NORTHWICH TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 5th OCTOBER 2026

Present:
Cllr Robert Cernik — Town Mayor

Councillors:

Cllr Joanne Callaghan	Cllr Kate Cernik	Cllr Emma Guy
Cllr Graham Emmett	Cllr Brian Holland	Cllr Andy Kent
Cllr Stephen Harcombe	Cllr Lee Siddall	Cllr Andy Stott
Cllr Sam Naylor	Cllr Julie Macdonald	Cllr Rachel Waterman
Cllr Janet Illidge	Cllr Olwyn Dean	

Also present:
Chris Shaw — Chief Officer
Cath Kirwan — Deputy Chief Officer/RFO

NTC 26/48 PRESENTATION OF GRANT AWARDS

Cheques presented to the Northwich Pride, 1874 Northwich Junior FC and Friends of Leftwich Primary School.

NTC 26/49 PRESENTATION FROM HOME INSTEAD

Members received a presentation from Chris Broadbent of Home Instead, who explained that the organisation, based at Gadbrook Park, currently supports approximately 100 people across the local area.

Home Instead is currently recruiting staff, with their biggest challenge being a shortage of employees to deliver the required level of service. Members were asked to help spread the word about the employment opportunities. A recruitment open day will be held next month, alongside various recruitment events taking place across the area.

Members were also advised that Home Instead provides wider community support and is a strong supporter of the Dementia Friendly initiative. They were pleased that Northwich is progressing towards becoming a Dementia Friendly town and confirmed that the Dementia Bus will be returning to Northwich next year, following the success of its previous visit.

Home Instead is also seeking volunteers to support the Dementia Café. Members were informed about the 'Spot the Signs' initiative, which helps families and carers recognise the signs of dementia.

Home Instead also runs a monthly Companion Café, which features a variety of guest speakers delivering short talks designed to educate and support the local community.

Cllr Emma Guy suggested that previous users of the Dementia Café and Dementia Bus could also help promote the current employment opportunities.

Cllr Robert Cernik thanked Home Instead for their presentation.

NTC 26/50 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Patricia Parkes, Cllr Catherine Fox, Cllr Arthur Neil, Cllr Alison Gerrard, Cllr Tom Melville and Cllr Catriona Stewart.

Date…… **……**
Cllr Robert Cernik
Mayor

NTC 26/51 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members to declare any interest under the following categories:

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

Cllr Sam Naylor declared an interest in any matters relating to Cheshire West and Chester Council and Mid Cheshire Hospital Trust.

Cllr Rachel Watermam and Cllr Olwyn Dean declared an interest in any matters relating to Cheshire West and Chester Council

NTC 26/52 OPEN FORUM

No public speakers

NTC 26/53 SIGNING OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 7thth September 2026 be confirmed and approved as a true and accurate record.

Proposed by Cllr Jo Callaghan and seconded by Cllr Kate Cernik
All agreed

NTC 26/54 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Finance, Amenities & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 21st September 2026.
Noted

Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 28th September 2026.
Noted

NTC 26/55 TOWN MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Mayor's diary – September 2026

Town Mayor's Communications	
1st September	Welcome the new reverend Ruth Gray to Witton Church
16th September	Joshua Tree celebration of the charity centre in Sandiway
18th September	Opening of the Northwich Market
18th September	The Rotary Beer Festival
20th September	Lion Salt Works – renovated salt making facility
21st September	Everly Academy – shown round the new school facility
24th September	Daneside Court – Macmillan's Coffee Morning *attended by Deputy Mayor*
24th September	Leftwich High School, summer concert *attended by Deputy Mayor*

Date…… **……**
Cllr Robert Cernik
Mayor

NTC 26/56 CHIEF OFFICERS REPORT

Members received the report from the Chief Officer.

Cllr Andy Kent asked whether there had been any further update on the application for the Vickersway Park play area. The Chief Officer advised that nothing had been submitted yet but

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was hopeful that the application would be submitted for the next funding round.

Cllr Andy Kent also asked for an update on the proposed car park at Verdin Park and whether any consultants had been appointed. The Chief Officer advised that the Council was currently looking at a suitable company to undertake the work.

Cllr Julie Macdonald asked whether surrounding high schools could be involved in planting projects, suggesting that this could also help reduce anti-social behaviour in the town centre.

Cllr Rachel Waterman asked whether Barons Quay could assist with watering the plants next year.

Members noted the Chief Officers Report.

NTC 26/57 POLICE UPDATE

PC Jack Kirkbride presented the Police update to Members. He advised that there had been 1,648 incidents recorded across Northwich and Winsford, of which 956 had required deployment by police officers. This included 305 emergency responses and 214 incidents requiring a prompt response within one hour.

Members were advised that Operation Treacle would take place on 30th and 31st October and 5th November. Dedicated staff will be assigned to deal with anti-social behaviour-related incidents during these dates. The operation will primarily involve local officers, with assistance from other departments to ensure that normal policing services can continue.

Cllr Guy asked where the additional 20 officers would be coming from. PC Kirkbride advised that officers would be drawn from other departments and that some rest days would be cancelled to provide additional resources.

Cllr Guy also raised a recent incident involving a resident who wished to help monitor speeding in their area. The resident had been advised by the Police that handheld speed detection equipment would be required. PC Kirkbride advised Members that no reports of speeding in the area had been received.

Cllr Rachel Waterman asked whether information and advice could be provided to Councillors that could be distributed to residents to help promote compliance with speed limits and reduce speeding.

Cllr Julie Macdonald asked how many incidents had occurred in the town centre. PC Kirkbride advised that he would gather the relevant information and provide this to Members. He noted that theft of alcohol remained a significant issue, although there had been a reduction in anti-social behaviour.

Date…… **……**
Cllr Robert Cernik
Mayor

NTC 26/58 CHURCH WALK PADDLING POOL

Members received the report from the Chief Officer.

It was proposed by Cllr Andy Kent and seconded by Cllr Julie Macdonald that a small working party be established. The working party has now been formed and will produce a report for consideration at the December meeting.

The working party comprises Cllr Lee Siddall, Cllr Olwyn Dean, Cllr Sam Naylor, Cllr Emma Guy and Cllr Callaghan.

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Cllr Emma Guy raised concerns regarding the number of people who book facilities but fail to attend and do not cancel their bookings.

Cllr Rachel Waterman asked whether Members who were not part of the working party would still have the opportunity to raise their views. Cllr Robert Cernik advised that the report would be brought back to Council and all Members would have the opportunity to comment.

Members noted the Report.

NTC 26/59 SOLAR FARM PROPOSALS

*C*llr Graham Emmett presented a report to Members regarding the Wallerscote Lime Beds and the ongoing proposal, which has been opposed by both Cheshire West and Chester Councillors and Northwich Town Councillors.

Members were advised that Toxic Free Tomorrow had been established to monitor the development and had raised significant concerns regarding the condition and stability of the lime beds. Concerns were raised that the beds may be exceeding permitted limits and that there is a potential risk of the banks collapsing. Members were also advised that the banks are currently considered unsafe.

Cllr Robert Cernik advised Members that he had spoken with Rob Charnley of Cheshire West and Chester Council regarding his concerns about the stability of the banks and the potential for collapse. Mr Charnley had requested that these concerns be submitted in writing.

Cllr Jo Callaghan raised concerns regarding the ability of the lime beds to support the proposed activity during periods of wet weather.

Cllr Andy Kent stated that the situation was highly concerning and that appropriate action and accountability were required. He thanked Toxic Free Tomorrow for the work they were undertaking.

Cllr Julie Macdonald questioned why the Environment Agency had not taken action in relation to the concerns raised.

Members were advised that Toxic Free Tomorrow had been in contact with the Environment Agency, which had requested a report regarding the concerns. It was also reported that 13 documents had recently been published on the planning portal which, it was considered, should have been available in the public domain when originally submitted. Reference was also made to the Manstock Volume 3 document, which Andrew Cooper MP was also seeking to obtain.

Date…… **……**
Cllr Robert Cernik
Mayor

Members were advised that a number of conditions associated with the development had either not been met or were considered inadequate. Toxic Free Tomorrow requested an update from the Cheshire West and Chester Council liaison group and would be approaching Cllr Neil and Cllr Davis for further information.

It was reported that Cllr Davis had requested a meeting with Cheshire West and Chester Council. Members discussed the possibility of Northwich Town Council arranging a face-to-face meeting to enable the concerns to be discussed and an update provided.

Members were also advised that a Land Registry search continued to show TATA as the owner of the land, although this information may not be current. Toxic Free Tomorrow confirmed that they continued to undertake further work regarding the conditions associated with the development.

The group also opposed the installation of 21 signs within the town centre to assist vehicles

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travelling to the site.

Cllr Graham Emmett confirmed that he would provide Members with a further update at the next meeting.

Cllr Sam Naylor suggested that a letter should be sent directly to the Chief Executive of Cheshire West and Chester Council, Del Curtis, Louise Gittins and Rob Charnley, seeking answers to the concerns raised, including the stability of the banks and whether the issues could potentially lead to a judicial review.

Cllr Andy Kent proposed that a letter be sent to Cheshire West and Chester Council outlining the concerns raised. This was seconded by Cllr Joanne Callaghan.

It was agreed that the Mayor would write to the relevant authorities outlining Members' concerns, including the stability of the banks, compliance with conditions, the proposed development and the potential risks associated with the site. Cllr Robert Cernik agreed to assist with drafting the letter.

It was also suggested that representatives from Highways and Planning be invited to attend a future Northwich Town Council meeting to address Members' concerns.

Cllr Stephen Harcombe advised Members that it could take up to two years for the Land Registry information to be updated. He also referred to a previous incident in Wales and expressed concern that a similar incident could potentially occur at the site.

Kevin Gardner from Toxic Free Tomorrow advised Members that the company undertaking the works had not previously carried out work of this nature and raised concerns regarding their experience and ability to work safely in relation to the unstable banks.

NTC 26/60 TECHNOLOGY POLICY MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

Members received a report regarding the Technology Policy and the use of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA). Members were advised that MFA is commonly used by larger organisations and that implementing the system would represent a significant cost to the Council.

Cllr Emma Guy raised concerns about not using Multi-Factor Authentication, stating that she felt it was an important security measure for the Council and would provide additional protection.

Date…… **…….**
Cllr Robert Cernik
Mayor

Cllr Julie Macdonald also raised concerns regarding online payments and highlighted her recent experience of fraudulent activity within her workplace.

Cllr Lee Siddall shared these concerns and stated that he would like to see additional protection in place, provided that the cost was not prohibitive.

Cllr Stephen Harcombe asked what systems and information would need to be protected, noting that the Council could be particularly vulnerable through its use of public sector email accounts.

The Chief Officer advised that further information would be obtained regarding the options, security implications and costs of Multi-Factor Authentication and reported back to Members at a future meeting.

Members noted the Report.

NTC 26/61 TOWN CENTRE SIGNAGE

Members received a report from Cllr Jo Callaghan.

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Cllr Illidge asked for clarification regarding vacant premises and why action could not be taken to prevent inappropriate signage, even where the premises were privately owned. He felt that Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) should have measures in place to prevent this and should advise businesses of the correct signage requirements. Members were advised that illuminated signs require planning permission; however, there appeared to be no planning applications being submitted for some of these signs.

Cllr Robert Cernik asked whether Northwich Town Council and BID Northwich could write to shop owners to remind them of the relevant rules and requirements.

The Chief Officer advised Members that the matter is discussed monthly at the Cell meeting with CWaC and other partners. CWaC Enforcement Officers are issuing warnings to businesses that are taking up space outside their shop fronts. Members were also advised that billboards and other unauthorised posts installed in the town centre are removed by Northwich Town Council.

Cllr Lee Siddall stated that it was important to ensure the High Street looks attractive and that all businesses should comply with the relevant rules and regulations.

Cllr Andy Kent agreed with Cllr Siddall and felt that the issues needed to be better understood and addressed. He would like to meet with CWaC leaders to seek clarification and answers regarding the Council's approach to enforcement.

Cllr Stephen Harcombe referred to the meeting with CWaC in June and recalled that there appeared to be limited support from CWaC regarding these matters. However, he felt that the Town Council should continue to try to influence and work with CWaC to address the issues.

Cllr Sam Naylor advised that he attempts to contact CWaC Planning most weeks but has experienced difficulties communicating with the department due to staff availability.

Cllr Olwyn Dean asked whether CWaC had contacted businesses to establish which premises are permitted to have items outside their shops, including businesses operating alfresco areas, and whether the necessary licences are in place.

Members noted the Report.

Date…… **……**
Cllr Robert Cernik
Mayor

7.56pm – Cllr Andy Kent proposed that Standing Orders be suspended to allow the meeting to continue.

NTC 26/62 OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Andy Kent raised an issue regarding the recent opening of a new railway station at Cheadle by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.

Members were advised that the station required approval from the relevant bodies. Cllr Kent referred to correspondence received from Andrew Cooper of Mid Cheshire Rail Users (MCRU), which indicated that the station should not have been opened without the necessary approvals. It was also noted that there are conditions relating to the railway line, including improvements to rolling stock, signalling and the introduction of new trains by 2032.

Cllr Kent advised that the franchise had been awarded to Northern Rail in 2015 and felt that the line needed to be protected, given the level of use and demand for the service. He proposed that Northwich Town Council write to Mike Battman to raise concerns regarding the opening of the station and to support the position of MCRU.

The Chief Officer was instructed to prepare and send the letter.

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Cllr R Waterman asked Cllr Kent to attend the Cheshire Central meetings and raise the matter there.

NTC 26/63 CWAC MEMBERS

Cllr Dean updated members that she has recently planted bulbs on Belmont Road.

Cllr Andy Stott asked about Active Travel and when it will be completed. Chief Officer will ask for an update.

NTC 26/64 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Council meeting will be Monday 2nd November 2026 at 8.05 pm

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Date…… **……**
Cllr Robert Cernik
Mayor