survey on the River Weaver.

NTC 23/60 OUTSIDE BODIES

N/A

NTC 23/61 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Council meeting will be Monday 6th November 2023

There being no more business, the meeting ended at **7.50pm** and moved to part B

NORTHWICH TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 16th OCTOBER 2023 at 6.30 pm

Members Present : Cllr Ms J Thomas
Cllr Ms J MacDonald
Cllr Ms C Fox
Cllr Mrs K Cernik
Cllr Ms R Waterman

Also Present : Chris Shaw - Chief Officer
Cath Kirwan – Deputy Chief Officer/RFO

FIN23/38 TO APPOINT A TEMPORARY CHAIR

As Chair and Vice Chair were not present at the meeting, it was agreed that Cllr Mrs K Cernik would Chair tonight's Finance Meeting.

FIN23/39 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE OR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr S Naylor, Cllr Ms A Gerrard, Cllr T Melville, Cllr L Siddall

FIN 23/40 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were given by Cllr Ms J MacDonald to Northwich Metals and Cllr Ms R Waterman to Changing Lives Together

FIN 23/41 SIGNING OF THE MINUTES

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 18th September and noted at Full Council meeting on Monday 9th September 2023.

Proposed Cllr Ms J Thomas, seconded Cllr Mrs K Cernik, all agreed

FIN 23/42 DETAILED INCOME & EXPENDITURE BY BUDGET

CO & ACO/RFO answered various members questions relating to budget headings.

Proposed Cllr Mrs K Cernik, seconded Cllr Ms C Fox, all agreed

FIN 23/43 BACS DUE FOR PAYMENT

Bacs payments and direct debit figure approved £91,884.83

Proposed Cllr Ms C Fox, seconded Cllr Ms J MacDonald, all agreed

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Date

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**Cllr Mrs K Cernik
Chair**

FIN 23/44 BANK PAYMENTS TO BE CHECKED BY FINANCE

Members approved evidence for payments made in August 23 (July 23 invoices)

Kaos - £250.00
Steve Pugh - £325.00

Proposed Cllr Ms C Fox, seconded Cllr Mrs K Cernike, all agreed

Members picked two suppliers from September payments (August invoices), evidence to be brought to finance meeting in November 2023

Blue Arrow - £444.00
Radio Northwich - £250

Proposed Cllr Ms C Fox, seconded Cllr Mrs K Cernik, all agreed

It was also agreed that we pay Leftwich Primary School there grant application earlier than the agreed date due to the event taking place earlier.

Proposed Cllr Ms J Thomas, seconded Cllr Mrs K Cernik, all agreed

FIN 23/45 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date of the next meeting Monday 20th Noem2023 at 6.30pm

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.20pm

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Date

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**Cllr Mrs K Cernik
Chair**

NORTHWICH TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 17th OCTOBER 2023

Members Present

Cllr Andy Stott
Cllr Lee Liddall
Cllr Patricia Parks
Cllr Andy Kent
Cllr Catriona Stewart
Cllr Andy Stott
Cllr Janet Illidge

Also present

Chris Shaw – Town Clerk
Liza Clansey – Assistant Town Clerk

PL 23/68 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, OR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence received from Cllr Jo Callaghan, Cllr Andrew Cooper, Cllr Olwyn Dean and Cllr Catherine Fox.

PL 23/68 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members to declare any interest under the following categories:

- Pecuniary Interest
- Outside Bodies Interest
- Family, Friend, or Close Associate interest

Cllr Catriona Stewart and Cllr Andy Kent declared an interest in planning application at 23 The Crescent Northwich CW9 8AD. Proposal: Single storey side and rear extension, addition of side window. This is the road they both live on.

PL 23/69 SIGNING OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning and Environment committee meeting held on Tuesday 19th September 2023 and noted at the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 9th October 2023 be confirmed and approved as a true and accurate record with the following amendments noted: Cllr Janet Illidge and Cllr Andy Stott sent in their apologies for the meeting.

Proposed by Cllr Lee Siddall and seconded by Cllr Andy Stott, all agreed.

PL 23/70 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1. Reference Number: 23/02991/TPO

Site Address: 2 Tall Trees Close Northwich CW8 4YA

Proposal: Rear garden Lime Tree - re-pollard to previous pollard points. Rear Garden Oak tree - remove epicormic growth from main stem.

Refer to tree officer

2. Reference Number: 23/03080/FUL

Site Address: 24 Church Road Northwich CW9 5NT

Proposal: Conversion of single dwelling-house into 2 self-contained flats together with internal and external alterations.

No comments

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Date

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Cllr A Stott – Chair

3. Reference Number: 23/02986/FUL

Site Address: 41-43 Wolsten Croft Northwich CW8 4DL

Proposal: Change of use of 3 units in Class B2/B8 use to indoor sports hall (Padel Tennis) sui generis and ancillary works.

No comments

4. Reference Number: 23/02965/FUL

Site Address: Dale Cottage Dales Square Northwich CW9 8AH

Proposal: Erection of detached single storey garden room/hobbies studio to rear garden.

No comments

5. Reference Number: 23/02766/FUL

Site Address: Land At Winnington Avenue Northwich

Proposal: Re-engineering, remediation (through the creation of a development platform), restoration, and subsequent installation of a commercial scale photovoltaic solar park including a battery energy storage system (BESS) and other associated development.

It was agreed that NTC would put in their objections to this planning application, Cllr Catriona Stewart drafted out the response to be placed on the website.

Town Council planning committee met on 17th October 2023 where the proposed solar farm in Winnington was discussed at length. Councillors are mindful of collective responsibility and moral duty to respond to the climate emergency. This means any objection from the Town Council to a planning application for a solar installation should have a very high bar if objections are to be made. It was the view of all councillors at the planning committee that this high bar had been met and ask Cheshire West and Chester to note our strongest objections.

Northwich Town Council's objections are in relation to the many years of works as well as the impact of the works on local infrastructure which is already stretched and, in the case of Winnington Bridge, at risk of failing. The council does not object to the solar farm in principle but to the impact of the proposed implementation.

The planning application notes the works are estimated to take five years. However, in reality the experience is that building and infrastructure work generally exceeds estimations for completion, sometimes substantially so. Winnington Bridge has been classed as 'borderline immediate risk structure' with its condition noted as 'poor.' The existing road network in Northwich is already at capacity with high levels of traffic and congestion throughout the day. The proposal would bring hundreds of HGV trips to deliver material to cover the lime beds six days a week over many hours will put the bridge at even greater risk. It will add to congestion in an already congested network of roads. It will also impact negatively on air quality and noise levels over an unacceptably long period of the day (7.30am-6pm on weekdays and 7.30-4pm on Saturday, giving residents very limited respite and peace for many years). Cheshire West and Chester Council have already commented that the three way traffic signal at the bridge causes significant congestion and emissions. CW&C was refused levelling up funding for a new bridge demonstrating a lack of concern for the safety and welfare of the community before the additional burdens of this planning proposal which would exacerbate the situation and risk considerably and in the view of the Town Council, to a wholly unacceptable level.

The Town Council's concerns go beyond the immediate impact on the Winnington Bridge the local roads. While we acknowledge that every KW of solar energy is one not using fossil fuels, the main beneficiaries of the project would be TATA. TATA would receive free electricity and financial benefits under the Climate Change Levy and Smart Export Guarantee scheme. The community would pay the cost in reduced air quality, significant disruption and the risk to roads and the Winnington Bridge. Councillors wondered whether there might be alternative ways of bringing in the material to raise the level of the lime beds; possibly using the existing canal/river network or using rail (where track could be repurposed for the community when work was complete as a cycle track for example).

As Northwich Town Councillors we ask that you consider the serious concerns we have raised, as individual councillors responding, and this objection from the Council. In considering the benefits of a solar farm, as we acknowledge there are for everyone in terms of climate change and for TATA in the considerable financial benefits they will receive, we ask that CW&C and TATA engage in meaningful and serious dialogue with the community who will be so adversely affected during the period of construction.

We hope you will consider our objections in your consideration of the above planning application.

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Date

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Cllr A Stott - Chair

6. Reference Number: 23/02929/FUL

Site Address: Land To The South West of Winnington Hall Winnington Lane Northwich
Proposal: Installation of a solar array and erection of associated fencing.

No comments

7. Reference Number: 23/02670/FUL

Site Address: 23 The Crescent Northwich CW9 8AD
Proposal: Single storey side and rear extension, addition of side window.

No comments

8. Reference Number: 23/02918/FUL

Site Address: 127B Middlewich Road Northwich CW9 7BY
Proposal: Single Storey Rear Extension (re-submission of application 20/01466/FUL).

No comments

9. Reference Number: 23/03067/PMA

Site Address: 14 - 16 Witton Street Northwich CW9 5EB
Proposal: Change of use of the first floor from retail shop to 2 self-contained flats.
Upgrading of single-glazed windows into double-glazed windows on front elevation retaining colour and style of existing windows and replacement of access door to the flats.

Planning committee raised several issues regarding this application. There is already an issue with bins and waste from residents with dwellings within the town area, this would add to this, the bin/waste issue needs addressing. Safety issues for residents at nighttime with dim lighting and very dark back entry areas. Retail units already struggle with use of this service area without an additional four car space being taken for residents, there is also currently issues with deliveries and parking for retail units.

10. Reference Number: 23/03103/FUL

Site Address: 103 Cromwell Road Northwich Cheshire CW8 4BW
Proposal: Single storey rear extension

No comments

PL 23/71 DLUHC CONSULTATION ON LOCAL PLANS

Cllr Catherine Fox replied on behalf of Northwich Town Council to NALC regarding the DLUHC consultation on local plans.

Members thanked Cllr Catherine Fox for her time and efforts in drafting out the reply.

PL 23/72 NEXT MEETING

The next Meeting will be held on Tuesday 21st November 2023 at 6.30 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 19.30.

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Date

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Cllr A Stott - Chair

Report to : Full Council

Meeting Date : 6th November 2023

Agenda Item : 8

Prepared By : Cllr Jane Thomas/Cath Kirwan

Subject : Town Mayors Communications



There were events attended by the Town Mayor during October 2023

Mayor's diary – October 2023

14 th October	Royal British Legion – Attended this event with the CO. Chris gave feedback around Remembrance Day logistics. The AFVBC is a breakfast group for veterans who meet Davenham regularly. They also have groups in Winsford. It is a really important group who support veterans with any issues that they might have. They can put you in touch with officers who can support you achieve many things. These include support for housing, healthcare, education and also interview techniques. Chris Samuel from the Armed Forces Covenant Coordinator for CWAC spoke about many of the support networks available as well as activities which might be of interest to the group. It was very insightful, and I enjoyed meeting a number of veterans. He would be delighted to work with any veterans. Sam N also spoke as CWAC Armed Forces Member Champion and would only be too happy to support veterans / serving members get any help they need.
20 th October	Brunner Mond and Co 150 th anniversary weekend. Although this was not one for the Mayor, but open to councilors, I would like to recognize this very special event. The talk, given by Diana Leitch MBE was informative and it was wonderful to hear how Northwich became the heart of industry along with Widnes and Runcorn. I spoke with Hugo Brunner after the meeting and he spoke about Sam N's desire to return the two statues to Northwich. It would be an incredible achievement and one which we should support Sam to achieve. These two gentlemen transformed Northwich and it would be fitting to see them back in town.
24 th October	Meeting Len Cotterell at the Warrington Museum of Policing. Len talked about his role within the CNC and how this impacted on Cheshire. He was extremely informative and I was so pleased to hear him speak. I would thoroughly recommend a visit to this museum – although in Warrington is a museum for all of Cheshire
28 th October	Launch of the Poppy Day Service. This is the start of the Poppy Day Appeal. Money raised supports families of veterans as well as those who are still serving.

Report to : Full Council
Meeting Date : 6th November 2023
Agenda Item : 12
Prepared By : Chris Shaw
Subject : Chief Officers Report



Northwich Ticket Office

Following on from the Government Consultation on the closure of all ticket offices, we have received news that this will now not go ahead due to public outcry and the Government have made a u-turn in their decision. Many thanks must go to everyone that has responded to the Consultation to make the Government aware that this was just not acceptable.

Tree of Lights/Cheese and Wine Evening

We are holding two Mayoral events during December including the popular Tree of Lights ceremony in Witton Cemetery and also a Cheese and Wine evening. Please see details below:

**Northwich**
town council

Town Mayor Charity Event

Cheese & Wine

Charity Evening

Thursdays 14th December. 7pm
Council Chambers, Witton Cemetery,
78 Church Road, Northwich, CW9 5PB.

Tickets are £15 pp and includes a glass of wine or soft drink on arrival.

Cllr. Jane Thomas, our Town Mayor would love you to join her for this special cheese and wine charity evening with all proceeds going to local charities chosen by Jane.

Come along and try carefully selected cheese and wine pairings whilst raising money for good causes, there will also be cash prizes to be won on the night.

A pop up bar will be serving red, white and rosé wine along with soft drinks available to purchase throughout with cash or card payments accepted.



SCAN TO BOOK



Payment to be made before the event by cash or cheque (payable to Northwich Town Council Town Mayor's Charity account) to our offices or by bank transfer to: Town Mayor's Charity Account, sort code: 40 35 02, acc number: 41400320. Last date for booking is 10th December.

TO BOOK: <https://forms.office.com/e/CegXYWHQT4> or scan the code

**Northwich**
town council

Tree of Lights

Ceremony 2023

Celebrate a Life at Christmas

Witton Cemetery. Friday 8th December 2023. 6pm.
Held within the entrance of Witton Cemetery gates, 78 Church Road, Northwich, CW9 5PB.

Let a light shine in memory of a loved one this Christmas by dedicating a star to be placed on the "Tree of Lights" at Witton Cemetery.

All of the stars will be laminated and placed on the large holly tree just within the cemetery gates and will remain on the tree until after the twelfth night of Christmas when the lights are turned off and the stars will then be carefully removed.

Please return your form and stars to:
Northwich Town Council Offices
78 Church Road, Northwich CW9 5PB
or
Snippets Hair Salon
89 Station Road, Northwich CW9 5LT

Closing date is Wednesday 6th December and although there is no charge, should you wish to make a donation, all the proceeds will go to the Town Mayor's Charity.

Thank you.

Please fill in and return with the completed star (and donation if you wish)
Name of loved one as you would like it to be read out at the ceremony:



Report to the Council meeting on 6th November 2023 Ethical Framework

Background

Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC) were engaged to undertake a Situation Analysis for the Authority. When this was considered by Council, it agreed to revise several governance and policy documents which included codes of conduct and associated protocols.

National Framework

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new ethical framework for local government, to replace in July 2012, the outgoing framework introduced in the Local Government Act 2000, following an independent report by the Nolan Committee. The 2011 Act abolished the national Standards Board but continued to require principal councils to uphold the high standard of members conduct and to make arrangements through their monitoring officer to investigate allegations of breaches for both their own councillors and those of town and parish councils. The Act also created new provisions (including a criminal offence) in relation to "disclosable pecuniary interests" which needed to be incorporated within any code of conduct.

All principal and local councils are required to adopt their own local codes of conduct for members (rather than base it on a national code as previously) and Cheshire West and Chester Council (CW&CC) has to determine arrangements to deal with complaints about both its own members and town/parish councillors. The Localism Act does require it to appoint at least one Independent Person to assist the Council and members with complaints issues. The principal council is no longer able to impose sanctions on parish/town councillors but can make recommendations to the relevant council, which will be published. It is then up to that local Council to make a resolution to respond to such a recommendation.

At Northwich Town Council

Code of Conduct for Councillors

Northwich Town Council adopted its currently published Member Code of Conduct in December 2015 which is based on the then current CW&CC Code. The principal Council has since adopted a new model which NTC has agreed to base its next Code on. The Situation Analysis Report supported this but suggested some tailoring to meet the needs of a local council.

So, what do we want from a Code of Conduct? Certainly, the following:

- A clear statement of what is and is not satisfactory behaviour.
- One that is easily understood by councillors in a very complex area.
- One that is understood by the public.
- One which will maintain the Council's credibility and good governance.

The recommended **Councillor Code of Conduct, Appendix 1** is therefore based closely on the CW&CC Code but has been tailored slightly (highlighted in red) by a note on dispensations and linking it to recommended protocols. References to cabinet members, which is not applicable to local councils, have been omitted.

Protocol for Member/Officer Relations

The significance of respect between officers and councillors and the importance of each recognising the others' role is vital to a successful council. The Town Council have never adopted a formal protocol to supplement the Member Code, but agreed to the recommendation in the Situation Analysis.

Appendix 2 sets out a recommended **Protocol of Member/Officer Relations** which supports and adds detail to both the Members' and officers' codes of conduct. It is based on one adopted by Cheshire West and Chester Council, but tailored for the Town Council. Variations from the CW&CC model are identified in red.

Planning Protocol

Although local councils such as Northwich TC are not planning authorities, as important consultees they are still part of the planning process. It is vital therefore, that their considerations of planning applications in public, are open and fair. It is recommended that Council adopt of a planning protocol; to supplement the code of conduct because planning is a particularly sensitive area where members can easily make a mistake. It is intended that the planning protocol will continue to engender public confidence in the planning system at Town level, whilst avoiding procedural rules which are so rigid and overbearing that observance of them would become an end in itself, at the expense of the consideration of the merits of an application. The recommended **Planning Protocol** is attached as **Appendix 3**. It has regard on the one adopted by Cheshire West and Chester Council but is tailored for use by the Town Council to reflect their different roles in the planning process.

Officers' Code of Conduct

The suggested Code is written around the same seven principles of standards in public life as the Members Code of Conduct.

This Code is based on the voluntary Code of Conduct approved by the Local Authority Associations and the Local Government Management Board, adapted and/or amplified where perceived necessary to meet local circumstances or requirements. It also incorporates the principles contained in the draft model Code of Conduct for Local Authority Employees which has been the subject of consultation by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister but has not progressed to adoption.

Recommendations

1. To adopt a revised Councillor Code of Conduct based on the Cheshire West and Chester Council Code. (Appendix 1)
2. To adopt a Protocol for Member-Officer Relations set out as Appendix 2.
3. To adopt a Planning Protocol to supplement the Code of Conduct as set out in Appendix 3.
4. To adopt an Officers Code of Conduct as set out in Appendix 4.

Chris Shaw
Town Clerk

Peter C Cooper
Cheshire Association of Local Councils

Appendix 1. Revised Member Code of Conduct
Appendix 2. Protocol for Member-Officer Relations.
Appendix 3. Planning Protocol
Appendix 4. Officers Code of Conduct.

Appendix 1



MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

VERSION NUMBER	V3
DATE Adopted by Council	6 th November 2023
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	May 2025

Introduction

Northwich Town Council has adopted this revised Member Code of Conduct, based on the one adopted by Cheshire West and Chester Council but adopted to the requirements of a local council.

All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct and it is intended to promote and maintain high standards of conduct and underpin public confidence in the authority and its members.

The Council will undertake a regular review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation.

The Code has been adopted under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 and is based on the following core principles of public life - selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. It sets out general obligations about the standards of conduct expected of members and co-opted members of the authority, together with provisions about registering and declaring interests.

The role of councillor is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviours and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become councillors.

As councillors, we represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area, taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.

Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as a councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied, or threatened by anyone, including the general public.

This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “member” means a member or co-opted member of Northwich Town Council. A “co-opted member” is designed in the Localism Act 2011 section 27(4) as a “person who is not a member of the authority but who:

- a) Is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority; or
- b) Is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee.”

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

Members are also expected to comply with any protocols on Member-Officer Relations, Planning or Social Media which the Council may adopt to supplement this Code.

General principles of member conduct.

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, members and local authority officers, should uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as the Nolan Principles. **(see Appendix A)**

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of member.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I will act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of member.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community;
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person;
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of member or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a member.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a member which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a member;
- your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a member

This Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements, and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a member.

The Monitoring Officer **of the principal authority** has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town Council members are additionally encouraged to seek advice from their **Chief Officer**, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

Standards of member conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standard of conduct required by you as a member. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

General Conduct

1. Respect

As a member:

- 1.1. I treat other members and members of the public with respect.
- 1.2. I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a member, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions, and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in members.

In return, you have the right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider, or the police. This also applies to fellow members, where action could then be taken under the Member Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the **Council's** member-officer protocol.

2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a member:

- 2.1. I do not bully any person.
- 2.2. I do not harass any person.
- 2.3. I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity as defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and

maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. [\[see the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy\]](#)

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Members have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

3. Impartiality of officers of the council

As a member:

- 3.1. I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority**

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral. They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

4. Confidentiality and access to information

As a member:

- 4.1. I do not disclose information:**

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone
 - b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless
 - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;
 - ii. I am required by law to do so;
 - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
 - iv. the disclosure is:
 - 1. reasonable in the public interest; and
 - 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and
- 3. I have consulted the Chief Officer prior to its release**

- 4.2. I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a member for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer, or my business interests.**

- 4.3. I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.**

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents, and other information relating to or help by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations. [\[See the Council's Publication Scheme and Information and Data Protection Policy\]](#)

5. Disrepute

As a member:

5.1. I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute

As a Member, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on your, other members and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in your or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow members to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

6. Use of position

As a member:

6.1. I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities and privileges and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

7. Use of local authority resources and facilities

As a member:

7.1. I do not misuse council resources

7.2. I will, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use by others:

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a member.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones and computers
- transport
- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a member more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

8. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a Member:

- 8.1. I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority**
- 8.2. I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination**
- 8.3. I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings**
- 8.4. I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct**

It is extremely important for you as a member to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the principal authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your **Chief Officer or the** Monitoring Officer.

Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority

9. Interests

As a Member:

- 9.1. I register and disclose my interests**

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority.

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow members know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other members when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in **Table 1**, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix B sets out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from the **Chief Officer or the Monitoring Officer**.

10. Gifts and hospitality

As a Member:

- 10.1. I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimate value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.**
- 10.2. I register with the Chief Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.**
- 10.3. I register with the **Chief Officer** significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.**

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you, because you are a member. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult as it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure that it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a member, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a member. If you are unsure, do contact the **Chief Officer** for guidance.

Appendices

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix B – Registering Interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer **of the principal council**, the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012. You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registrable Interests)**. **(The Town Council are required to maintain a copy of Registrable Interests for each councillor on its website).**

“Disclosable Pecuniary Interest” means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner’s interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

“Partner” means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that you register of interests is kept up to date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A ‘sensitive interest’ is an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the member, or a person connected with the member, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a ‘sensitive interest’ you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a **dispensation**. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Disclosure of Other Registrable Interests

5. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registrable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the same room unless you have been granted a **dispensation**. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registrable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or wellbeing (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a **dispensation**. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’ you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –

- a. your own financial interest or wellbeing;
- b. a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied.

8. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or wellbeing:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all of the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Pre-Determination and Bias

9. Separately from considerations as to disclosable pecuniary or other interests, Councillors must be mindful of falling foul of the general obligations of this code by taking part in decisions where they are biased or have pre-determined the matter in question.

Simply put, a Councillor will be biased or will have pre-determined a matter if they have approached a matter with a closed mind. That is to say if they have made up their mind on which way they will decide a matter before all of the relevant considerations are presented and debated in the appropriate decision-making forum.

10. Previous actions or statements of a Councillor will not be taken by themselves as proof of predetermination. A Member may be predisposed to a certain point of view, however notwithstanding any pre-disposition, Councillors need to be careful to ensure they approach and, insofar as is possible, are seen to approach decisions with an open mind.
11. Particular scenarios to be mindful of are where a Councillor, in some other role, is seen to be a promoter or advocate for a proposal which later comes before them for decision. A risk arises when there has been significant personal involvement in preparing or advocating the proposal such that a Councillor may become or may be perceived by the public as being no longer able to approach the decision with an open mind.
12. If you feel that you have pre-determined a matter you should say so. You should not speak or vote on the proposal. You may, however, make representations on the proposal if a member of the public also has the right to do so. You are not legally obliged to withdraw from the meeting for the remainder of the debate and vote but in most circumstances doing so will counter any suggestion that you influenced the remaining Members by your continued presence. If you do not withdraw, as a minimum you must withdraw to the public area of the meeting room for the whole of the consideration of the matter, whether or not you are also exercising your right to speak.

If in any doubt you should seek advice from the Chief Officer or Monitoring Officer.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
Sponsorship	Any payment or provisions of any other financial benefit (other than from the Council) made to the member during the previous 12 month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a member, or towards his/her election expenses This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992
Contracts	Any contract made between the member or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the Council – (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and Property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the areas of the Council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the member or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income
Licenses	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the Council for a month or longer
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the member's knowledge): (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the member, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a

	director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where: (a) that body (to the member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either: i. the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or ii. if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the member, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest: a) any unpaid directorships b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority c) any body: i. exercising functions of a public nature ii. directed to charitable purposes or iii. one of whose principal purposes included the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

Appendix C – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The LGA has undertaken this review whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on [Local Government Ethical Standards](#). If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. These are:

Best practice 1: Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

Best practice 2: Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring members to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by members.

Best practice 3: Authorities should review their code of conduct each year

Best practice 4: An authority's code should be readily accessible to both members and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

Best practice 5: Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

Best practice 6: Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

Best practice 7: Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

Best practice 8: An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

Best practice 9: Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied. **[Not applicable to the Town Council]**

Best practice 10: A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

Best practice 11: Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish (town) councillor towards a Council Manager should be made by the chair or by the Council, rather than the Council Manager in all but exceptional circumstances.

Best practice 12: Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

Best practice 13: A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation. **[Not applicable to the Town Council]**

Best practice 14: Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

Appendix D – Councillor Dispensations

The Town Council may, on written request made to the Council's Proper Officer by a Councillor, but only in limited circumstances, grant a dispensation, to enable the Councillor to participate and vote on a matter in which he/she has a **disclosable pecuniary** interest; **other registered interests** and **Disclosable Non-Registered** interests.

Note

The Council may grant a dispensation under paragraph 29 only if, after having had regard to all relevant circumstances, the Council considers that:

- *without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited by Section 31(4) Localism Act 2011 from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business,*
- *without the dispensation the representation of different political groups on the body transacting any particular business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the business,*
- *granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area,*
- *it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.*

A dispensation under paragraph 29 must specify the period for which it has effect, and the period specified may not exceed four years.

The requirement to leave the room and not participate in the discussion and vote does not apply in relation to anything done for the purpose of deciding whether to grant a dispensation under paragraph 29.

The Town Council may delegate a decision under paragraph 29 to the Proper Officer, in circumstances where the interest is in an item on the agenda of a committee, and there is not a Council meeting to consider the application. [see Terms of Reference/Delegation]

Appendix 2



PROTOCOL ON MEMBER-OFFICER RELATIONS

VERSION NUMBER	V1
DATE Adopted by Council	6 th November 2023
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	May 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 Northwich Town Council has adopted this Protocol, based on the one adopted by Cheshire West and Chester Council but adopted to the requirements of a local council.

1.2 The purpose of this protocol is to provide guidance to members and officers about how they should interact with each other and to outline some of the appropriate conventions in place within the Council. This protocol cannot cover every eventuality and is not intended to be prescriptive. Its intention is to offer guidance on some of the issues which commonly arise.

1.3 This protocol needs to be considered alongside the codes of conduct for members and officers.

Key Points

1.4 The following key points underpin the member/officer working relationship:

- (a) Working relations between members and officers must be based on mutual trust and respect.
- (b) Officers must remain politically neutral at all times, and must not offer advice of a political nature.
- (c) Officers have a duty to support all members and provide them with the level of information they need to carry out their roles.
- (d) Officers will keep discussions with political groups and individual members confidential unless the group or member gives permission to discuss the matter with others.
- (e) Ward members should be kept informed of relevant matters within their ward and should normally be invited to attend public meetings organised by the Council in their ward.
- (f) Members have a right to access the information which they “need to know” in order to carry out their duties and responsibilities as a member.
- (g) Members must understand and respect the competing pressures and workloads on officers’ time.
- (h) Any request for officers to advise party group meetings must be made to the Chief Officer.

2 Definition of the Role of Members and Officers

2.1 This protocol seeks to reflect the principles underlying the codes of conduct that apply to members and officers. The aim of those codes is to enhance and maintain the integrity of local government and they demand very high standards of personal conduct.

2.2 Members and officers are servants of the public. Members are responsible to the electorate and serve only so long as their term of office lasts.

2.3 For the effective conduct of council business, there should be mutual respect and courtesy in all meetings and contacts (both formal and informal) between members and officers. It is important that behaviour which could be viewed as conferring an advantage or disadvantage is avoided, as should close personal familiarity between members and officers, which could undermine public confidence in the Council.

Members

2.4 Members are accountable to the electorate who determine, every four years, the people they wish to represent them on the Council. Therefore, this protocol recognises that members are elected to serve the people of **Northwich**.

2.5 Members, as politicians, may express the values and aspirations of their party political groups but they must recognise that in their role as members they have a duty to always act in the public interest.

2.6 Members may have a number of roles within the Council and on external bodies or organisations and need to be alert to the possible conflicts of interest that may arise. Members should be aware at all times that the role they are performing may impact upon the nature of their relationship with officers and the expectations that officers may have of them.

2.7 Members are mainly responsible for:

- (a) the political direction and leadership of the Council
- (b) determining policies, plans and strategies
- (c) implementing those policies, plans and strategies
- (d) discharging the Council's regulatory functions
- (e) monitoring and reviewing, primarily committees, the Council's performance in implementing its policies, plans and strategies and delivering its services
- (f) participating in partnership working
- (g) representing the Council on national regional and local bodies and organisations
- (h) representing the views of their communities and individual constituent

2.8 Some members will have additional responsibilities relating to their membership (and/or chairing) of committees, sub-committees or working groups. These roles may require different relationships with certain officers.

2.9 Officers can expect members:

- (a) to act within the policies, practices, processes and conventions established by the Council
- (b) to work constructively in partnership with officers acknowledging their separate and distinct roles and responsibilities
- (c) to understand and support the respective roles and responsibilities of officers and their workloads, pressures, scope of powers and management structures
- (d) to give political leadership and direction and to seek to further the Council's agreed policies and objectives with the understanding that, subject to the Scheme of Delegation to officers and the Council's core objective in decision making, members have the right to take the final decision on issues, based on advice
- (e) to treat them fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy
- (f) to act with integrity, to give support and to respect appropriate confidentiality

(g) to recognise that officers work to the instructions of their senior officers and not to individual members;

(h) not to subject them to intimidation, harassment, or put them under undue pressure

(i) have regard to the seniority of officers in determining what are reasonable requests, taking in to account the relationship between the member and officer, and the potential vulnerability of officers, particularly at junior levels

(j) not to knowingly request them to exercise discretion which involves acting outside the Council's policies and procedures

(k) not to authorise, initiate, or certify any financial transactions or to enter into any contract, agreement or undertaking on behalf of the Council or in their role as a member without proper and lawful authority

(l) not to use their position or relationship with officers to advance their personal interest or those of others or to influence decisions improperly

(m) to comply at all times with the members' Code of Conduct, the law, the Constitution and such other policies, procedures, protocols and conventions agreed by the Council.

Officers

2.10 Officers are employed by, and are responsible to the Council. Their job is to give advice to members and the Council and to carry out the Council's work under the direction and control of the Council, its committees and sub-committees.

2.11 The primary role of officers is to advise, inform and support all members and to implement the lawfully agreed policies of the Council.

2.12 Officers are responsible for day to day managerial and operational decisions within the Council. Members should avoid inappropriate involvement in such matters.

2.13 In performing their role officers will act professionally, impartially and with political neutrality. Whilst officers will report a member's view on an issue, the officer should not be influenced or pressured to make comments, or recommendations which are contrary to his professional judgement or views.

2.14 Officers should:

(a) work in partnership with members in an impartial and professional manner

(b) implement decisions of the Council and its subordinate bodies which are lawful, which have been properly approved in accordance with the requirements of the law and the Constitution, and are duly recorded

(c) assist and advise all parts of the Council. Officers must always act to the best of their abilities in the best interests of the Council as expressed in the Council's formal decisions

(d) respond to enquiries and complaints in accordance with the Council's standards

(e) be alert to issues which are, or are likely to be, contentious or politically sensitive, and be aware of the implications for members, the media or other sections of the public

(f) act with integrity, honesty, respect, dignity and courtesy at all times

(g) provide support and learning and development opportunities for members to help them in performing their various roles

(h) not use their relationship with members to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly

(i) comply, at all times, with the Officer Code of Conduct, and such other policies or procedures approved by the Council

2.15 Officers do not have to support members in any role other than that of member, and should not engage in actions incompatible with this protocol.

3 Officer Advice to Party Groups

3.1 **Party groups rarely operate at Town Council level.** Officers cannot be instructed to attend party political group meetings, or write reports for such meetings. Any requests for advice or attendance shall be directed through the Group Leaders.

3.2 The request shall be made to the Chief **Officer**. An officer accepting an invitation to one group or individual shall not decline an invitation to advise another group or individual on the same subject. Any request received and advice given shall be the subject of strict confidentiality, unless agreed otherwise.

4 Briefings for Committees

4.1 The principles outlined above do not obviate the necessity for regular contact on matters affecting the Council between senior officers and the leaders of political groups, or on matters affecting or those of committee Chairs/Spokespersons.

4.2 **Chairs of committees may request a briefing prior to a committee meeting by the Chief Officer or relevant member of Management Team, however briefings are not given to political groups.**

5 Support Services for Members

5.1 The role of officers is only to assist members in discharging their role as members of the Council. Officers should not be used in connection with party political campaigning or for private purposes. Council resources (e.g. member services, stationery, photocopying) may only be used for council business or where such use is conducive or incidental to that role.

6 Members' Access to Information

6.1 **All members** are equally entitled to request copies of background information underpinning decisions **which they are to be asked to make** including essential financial information.

6.2 Members are reminded of the need to consider whether such information is likely to fall within the categories of Exempt information (as defined in this Constitution) and to treat it accordingly. Release of information to members will be subject to the laws on confidentiality and disclosure of information.

6.3 The common law right of members is based on the principle that any member has, on the face of it, a right to inspect council documents so far as their access to the documents is reasonably necessary to enable them to properly perform their duties as a member of the Council. This is referred to as the "need to know" principle.

6.4 The exercise of this common law right depends upon the member's ability to demonstrate that they have the necessary "need to know". A member has no right to a "roving commission" to go and examine documents of the Council, and what the law terms "mere curiosity" is not sufficient.

6.5 The question must initially be determined by the relevant member of Management Team. If the officer refuses to supply the information requested by the member, the member may refer the matter to the Chief Officer who will review the decision.

6.6 In some circumstances (e.g. a committee member wishing to inspect documents relating to the functions of that committee), a member's need to know will normally be presumed. In other circumstances (e.g. a member wishing to inspect documents which contain personal information about third parties), a member will normally be expected to justify the request in specific terms, and may be required to do so in writing.

6.7 Draft reports and working papers will be considered as work in progress and as such may not be requested under these rules.

7 Reports

7.1 Members of Management Team may initiate reports on any matter where they believe the Council, committee or sub-committee should make a decision or should be informed.

7.2 Where such a report affects another service, the appropriate member of Management Team must be consulted. Reports shall communicate all relevant factual information and professional opinions, together with appropriate recommendations. The final decision on the contents of the report will be that of the officer in whose name the report is presented.

8 Ward members

8.1 Ward members (and, where appropriate, neighbouring Ward members) should be kept informed and consulted on relevant matters affecting their Ward. In the case of public meetings in a particular locality, Ward members will normally be invited to attend and can expect to be consulted on any form of consultation exercise on local issues.

8.2 So far as decision making is concerned, members remain accountable to the whole electorate of the **Town**, and must make a personal decision on matters which come before them, balancing the interests of the electorate as a whole. Including those members of the public who did not vote for them.

9 Correspondence

9.1 Where an officer copies correspondence addressed from one member to another, it should be made clear to the originator and should not be sent to any member of another group without the originator's consent.

9.2 Official letters from the Council should normally be sent out in the name of the appropriate officer, rather than a member. It may be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g. representations to a government minister) to address correspondence in the name of the member, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Letters which create obligations or give instructions should not be sent out in the name of a member.

9.3 Any members who receive correspondence in their capacity as **Mayor** shall respond to the correspondence in their official capacity only. Such correspondence shall be copied **to the Chief Officer**.

10 Press Releases

10.1 Members are reminded of the need to comply with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1986 and the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity which prohibits local councils from publishing any material which appears to be designed to reflect support for a political party.

10.2 Council publicity should not be used as a means to publicise individual members, except where they are acting to represent the Council as a whole.

10.3 Council resources cannot be used to publish any material of a party political nature.

10.3 All press releases shall be discussed with the Chief Officer before they are sent by a member or another officer.

11.Ceremonial Events

11.1 Ceremonial events would normally be attended by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor of the Council, unless they relate specifically to initiatives led by a particular committee, in which case the Chair or Deputy Chair of that committee could attend.

11.2 In addition, local members should be informed and, where possible and appropriate, invited to participate

12 Complaints

12.1 Where a member's conduct is considered inappropriate, contact should be made in the first instance with the Chief Officer.

12.2 In serious cases, or case where it appears that a member may have breached the Code of Conduct, a written complaint may be made to Monitoring Officer of Cheshire West and Chester Council.

12.3 Matters relating to Officer conduct are to be dealt with solely by the Chief Officer and or their nominated officer in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

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Appendix 3



PLANNING PROTOCOL FOR CONSIDERATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

VERSION NUMBER	V1
DATE Adopted by Council	6 th November 2023
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	May 2025

INTRODUCTION

This Protocol of Conduct in relation to planning matters ('the Planning Protocol') has regard to the one adopted by Cheshire West and Chester Council but tailored for use by the Town Council to reflect the two councils' differing role in the planning process.

Local Councils (town) are not planning authorities, but as important consultees they are still part of the planning process. They are no longer statutory consultees, but have the right to be notified by planning authorities if they have requested them to do so. It is important therefore, that their consideration of planning applications in public, are open and fair.

It is intended that the Planning Protocol will continue to engender public confidence in the planning system at Town level, whilst avoiding procedural rules which are so rigid and overbearing that observance of them would become an end in itself, at the expense of the consideration of the merits of an application.

The role of a Northwich Town Councillor is a dual one. It involves balancing representing the needs and interests of individuals and the community with the need to maintain an ethos of impartial decision making on what can often be highly controversial proposals.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCILLORS

The rules in the Code of Conduct for Councillors adopted by the Local Council must always be complied with first. The rules in this Planning Protocol must then be applied. They seek to explain and supplement the Code of Conduct for Councillors for the purposes of planning matters. If a Councillor does not abide by this Code of Good Practice, they may put:

- the Council at risk of proceedings on the validity of their decision on observations; and
 - themselves at risk of being named in a complaint being made to the Monitoring Officer.
- [A breach of the Planning Protocol is very likely to also be a breach of the Code of Conduct.]

PURPOSE AND APPLICATION OF THE PROTOCOL

1. The aim of this Planning Protocol is to ensure that in the planning process there are no grounds for suggesting that a decision has been biased, partial or not well-founded in any way.
2. The key purpose of Planning is to control development in the public interest.
3. Your role as a Member of the Town Council is to make planning observations openly, impartially, with sound judgement and for justifiable reasons.
4. This Planning Protocol applies at all times when Councillors are involved in the planning process. (This includes, when part of decision-making meetings of the Town Council or Planning & Environment Committee or when involved on less formal occasions, such as meetings with officers or the public and consultative meetings.) It applies as equally to planning enforcement matters or site-specific policy issues as it does to planning applications.
5. If you have any doubts about the application of this Planning Protocol to your own circumstances you should seek advice early, from the Council Manager or if appropriate the Monitoring Officer, and preferably well before any meeting takes place.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

1. Councillors who have substantial property interests or other interests, which would prevent them from voting on a regular basis, should avoid serving on the Planning & Environment Committee.
2. Serving Councillors, who are themselves, or are acting as agents for people pursuing, a planning matter should play no part in the decision-making process for that proposal. The identification the conflict of interest is important.
3. The Councillor concerned should make any such interest clear to the Committee if the planning application is submitted to the Planning and Environment Committee.

DISCUSSIONS WITH APPLICANTS

1. It is less likely that Town councillors will be involved in discussions with applicants than members of the principal council, however if councillors are involved in any type of discussions with applicants, either before or after a planning application is submitted or any other type of meeting, to discuss development proposals or other contact with applicants or their agents, it should always be made clear that the discussions will not bind the Council to make a particular decision and that any views expressed are personal and provisional.
2. Members of the Planning and Environment Committee should be especially careful in attending such meetings and avoid expressing support or opposition. Also, whilst members may receive information from applicants and give information to applicants and members of the public, to safeguard their impartiality they should maintain a clear distinction between receiving/passing on information and more detailed involvement which could be mistaken for supporting or advocating a particular view or outcome.
3. Any developer presentations to councillors, outside the normal committee cycle, should be the subject of a formal request to the Chief Officer. Councillors will be limited to asking questions to clarify points of detail. There will be no discussion of the merits or demerits of the proposal.
4. All meetings between councillors and applicants relating to major project applications should be recorded in writing and should be attended by an officer.

THE REPRESENTATIONAL ROLE

1. It is accepted that a key element of the Councillors role and duties is representing the views of the electorate on matters of local importance. It is in this area that there can be the potential for conflict between this local representational role and the need for the Councillor to be part of the decision-making process. Members must be careful to avoid predetermination of the matter or the appearance of having made up their mind before the committee meeting.
2. It is inevitable that Councillors will be lobbied on planning proposals and asked to represent the views of the community. If letters are sent by lobbyists to Councillors, a copy of these should be sent to the Chief Officer to enable the content to be considered if appropriate, by Committee. At

Committee, a councillor should always declare that they have been lobbied (either in support or opposition to an application).

3. Sometimes a Northwich councillor may also be a Member of Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC). The Town Council's view on the application does not in principle prevent that member taking part in the principal council's Planning Committee's decision-making process, but it must be clear that they have kept an open mind on the application and have not pre-determined it. When considering the application at Town level, the councillor should point out that, in the event of the matter being referred to the CWaC Planning Committee, they would consider the matter afresh and with an open mind. They may find it clearer not to express an opinion or vote at Town level.

4. It is unwise for a member to express a final personal view on the planning application before the Committee meeting at which the application response is to be determined. A member should not give the impression that when voting on an application they would not be influenced by these additional factors. To act in this way would be to appear to be acting partly out of prejudice rather than through reason based on information received and argument considered. A member who acted unreasonably in this way would increase the risk of a successful challenge to overturn the Committee's decision being made by an aggrieved party.

5. A decision on an application being considered by Planning and Environment Committee cannot be determined before the formal meeting, either at a pre-briefing meeting or political meeting with the purpose of influencing councillors how to vote or for councillors agreeing how to vote.

6. Councillors should also not put undue pressure on officers to put forward a particular recommendation or comment.

7. Observations from the Town Council should always be objective after all information both for and against the application have been fairly considered. It should be remembered that the Planning Authority can only consider "material planning matters". Members should always consider the aims and policies of the Northwich Neighbourhood Plan and also any stated Town Council planning objectives.

MEMBERS' "CALL IN" PROCEDURE

1. Members are notified of applications in the Northwich Town Council area via email and weekly memos. Any Councillor has the opportunity to refer a planning application to the Planning and Environment Committee for consideration. All requests for referrals must be made within the timescale provided on the memos, and sent to Chief Officer.

2. It is desirable that the member referring the application to the Planning and Environment Committee attends at the meeting to explain their reasons for this matter coming before the Committee.

3. If a councillor requests that an application be considered by Committee, he/she should not express an opinion on the application prior to the meeting, but wait for all information to be available and listen to the debate before reaching a personal decision, so as to avoid the inference of pre-determination.

4. Where a member is approached to refer a planning application to the Planning and Environment Committee then members are notified via the Committee agenda.

SITE-VISITS

1. Although not common at Town level, site Inspections can play a legitimate part of the planning process but must be limited to inspections by viewing and as a fact-finding exercise. They are not to be used to determine a proposal prior to the Committee meeting. It is important to ensure that Councillors taking planning decisions are in possession of all the facts, including matters that may have been pointed out or come to light during a site visit. Attendance of Councillors will not only

demonstrate that Councillors are fully informed but will also ensure that high quality consistent and sound decisions are made, and that the risks of legal challenge are minimised.

2. Do try to attend site inspections organised by the Town Council where possible, or if invited by the planning authority. Don't request a site inspection unless you feel it is strictly necessary.

3. Do ensure that any information that you gained from the site inspection is reported back to the Committee meeting, so that all councillors have the same information.

4. Remember that if invited to join a site visit by CWaC, it constitutes a part of the formal Committee process and members' interests provisions apply. They are arranged formally by CWaC. There is no requirement for CWaC to agree to a request by the Town Council to join the site-visit.

5. Northwich Council officers or the Chairman of the Council or Committee may be allowed to attend Cheshire West and Chester Planning site-visits, if approved, but for the purpose of asking questions only and only under strict guidance. For this purpose, the Chief Officer will be notified. Otherwise, third parties will not be able to attend. ~~and speak at Planning Committee site-visits.~~

6. Unless they are required to permit access to the site, the site owner will not normally be invited to attend. Discussions with the applicant, their agent or any third party should be avoided. If it is necessary to seek information from the applicant on site, this will be done by an officer.

7. The purpose of a site-visit is for Members as a group to have facts pointed out by officers and questions responded to, not for there to be a debate about issues, nor for any decision to be made on the application. That will take place at the Committee meeting.

8. Town Council only site visits should be arranged through the Chief Officer and an officer should always be present. A record of the visit and those in attendance will be made. The visit must be conducted in the same way as a CWaC organised site visit.

PUBLIC SPEAKING AT COMMITTEE

1. Members of the Planning and Environment Committee should not allow members of the public or visiting members to communicate with them during the committee's proceedings (orally or in writing) other than through the scheme for public speaking or through the Chairman, as this may give the appearance of bias.

2. All Councillors are entitled to speak at a planning meeting in accordance with the Public Participation rules either as an individual, representative or ward member. However, where you might be regarded as having a personal and prejudicial interest in the application then you may attend and speak in accordance with the protocol but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the matter in the same manner as would apply to a normal member of the public. Immediately after doing so, you must leave the meeting room whilst the meeting considers the proposal even though members of the public may remain.

3. Northwich Town Council will give equal opportunity to the following groups of members of the public wishing to speak at a committee meeting on a planning application:

Civic Society/Local representation.

Objectors.

Applicants/supporters representations.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

1. Councillors should follow scrupulously Northwich Town Council's Code of Conduct in relation to declarations of interest.

2. Not only should impropriety be avoided but also any appearance or grounds for suspicion of improper conduct. In particular, they should not favour any individual person, company or group nor put themselves in the position where they appear to do so. They should carefully consider the need

to declare an interest in any planning proposal of an outside body in which the Councillor is closely involved.

3. The principles about the disclosure of interests should be applied not only to formal meetings, but also to any of a member's dealings with Council officers, or with other Councillors. Treatment of Officers by members should be fair and proper. (see also Protocol on Member-Officer Relations)

4. Members should refer to the Code of Conduct regarding the declaration of interests and non-participation in decision making in respect of "Disclosable Pecuniary Interests", "Other Registerable Interests" and "Non-registerable interests."

PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

1. Members should avoid becoming involved in discussions with applicants, prospective applicants, their agents, landowners or other interested parties regarding benefits which may be offered to Northwich Town Council or benefits which Northwich Town Council itself wishes to obtain.

2. Members of Planning and Environment Committee should, when considering the merits of an individual planning application, consider any relevant planning obligation which has been offered by the applicant or agent. They may include representations on planning obligations in their observations to the planning authority.

PLANNING DECISIONS

Following submission of comments by Committee a record of the decisions taken by the CWaC Planning Committee are reported to the Planning and Environment Committee at their scheduled meetings or relayed by means of an Officer briefing.

Appendix 4



VERSION NUMBER	V1
DATE & MINUTE REFERENCE (Council)	
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	October 2024

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INTRODUCTION

The public are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all employees who work for local government. **The purpose of this Code is to make a clear statement about the standards of conduct expected of employees of Neston Town Council and it aims to:**

- **ensure the highest standards of conduct by identifying corporate standards which sit alongside professional codes and guidelines as well as the Employees Handbook and other policies, including the Protocol of Member-Officer Relations;**
- **help all employees to act in a way which upholds the Council's standards and at the same time, protect them from criticism, misunderstanding or complaint; and**
- **help build trust between the Council and the people who come into contact with those working for it.**

STATUS OF THE CODE

This Code is based on the voluntary Code of Conduct approved by the Local Authority Associations and the Local Government Management Board, adapted and/or amplified where perceived necessary to meet local circumstances or requirements. It also incorporates the principles contained in the draft model Code of Conduct for Local Authority Employees which has been the subject of consultation by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The standards contained in it are the minimum that should apply.

The Code of Conduct embraces the seven principles of public life which were drawn up by the Nolan Committee and are endorsed by Parliament. These are:

Selflessness – Acting solely in terms of the public interest

Integrity – Avoiding placing yourself under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence you in your work. You should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, or your friends. You must declare and resolve any interests and relationships as detailed in the Code of Conduct.

Objectivity – Act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability – Be accountable to the public for your decisions and actions and submit yourself to scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness - being as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that you take. You should give reasons for your decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty – Act with honesty, and be truthful.

Leadership – Exhibit these principles in your own behaviour. Actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour, wherever it occurs.

The Codes themselves are printed in bold type and *beneath has been added procedural guidelines in italics.*

These Procedural Guidelines are intended to provide background information to help employees understand and interpret the requirements of the Code of Conduct. They cannot cover all circumstances and are not to be considered as a substitute for reading the Code itself.

WHO IS THE CODE AIMED AT?

The Code is intended to cover all employees under a contract of employment with the Council. Activities carried out by employees acting as members of companies or voluntary organisations should be subject to the minimum standards within this Code.

1 STANDARDS

- 1.1 The Council's employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public, and must perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity. Employees will be expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiency in the provision of service. Employees must report to the appropriate manager any impropriety or breach of procedure that is more than trivial. (See Making a protected disclosure in the Employee Handbook).
- 1.2 An employee must be accountable to the Authority for his/ her actions.
- 1.3 An employee must at all time act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in him/ her.
- 1.4 The guidance in this Code is based on the principles **of public life**. At the end of the day the Council relies on the integrity, reasonableness, common sense and professional judgement of individual officers. Staff should not hesitate at any time, to seek advice on the interpretation of the Code, or when circumstances arise which, it does not cover.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

1.A: *In determining acceptable standards, employees are asked to familiarise themselves, not only with the Council's Code of Conduct for Officers. but also, with the operating procedures used, **governance documents such as** Standing Orders & Financial Regulations and policies.*

2 DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

- 2.1 It is generally accepted that open government is best. The law requires that certain types of information must be available to members, auditors, government departments, service users and the public. The Council itself is open about other types of information. Employees shall not however disclose any confidential information unless authorised to do so in writing by the Council Manager or the Council. Employees must ensure compliance with the Council's Information and Data Protection policy.
- 2.2 Employees shall not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way. Any particular information received by an employee from a councillor which is personal to that councillor and does not belong to the Council, should not be divulged by the employee without the prior approval of that councillor, except where such disclosure is required or sanctioned by the law.
- 2.3 Employees shall not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled under the Freedom of information Act or other legislation.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

- 2.A *The Council's employees receive information relating to the Council's business, as well as confidential information about client, the public, businesses, Councillors and other employees. Much of this information needs to be treated as confidential and should not be betrayed either inside or outside work, even to family and friends. See the Council's Information and Data Protection Policy.*
- 2.B. *Both councillors and the public have rights to certain information, particularly that listed in the Publication Scheme Information Guide and all officers should encourage people to access this.*

3 POLITICAL NEUTRALITY

- 3.1 **Employees serve the Council as a whole. It follows they shall serve all councillors and must ensure that the individual rights of all councillors are respected.**
- 3.2 **Employees must follow every lawful expressed policy of the Council and shall not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with or otherwise bias their work.**
- 3.3 **Subject to the Town Council's conventions, employees may also be required to advise political groups should they ever be active at the Council. They must do so in ways which do not compromise their political neutrality.**

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

- 3.A *It is only to be expected that the Council Manager will work closely with members of the Council. Confidentiality over discussions with particular groups is vital. See the Protocol on Member-Officer Relations*

4 RELATIONSHIPS

4.1 Councillors

Employees are responsible to the Council as a whole. For some, their role is to give advice to councillors and all are there to carry out the Council's work. Mutual respect between employees and councillors is essential to good local government. Close personal familiarity between employees and individual councillors can damage the relationship and prove embarrassing to other employees and councillors and should therefore be avoided where possible. Employees must have regard to the Council's Protocol on Member-Officer Relations.

4.2 The Local Community and Service Users

Employees will always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within that community as defined by the policies of the Council. All members of the community should be treated fairly and with respect in accordance with the Council's Equality Policy. Employees will

ensure that they are always fit to perform their duties effectively and will not allow standards to be impaired in any way.

4.3 Colleagues

Mutual respect between fellow employees is also essential to maintaining constructive working relationships and providing a high-quality service to the community. It is also a key part of the Council's Equality statement.

4.4 Contractors

All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors, shall be made known in writing to the Council Manager or the Mayor where the relationship involves the Council Manager. Orders and contracts shall be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenders or quotes, and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives in the tendering process. No part of the local community shall be discriminated against.

4.5 Employees who engage or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, shall declare that relationship to the Council Manager or the Mayor (in the case of the Council Manager) in writing.

4.6 In the event of employees engaging a Contractor for private work at home, who is known by the employee to be one of the Council's contractors, care shall be taken to ensure that the price paid for the work represents full value and thereby cannot be construed as an inducement or reward for the award of Council contracts. Especial care shall be taken in this respect by employees who engage or supervise contractors in the course of their employment. A similar principle applies to accepting discounts from vendors in the town, particularly market traders, where similar discounts are not offered to other residents.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

4.A *The Town is a relatively small community and it is impossible not to know some councillors in other walks of life. This must be correctly and openly managed without favour.*

4.B *It is not sufficient to ensure that a relationship with a contractor or potential contractor will not unduly influence their business involvement with the Council, but impartiality and integrity need to be demonstrated. It is necessary for such relationships to be open and beyond suspicion by the reasonable person.*

4.C *Staff should not accept discounts from vendors, particularly market traders that were not available to local residents. Whilst it is understood it may be offered by traders with the best of intentions, without return favours being expected or given, if it were to become public knowledge, most members of the public would consider it unacceptable. Such discounts to be accepted by staff or their partners would breach this Code and the General Employment Principles for staff.*

4.D *It is difficult to define precisely when a declaration should be made. The decision should be made after you have assessed the degree of influence that you may have*

over the Council's relationship with the particular contractor. If you are responsible for the administration of the contract, or are in any way involved in it, a declaration should always be made.

5 APPOINTMENT AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

5.1 Employees involved in appointments shall ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. It is unlawful for an employee to make an appointment based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees shall not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant, or have a close personal relationship outside work with him or her.

5.2 Similarly, employees shall not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion, training or pay adjustments for any other employee who is a relative, partner, etc.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

5.A *In cases where you are involved in deciding any matter relating to the appointment, promotion, discipline, pay, conditions of service or training opportunities for a person who is a relative, partner or with whom you have a close personal relationship outside work, you **shall** declare this to the Council Manager or Mayor (in the case of the Council Manager) and have no further involvement in the matter.*

5.B *In this paragraph “relative” means a spouse, partner, parent-in-law, son, daughter, step-son, step-daughter, child of a partner, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, or the spouse or partner of any of the preceding persons and “partner” means a member of a couple.*

6 OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS

6.1 You shall not become engaged or concerned in any other business in which your duties may conflict with the interests of the Council, without advising the Council. You shall not become engaged in any secondary occupation that may unduly interfere with your work.

6.2 The Town Council is consultee for making recommendations to the determining bodies for applications for various types of consent such as planning permission, licensing etc. and also determines grant applications. Staff members who are in any way concerned, connected or consulted in their work during the processing of such applications are precluded from preparing or assisting with those submissions in any private capacity on behalf of applicants (unless for their own submissions when, of course, their private interest in the matter would be perfectly clear and should be declared).

6.3 The general rule is therefore as follows:

(a) Staff at all levels shall not undertake any outside work which would put them in a position of conflict of interest. Such a conflict would arise when an employee is to be paid by a member of the public or any outside organisation or body for work which is in any way connected with the scope of his or her official duties.

- (b) Employees shall follow such rules as the Council may from time to time impose on the ownership of intellectual property or copyright created during their employment.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

- 6.A *As some employees may only work part time or on a casual basis, this part of the Code is in no way intended to prevent them having other employment, merely to avoid conflicts of interest. It is always best to advise the Council Manager about other employment.*

7 PERSONAL INTERESTS

- 7.1 An employee shall not in his/her official or personal capacity, allow personal interests to conflict with the Council's requirements, or use his/ her position improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.
- 7.2 Employees shall declare to the Council Manager or Mayor (in the case of the Council Manager) in writing, any non-financial interests that they consider could bring about conflict with the Council's interests e.g. school governor, membership of local sports club, membership of the district or county council.
- 7.3 Employees shall declare to the Council Manager or Mayor (in the case of the Council Manager) in writing, any financial interests which could conflict with the Council's interests eg. financial interests of a spouse or other member of the family in a contract.
- 7.4 Employees shall declare to the Council Manager, membership of any organisation not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance and which has secrecy about rules or membership or conduct.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

7.A **Non Financial Interests**

The test as to whether an interest in an outside body must be declared, is whether or not the interests of the body may conflict with those of the Council.

*By way of advice, it **shall** always be appropriate to declare being a governor of a school within the Town, or membership of another council. Similarly, membership of a trust or statutory body operating within the Town shall be declared.*

In the case of, for instance, local sports clubs, these should be declared when a conflict of interest may arise, eg. where planning permission is sought, or where land is being brought from or sold to the Council.

7.B **Financial Interests**

The Council needs to be aware of all cases where an employee or his/her close relative, partner or associate has a financial interest in a business (including private company, public sector organisation and/or voluntary organisation) which are, or are seeking to have business dealings or enter into a contract with the Council.

Examples of such interests are:

- Paid employment, directorships, consultancies or personal sponsorship.*
- An interest in land or other assets, held or used by the business organisation.*

- *Share capital in the company exceeding £25,000 (the amount need not be declared) or more than $\frac{1}{100}^{\text{th}}$ of the issued shares or securities*

NB This does not include money invested in a Building Society or Bank where you have no influence over the dealings of that organisation.

7.C Organisations not open to the public with formal membership etc. Eg. Free Masons.

8 EQUALITY ISSUES

8.1 All local government employees shall ensure that policies relating to equality issues as agreed by the Council are complied with in addition to the requirements of the law. All members of the local community, customers and other employees have a right to be treated with fairness, respect and equity.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

8.A Reference should be made to the Equality Policy adopted by the Council. The Council celebrate diversity.

9 ROLES DURING TENDERING

9.1 Employees shall exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors.

9.2 Employees who are privy to confidential information on tenders or costs shall not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.

9.2 Employees shall ensure that no special favour is shown to current or recent former employees or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in a senior or relevant managerial capacity.

10 CORRUPTION

10.1 Employees shall be aware that it is a serious criminal offence for them corruptly to receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing, anything or showing favour, or disfavour, to any person in their official capacity.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

10.A It is essential to remember that dealings with officers and members of local authorities and other public bodies are subject to the provisions of special legislation with onerous requirements and imposing sanctions under criminal law designed to protect the public interest and public confidence.

The particular legislation is contained in:

The Public Bodies Corrupt Practices Act 1889

The Prevention of Corruption Act 1906

The Prevention of Corruption Act 1916

The Local Government Act 1972, Section 117(2)

10.B In summary, anyone who corruptly gives, promises or offers any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage to any person as an inducement to or a reward for any member, officer or servant of a public body for doing or forbearing to do anything in respect of any matter or transaction is guilty of a criminal offence. Similarly, a criminal offence is committed by anyone who corruptly solicits, receives or agrees to receive for themselves or any other person such an inducement or reward.

10.C It is particularly to be noted that the giving or acceptance of any money, gift or other consideration is deemed to have been given or received corruptly unless the contrary is proved. This represents a departure from the general principle that a person is deemed innocent until proven guilty.

11 USE OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

11.1 Employees shall ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner. They shall strive to ensure value for money to the local community and to avoid legal challenge to the Council.

11.2 Employees shall not make personal use of property or facilities of the Council unless properly authorised to do so.

12 HOSPITALITY AND GIFTS

12.1 Employees shall only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine and clear need to impart information or represent the local Council in the community. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions must be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the Council should be seen to be represented. They shall be properly authorised and recorded. It is generally more acceptable to join in hospitality offered to a group of people rather than something unique to the individual, ie. there is a degree of safety in numbers. Hospitality should only be accepted when it is reasonably incidental and on a scale appropriate to the occasion or circumstances.

12.2 When hospitality has to be declined, those making the offer shall be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operating within the Council.

12.3 Employees shall not accept significant personal gifts from contractors and outside suppliers, although the Council allow employees to keep insignificant items of token value such as pens, diaries etc.

12.4 When receiving authorised hospitality, employees shall be particularly sensitive as to its timing in relation to decisions which the Council may be taking affecting those providing the hospitality. Where it is known that a particular person or body has a matter currently in issue with the Town Council, an offer of hospitality shall be refused even if in normal times it would be acceptable.

- 12.5 Acceptance by employees of hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal and where it is clear that any purchasing decisions are not compromised. Approval to attend a relevant conference or course will be considered to be approval of allied hospitality as outlined above. Where visits to inspect equipment etc are required, employees shall ensure that the Council meets the cost of such visits to avoid jeopardising the integrity of subsequent purchasing decisions.**
- 12.6 Employees shall report to the Council Manager or Mayor (in the case of the Council Manager) the offer of any gifts or hospitality. These must be recorded in the register maintained by the Council Manager**

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

- 12.A** *Offers of hospitality and gifts in a Town Council will be rare but should be approached with caution. Members of staff should ask themselves what a member of the public, who may be critical or suspicious, might think. Offers of hospitality where any suggestion of improper influence is possible should be tactfully refused. Hospitality **shall** only be accepted when it is reasonably incidental, and on a scale appropriate, to the occasion or circumstances. If in doubt say no.*
- 12.B** *Employees **shall** only accept reasonable or modest hospitality and, if in doubt as to whether such hospitality is reasonable or modest in the circumstances, the employee **shall** seek guidance from the Council Manager or Mayor (in the case of the Council Manager).*
- 12.C** *Clearly, hospitality received in the ordinary course of business (for example working lunches) need not be declared or registered provided it is modest and reasonable.*
- 12.D** *All hospitality received (other than that mentioned in 12.3 above) and hospitality offered but not accepted **shall** be registered in the Register of Hospitality (see below).*
- 12.E** *Any employee receiving an offer of hospitality **shall** inform the supplier or contractor offering the same that the employee is under a duty to register hospitality received or offered but not accepted.*
- 12.F** *A Register will be kept and maintained by the Council Manager. The details to be included in the Register will be:*

- i the name of the employee concerned;*
- ii the name of the contractor or the supplier or other party making the invitation;*
- iii the nature of the hospitality received or offered but not accepted; and*
- iv the date or receipt of hospitality.*

12.G As with Declarations of Interest, it is the duty of each individual employee to register hospitality received, or offered but not accepted, within a reasonable period before or after that hospitality is received or offered and it is suggested for this purpose that a reasonable period would be no longer than 7 days after the hospitality is received or offered. Notices to be sent to Council Manager or Chairman.

12.H Some offers of hospitality are clearly unacceptable, eg. offers of holiday accommodation. Invitations to sporting fixtures or evenings at the theatre are acceptable only in accordance with paragraph 12.1 of the Code of Conduct for Officers, or when they are clearly required for the conduct of Council.

Gifts

Examples of the type of modest gifts which would normally be acceptable are:

- Small gifts of office equipment or stationery given by way of trade advertisement to a range of officers or for use in the office. Nothing more elaborate than calendars, diaries, rulers or blotters would fall into this category;*
- Small gifts of only token value given on the conclusion of an official courtesy visit eg. to a factory or other premises.*
- Gifts to a member of staff or a member of their family where the donor is a personal friend. Extreme care needs to be taken in such circumstances that friendships are equal in both directions and declarations are made in accordance with Section 4 of the Code.*
- If a gift outside the exceptions arrives without warning, it must be handed to the Council Manager or Mayor (in the case of the Council Manager) to decide whether the gift should be returned (or passed to an appropriate charity) and to ensure the donor is informed of what has happened.*

These rules also, of course, apply to offers by firms to members of staff of discounts going beyond those on general offer,

13. CONTACT WITH THE PUBLIC, PRESS & MEDIA

- 13.1** Employees should refer to the national Protocol on Communications. Basically, you should not make any statement to the media which you are not authorised to make. No employee should give a view which is contrary to or critical of Council policy. Employees should seek authorisation from the Council Manager prior to speaking to the media.
- 13.2** Outside working hours, an employee is entitled to voice their opinion on issues affecting the local community eg. at a neighbourhood forum. However, employees have a general duty of care to avoid a conflict of interest and should not criticise, damage or act in any way against the Council.
- 13.3** Employees must comply with the Town Council's protocols and policies on social media and the use of emails. Again, employees have a general duty of care to avoid a conflict of interest and should not criticise, damage or act in any way against the Council, or otherwise bring it in to disrepute.

14 SPONSORSHIP - GIVING AND RECEIVING

- 14.1** Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor a local government activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care shall be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.
- 14.2** Where the Council wishes to sponsor an event or service neither an employee nor any partner, spouse or relative must benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure to the Council Manager or Mayor (in the case of the Council Manager) of any such interest. Similarly, where the Council through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, gives support in the community, employees shall ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

- 14.A** *The Council shall not be seen to offer any special favours or business in return for sponsorship.*

15 CONDUCT OUTSIDE WORKING HOURS

- 15.1** The Town Council does not wish to intrude on your interests/activities outside normal working hours. However, you should not become involved in activities

which prevent you from fulfilling your duties or which result in adverse publicity for the Town Council. For the avoidance of doubt this requirement involves the appropriate use of social networking sites which are in the public domain.

15.2 In order to foster team spirit and good working relationships, the Town Council may offer you the opportunity to attend social events from time to time and may also organise work-related social events to which clients, as well as staff, are invited. Although such social events usually take place away from the workplace and outside of normal working hours, the code of conduct applies to such events. Whilst the Town Council does not wish to affect your enjoyment of such social events, certain rules of conduct are necessary for the protection and comfort of all those attending. Accordingly, if you attend a work-related social event you must observe the following rules and principles:

- Alcohol should be consumed only in moderation.
- The use of illegal drugs, including cannabis, is forbidden.
- The policy on dignity at work should be observed.
- Do not behave in a way that could offend, intimidate, embarrass or upset any other person, whether as a joke or not.
- Do not swear or use intemperate language.
- Do not behave in any way that could bring the Town Council into disrepute.
- Any breach of the above rules may result in disciplinary action being taken against you under the disciplinary procedure.

16 DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

16.1 Criminal charges, or convictions, for offences of dishonesty, or violence committed during the period of your employment with the Town Council, whether committed during or outside normal working hours must be reported to the Council Manager immediately. Such charges, or convictions, may result in disciplinary action being taken against you up to and including summary dismissal. Failure to disclose such criminal proceedings/convictions that arise during the period of your employment could also result in disciplinary action being taken against you up to and including summary dismissal.

16.2 A charge or conviction for any other type of offence during the period of your employment should also be reported to the Council Manager. Such charges or convictions may result in disciplinary proceedings being taken against you, up to and including dismissal, where, in our opinion, the charge or conviction:

- affects your suitability for your role.
- impairs the reputation of the Town Council.
- seriously undermines the trust and confidence in you.

Report to : Full Council

Meeting Date : 6th November 2023

Agenda Item : 12

Prepared By : Chris Shaw

Subject : Remembrance



Saturday 11th November 2023

Northwich Town Council will be holding a short service starting at 10.40 am at the Cenotaph on Church Road followed by the 2-minute silence at 11.00 am.

The Royal British Legion and the Town Mayor will then lay a wreath.

Sunday 12th November 2023

On Sunday 12th November the town parade and Act of Remembrance will take place.

Timings below

- 9.00 am - Parade to assemble on Victoria Club Car Park
- 9.30 am – Parade to form on Sheath Street ready for the step off at 9.40 am
- 10.00 am – Church Service in St Helens Church
- 10.45 am – Gather at the cenotaph on Church Road
- 10.50 am – Act of Remembrance Service
- 11.00 am – 2 Minutes Silence
- 11.05 am – Laying of Wreaths
- 11.20 am – Parade to reform
- 11.25 am – Parade to march to Brio
- 11.40 am – Tea & Biscuits in Brio

All are welcome to both services and we hope to see as many people as possible remembering our fallen.

Report to : Full Council

Meeting Date : 6th November 2023

Agenda Item : 13

Prepared By : Chris Shaw

Subject : Christmas Extravaganza



On Saturday 25th November Northwich will hold its annual Christmas Extravaganza in and around the town centre.

The event is organised by Northwich Town Council, Northwich BID, Barons Quay with help from local organisations.

We once again will be having an Ice Rink which will be sponsored by Radio Northwich and this year, we will be doing themed skate sessions into the evening.

Activities throughout the day will include the following:

Christmas Crazy Golf, Outside Barclays, High Street, 12pm – 4pm

Ice Rink, Apple Market Place

Christmas Library Bus, Apple Market Place, 10am – 4pm

Christmas Sleigh & Wonderland by King's Delicatessen, Witton Street, 12pm – 4pm

Christmas Markets, Outside Santander, Witton Street, 11am – 4pm

Christmas Storytelling, Barons Quay VAC Gallery, Slots at 12.30pm 1.30pm, 2:30pm and 3:30pm

Christmas Craft Village, By the Library, Witton Street, 12pm – 4pm (for info this is Glitter Tattoos, Face Painting, Christmas Crafts and Christmas Colouring)

Christmas Games, Outside Quayside, Witton Street, 12pm – 4pm (Narnia Ring Toss, Get Santa Down the Chimney, Nutcracker Hoopla)

Barnton Circus, Witton Quarter, 2pm – 4pm (Shows throughout – I have asked Sara for confirmation of the times).

Santa's Grotto, Swing Grill, Funfair, Live Music, Lantern Parade, Light Switch on, Fireworks

We still require some help throughout the day so if any member wishes to lend a hand can you please let me know ASAP.