

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

Present:

Cllr Julie Macdonald Town Mayor

Councillors:

Cllr Emma Guy	Cllr Tom Melville
Cllr Kate Cernik	Cllr Graham Emmett
Cllr Stephen Harcombe	Cllr Rachel Waterman
Cllr Andy Kent	Cllr Catriona Stewart
Cllr Andy Stott	Cllr Tom Melville
Cllr Janet Illidge	Cllr Arthur Neil
Cllr Joanna Callaghan	Cllr Robert Cernik
Cllr Sam Naylor	Cllr Catherine Fox
Cllr Brian Holland	Cllr Patricia Parkes

Also present:

Chris Shaw	Chief Officer
Cath Kirwan	Deputy Chief Officer/Responsible Finance Officer

NTC 25/65 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Alison Gerrard, Cllr Lee Siddall and Cllr Olwyn Dean.

NTC 25/66 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members to declare any interest under the following categories:

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

Councillor Rachel Waterman, Councillor Patricia Parkes, Councillor Arthur Neil and Councillor Sam Naylor declared an interest in any matters relating to Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Councillor Catriona Stewart declared an interest in Love Music Trust.

Date.....

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Cllr Julie Macdonald
Mayor

NTC 25/67 OPEN FORUM

Alan Carr and Phil Carter, representing Visual Arts Cheshire, an arts organisation run by volunteers, shared that for the past three years, they have been based at Barons Quay.

However, due to the unit now being under offer, they are no longer there. They have been offered a temporary location at the indoor market, which they appreciate, and it is set to open on November 13th. Visual Arts Cheshire is known for producing the Northwich Calendar and 20/20, as well as hosting a children's art exhibition in collaboration with local primary schools. They have also organised displays at Northwich Train Station. The organisation works in partnership with BID Northwich, which supports the exhibitions, including an art trail. There are many artists in the Northwich area and surrounding regions, with 200 artists currently on their register. Their exhibitions typically feature around 140 pieces of artwork. Barons Quay had created a community gallery space for both amateur and professional artists to display and sell their work.

Councillor Rachel Waterman expressed that this situation presents a fantastic opportunity. Phil Carter raised concerns about the future of the group after May, as they are uncertain about their location. In response, Councillor Cernik suggested the possibility of moving into the new library or Weaver Hall as potential options. Councillor Waterman expressed her willingness to support Visual Arts Cheshire and mentioned that she could assist with setting up a Community Interest Company (CIC) and also help with securing funding to support a permanent premises in the near future. Councillor Stewart agreed with this approach. Councillor Waterman proposed the creation of a small sub-working group to further explore options.

Councillor Guy noted that the museum would be an excellent space for the group. Councillor Patricia Parkes inquired if Visual Arts Cheshire would be open to a location just outside the town centre. However, Alan Carr responded that they would require the footfall from the town centre for the exhibitions to be successful.

Councillor Macdonald proposed the formation of the sub-working group, which would consist of Councillors Waterman, Councillor Guy, Councillor Cernik and Cllr Stewart.

The group will meet to explore the best options for securing a permanent location for Visual Arts Cheshire.

*Proposed by Cllr Rachel Waterman and seconded by Cllr Jo Callaghan
All agreed.*

NTC 25/68 POLICE UPDATE

PCSO Faulkner provided an update on Operation Treacle and highlighted that since July, there has been an increase in foot patrols in the town centre. As a result, there has been a reduction in crime, and the enhanced patrols will continue until March. PCSO Faulkner encouraged Councillors to inform the public to report any incidents, as this data is valuable for tracking trends and planning future footfall. The PCSO also noted that there has been a significant decrease in anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the town this year. However, the issue of "boy racers" has escalated, particularly in Barons Quay, and remains a concern. PCSO Faulkner has been working alongside the problem-solving team to find solutions. Evidence of reckless driving has been observed in Cumberland Car Park, with 20 vehicle registrations now on file for monitoring. The situation will continue to be closely observed.

Date.....

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Cllr Julie Macdonald
Mayor

Councillor Cernik asked how councillors can assist with addressing crimes and whether more communication is needed. PCSO Faulkner responded that the primary issue remains concentrated in Barons Quay. Councillor Guy inquired about the situation after March, and PCSO Faulkner explained that the continuation of the increased patrols depends on government funding, although they are hopeful the funding will be extended.

PCSO Faulkner also mentioned that a Business Crime Day will take place in November, offering support to local businesses on how to prevent crime. Information packs have been distributed to assist businesses with crime prevention strategies.

NTC 25/69 SIGNING OF THE MINUTES

- 5.1 The minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 6th October 2025 be confirmed and approved as a true and accurate record.

*Proposed by Cllr Arthur Neil and seconded by Cllr Kate Cernik
All agreed.*

Minutes to be signed by the Deputy Mayor.

NTC 25/70 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

- 6.1 To note Finance, Amenities & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 20th October 2025
6.2 To note Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 27th October 2025

Members noted the minutes of the meetings

NTC 25/71 TOWN MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Mayor's diary – October 2025

Town Mayor's Communications	
3 rd October	Bingo with the Mayor of Knutsford
7 th October	Cheshire Constabulary AFVBC/Breakfast Club
16 th October	The Joshua Tree
18 th October	50 th Charter Dinner, Vale Royal Lions
22 nd October	Theatre Production from 'Come from Away'
25 th October	The Cheshire and Northwich Wales Poppy Appeal Launch

Date.....

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Cllr Julie Macdonald
Mayor

NTC 25/72 CHIEF OFFICERS REPORT

Members received the report from the Chief Officer.

Members noted the Chief Officers Report

NTC 25/73 CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR OPENING TIMES

Members to approve Christmas opening hours.

Proposed by Cllr Jo Callaghan and seconded by Cllr Catriona Stewart

NTC 25/74 **NORTHWICH INFIRMARY UPDATE**

Members received an update report from the Chief Officer regarding the Northwich Infirmary Car Park. The Chief Officer mentioned that, following additional emails received from local residents in recent days, it is recommended to seek further detailed clarification to ensure the legal validity of the proposed car parking plans. Discussions will take place with the Trust to ensure that there will be no financial implications for Northwich Town Council.

Councillor Neil remarked that, while everyone is invested in the best interests of the park, there are differing views on the matter. He expressed scepticism about staff parking, citing concerns over staff being charged for parking and the ongoing issue of staff parking on nearby side roads. He emphasised the need for more parking spaces for patients rather than for staff and indicated plans to engage with residents to discuss potential solutions.

However, he acknowledged that legal constraints might limit what can be done. He remains committed to finding a resolution.

Councillor Cernik mentioned that NHS staff typically have parking fees deducted directly from their salaries. She also shared insights from recent discussions with staff at the Northwich Infirmary, who are having to park on nearby streets due to a lack of available spaces.

Councillor Neil added that some green space had been created at the hospital, which resulted in the removal of some parking spaces. Councillor Stewart responded that this change was made outside a theatre area to maintain a quiet space for patients, with the aim of minimising disruptions from parked cars.

Councillor Fox raised concerns about the Active Travel Plan, stating that it hasn't been covered in sufficient detail. She expressed the feeling that the situation is a "no-win" scenario and questioned how parking spaces are currently being managed, as well as what sustainable alternatives have been explored. She stressed that the legal risks lie with Northwich Town Council, and the Trust needs to be more supportive in this matter.

Date.....

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Cllr Julie Macdonald
Town Mayor

Additionally, she suggested that media communication from the Trust could be improved. Councillor Waterman asked if there had been any protests against the earlier developments of the skatepark and play area, considering the space involved is comparable to the car park in question. The Chief Officer clarified that there has always been a designated play area, and grass was removed to create the skatepark. A public consultation was held regarding the play area, and there were no objections. All play areas feature accessible equipment, but the lack of parking for parents and carers makes them less usable.

Councillor Emmett expressed concern that it could take several years before a final decision is reached. He suggested that a park and ride service could be a useful interim solution and voiced his disappointment with the Trust's handling of the situation.

Councillor Cernik argued that the Trust should be pressured to implement a no-dig solution for parking. Reflecting on a meeting held a few years ago regarding the future of the Northwich Infirmary, Councillor Cernik noted that the hospital had requested additional funding for a scanner, which was a positive development. He stressed that while the new hospital is a great step forward, the parking issue needs to be addressed as a short-term

solution, and the Trust should be pushed to provide a long-term plan.

Councillor Fox noted that the issues with staff parking are primarily felt by those who work full days at the hospital.

Councillor Cernik shared that she has been advocating for a satellite service in the town centre for departments like phlebotomy and physiotherapy. However, the Trust has confirmed that this is not currently feasible, though it may be considered in the future.

Councillor Cernik provided an update on the no-dig solution, explaining that this approach would be easily reversible if needed in the future.

Councillor Kent expressed support for the no-dig solution, provided the council has the authority to implement it. He also requested further information on the benefits of this solution from the Trust and encouraged the exploration of additional options.

The Chief Officer asked members if they would be agreeable to seeking further legal advice regarding the proposal. Members agreed that further legal advice would need to be sought as soon as possible.

A meeting between Northwich Town Council Councillors and the Trust is scheduled for Wednesday to discuss further options. Due to confidentiality with third-party involvement, certain information cannot yet be published.

It was agreed that a full council meeting in December will include a report on the outcomes of this meeting.

Noted

All agreed

NTC 25/75 PUBLICATION SCHEME

Members to approve the Publication Scheme.

Proposed by Cllr Graham Emmett and seconded by Cllr Tom Melville

All agreed

Date.....

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Cllr Julie Macdonald
Town Mayor

NTC 25/76 EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK MEMBERS TO APPROVE REVISED EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Members received a report from Chief Officer on the Employee Handbook to approve.

Councillor Graham Emmett has raised a few queries, and this will be updated by the Chief Officer.

Proposed by Cllr Andy Scott and seconded by Cllr Tom Melville.

All agreed

NTC 25/77 MODEL STANDING ORDERS

Members to approve the Model Standing Orders.

Proposed by Cllr Jo Callaghan and seconded by Cllr Tom Melville.

All agreed

NTC 25/78 OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Emmett provided an update on the Navigation Road site, stating that work has begun on the building, although this represents only a third of the overall site plan.

Councillor Emmett also shared that he has been working with the Northwich Litter Heroes.

They have recently conducted litter picking activities in Verdin Park and Hadfield Street, an unadopted street with a high volume of waste. The area is currently in a neglected state and poses a safety risk. Councillor Catherine Fox provided an update on potential ownership of the land. Councillor Brian Holland noted that there are several neglected and unadopted paths in the area. Councillor Julie Macdonald suggested that this issue be added to a future council agenda for further discussion.

Councillor Rachel Waterman provided an update on the ownership of The Plaza. The details will be revealed in the new year.

NTC 25/79 CWAC MEMBERS

Councillor Rachel Waterman provided an update on Leftwich Green, noting that she is still awaiting responses to some outstanding questions. She also highlighted ongoing severe parking issues at Verdin House, where vehicles are now encroaching onto the road. Councillor Waterman plans to speak with the management company to seek a solution to the problem.

7.46pm – Councillor Arthur Neil left.

NTC 25/80 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Council meeting will be Monday 8th December 2025 at 6.00 pm

Meeting closed at 7.50pm

Date.....

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Cllr Julie Macdonald
Town Mayor