

NORTHWICH TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 8th APRIL 2024

Present:

Cllr Jane Thomas

Town Mayor

Councillors:

Cllr Joanne Callaghan

Cllr Andy Kent

Cllr Catriona Stewart

Cllr Andy Stott

Cllr Patricia Parkes

Cllr Lee Siddall

Cllr Andrew Cooper

Cllr Janet Illidge

Also present:

Chris Shaw Chief Officer

Cath Kirwan Deputy Chief Officer/Responsible Finance Officer

NTC 23/136 GRANT CHEQUE PRESENTATION

Councillor Jane Thomas presented cheques to:

Northwich Litfest - £500 St. Wilfreds Scouts - £600

Rudheath Bowling Club - £500

Toppers of Northwich - £1500 Cllr Cooper thanked Toppers for their fantastic work in the community. Leftwich Primary School - £500 Teachers thanked members for the funding and continued support

NTC 23/137 NORTHWICH PLAZA UPDATE

Friends of the Plaza gave a presentation on their plans for the future of this Northwich building. The building is currently in family ownership who wish to look at transferring the building to the Friends of the Plaza if they can come up with the funding. The Friends of the Plaza was formed to support the venue. Over the past seven years, the Plaza has successfully hosted events and made a significant impact on the town. With the building nearing its centenary, there's a desire to celebrate its 100th year and preserve it as a community asset. Rupert Adams elaborated on the group's establishment and its endeavor to become a registered charity. The board of trustees, with Rupert as Chair, is exploring funding avenues, including support from the "levelling up" initiative and other creative ideas like a filmed advertisement showcasing local businesses. Preservation of the Grade 2 listed building is a priority, and recent meetings with partner agencies and dignitaries have been promising.

Cllr Cooper inquired about the family's timeline for selling the premises. Jon clarified that the family is willing to wait for the group to raise funds. Cllr Cooper also raised a query regarding the availability of funding under a Labour government.

Cllr Rachel Waterman offered professional support from the group's members and asked if legal advice and marketing assistance were needed, to which Rupert expressed interest.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas
Town Mayor

Members will receive a PowerPoint presentation for further reference.

Closing Remarks: Cllr Jane Thomas extended gratitude to Jon and Rupert for their informative presentation.

NTC 23/138 LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR CLLR AMY LOCKETT

Members to approve an extending absence for 6 months.

Proposed by Cllr Janet Illidge and seconded by Cllr Rachel Waterman

All agreed

NTC 23/139 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE OR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Sam Naylor, Cllr Amy Lockett, Cllr Graham Emmett, Cllr Catherine Fox, Cllr Bob Cernik, Cllr Olwyn Dean, Cllr Julie MacDonald, Cllr Alison Gerrard, Cllr Arthur Neil and Cllr Kate Cernik.

NTC 23/140 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members to declare any interest under the following categories:

Pecuniary Interest

Outside Bodies Interest

Family, Friend or Close Associate interest

Cllr Andrew Cooper, Cllr Patricia Parkes in any matters relating to Cheshire West and Chester Council.

NTC 23/141 OPEN FORUM

A representative from Transition Northwich provided a presentation on the Peak Cluster Pipeline proposal, which entails installing a pipeline for Carbon Monoxide (CO) stretching from Derbyshire to Morecambe Bay. The pipeline will pass through Northwich to collect CO2 from the Lostock Sustainable Energy Plant under construction on Griffiths Road. Members were informed about an event scheduled for Monday, 22nd April at 7pm, and were encouraged to attend to represent Northwich.

The meeting time clashes with the NTC Planning meeting. It was decided that the NTC Planning meeting time would be changed to 5pm to accommodate members who wished to attend both meetings.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas
Town Mayor

NTC 23/142 SIGNING OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 4th March 2024 be confirmed and approved as a true and accurate record.

Proposed by Cllr Andy Stott and seconded by Cllr Jo Callaghan

All agreed.

Minutes to be signed by the Mayor.

NTC 23/143 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

- 6.1 To note the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Monday 18th March 2024. Noted by Cllr Lee Siddall
- 6.2 To note the Planning and Environment Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 26th February 2024 Noted by Cllr Andy Scott
- 6.3 Grants committee
Noted by Cllr Janet Illidge

All agreed.

NTC 23/144 TOWN MAYOR’S COMMUNICATIONS

Mayor’s diary – March 2024

2 nd March	The Zodiac Theatre – “Beautiful” – A wonderful performance celebrating the Carole King Story. This was such a lovely story filled with incredible songs and excellent acting. Watch out for any more productions!
9 th March	Namix Gym expansion. Chris Wood started this business 10 years ago and was joined by Charlotte, his wife and Tom, brother-in-law. It is now a thriving business. I was invited to open the expansion. A real achievement given the number of gyms in the local area and the current cost of living crisis.
23 rd March	Rotary’s annual Swimathon. It was a real privilege to open the swimathon event where many teams competed to raise money for a host of different charities.
31 st March	Easter Egg Hunt. I arrived to find most of the eggs won and to a huge queue of people waiting for hot dogs and burgers. The response to this event was incredible and it was lovely to see so many families enjoying this fabulous space. A huge thank you to Cath and Chris for their time and for organizing this very popular event.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas
Town Mayor

NTC 23/145 CHIEF OFFICER REPORT

Members received the report.

Cllr Janet Illidge asked who is responsible for Fury Wood as the litter is terrible and very unsightly. CO informed members that it is CWAC.

Cllr Andrew Cooper informed members about a complaint he has received from a concerned resident due to ASB around the park at Old Hall Road, Leftwich. TO will look at CCTV and will arrange a site visit with Councillor Cooper.

Cllr Jane Thomas asked about the lions being installed and TO confirmed they have been installed at Vickersway Park, Verdin Park, Church Walk playground and Whalley Road playing fields.

Cllr Andrew Cooper raised concerns about gritting and TO will create a steering group. Also, asked about for update on the Northwich Infirmary using our land and TO will create an informal meeting.

NTC 23/146 POLICE UPDATE

PCSO Nichola Devey gave an update on various issues around the town.

Staffing has changed from 4 officers to just 2. Problems still with ASB in Cumberland Street however, the signage has reduced the problem and have been working with Barons Quay Security with CCTV footage.

ASB

Has unfortunately increased with larger group congregating especially around McDonalds in town. Have been working with staff in helping them gain evidence and this is a working progress with a Trigger Plan.

SHOPLIFTING

This has increase and has been working with Emily and have been giving Crime Prevention information to the businesses.

Cllr Cooper asked what the age is and Nichoa replied with ages 11 to 17 years old. And have we got anything planned as in previous years with Edesential. Chief Officer informed members that the companies are applying for this themselves this year and will be delivering courses. Unfortunately, these children do not take part in these sessions and continue to hang around the town centre. Police have been working with the families.

Councillor Lee Siddall asked about PCSO Mandy who has left and will she be replaced as there is problem on Castle. Unfortunately, PCSO Nichoas was unable to answer this. Cllr Siddall raised his concerns in not having PCSO in the areas and thanked nicho9la for her great work.

Cllr Rachel Waterman asked if the group of youths is local and PCSO Nic confirmed they are.

PCSO Nichoas expressed that the members of the public need to report any ASB to the Police. If children over step the mark then they will be taken to task.

Cllr Jane Thomas thanked the police for their hard work.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas
Town Mayor

CAREY PARK

Rough sleepers have now moved on from Carey Park.

NTC 23/147 BADGERS

Proposal

Option 1 – Do nothing, the news of the badgers went into the local press over the weekend and the reaction of the public was in favour of leaving the badgers as it is their natural environment. we can continue to monitor the activity and manage the area accordingly keeping the site clean and safe.

Option 2 – Employ the services of an ecologist to monitor the setts over a period of time and then be advised of next steps bringing that report back to Council

Option 3 – Continue conversations with Network Rail to discuss how they could potentially help and offer advice

TO informed members of the cost of surveys from three different companies who offer different options, prices range from £300 to £6000 depending on what we have done.

Cllr Lee Siddall felt that something has to be done and the badgers need to be removed for the existing graves to be used and has a understanding of protecting the badgers and feels that the council should not be funding this. TO said there is no funding to claim which is disappointing.

Cllr Catriona Stewart asked how many plots are available. TO answered that no new graves are available, but we be adding to existing graves.

Cllr Rachel Waterman has found some information regarding funding and TO will explore this option.

Proposal that we obtain costs for an ecologist to monitor an and offer advice while also continuing the dialogue with Network Rail (option 1 and option 2).

Obtain costs and report back to council in May

*Proposed by Cllr Jo Callaghan and seconded by Cllr Lee Siddall
All Agreed*

NTC 23/148 VERDIN PARK MUSIC FESTIVAL

Members to let CO know if they volunteer for the weekend.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas
Town Mayor

NTC 23/149 BELMONT ROAD PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT

Proposal

Belmont Road is the last site that is to be refurbished as all other locations have received significant investment and all now have a high standard of play equipment installed. As with all our installations we will work with local residents by inviting them to take part in a consultation and feed into the design of the site, these flyers with a QR code will be delivered to local residents by members in the next few days. Once we have the information from the community, we will develop a design and then go out to tender for the supply and installation of the play equipment. We aim to have our play areas accessible all year round to encourage health and wellbeing to our community, this is why we do not install on grass or grass mat so the play surface is always usable.

This is more expensive but means the site will be well used and offer longevity. Funding will be sourced from the following.

- Section 106 contribution
- Wren Funding Grant (FCC Communities).

Northwich Town Council will pay the 3rd party contribution if we are successful which will be £10,000. Members to approve the Belmont Road Play Area project and allow the Chief Officer to apply for funding for the project

Cllr Cooper has handed the leaflets out but has asked for volunteers to distribute the remainder.

Proposed by Cllr Catriona Stewart and seconded by Cllr Jo Callaghan All agreed

NTC 23/150 CHURCH ROAD PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT

Proposal

The current play equipment is safe but is old and does not offer significant play value as newer play equipment now does. we will also look at putting in a sensory area and work with local groups such as Tiny Steps to pick the correct equipment. Again, we will follow the same format as previous installs by asking local residents, park users and Church Walk school to take part in a consultation to enable us to come up with a design. Once the design is agreed will then go out to tender for the supply and installation of the play equipment. Funding will come from the following sources. • Veolia Northwich Town Council will pay the 3rd party contribution if we are successful which will be £10,000. Members to approve the Church Walk Play Area project and allow the Chief Officer to apply for funding for the project.

Proposed by Cllr Catriona Stewart and seconded by Cllr Lee Siddall All agreed

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas
Town Mayor

NTC 23/151 VICKERSWAY PARK SENSORY PLAY AREA

Proposal

Something we are currently being asked about is play equipment which is accessible, low level and supports sensory requirements. I have already made contact with local groups and the community regarding this project and they are extremely keen to become involved. A location in Vickersway Park will be decided and we will then consult with relevant groups on the kit they would like to be seen in the park. Funding will come from the following sources. • Awards For All (National Lottery) Members to approve the Vickersway Park Sensory Area project and allow the Chief Officer to apply for funding for the project.

Cllr Andrew Cooper raised concerns if we have the capacity for Northwich Town Council to deliver these projects. TO advised that these will be done in stages and will be staggered.

Proposed by Cllr Janet Illidge and seconded by Cllr Andy Kent

All agreed

NTC 23/152 RUDHEATH AND WITTON TOGETHER

Members thanked Rudheath and Witton Together for their work in the last 10 years.

Cllr Rachel Waterman thanked Northwich Town Council who have supported the project from the start.

NTC 23/153 OUTSIDE BODIES

Library Refurbishment

Cllr Andrew Cooper informed members about ongoing refurbishment, revealing that builders discovered a significant amount of asbestos, leading to increased costs. CWaC (Cheshire West and Chester Council) have secured funding for the additional work. Workzone will relocate to the library from Navigation Road.

Weaver Square Market

There's a proposal to move the market to Barons Quay, but CWaC finds the cost prohibitive. Cllrs Cooper and Naylor are keen for the move.

Barons Quay Glass Defects

Cllr Andrew Cooper updated members on glass defects at Barons Quay, attributed to incorrect installation by contractors. The responsible contractor, Balfour Beatty, have accepted responsibility. Cllr Cooper requested that, once repairs are done, the traveller be painted. Weaver Way's road repair remains in dispute.

Path near Hunts Lock

Cllr Jo Callaghan sought an update, with Cllr Cooper sharing information from Cllr Arthur Neil. Cllr Arthur Neil contacted the Canal and River Trust regarding public safety concerns. CRT responded, stating that their engineer is investigating the matter.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas
Town Mayor

River Heroes Event

Cllr Lee Siddall announced the River Heroes event on April 20th at 10 am at Grozone. The event will feature water testing demonstrations, talks, and a site visit.
Friends of the Train Station

Cllr Andrew Kent provided an update on the group's activities and informed members that a successful litter pick occurred last month, with plans for another soon.

NTC 23/154 ASSET REGISTER

CO informed members that we have produced an Asset Register Policy with guidance from The Practitioners Guide.
Cllr Andrew Cooper asked if items would depreciate, and CO advised that after seeking guidance from various agencies they would not.

Proposed by Cllr Jo Callaghan and Cllr Catriona Stewart All agreed

NTC 23/155 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be the AGM (Mayor Making) on Monday 20th May at 7.00 pm.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas
Town Mayor