



Congleton Town Council

Title	Environment Committee
Date of Meeting Time	5 th February 2026 7.00 pm
Status	Final Minutes
Reference Documents	Agenda Papers for Environment – 5th February 2026

Attendance

Committee Members	CLr Suzy Firkin (Chair and Deputy Mayor) CLr Heather Pearce (Vice Chair) CLr Dawn Allen CLr Sally Ann Holland CLr Heather Seddon CLr Glen Williams
Ex Officio	CLr Robert Brittain (Mayor)
Non-Committee Members	CLr Kay Wesley, CLr Robert Douglas
Officers	David McGifford (Chief Officer)
Members of the Press	0
Members of the Public	2

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Cllr Suzie Akers Smith, Cllr Susan Mead

2. **Minutes of Previous Meetings**

ENV/29/2526 resolved to approve and sign the Environment Committee minutes held on 4th December 2025 as a correct record.

3. Declaration of Interest

Declarations were received by

4. Outstanding Actions

There were no outstanding actions

5. Questions from Members of the Public

Questions were received from residents Barry Speed and Olga Whitmore- See appendix 1

6. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items

7. Congleton In Bloom Working Group Accounts

ENV/30/2526 resolved to receive the In Bloom working group accounts

There were no further updates relating to Congleton in Bloom

8. Streetscape Management Accounts

ENV/31/2526 resolved to receive the Streetscape Management Accounts

9. Streetscape Update

ENV/32/2526 resolved to receive the report relating to the Streetscape Services

10. Carbon Footprint Summary

ENV/33/2526 resolved to receive the update and comments relating to the Town Council's Carbon Footprint

11. Mobile Waste Service

ENV/34/2526 Noted that the Mobile Waste Service will operate from West Street car park one Saturday per month. Start date to be confirmed via Cheshire East Council

It was noted that they were effectively working in other towns and advised that residents would need to bring their waste by car which will need to have booked in advance

Action To generate a press release promoting the service and provide links back to the Cheshire East Council website which will advise on the booking process

12. Peak Cluster Project Responses

12.1 Environmental Impact Assessment

ENV/35/2526 resolved to submit a comment that calls for a specific local consultation opportunity for Timbersbrook by 11th February 2026

12.2 Phase1 Consultation

ENV/36/2526 resolved to submit a response agreed by the Planning Committee and encourage councillors to make individual submissions to the consultation

13. Review of herbicide requirements for highway weed treatment

ENV/37/2526 resolved to receive the update on highway weed treatment

**Cllr Suzy Firkin
(Chair)**

Appendix 1

Questions from Barry Speed to the Environment Committee 5th Feb 2026

The context to these questions is the following:

- Humanity faces existential threats in the form of the climate emergency and the loss of biodiversity.
- The Town Council declared a climate emergency in 2019.
- The Town Council committed to become carbon neutral by 2025 – the target was missed and moved back to 2030.
- Councillors have individual responsibility to promote policies that protect and enhance biodiversity

1	I can see that a new strategy document has appeared – the Corporate Strategic Plan 2025-2029. However, the Business Plan 2020-2023 is still listed on the website. Can the Council confirm whether the strategy document has superseded the Business Plan, and at what meeting this was discussed and approved
A	<i>Yes, the Corporate Strategic Plan has superseded the 2020-23 Business Plan and was approved at the meeting of the Council on the 1st of May 2025. CTC/103/2425 Resolved to approve/amend the proposed Corporate Strategic Plan 2025- 2029</i>
2	S04 of the Strategic Plan says, ‘reduce carbon footprint’. This seems to replace a previous statement of ‘become carbon neutral by 2025’. I believe a new target of 2030 has been approved – if so, shouldn’t this date be explicit in the Strategic Plan?
A	<i>Yes, it should</i>

	<p>26-9-24 ENV/15/2425 resolved update and review the Town Council Carbon Neutral set date under the approval of the following: To hit Carbon Neutrality by 2030 at the latest but strive to achieve at the earliest opportunity. Resolved to agree and endorse by Council.</p> <p>Council approved the minutes on the 12-12-24</p>
3	<p>It is understood that all the responsibilities of the previous Congleton Green working group will have been transferred to the Environment Committee. Can the Council clarify whether the following items from Congleton Green discussions are still being pursued – Air Quality, Water Quality, Allotment provision. It is noted that Air Quality is still included in the Strategic Plan.</p>
A	<p><i>In theory this is true, but it does inevitably mean that there is less air- time for specific issues unless committee members and officers are proactively discussing specific projects outside meetings. On the specific topics you mention:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Air Quality is still a strategic issue for ongoing monitoring despite the removal of all Congleton’s non-compliant AQM’s by CEC.</i> • <i>Concern over Water Quality has seen us endeavour to build a closer relationship with United utilities to better understand the actions being taken locally to improve water quality. Local water monitoring community groups have also been invited to join discussions.</i> • <i>Allotments are still within the remit of this committee and at a recent meeting a potential new site was suggested which the Chair and the Streetscape Manager will visit as soon as possible</i>
4	<p>Weed spraying. Notes to the meeting mention a product called ‘Nomix Enviro Herbicide Spray.’. Given that the Council phased out the use of glyphosate some years ago, can the Council please clarify exactly the chemical composition of the product proposed`.</p>
A	<p><i>Congleton Town Council has historically been responsible for weed control at the playgrounds and green spaces that it manages. In these areas managed by CTC we made the commitment to use glyphosate free herbicide and supplement this with extra manual weeding. This is still our policy. Where children and young people congregate, we will not use glyphosate. The current product in use, if required, is Finalsan whose active ingredient is Pelargonic Acid. A naturally occurring, biodegradable organic material.</i></p> <p><i>Highways and pedestrian pathways have previously been managed by CEC, not CTC. CEC has continued to use Glyphosate (as far as we are aware). Now that CEC has declared that it will no longer undertake weed control activities on our highways CTC has made the decision to take on board this responsibility to ensure that our highway infrastructure does not deteriorate even further resulting in potholes and poor road and path surfaces.</i></p> <p><i>CTC is considering the use of Nomix as a controlled and optimised application of Glyphosate via fine drop dispersal. This will minimise the use of Glyphosate but still</i></p>

	<p><i>have the necessary degree of effectiveness to keep our Highways weed free. Unfortunately, the highly resistant nature of mature weeds means that this highways application would not be suitable for our Glyphosate free herbicide which is much less effective in these circumstances.</i></p> <p><i>It has been notable that numerous councils in the UK who previously committed to a full Glyphosate free policy have had to revert to using Glyphosate for some or all operations. This includes the high profile Green Controlled Brighton City Council decision. We will review the situation annually and look at further methods by which we can reduce Glyphosate use.</i></p>
5	<p>Biodiversity. Can the Council please provide an update on the status of the 30 biodiversity sites.</p>
A	<p><i>The new Streetscape Development Manager will be investing time in understanding the specific requirements for each Biodiversity site and working with community groups to further enhance these sites with different features identified in the site-specific plans.</i></p> <p><i>A budget has been allocated to support the requirement for items such as bird and bat boxes as well as fencing and hedge laying where required.</i></p> <p><i>The next site that we will be spotlighting is the Blackshaw Close site which, led by Cllr Kay Wesley, is being discussed with residents. If you'd like to get involved with one or more of the sites, then do let us know.</i></p>

Questions received from Olga Whitmore received 2nd February 2025

1	<p>Since 2024 CTC was given responsibility by CEC to change Congleton maintenance of green spaces from a biodiversity point of view and reduce mowing taking into account the fact that mowing excessively reduces the amount of pollinators . Can CTC please provide the latest updated maintenance schedules, as I can't find them online. Can you please show which areas are mown twice a year ? Which areas are left alone ?The information on CTC website is out of date .</p>
A	<p><i>Answer with 21 days</i></p>
2	<p>Are CTC still planning to rewild the Link road roundabouts?</p>

A	<i>The Link Road roundabouts are not within the Congleton Town Boundary – we would need to work with relative Parish Councils to agree to the proposal and establish a budget with them to deliver and when necessary, maintain them.</i>
3	Does Congleton Partnership still have a role in rewilding?
A	<i>There are currently no rewilding projects involving the Partnership but could become involved if approached.</i>
4	Does CTC have any role in management of Congleton Partnership, given that CTC holds the accounts, and I believe also provides a secretary to produce minutes of meetings and updates of the website (please correct me if this is wrong).
A	<i>Congleton Town Council has 2 councillors and the Chief Officer representing the council on the Oversight Committee (previously named the executive board) Officer time (secretary) is approximately 7 hours per week.</i>
5	Can you please clarify whether in fact CTC has cancelled its commitment to increase biodiversity in the town, since I see no mention of money allocated to biodiversity sites in the CTC budget meeting . On the other hand “ weed spraying “ was mentioned a few times
A	<i>We have not cancelled our commitment to increase biodiversity in the town, we are currently reviewing all the existing sites and ensuring that those are receiving the required maintenance.</i>
6	<p>It appears that CTC continues to spray weeds in the following locations :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antrobus street Avon drive, Back land Blackshaw Close Bromley Farm Wood, Hutton Drive Bromley Farm Cloud View Burns Road Church yards Playing fields Charlesworth Place Congleton park Daneside ... and 27 more green spaces in Congleton. <p>Can you please clarify which chemical is currently being used for this work, whether residents were consulted about weed spraying in those locations, and why there is any need at all to kill plants in church yards or playing fields.</p>
A	<i>Answer with 21 days</i>

7	<p>Has the Environment Committee discussed any other ways of removing weeds apart from spraying them?</p> <p>RHS new guidance suggest non chemical weeds spraying : https://www.rhs.org.uk/prevention-protection/weeds-non-chemical-control</p> <p>Did CTC take into account CEC information: “ Due to cost and effectiveness, we are not routinely spraying weeds on the highway. We review requests for treatment of weeds in channels, at the top of kerbs, in footways/alleyways (bordering a wall or fence), footpaths and link paths. Where they are clearly impairing visibility, drainage or restricting passage we will remove them by mechanical means.</p>
A	<p><i>Answer within 21 days</i></p>
8	<p>CTC maintains 260 hanging baskets, 30 solid baskets, 30 large planters, and 180 troughs, and the plants there are all changed twice a year . Are there any plans to reduce the amount of annual planting and concentrate on planting bee-friendly perennials?</p>
A	<p><i>Yes, we have already reduced the amount of annual planting and will continue to do so.</i></p>
9	<p>Does CTC have plans for the field between Town Hall and Police station ?</p>
A	<p><i>Cheshire East Council own the land. We have previously and will continue to request permission to improve the whole area for community benefit</i></p>