

**NORTHWICH TOWN COUNCIL**  
**MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**HELD ON MONDAY 3rd FEBRUARY 2025**

**Present:**

Cllr Kate Cernik

Town Mayor

**Councillors:**

Cllr Graham Emmett

Cllr Catriona Stewart

Cllr Arthur Neil

Cllr Julie MacDonald

Cllr Patricia Parkes

Cllr Catherine Fox

Cllr Alison Gerrard

Cllr Bob Cernik

Cllr Joanne Callaghan

Cllr Sam Naylor

Cllr Olwyn Dean

Cllr Stephen Harcombe

Cllr Rachel Waterman

Cllr Patricia Parkes arrived – 6.11pm

**Also present:**

Chris Shaw

Cath Kirwan

Chief Officer

Deputy Chief Officer/Responsible Finance Officer

**NTC 24/91     APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Tom Melville, Cllr Andy Kent, Cllr Andy Stott, Cllr Lee Siddall, Cllr Janet Illidge.

**NTC 24/92     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, Cllr Sam Naylor, Cllr Patricia Parkes and Cllr Rachel Waterman declared an interest in any matters relating to Cheshire West and Chester Council. Cllr Kate Cernik declared an interest in Healthwatch.

**NTC 24/93     OPEN FORUM**

Members received a presentation from Dan Price, the Police and Crime Commissioner. The PCC introduced himself to the Councillors, sharing his background as a Parish Councillor for 12 years and his strong belief in decision-making at the local level. He acknowledged the valuable work done by Parish Councils, often taking on responsibilities that should be handled by the borough council. The PCC aims to visit the larger councils in the area and is passionate about fostering a thriving community. With a background in engineering, he emphasised his problem-solving skills.

The PCC spoke about his key themes for reducing crime which include Increasing visible policing to assure public safety. Ensuring an additional 10% policing in Cheshire, focusing on neighborhood policing and also promoting public awareness and safety education programs.

**Date.....**

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**Cllr Kate Cernik**  
**Town Mayor**

The PCC highlighted the importance of investing in technology to stay ahead of criminals. AI will be integrated to assist in solving crimes and identifying offenders.

A hotspot policing initiative will be announced this month, allowing all partners access to increased police presence in high-crime areas.

Councillors asked The Police and Crime Commissioner questions on his presentation

Cllr Harcombe asked about facial recognition & safeguards. The PCC noted a 500% increase in the use of facial recognition, which has been instrumental in tackling theft. Citizens can take photos of offenders, aiding the police in case-building. This technology helps prevent repeat offenses, particularly among known offenders.

Cllr Waterman asked about Hotspot Policing & Business Reporting. The PCC emphasised the need for businesses to report anti-social behavior (ASB) so the police can address it effectively. The additional 10% policing in Cheshire will prioritize neighborhood safety.

Cllr Stewart asked around concerns on Policing People of Colour. The PCC assured that AI will be used for crime-solving based on reported incidents and that safeguards will be in place to ensure accurate identification.

Cllr Cernik asked about the role of PCSOs. The PCC acknowledged the reduction in PCSOs due to retirements without replacements. He is committed to ensuring that all 122 wards have at least 1 PCSO and 1 PCO, with some areas receiving additional resources as needed. Government funding will support this initiative.

Cllr Parkes asked about cycling in the town & speed concerns. The PCC acknowledged the problem of fast-moving bicycles and suggested tougher legislation. He proposed working with large businesses to establish a Code of Conduct, similar to programs in Manchester. This issue could be integrated into the hotspot policing initiative.

Cllr Callaghan asked about AI & Data Security. The PCC acknowledged concerns about data security and emphasised learning from other police forces with advanced AI systems. He reassured Councillors that data will be secure but acknowledged that there will always be risks.

Cllr Emmett asked about Education on Safety. The PCC mentioned an ongoing consent campaign currently advertised in Northwich cinema, aiming to promote safety awareness in schools.

Cllr Cernik asked about Police Staff Turnover & Continuity Cllr Cernik raised concerns about frequent changes in senior police officers, which disrupts relationship-building. The PCC shared this frustration, acknowledging that while he cannot control operational policing decisions, he will advocate for greater stability.

The PCC reaffirmed his commitment to representing the public and ensuring that the police serve the community effectively. He emphasised the importance of collaboration with councils and the public to enhance safety and policing efforts.

Cllr Arthur Neil left 6.50pm.

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**Cllr Kate Cernik**  
**Town Mayor**

**NTC 24/94      SIGNING OF THE MINUTES**

4.1      The minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025 be

confirmed and approved as a true and accurate record.

*Proposed by Cllr Cernik and seconded by Cllr Stewart*

*All agreed.*

Minutes to be signed by the Mayor.

#### **NTC 24/95     REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

5.1     To note the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

5.2     To note the Planning Committee Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

*Members noted the minutes of the meetings.*

#### **NTC 24/96     TOWN MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

Mayor's diary – January 2025

| Town Mayor's Communications |                                         |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 21 <sup>st</sup> January    | David Lanham, Mayors Award presentation |
| 24 <sup>th</sup> January    | David Roberts funeral                   |
| 31 <sup>st</sup> January    | Community ReAwards                      |

Cllr Kate Cernik spoke about her visit to David Lanham at his home with his family. Unfortunately, David was unable to come to a council meeting. Cllr Kate Cernik presented David with a certificate, and we are awaiting the medal to be made. Cllr Arthur Neil thanked Cllr Kate Cernik for visiting David Lanham and how the family are appreciative of the award. Kate passed on her regards to David and the family.

Cllr Kate Cernik informed members about various awards such as the Kings Award and would like members to think about who they would like to nominate. Cllr Sam Naylor commented about a member of the public who had nominated somebody 18 months ago but the process can take up to 3 years for a decision to make.

#### **NTC 24/97     CHIEF OFFICERS REPORT**

Members received the report from the Chief Officer

Cllr Waterman asked about parking at Belmont Road when it is finished but Cllr Dean commented that users were encouraged to walk to the new facility.

Councillors thanked Chief Officer for his persistence work with the Rose Meadow play area.

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**Town Mayor**

#### **NTC 24/98     POLICE UPDATE**

##### **ASB**

Reports are still low for ASB within the town centre, Barons Quay have reported some

issues with youths riding their bikes on the traveller and causing damage to the safety signs and within the stair wells, CCTV is being reviewed to see if the youths can be identified.

Received reports from members of the public regarding people begging in the town centre – Main area's where the begging takes place is Sainsburys, McDonalds, Pound Bakery and near to Greggs.

PCSO'S and Community safety wardens will be patrolling these areas to provide a visual deterrent and to take positive action against anyone committing the offence.

Yoxall Joiners – After recent complaints to CWAC councillors I highlighted this location to the Community safety wardens. This was then mentioned in the most recent PSG meeting. Cheshire West have been in touch with the site owners and since then the site has now been secured. All windows and doors have been boarded up, Preventing access to the building. This site will continue to be monitored to ensure that no unauthorised persons can access the site.

Still no reports regarding vehicle ASB on the car parks within the town, The signs still seem to be having an impact as well as Matalan who have implemented new restrictions preventing people being in the car park for more than 10mins after closing. However these areas will still be monitored to provide reassurance to residents, members of public in the area.

### **HOMELESS**

Currently there are three homeless people living on the land behind the job centre in a disused building.

Forfutures, Cheshire West and Police are aware of these people and numerous referrals have been made to help them get support and potential accommodation.

The group are not engaging and have refused accommodation as it was out of the Northwich area.

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January Fire attended a report of a building on fire, On arrival it was a camp fire that had got out of control and was extinguished by Fire.

Cheshire West have managed to locate the owners of the disused building and notified them to secure the building.

On Friday 24<sup>th</sup> a 7 day notice was given to the homeless people to vacate the site to allow contractors to secure the building.

### **GOOD NEWS**

In my last meeting I mentioned that a Male was arrested and charged in connection with a series of burglaries within the Northwich area, He has now been sentenced to 52 Weeks in Prison.

### **NORTHWICH AGAINST BUSINESS CRIME**

Working closely with the NABC team we have been able to identify several suspects for numerous Shoplifting offences in the Northwich Town centre.

Date.....

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**Cllr Kate Cernik**  
**Town Mayor**

Once identified these incidents are then passed to a Police Officer who will then be able to conduct an investigation, obtain all the relevant evidence and bring the offenders to court. Partnership working with the NABC team allows both Police and Cheshire West to share intelligence around offenders, new trends and also targeted products – This information allows both agencies to inform shops so that the appropriate crime prevention advice can be given.

If we see that certain shops are being targeted, I will invite our Crime prevention Officer to attend the store and complete an assessment of the site to Target harden the location.

## **HOUSING**

PCSO Faulkner has conducted a joint visit with Weaver vale Housing Trust on Harrisons Place following concerns raised by residents.  
All information obtained from that visit assist Police and Housing to take positive action.

## **EVENTS**

PCSO Nichola Faulkner, PCSO Di Wiggins and PCSO Michelle Gillett held three bike marking events across Northwich on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January, this was a free event for members of the public to have their bike marked. This helps the Police return bikes to their rightful owners once they have been stolen. All information is recorded on Bike register which is a national scheme throughout the UK.  
It was a great opportunity to provide crime prevention advice and engage with the public. Future events will be arranged over the next few months.

## **FUTURE ENGAGEMENT**

In February, all schools will be taking part in INTERNET SAFETY DAY, PCSO'S will be attending Charles Darwin and Witton Walk to conduct Internet safety presentations to the whole School working with the Junior safety Officers.

PCSO Faulkner and PCSO Nixon are looking to hold Knife Crime events across the Northwich area. PCSO Nixon has been in contact with a Nurse who conducts presentations to all High School aged children. The presentation is extremely informative and shows the gruesome details of the seriousness of Knife Crime.

We are currently looking to hold these events in May to incorporate NATIONAL KNIFE CRIME WEEK.

PCSO Faulkner reminded all Councillors that if a resident from your ward wishes to raise a concern that requires Police involvement, then please direct them to Ringing 101/ 999, Cheshire Police Website where they can submit an online report or complete a Resident Voice Survey.

This allows all concerns to be raised officially on Police systems and assists local officer in producing a patrol plan for their patches. It also means that should a member of staff change their area or report Sick the information will be recorded and passed onto the most appropriate patrol.

Date.....

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**Town Mayor**

## **NTC 24/99     PRECEPT 2025/2026**

Chief Officer gave background to the justification statement previously distributed to members. With public sector pay increases, materials increase, increase in the cost of delivering events throughout the town we have no alternative but to increase the precept for 2025/26. This budget offers value for money for Northwich residents with only a slight increase in our budget. Finance Committee were presented with the 2025/26 draft budget and have recommended that Full Council approve the precept figure of £655,743.00 for

2025/26.

This budget gives value for money for residents with an increase to a band D property from **£79.08** to **£85.68** which equates to an increase of **£6.60** per year (55 pence per month per band D household). Members to approve Band D charge of **£85.68** for 2025/26 and to precept CW&C Council **£655,743**

We precept Cheshire West and Chester for £655,743.00.

*Proposed by Cllr Stewart and seconded by Cllr Cernik*

*One abstention*

**Approved**

**NTC 24/100 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Report distributed to Members prior to this meeting.

*Proposed by Cllr MacDonald and seconded by Cllr Stewart*

*All agreed*

**Approved**

**NTC 24/101 FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT**

Report distributed to Members prior to this meeting.

*Proposed by Cllr Fox and seconded by Cllr Stewart*

*All Agreed*

**NTC 24/102 EARMARKED RESERVES**

Earmark Reserves were presented to members prior to the meeting.

*Proposed by Cllr Waterman and seconded by Cllr Callaghan*

*All Agreed*

**Date.....**

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**Cllr Kate Cernik**  
**Town Mayor**

**NTC 24/103 FIXED ASSET REGISTER**

Members were presented with the Fixed Asset Register prior to the meeting.

*Proposed by Cllr Waterman and seconded by Cllr Parkes*

*All Agreed*

**NTC 24/104 FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE OUR FEES**

**FOR 2025/26**

Cllr Stewart inquired about the lack of an increase in park fees. The Chief Officer responded that the aim is to keep outdoor activities as affordable as possible.

*Proposed by Cllr Callaghan and seconded by Cllr Parkes*

*All Agreed*

**NTC 24/105 STANDING ORDERS**

Standing orders were presented to members prior to the meeting.

*Proposed by Cllr Cernik and seconded by Cllr Stewart*

*All Agreed*

**NTC 24/106 NORTHWICH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW**

Cllr Fox went through her report regarding reviewing the Northwich Neighborhood Plan and how we may wish to proceed.

Cllr Cernik thanked Cllr Fox for her work so far on this.

Members to agree to accept the report and set up a small steering group with four members: Cllr Dean, Cllr Cernik, Cllr Callaghan and Cllr Parkes.

*Proposed by Cllr Emmett and seconded by Cllr Stewart.*

*All Agreed*

*Cllr Alison Gerrard left 7.30pm.*

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**Cllr Kate Cernik**  
**Town Mayor**

**NTC 24/107 OUTSIDE BODIES**

Cllr Cernik encouraged members to complete a Healthwatch survey regarding GP practices in the area.

Cllr Dean provided an update on a planning application for land near Gadbrook Park and noted that a public consultation will be held at The Venue on Wednesday, 5th February.

**NTC 24/108 CWaC MEMBERS**

Cllr Naylor provided an update on a visit from Kathy McArdle, Executive Director of Place and Growth, Cheshire West and Chester, discussing Northwich Town Council taking on additional responsibilities. He also mentioned various town centre matters and upcoming

meetings with Edward Fifield. Cllr Naylor expressed concerns about the Navigation Boatyard and aims to contact the new owner to discuss heritage preservation.

Cllr Naylor had met with NOW Northwich to confirm the event scheduled for May. He also visited Warrington and Vale Royal College following a £2 million refurbishment, noting that attendance numbers remain low. Cllr Naylor also spoke with Tata regarding the solar farm; an appeal has been submitted, and Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) will be challenging it.

Cllr Waterman announced that Leftwich Care Home will be opening as a rehabilitation facility for brain injury patients. Cllr Waterman updated members on the Mid Cheshire plan; the existing board is meeting, and an action plan will be developed.

Cllr Parkes attended a scrutiny meeting, which concluded that Northwich requires additional further education colleges.

**NTC 24/109    DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next Council meeting will be Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 at 6.00 pm

Meeting closed 7.55pm.

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**Cllr Kate Cernik**  
**Town Mayor**