

NORTHWICH TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 5th FEBRUARY 2024

Present:

Cllr Jane Thomas

Town Mayor

Councillors:

Cllr Joanne Callaghan

Cllr Lee Siddall

Cllr Catriona Stewart

Cllr Julie MacDonald

Cllr Andrew Cooper

Cllr Kate Cernik

Cllr Rachel Waterman

Cllr Andy Kent

Cllr Andy Stott

Cllr Bob Cernik

Cllr Graham Emmett

Also present:

Chris Shaw

Cath Kirwan

Chief Officer

Deputy Chief Officer/Responsible Finance Officer

NTC 23/104 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE OR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Amy Lockett, Cllr Olwyn Dean, Cllr Alison Gerrard Cllr Janet Illidge, and Councillor Tom Melville.

NTC 23/105 GRANTS CHEQUE AWARD

Suzanne Rhodes Suzanne Rhodes from The End of Life Partnership gave a presentation to members on the End of Life Partnership which is based in Crewe and also covers Cheshire.

Suzanne explained the role of the organization to members which covers training, dementia support and palliative care.

Suzanne thanked member for the kind donation which will be used to provide 3 namaste sensory boxes which includes visual, sensory and taste objects for dementia patients throughout Cheshire.

Town Mayor Cllr Jane Thomas thanked Suzanne for the presentation.

NTC 23/106 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 Sam Naylor, Cllr Patricia Parkes declared an interest in any matters relating to Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas Town Mayor

NTC 23/107 OPEN FORUM

A member of the public attended the meeting and addressed members regarding ASB in and around the town centre especially around Barons Quay and Cumberland car parks. These car parks are being used for car meets late in to the night and this is disturbing the resident on a regular basis, the resident is also concerned that a serious accident is going to take place with serious injuries to the drives or members of the public.

The Police have been informed on a regular basis and the are working with the resident and local partners to resolve the situation.

Cllr Andrew Cooper asked that this be raised at the PSG (problem solving group) and measures looked at to reduce the ASB

Cllr Sam Naylor said that he would raise the residents concerns with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Police were in attendance and gave an update to members on the measures taken so far and welcomed the support from the Town Council.

6.18pm Councillor Bob and Kate Cernik arrived for the meeting and apologised for their late arrival.

NTC 23/108 SIGNING OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 8th January 2024 be confirmed and approved as a true and accurate record.

Proposed by Cllr Andy Kent and seconded by Cllr Andy Scott

All agreed.

Minutes to be signed by the Mayor.

NTC 23/109 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

- 6.1 To note the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Monday 15th February 2024. Noted by Lee Siddall
- 6.2 To note the Planning and Environment Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 16th February 2024
Noted by Andy Kent

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas Town Mayor

NTC 23/110 TOWN MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Mayor's diary – January 2024

20 th January	Opening of Jodies Gym
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NTC 23/111 CHIEF OFFICER REPORT

Rose Meadow Play Area

As discussed in previous meetings we are still waiting for CW&C Council to asset transfer the land so that the Section 106 funding can be released. Once this is completed, we can then begin the installation of the play area on Rose Meadow.

Update from S106 officer today stating that it is now with the Legal Team and unfortunately this will take a while as it needs to be rewrote.

Northwich Flooding Letter of Appreciation

Following on from our January Full Council meeting a letter of appreciation was sent to the local press and placed on our social media platforms thanking all agencies that were involved in the recent deployment of the flood defences and pumps.

Thanks to Cllr Stewert for writing the press release.

Copy of letter below –

I write regarding comments made about the Northwich Anti-flooding strategy.

During the Northwich Town Council meeting of 8th January, members reflected on the measures taken last month using the emergency plan to prevent the town centre flooding. Flooding in 2021 had terrible consequences for residents and businesses and with two rivers meeting in the town centre, flooding has been a risk to the town historically. This is likely to become increasingly prevalent with rapidly changing weather patterns.

As a Town Council, we would like to record our appreciation of the efforts of Cheshire West and Chester Council officers and councillors, working alongside the Environment Agency, United Utilities and the Canal and River Trust.

The measures which have been put into place have been effective in keeping the water in the rivers and drains, albeit at high levels. Road closures are of course disruptive to businesses and residents, although far less so than a flooded town centre. Closing some roads is essential for the emergency plan to prevent the rivers bursting their banks and flooding the town centre. Closed roads enable pumps to be put in place safely taking excess water to where it needs to go. Workers are then able to monitor water levels in manholes and rivers safely and regularly. This enables the rapid deployment of further measures if needed.

We can't predict weather in Northwich in the future. However, it is reasonable to assume that severe wet weather over the winters will become more frequent across the UK due to the climate emergency.

As Town Councillors, we are of the view that when agencies work together and cooperate, we can better mitigate the impact of climate change and everybody is better served and supported.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas Town Mayor

It is important that Northwich residents know the reasons behind occasional road closures during potential flooding events. It is crucial to convey that various agencies are collaboratively addressing these challenges to prevent further issues in the town.

Councillor Jane Thomas thanked Cllr Catriona Stewart for writing the letter.

Allotments

We have now applied for some section 106 funding to improve some of our allotment sites, sites to be improved are below.

Winnington Allotments

- New perimeter fencing and gates.
- Crown lifting of trees.
- Removal of allotment waste.
- New water supply and taps.

Queensgate Allotments

- Improved paths.
- Improved parking facilities.

Vickersway Allotments

- Replacement fencing including new gates.
- Improved parking facilities and shed access.

We will know the outcome of the funding applications within a month and works will start ASAP if we are successful.

Dane Valley Cemetery

New drain has been installed to the entrance of Dane Valley Cemetery as this area was prone to flooding during heavy rain. Double gates and pedestrian gates will be removed sand blasted and powder coated. The entrance to the cemetery will be improved with this work being carried out.

Vickersway Park

The main gate at Vickersway Park will also be removed, sandblasted and powder coated to again improve the appearance of the park.

We have carried out some cutting back within the park and will be replanting in due course, we will also be looking at carrying out remedial works to the Crazy Golf and tennis courts ready for the coming season.

DCO/RFO to set a meeting up with David Levins from Cheshire Police on future police support in Northwich.

S106 for Belmont Road Play Area and Vickersway Park. Looking at using the funding for the paths at Belmont Road and will be applying for funding for a new play area. In Vickersway we will be using the funding for the paths and Crazy Golf. We are also looking at Eco Toilets for Vickersway Park and should there be enough funding left these will be installed, along with a contribution towards a new Pavilion.

Mayors Chain is being repaired at a cost of £2000.00.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas Town Mayor

NTC 23/112 FINANCE REGULATIONS

Members to approve update Finance Regulations.

Proposed by Cllr Arthur Neil and seconded by Cllr Catriona Stewart

All agreed.

NTC 23/113 FINANCE RISK ASSESSMENT

Members to approve update Finance Risk Assessment.

Proposed by Cllr Arthur Neil and seconded by Cllr Andy Stott

All agreed.

NTC 23/114 PRECEPT 2024-2025

Background

Finance Committee have been presented with the 2024/25 budget In the January meeting and have recommended that Full Council approve the precept figure of £590,000 for 2024/25. The running costs to the Council have increased significantly over the last few years but by working hard and finding savings we have not increased the precept for 6 years.

With public sector pay increases, materials increases, increase in the cost of delivering events throughout the town we have no alternative but to slightly increase the precept for 2024/25.

This budget offers value for money for Northwich residents with only a slight increase in our budget.

Projects and initiatives 2024/25

This budget will deliver the following improvements for Northwich residents.

Planned Improvements

- Further Improvements to our parks and open spaces.
- Continued partnership working with local stakeholders to improve the appearance of Northwich Town Centre and surrounding areas.
- Increase in floral displays.
- Further improvements to cemetery paths.
- Continued installation and maintenance of AED's throughout the town, we have now installed 24 Accessible AED's for our community.
- Increased Wildflower areas in Witton Cemetery and Verdin Park
- Continued improvements to our towns play areas and open spaces.
- Partnership working with local agencies to combat ASB and provide youth activities.

Events

We will continue to deliver large scale events in Northwich, our emphasis will be on improving our existing in-house events as we believe offer greater value for money. Northwich has an amazing partnership network delivering events and working together we bring some of the best events in Cheshire to our residents and businesses.

The following events will be delivered throughout the year by NTC or with our partners. All the events listed are free to attend for the whole family and support our town centre businesses.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas Town Mayor

- Easter Egg Hunt
- Pina Colada Festival
- NOW festival
- Artisan Markets
- Christmas Extravaganza
- Verdin park Music Festivals (3-day free event)
- River Festival
- Food festivals
- Tree of Lights

Services

Northwich Town Council provide a wide range of services to the Northwich Community including cemeteries, open spaces, allotments and play areas.

Church Walk Paddling pool is free to attend for all, this fantastic facility is known throughout the North West and brings visitors into the town to enjoy a free day out throughout the summer.

Vickersway Park is a great day out and is a firm favourite with locals, Verdin Park now sees additional events staged within the park and again will see additional investment this year. The above events, improvements and projects are just the tip of the iceberg in what Northwich Town Council deliver. We also deliver a range of services with partners to improve the appearance and safety of the town, this includes additional cleansing, road sweeping, weed control and winter gritting.

This budget gives value for money for residents with an increase to a band D property from **£76.86** to **£79.08** which equates to £2.22 per year (18.5 pence per month per band D household)

Members to approve Band D charge of **£79.08** for 2024/25

We precept to CW&C for **£590,000** for 2024/25 financial year

Proposed by Cllr Arthur Neil and seconded by Cllr Catherine Fox

All agreed.

NTC 23/115 POLICE UPDATE

Local Police in attendance at the meeting gave members an update on various issues around the town,

- ASB and car meets on car parks is on the Police radar, measures are being put in place including additional barriers on BQ and signage explaining Section 59 enforcement.
- Cumberland car park could be locked but no partner currently have the resources to carry this out.
- Cllr Siddal asked if CCTV could be used as deterrent to discourage the ASB

This was a question that will be asked at the next cell meeting and a response will be given at the next FC meeting..

Chief Officer will pick this up with Barons Quay.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas Town Mayor

There is a raise of ASB in Cumberland Street Car park and the schools have reported that this has become a new drinking area and evidence of drug users on site. TC confirmed that this has gone to CWaC and NTC will secure the area along with another litter pick.

Increase with Year 7s students and has been liaising with the schools to educate the children.

Business Crime Team on the town will be visiting the shops with a high rate of crime from organised crime teams which are travelling around the area. Will be working with Trading Standards to target the shops selling the alcohol to underage children.

Cllr Arthur Neil informed members of a comment recently made by John Dwyers, The Police and Crime Commissioner comment to a Parish Council about the length of girls skirts and boys behaviour towards them and would like to state that Northwich Town Council does not agree with this and it is total unacceptable. Cllr Kate Cernik raised concern about this comment and owes it to our residents that we write to the committee stating that the comment from a senior member of staff how intolerable this is. Cllr Rachel Waterman commented that again this is totally unacceptable and would like to issue a public statement from Northwich Town Council.

Proposal: Letter drafted in response to the comments made by The Public Crime Commissioner to the Chair of The Police Crime Commissioner and published in the Northwich Guardian.

Proposed by Cllr Catherine Fox and seconded by Cllr Joanne Callaghan all agreed.

All agreed

Cllr Arthur Neil suggested that Mayor and Deputy Mayor to draft the letter from Northwich Town Council.

Cllr Sam Naylor thanked Nicola on her work and knowledge and how the resources have been slimmed down since he was a police officer.

PCSO Davey mentioned the drug bins to used needles, but this problem has reduced.

Cllr Kate Cernik is concerned that our residents are experiencing these problems with ASB.

NTC 23/116 TO APPROVE 2024-2025 EMR

Earmarked Reserves

Council to approve current Earmarked Reserves

Account	Opening Balance	Net Transfers	Closing Balance
320 EMR - Teen Wheels	2,000.00		2,000.00
327 EMR - Verdin Park CCTV	4,000.00	-4,000.00	0.00
333 EMR - Paddling Pool	30,000.00		30,000.00
337 EMR - Cemetery Chapel	30,000.00		30,000.00
338 EMR - Now Festival	0.00	4,300.00	4,300.00
341 EMR - Verdin Park Woodland Tra	9,850.00		9,850.00
343 EMR - Skatepark	20,000.00	-20,000.00	0.00
344 EMR - Verdin Park Improvements	54,000.00	-10,000.00	44,000.00
346 EMR - Vickersway Park Pavilion	40,000.00		40,000.00
350 EMR - Cemetery Path Improvemen	35,000.00		35,000.00
	224,850.00	-29,700.00	195,150.00

Proposed by Cllr Arthur Neil and seconded by Cllr Catherine Fox all agreed.

All agreed

NTC 23/117 NORTHWICH TOWN COUNCIL EVENTS UPDATE

Easter Egg Hunt

We will once again be holding our charity Easter Egg Hunt in Vickersway Park in aid of the Town Mayors charity.

Date – 31st March 2024

Verdin Park Music Festival

This ever-popular event which is held in Verdin Park over 3 days will this year see NTC working with Radio Northwich & The Salty Dog. As always, the event is free of charge for all with NTC running a bar with food available throughout the weekend along with a funfair and other activities for all the family. Final arrangements and line up will be published in the next few weeks.

Date – 7th June 2024

8th June 2024

9th June 2024

Remembrance Sunday

Remembrance Sunday is the time for the town to come together and remember the fallen. As in previous years the parade will march from Crum Hill into St Helens Church for a service then we will form at the cenotaph for the Act of Remembrance before marching back to Memorial Court.
Date – 10th November 2024

Christmas Extravaganza

The ever-popular Christmas Extravaganza will this year be held on Saturday 30th November 2024 within Northwich Town Centre. This event is organised in partnership with Northwich BID, Barons Quay and Rotary Clubs of Northwich. The event will follow the same programme with activities throughout the day with a parade and the switch on and fireworks in barons Quay.
Date – 30th November 2024

Tree of lights

The tree of lights is held in Witton Cemetery and is a very popular event with the local community. All are invited to place a star in the tree in memory of a loved one which is then lit up over the Xmas period. During the lighting up ceremony all the names on the stars are read out by our local clergy.
Date – 6th December 2024

Northwich Partnership Events

River festival

The Northwich River Festival is staged on Weaver Way and attracts large crowds throughout the day. Organised by Northwich Rotary with in-kind help from NTC/BID.
Date – 20th July 2024

Pinacolada Festival

This annual festival organised by Northwich BID with support from NTC has become a firm favourite with the local community and visitors from further afield. The event gets bigger and better each year with large crowds expected to flock to the town once again in 2024.
Date – 17th August 2024

Firefest

The annual Northwich Firefest is held at Verdin Park and organised by Northwich Rotary, all money raised from the event goes to local charities.
Date – TBC

Proposed by Cllr Andy Stott and seconded by Cllr Graham Emmett all agreed.

NTC 23/118 CW&C COUNCILLOR UPDATES

Councillor Catherine Fox left 7.36pm

Councillor Catriona Stewart left 7.38pm

Cllr Arthur Neil updated members of the residents complaining about litter and pot holes and having a tidy up of Fury Wood.

Cllr Andrew Cooper updated members on the Library Consultation. CW&C proposal is to reduce the hours of the Library from 9am – 7pm and 9am – 5pm but 7pm on a Wednesday.
Cllr Cooper is still waiting for his funding application decision on Leftwich Meadows.

Cllr Lee Siddall asked about the status of the Library in the town centre and Cllr Andrew Cooper updated members on it opening in 2025 and advised members to keep looking on the Cheshire West and Council website for regular updates.

Cllr Graham Emmett asked for an update on the Solar Energy Plant but Councillor Arthur Neil confirmed there was no update.

NTC 23/119 OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Andy Kent updated members on the Friends of Northwich Train Station and after the meeting on Wednesday he will know more. Chief Officer updated members with the work that Northwich Town Council do at Northwich and Greenbank station with the planters.

Cllr Lee Siddall updated members on the recent progress with the Angling Trust. They have just acquired five top-notch water quality testing kits, marking a significant step forward in the initiative to conduct comprehensive testing on our local rivers.

This development paves the way for our citizen science project, which aims to involve community members in environmental monitoring and conservation efforts. If you have a passion for ecological health or are simply curious about hands-on science, we would love to have you join us.

To equip participants with the necessary skills, the Angling Trust will be providing specialized training sessions with in next few weeks. Even if your schedule does not permit a long-term commitment to this project, attending the training could be incredibly informative. Not only will it give you an insight into the processes of our project, but it also enables you to share accurate information with others who might be interested in volunteering.

Cllr Sam Naylor praised Councillor Lee Siddall on this initiative.

NTC 23/120 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Council meeting will be Monday 4th March 2024 at 6pm

There being no more business, the meeting ended at 7.53 pm.

Date.....

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Cllr Jane Thomas Town Mayor