



Congleton Town Council

Historic market town

Chief Officer: David McGifford

10th July 2025

Dear Councillor,

Community Committee – Thursday 17th July 2025

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Communities Committee to be held at Congleton Town Hall on **Thursday 17th July at 7.00 pm.**

- **The Public and Press are welcome to attend the meeting. Please note** - There will be 15 minutes at each meeting to receive any questions from Members of the Public, either verbally or at the meeting, including those which have been received in writing 7 days prior to the meeting.
- There may be confidential items towards the end of the meeting in which the law requires the Council to make a resolution to exclude the public and press in accordance with Section 100 (B) (2) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Yours sincerely,

David McGifford
CHIEF OFFICER

Congleton
beartown
where friends are made

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AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

Members are reminded of the necessity to give apologies in advance of the meeting and to give reasons for absence.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings (enclosed)

To approve and [sign the minutes of the Community Committee held on 17th April 2025](#) as a correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

Members are requested to declare both “pecuniary” and “non-pecuniary” interests as early in the meeting as they become known.

4. Questions from Members of the Public

There will be 15 minutes at each meeting to receive any questions from Members of the Public, either verbally at the meeting, including those which have been received in writing 7 days before the meeting.

5. Urgent Items

Members may raise urgent items related to this Committee, but no discussion or decisions may be taken at the meeting.

6. Cheshire Police (Verbal update)

To receive and consider a verbal report from Cheshire Police on Policing matters affecting Congleton.

7. Committee Updates (Enclosed)

To update progress on actions from items discussed at the previous Community meeting.

8. Youth Council Proposal (Enclosed)

To receive a report regarding a new Youth Council for Congleton and a presentation from Barney Mitcheson.

9. Community Safety Working Group (Enclosed)

To receive the notes of the Community Safety Working Group meetings held on the 3rd July and receive a short update from the Chair.

10. Equal Access Advisory Group (Enclosed)

To receive the minutes of the Equal Access Advisory Group meeting on 17th June 2025.

10.1 Disability Pride Month

To receive a report on Disability Pride Month and an update on Disability Welcome Scheme.

11. Communications Update (Enclosed)

To receive and note a report from the Town Council's Communications and Marketing Officer, Debbie Coxon, highlighting the Town Council's Communications activities from 8th April to 10th July 2025.

12. Food and Drink Festival Report (Enclosed)

To receive a report on the Food and Drink festival held on Sunday, 8th June 2025.

13. Cheshire East Council Domestic Abuse Consultation (Enclosed)

To receive a report on the CEC Domestic Abuse Strategy consultation.

14. Speed Indication Device (Enclosed)

To receive a report on a speed indication device for Congleton.

To: Members of the Community Committee

CLls: Kay Wesley (Chair), Sally Ann Holland (Vice Chair)
David Brown, Mark Edwardson, Emma Hall, Amanda Martin, Susan Mead,
Shaun Radcliffe, Richard Walton, Glen Williams.

Ex Officio: Cllr Rob Brittain (Mayor), Cllr Suzy Firkin (Deputy Mayor)

Other members of the Council for Information, Police, Honorary Burgess (5), Press (3), Congleton Library, Congleton Information Centre.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY COMMITTEE HELD ON
17.04.25**

**Please Note – These are draft minutes and will not be ratified until the next meeting of this
Committee**

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

For the papers discussed at the meeting, please see the [Agenda and Papers of the Community Committee on 17 January 2025](#)

PRESENT: Committee members:

- Cllr Richard Walton (Chair)
- Cllr Glen Williams (Vice Chair)
- Cllr Dave Brown
- Cllr Suzy Firkin
- Cllr Emma Hall
- Cllr Sally Ann Holland

Ex Officio: Cllr Kay Wesley (Mayor),

Non-Committee Members:

- Cllr Rob Moreton

Officers: David McGifford, Chief Officer

Members of Press 0

Members of Public 1 guest speaker

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Cllr Dawn Allen, Cllr Mark Edwardson, Cllr Susan Mead, Cllr Shaun Radcliffe

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

CO/43/2425 resolved to approve and sign the [Community Committee minutes](#) held on 30 January 2025 as a correct record.

3. Declaration of Interest

Declarations were received by Cllrs David Brown, Sally Ann Holland Rob Moreton on matters relating to Cheshire East Council. Glen Williams, Suzy Firkin and Richard Walton on matters relating to Congleton Partnership

4. Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the public

5. Urgent Items

Cllr Kay Wesley raised to urgent items (details appendix 1)

- Childcare Crisis
- Transgender ruling

6. Cheshire Police

There was no representation or report from Cheshire Police

7. Active Listening with B.E.C.K (Presentation Frances Bromley)

The committee received a presentation aimed at empowering communities to realise the value of Active Listening as a life skill, with a focus on reducing self-harm, harm to others and suicide.

Frances requested that the information that she provided be used to help promote Active Listening within the Council.

8. Committee updates

Councillors noted the committee updates paper.

9. White Ribbon Working Group Minutes

CO/44/2425 resolved the minutes of the White Ribbon Working Group on 11th March 2025

9.1 Anti-Spiking Campaign Update

CO/45/2425 resolved to agree that the work of Officer Rachel McCarthy be acknowledged and suggested that it would be:

1. Useful to get feedback on the use of the tests and any results on where spiking had taken place.
2. Promote the project to local doctors and schools.

10. Community Safety Working Group

CO/46/2425 resolved to receive the notes and an update from the chair of the Community Safety Working Group meetings held on the 6th February and 27th March 2025

11. Health and Wellbeing Working Group

CO/47/2425 resolved to approve the minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Working Group held on the 20th February 2025.

12. Equal Access Advisory Group

CO/48/2425 resolved to receive the minutes of the Equal Access Advisory Group meetings on the 24th January and the 8th April 2025.

12.1 Disability Welcome Scheme

CO/49/2425 resolved to note this report

12.2 Terms of reference – Equal Access Advisory Group

CO/50/2425 resolved to note the Terms of Reference for the Equal Access Advisory Group

13. Communications Update

CO/51/2425 resolved to receive and note a report from the Town Council's Communications and Marketing Officer, Debbie Coxon, highlighting the Town Council's Communications activities from 9th January to 8th April 2025.

14. Congleton Community Projects Service Level Agreement

CO/52/2425 resolved To approve the Congleton Community Projects Service Level Agreement and sought clarification on the quantity of Play Days during the summer ideally 4.

15. Town Centre Updates

15.1 Town Centre Code of Conduct

CO/53/2425 resolved that the Town Centre Code of Conduct should state – That Cyclists should, if able, dismount. If not able to dismount proceed at a walking pace i.e. 4 mph.

15.2 Community Infrastructure Levy Contributions CIL'S

CO54/2425 resolved to note that the Strategy Working Group reviewing the Community Infrastructure Levy contributions of £21,684 could either:

1. Contributing towards a solution to traffic misuse of Bridge Street
2. Improvements/maintenance of town centre public realm ie bins, benches planters, signage
3. Public Toilet provision

Suggested that this could be taken to the Annual Town Meeting to receive residents' views.

16. Consultation response to CEC Vision For Transport

CO/55/2425 resolved to approve the proposed response to the CEC Vision for Transport Consultation subject to the inclusion of the Transport for New Homes Checklist.

17. Congleton Partnership Updates

CO56/2425 resolved to note the report Councillors from Congleton Partnership on main events for 2025.

Appendix 1

Urgent item CTC Community Committee 17th April 2025 - Childcare Crisis

I have been approached by several early years childcare providers in Congleton Including Daintry Hall Nursery, The Nursery and Friendly Faces Day Nursery, to ask for help in dealing with an immediate financial crisis they are facing, and I wanted to raise this with Council colleagues today as an urgent item as the situation is certainly urgent for these businesses. In September 2025, the government-funded ('free') childcare that parents can access increases from 15 to 30 hours per week for all children from 9 months.

The government funding is not sufficient for providers to support their nursery outgoings. Funding rates have not risen in proportion to the living wage rise, the increased Employer's National Insurance costs, and overhead costs. The funding per hour is below the cost of delivering the service per hour. If any other business's overheads increased they would be able to raise their prices to remain viable and customers could choose to use their service or not. Nurseries have no flexibility to charge the rates that would make their business viable, due to the government's funding formula.

The Department For Education also introduced new regulations that came into force this month, with regard to additional costs, such as for lunch, that providers can charge for. The new rules say that nurseries cannot insist on these top-up charges any more, leaving them no way to make up the shortfall.

This has been exacerbated by the expansion of free childcare to all children from 9 months. Previously, Nurseries could make a loss on the government-funded 'free' childcare provision for 3- and 4-year-olds but could claw some of this back by charging more for the younger children. Now this option is gone and many providers are on the brink of bankruptcy.

The Early Years Alliance recently conducted a survey amongst Childcare Providers, which found that, over the next 12 months:

94% of respondents are likely to increase fees for non-government funded hours, (private payers) to make up for the shortfall in funded hours.

77% said they are likely to introduce or increase the price of optional extras, such as nappies, meals and trips.

68% said they are likely to restrict when the government-funded hours can be claimed.

28% said they are likely to permanently close.

The nursery in Congleton has closed in the last two months, and more will follow if something is not done. This will potentially create more unemployment for parents in a town that already has a shortage of childcare places.

And of course, the biggest problems are for the nurseries that have the highest proportion of fully-government-funded places, in other words, those serving lower-income families. These families are less likely to be able to afford the additional costs and therefore it is these nurseries that are most likely to close.

Some childcare providers have stated they will not offer any of the government-funded hours because it is not viable for them to do so. This will have the opposite effect from the government's goals of 'free childcare', excluding many families from being able to access childcare provision at all.

The government has recognised the burden of the additional Employer's National Insurance and is providing grants to cover the additional costs for early years settings in schools.

BUT...

Private day nurseries and childminders will not receive the grant! They offer most of our local childcare and this is another financial hit to businesses that are already on the brink. In addition, nurseries haven't been given enough time (since 21st February) to make educated choices and plans to help their business stay viable.

This is having a detrimental effect on many providers' mental health as the pressures mount to deliver more services with less funding.

There is now a real danger that several local providers will be lost. We have already lost one Congleton Nursery (Lady Bugs and Slugs), due to these changes.

I realise it is unlikely there is a quick solution to this problem, and I know some of the providers have already met with our local MP to lobby the government.

I would like to ask the Chief Officer to meet with the business owners concerned and I, to discuss their situation and explore any ways in which the Town Council can help.

YouTube Explainer: <https://youtu.be/m5Pmsc4rN0g?feature=shared>

Urgent item CTC Community Committee 17th April 2025

Supreme Court Ruling on the definition of 'woman' in the Equality Act 2010

After this week's ill-informed Supreme Court ruling and the government's resultant decision to roll back the rights of trans people, I'd like to inform Councillors that I have heard from trans women in Congleton who are now very frightened.

This has not been helped by some very hateful comments in Congleton's social media groups. Please offer our trans residents your support and empathy.

I'd also like to point out that I, and my party will always stand up for the rights of trans women and trans men to live their lives 100% in their adopted gender, without fear of violence, persecution or exclusion.

I'm sure none of us want to see hate crime in our town.

The rights of trans people are human rights.

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	17th April 2025 7.00 pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall
REPORT FROM	Cathy Dean, Communities and Admin Manager		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	7 Updates Paper		
Background	This paper has been written to update members on the progress on actions from items discussed at the previous Community Committee. These items do not need a full paper and are either ongoing issues or confirmation of completion, or resolution.		
Updates	<p>Congleton Sustainable Travel – Biddulph Valley Way</p> <p>Congleton Sustainable Travel, Congleton Climate Action Group, is pleased to give an update regarding barriers to people with disabilities on the Biddulph Valley Way.</p> <p>We are told that Cheshire East Council's Green Infrastructure Team has been successful in obtaining money from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for the redesign and its implementation at the Bromley Rd access point for the Biddulph Valley Way. The funds must be spent by March 2026 so the project has already begun by commissioning a design from Sustrans. Subject to approval, this will be implemented by CE Highways. We have requested notification of the start date of work.</p> <p>Additionally, CE's draft Active Travel Strategy, with much input from the late Cllr Hilliard, CE's walking and cycling champion, is currently out for consultation (https://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/documents/s125316/)</p> <p>Appendix A (pages 16-18) details an updated policy on access control barriers. This recognises the problem of barriers to legitimate users, and undertakes to cease installing discriminatory designs. It also undertakes to 'endeavour' to remove existing problematic barriers. The policy implies that requests will be acted upon. Once the final document is approved, we will find out who to send requests to.</p> <p>We appreciate the help of councillors and officers for all their support in working towards this outcome that you voted on in June 2023.</p> <p>(CO/04/2324 resolved to contact Cheshire East about restricted access to the Biddulph Valley, and to contact Cheshire East Council to review barriers used across Congleton.)</p> <p>White Ribbon Campaign</p> <p>Congleton High School students and staff continue to support the White Ribbon campaign. They decided to name one of their annual awards the Congleton White Ribbon Allyship Award, and this was presented to a student by a White Ribbon Ambassador at the awards evening on 10th July. Eaton Bank School had a White</p>		

Ribbon presentation to the 6th form in May, and several of the students were keen to help promote the campaign.

Civic Awards

The first Town Mayors' Civic Awards were presented at the Town Meeting on 15th May. Most of the finalists and their families attended, and it was a joyful and celebratory occasion, with great feedback from the finalists, award recipients and the public. Many thanks to the judging panel and all who attended. The team are considering how to build on this for next year's awards.

High St Awards

These awards celebrating businesses' long service to Congleton have been very well-received. The first recipients were Davenport's Menswear, Jantex Furnishings and the Congleton Chronicle, and we have now received public nominations for more businesses. Councillors and members of the public are welcome to nominate any business with a 'shop front' that has been trading in Congleton for at least 5 years. [There is a page and a nominations form on the Town Council Website.](#)

Town Centre Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct was shared at the Annual Town Meeting with no objections raised. It will now be presented for adoption at the next Full Council meeting. If/Once approved, the Council will publish, promote, and explain its key points through the website, press, and social media.

Wellbeing Hub at Plus Dane

The launch event took place on Tuesday, 20th May, and was attended by the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team from Plus Dane, along with other team members. An initial workshop was held on 20th April, providing delivery partners with the opportunity to explore the space and begin shaping a shared vision for its use. This collaborative session focused on how partners could work together to maximise the space's potential.

Plus Dane has confirmed that the intercom system and door card readers on the second floor are now installed. They are currently finalising the User Agreements with the initial three partners (Talking Therapies, Visyon, CGL) before scheduling their building inductions. They aim to onboard the first partner, Talking Therapies, during the week of July 14, followed by the others.

A Steering Group will be established to provide strategic oversight for the project.

Town Centre Play Days

4 summer play days (in conjunction with Community Projects) will take place in the Town Centre on the following Tuesdays:

	<p>29th July – NATURE - Artspace junk modelling, chalk pavement, book swap, colouring competition for disability pride month.</p> <p>5th August – SPORTS - Artspace junk modelling, circus skills, chalk pavement.</p> <p>12th August – MUSIC & ARTS - Drum roots, Everybody Leisure, book swap, giant games, music crafts, library, storytelling, soldier bear from the town hall into the town centre for VJ day.</p> <p>19th August - BIG PLAY DAY - general play day, Everybody Leisure, library, creative arts, dance workshop, book swap, giant games, circus skills.</p> <p>Volunteering roles are available on the day.</p> <p>Victory in Japan Day – 15th August</p> <p>To mark VJ Day, a flower trail has been designed to coincide with Congleton In Bloom. The recently painted 'Len Bear' will be located in Town Centre on the 12th August play day. ('Len' is named after Leonard Cheetham, Congleton Mayor 1989-90, as a young man Len served in the Royal Medical Corps and was a Japanese prisoner of war.)</p> <p>TBC – Short Town Centre parade with military groups, cenotaph service and classic car display.</p> <p>Congleton Pride 19th July 2025</p> <p>The Congleton Pride event takes place on Saturday, and all councillors are invited to support and enjoy the day.</p>
PROPOSALS	To Note this Report

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Community		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	17th July 2025 7 pm	LOCATION	Town Hall
FROM	Cllr Kay Wesley and Barney Mitcheson (Mayor's Cadet 2024-25)		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	8 Youth Council		
BACKGROUND	<p>Congleton Town Council used to have a Youth Council Committee, but this stopped functioning about 5 years ago. It had an ongoing problem of the young people involved leaving Congleton and difficulty with succession planning.</p> <p>Young people in the town have shown an interest in the workings of the Council and have participated in Town Hall Tours, where their enthusiasm to learn more and participate in our democracy has been evident.</p>		
CURRENT SITUATION	<p>Congleton High School held a discussion of staff and students selected from years 7 to 12, together with Cllr Wesley and Angela Murney, of the Youth Support Service at Cheshire East Council. This age range was chosen deliberately, in order to mitigate the risk of more senior students being instrumental in the set-up and then leaving Congleton for university.</p> <p>The students had a lot of ideas they'd like to implement to improve life for young people in Congleton, and felt that a Youth Council with a communications channel to the Town Council would be a good way to achieve this.</p> <p>In order to be as inclusive as possible, Cllr Wesley and Barney have engaged with Eaton Bank Academy Deputy Director of 6th form and the leaders of the Rangers and the Scouts. All are very interested in their students/members being part of this initiative.</p>		
PROPOSAL	<p>We propose to move this forward with an Initial workshop in the Town Hall, in the Autumn term, for interested young people (we expect 20-50 attendees).</p> <p>Likely topics to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure and terms of reference for a Youth Council, including membership and age range (we suggest from 11 to 18) • Ideas for areas to focus on – what do young people want? Also, ideas for gathering more input (maybe a survey) • Frequency and format of meetings – e.g. the Youth Council could meet one month before main Council, then the Chair can attend Council with any outputs/asks • Election of Officers for the Youth Council – especially Chair and Vice-Chair, but also any specific roles if required • How to promote and engage the young people of Congleton. 		
Financial Implications	Use of the Great Hall or Bridestones Suite.		

Environmental Implications	Engaging young people could help support our initiatives to combat climate change
Equality and Diversity Impact	It will help the Council to be fully representative of our community if we listen to the voices of young people. The team commits to reaching out to as diverse a range of young people as possible, so that it is not just privileged youngsters who have a voice in the Youth Council.
DECISION REQUESTED	Support the continued work to set up a Youth Council, including Officer time to organise a workshop, and use of the Town Hall.

Minutes of Meeting
Community Safety Working Group
Thursday 3rd July 2025 3 pm – 4.30 pm

Present: Cllr Kay Wesley (Chair), Cllr Shaun Radcliffe, Cllr Glen Williams, Rachel McCarthy,
Sgt Karl Tatlock, Linda Webber, Cathy Dean.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Robert Brittain, Jim Adams and Cllr Richard Walton.
2. **Notes of the meeting** of March 2025 were accepted as correct.
3. **Agenda Approved** – New Police Sergeant Karl Tatlock was welcomed to the meeting and Congleton, and introductions took place.

Action – Invite the Plus Dane Housing team to the meeting, as police can work well with them.

4. **Action Log**

- a) **Town Centre Code of Conduct** was accepted via the community committee and shared at the Annual Town meeting. Next steps are to submit to Full Council for approval. Format the document, publish and share through the press and social media. A video campaign could be designed to highlight specific areas of the policy. **Action** – Discuss with Debbie
- b) **Town Pedestrian Area Traffic** – Following a meeting with Richard Christopherson (Community Safety Officer), ANPR is not a viable option; Cheshire East would have to commit to at least 10 locations, so the cost would be prohibitive. Actions we can take:
 - Improved signage in the area, making times clearer.
 - Use gates instead of bollards – research costs **RMc**
 - CTC Officers can be accredited to give tickets. **RMc & KW to follow up**
- c) **Anti-spiking Campaign** – Kits have now been distributed to venues in town (2 for each venue, including Costa). The campaign to publicise where to collect kits and how to use, also acts as a deterrent to would-be offenders. Press release sent out, social media posts and posters in venues. Once publicity rolled out, go into high schools explaining the dangers and how to use the kits.

5. **Police update on Crime (Sgt Karl Tatlock)**

5.1 Shoplifting – 155 offences since January (lowest in the constabulary). Potential issue with B&Ms/Tesco on Barn Road not reporting in.

5.2 Drug & Alcohol Abuse – 10 April / 5 May / 16 June.

5.3 Anti-social Behaviour – 318 offences since January (lowest in the constabulary).

5.4 Domestic Violence and sexual offences – April x 10 / May x 13 / June x 14 sexual offences

DV June x 51 – 31 arrests made.

5.5 Hate Crime - Pride Banners have been reported as hate crimes.

5.6 Speeding/Traffic – April x 239 / May x 269 / June x 278

5.7 Road Safety

5.8 Assaults & Public Order – June x 8

5.9 Residential Burglaries – 71 offences since January

6. Police Priorities – Increase in thefts of motor vehicles towards Sandbach. Local beat team focus continues to be on domestic violence/violence against women and girls. And local drug dealing, local hotspots discussed.

7. Cheshire East Council ASB team - not able to make the meeting.

8. Street Pastors Update –

Street Pastor patrols

Our current rota, June to August, is back down to 9 patrols from 10 previously due to holidays and ill health.

April - May 2025 report data relevant to this meeting

- Helped or observed to safety 6
- Helped sober up, water, wipes 3
- Bottles and cans binned 21
- Glasses returned to establishments 7
- Emotional support 11
- Directions 5
- Homeless 1 referral, water and meal
- First Aid 2

Saturday nights have been quieter recently, but last Saturday, 28 June, we came on duty at 9 pm and after Mill Street and CMQ we were heading to Congleton Park and met two Police Officers by Meadowside Health Centre who mentioned youngsters had just scattered from the Bowling Green. We continued to the park and Cllr Glen Williams explained what had happened. We cleared beer cans, sandwich packets and other rubbish from the area. The drop in numbers in town, even on pay day weekend, may be attributable to people drinking at home during the very warm weather. The evening parking charges could also be having an effect.

At our Management meeting on 23 June, we discussed whether we should review our usual Saturday 9 pm to 1 am Patrol times and start earlier. The recent Congleton Park incident was about 8.30 pm and it was mentioned on Congleton Chats back there was also bullying in the park at 8.30 pm Friday. I have asked our Street and Prayer Pastors to let me know if they witness locations and times of any ASB groups when they are off duty to help us reach a decision.

9. Shop Watch Updates - very quiet, there was an instance of fake notes earlier in the year.

10. AOB – None. Meeting ended at 4:45 pm.

Date of Next Meeting - Thursday 4th September, 3 pm – 4.30 pm

Equal Access Advisory Group

Meeting Minutes – In-person and Virtual 17th June 2025

Attendees – Dr Deborah Lawson, Cllr Kay Wesley (Chair), Alec Scaresbrook, Cathy Dean, Tom Stephans, Denis Murphy.

Apologies – Theresa Graystone, Diane Ritherdon, Angela Ward

1. Welcome from the chair – Deborah welcomed everyone to the meeting

2. Notes of the meeting of 8th April 2025 were accepted as a true record.

3. Actions from previous minutes

- **Action** - Kay and Theresa to check out routes from Able World to Readsmore Surgery – **carry forward**
- **Action** – Dropped kerbs – Denis is continuing to review dropped kerbs around the town centre. Footpath Morrisons no dropped kerb - Kay added to the action plan. Deborah to look at the route from an area where there is a high population of disabled residents into town/Tesco when the weather improves. **(Ongoing)**
- **Action** - Cathy & Kay are working on an accessibility leaflet for shops with Deborah's input – **Update below**
- **Action** – Cathy/Debbie design a social media campaign on improving attitudes to disabilities, and highlight it before big events. “Be Kind” or “Accessibility Benefits Everyone” campaign. **(Ongoing)**
- **Action** – ask Celeste to design business posters (use disability welcome logo) be kind/accessibility welcome. Deborah to send over a document, which includes good visuals for shops to use. **(Carry Forward)**
- **Action** – Email highways to reinstate the accessible parking space which should be the first space next to keep the clear area at the back of the TH but it's faded, should be blue badge holders only but anyone is parking in the space. **(Completed)**
- **Action** – Cathy to research the best e-learnings and disability-positive training for staff and councillors. **Assigned to Tom to research.**
- **Action** – Kay to write an article for ‘Disability Corner’ in the Chronicle on negative attitudes and the positive messaging from the careers fair. **(Completed)**
- **Action** – Contact CAB to see if they will come to Congleton so people can have face-to-face contact. – **Kay Contacted and passed to the Chief Officer, will follow up.**
- **Action** – Cathy/Kay to go through the leaflets that have been returned and make the awards for Gold and Silver. **(Completed)** – Update in the agenda
- **Action** – Vision for Transport consultation - Feedback comments to CTC so they can be included in the official response. **(Completed)**

- **Action** - Cathy to follow up with Mark (Town Hall Manager) regarding the ramp, accessible toilet sign and mirror in the accessible toilet (button also temperamental) – Permanent Ramp not possible, investigate a removable ramp and bell at the back door.

4. Events Feedback – Makers Market / Food & Drink Festival.

Deborah commented that the Makers Market is much improved, apart from when you get to the end by Wetherspoons, where wheelchair users have to go into the road and along Swanbank (still in the road) and up the next dropped curb to access the other side of the market, which is dangerous. This could be resolved if a clear gap, wide enough for mobility scooters and wheelchairs, were left between the stalls opposite Greg's. Also, tables at Crema can be obstructive.

Denis attended the Food & Drink Festival and commented that he was able to get through and visit all the stalls.

Cathy confirmed that event guidance was followed where possible, dropped curb access, extra toilets, bookable disabled parking spaces, quiet space at The Space. No issues or complaints were received on the day.

Action – Distribute the event guidance document to local event organisers.

5. Disability Welcome Scheme

The disability welcome scheme was launched, but after receiving the applications, it was considered that some amendments to the scoring may be required.

Documents shared before the meeting:

1. Revised Disability Welcome Award Criteria

2. Disability Welcome: Inclusive Service Award

After much discussion, we resolved that businesses will not receive any award if they do not meet the legal requirements. Communicate with businesses that do meet the legal requirements and educate on how to get the silver award (some businesses were very close). The Gold award should be awarded to businesses that have really thought about accessibility for all.

Action – Kay to follow up with businesses that have applied. Provide information on the website about the award criteria.

6. Recognition for businesses in Congleton that provide exemplary service for disabled people

This proposed new category of recognition supports the Disability Welcome scheme by acknowledging local businesses that do not operate a conventional public-facing premises but have demonstrated exceptional commitment to serving disabled customers in inclusive, flexible, and respectful ways.

The group felt the award had merit but was down to personal interpretation, difficult to create a set of standards to objectively measure. Most service businesses have reviews online which should allow people to recommend. We might revisit in the future.

7. Building Control (Cheshire East Council) – responsibility for accessibility standards

There has been a notable decline in accessibility standards and a lack of communication between departments.

Action – Arrange a meeting with the Cheshire East Officer - Sam Burnard - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer.

Deborah has followed up and also discovered that not all businesses are involving the building planning control team at CEC when they have made adjustments to their buildings for accessibility.

8. Deborah's Book Launch

The book about inclusion and kindness, will be released in July for Disability Pride Month, and many of the larger retailers are stocking the book.

The first CTC play day on July 29th, we plan to hold a colouring competition that children can enter to win a signed copy of the book, and each child will receive a bookmark for taking part.

Action – Discuss with Events Manager & Chief Officer regarding promotion of the book. The book is being developed as a social purpose project, with a significant portion of profits being used to donate free copies to schools, hospitals, and other charitable causes.

Deborah is donating books and educational packs to Congleton primary schools from mid-September, when schools return from the summer holidays.

9. AOB

The supermarket's mobility scooters appeared to be plugged in and available.

Disabled Parking – when the Fair visits and is in the Fairground carpark, 6 disabled parking spaces are lost. As far as we know, Cheshire East doesn't make any further provision or arrangements.

Sustainable Travel – Pleased to report Cheshire East has now confirmed that they can remove the barriers at Bromley Road going down to BVW.

Transport for All - <https://www.transportforall.org.uk>

Can You Help Street Designers Improve Accessibility?

Transport for All is working with partners to explore how features on streets, like crossings, kerbs, surfaces and street furniture, affect different disabled people.

We are looking for disabled people to be interviewed over a video call. £30 Amazon or John Lewis vouchers are available as a thank you for taking part.

The interview over video call will last 1-2 hours, at a time that suits you. It will involve talking about your experiences of navigating streets and how you are affected by different street features.

BSL interpretation and tactile models will be available if required.

If you are interested in taking part, please fill in this form:

<https://forms.office.com/e/Q9EBcHQ3KP>

Future Meeting Dates:




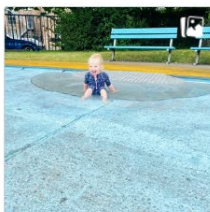
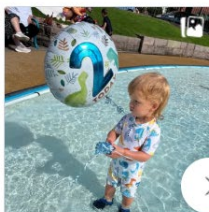
Tuesdays 11 am - 9th September / 18th November

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	17th July 2025 7.00 pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall
REPORT FROM	Cathy Dean, Communities and Admin Manager		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	10.1 Disability Pride Month/ Equal Access Group Updates		
Background	<p>Congleton Town Council is working with residents to make its activities and the town more accessible. The Equal Access in Congleton group, chaired by disability advocate Deborah Lawson and Congleton people with a wide range of disabilities, is advising the Council on improving life for people with disabilities. While some issues lie outside the Council's control, understanding them helps to improve accessibility for all.</p>		
UPDATES	<p>July is Disability Pride Month, and Congleton Town Council has created a social media campaign to mark the occasion.</p> <p>Local author Deborah will launch her new book, <i>Damson's Friendship Wish</i>—a story about inclusion and kindness—during July. At Congleton Town Council's Play Day on 29th July, a colouring competition will give children the chance to win a signed copy of the book, with all entrants receiving a themed bookmark.</p> <p>As a social purpose project, a portion of the book's profits will fund free donations to schools, hospitals, and charities. From mid-September, Deborah will also donate books and educational packs to Congleton primary schools.</p> <p>Disability Welcome Scheme.</p> <p>The Disability Welcome Scheme uses practical checklists to help businesses improve accessibility in areas such as premises access, communication, staff awareness, and the overall environment.</p> <p>Congleton Information Centre, Crown Bank Dental, and Congleton Veterinary Centre have all achieved Silver Disability Welcome Awards. So far, 11 checklists have been submitted, with several other businesses close to reaching Silver status. With just a few small improvements, some could progress to the Gold Award.</p> <p>The Town Council will continue working with businesses, offering practical advice and simple interventions to support accessibility improvements.</p> <p>All businesses with a shop front are encouraged to take part. Leaflets are available from the Congleton Information Centre and on the Town Council's website.</p> <p>https://www.congleton-tc.gov.uk/business-support-development/disability-welcome-congleton/</p>		


	<p>Deborah Lawson, Chair of the Equal Access Group, was invited to speak on BBC Radio Stoke recently. They contacted Deborah about a case currently in the national papers, where a blind man was asked to leave a restaurant. The Congleton Disability Welcome Scheme was mentioned - https://deborah-lawson.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/deborah-radio-interview-20.06.25.mp3</p> <p>A member of the public commented on the interview via email:</p> <p>“Yesterday (Friday) I was listening to BBC radio and heard a great interview with a lady called Dr Deborah Lawson who was talking about business accessibility. It was very good. I've never heard anyone make inclusion and accessibility so accessible and straightforward for businesses to understand. Instead of feeling like it's a minefield, after hearing the chat, I feel like she shifted my attitude in a really good way.</p> <p>She mentioned about the work your council do to make the area more inclusive and I have to say, I had a google, and looked on your site and I was very impressed. If only more councils were like yours! Well done.”</p>
Financial Implications	<p>Council via a request from the Community Committee, agreed on a budget for the Equal Access projects on 29.08.24</p> <p>CO/10/2425 – 1) Support to the group in implementing a promotional Campaign for the Public (including social media and high-quality video) £1000. Disability Guide to Congleton £1000 Business (Shop/Pub) ‘Disability Welcome’ Scheme (certificates & stickers) £250.</p>
Environmental Implications	<p>Considered as part of each piece of work.</p>
Inclusivity Diversity Impact	<p>Equality and diversity are at the very heart of this campaign. We want to make Congleton as accessible as possible and communicate the town’s offer so that disabled people can plan visits to Congleton with confidence.</p>
Decision Required	<p>That Councillors note this report.</p>

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

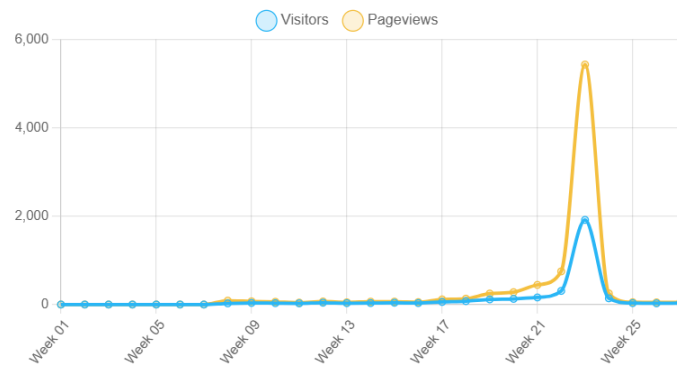
COMMITTEE:	Community Committee																				
MEETING DATE AND TIME	17 July 2025 7.00 pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall																		
REPORT FROM	Debbie Coxon, Marketing and Communications Manager																				
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	11 Communications Update																				
Background	This paper has been prepared to give committee members an update on the communications activities that took place over the last 90 days (10 April-8 July)																				
Details	Social Media Overview Facebook Followers: 6.2K* Instagram Followers: 1.2K Twitter: 3.5K *Increased into the 6K bracket! Facebook Performance Overview <table><tr><th>Views</th><th>Visits</th><th>Reach</th><th>Interactions</th><th>Follows</th><th>Clicks</th></tr><tr><td>910K</td><td>11.2K</td><td>194K</td><td>5K</td><td>550</td><td>2.5K</td></tr></table> Social media posts issued: 211 (excluding shared posts). Avg.2 per day Top 5 FB Posts: <div><div><p>SATURDAY SPLASH VIBES!... Sat Jun 21, 1:30am 👁 36.5K ❤️ 43 👍 30 🔄 6</p></div><div><p>The Food & Drink Festival is now in full... Sun Jun 8, 3:26am 👁 34.8K ❤️ 167 👍 10 🔄 11</p></div><div><p>30,000 trees planted across... Fri Apr 18, 5:49am 👁 32.7K ❤️ 363 👍 45 🔄 7</p></div><div><p>The paddling pool opens tomorrow, Sa... Fri May 23, 8:44am 👁 30K ❤️ 100 👍 33 🔄 23</p></div><div><p>WEEKEND FUN STARTS HERE!... Fri Jun 20, 3:19am 👁 28.3K ❤️ 30 👍 20 🔄 10</p></div></div> Notably, the increase in performance can be attributed to the summer season, highlighted by the flagship food and drink event, increased promotion of other events, and the opening of the paddling pool. CTC social posts are usually shared to: <table><tr><td>Congleton Chat’s Back</td><td>26.9K members</td></tr><tr><td>Congleton News & Views</td><td>13.2K members</td></tr><tr><td>Congleton Radio</td><td>1.1k followers</td></tr></table>			Views	Visits	Reach	Interactions	Follows	Clicks	910K	11.2K	194K	5K	550	2.5K	Congleton Chat’s Back	26.9K members	Congleton News & Views	13.2K members	Congleton Radio	1.1k followers
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	Congleton Radio	1.1k followers																			

	<p>CTC Website: Statistics unavailable for this reporting period, due to a system error.</p> <p>Noticeboards The six town noticeboards and the CIC What's on Window are updated weekly to promote town council events and activities by local organisations and community groups.</p> <p>Key CTC Events 8.5 VE Day 80th Anniversary, Cenotaph Service and lunch at the Town Hall 15.5 Annual Town Meeting including Town Mayor's Civic Awards Ceremony 22.5 Mayor Making 24.5 Paddling Pool Open 1.6 Drug testing kits launched 8.6: Food & Drink Festival 22.6 Town Mayor's Civic Service</p> <p>New publications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Welcome Scheme literature • High Street Awards literature • Food and Drink Leaflet & Map <p>Press Releases: 24 Radio Interviews: 3 Other Editorial: Effective Directories, April-June (circl. 51,700k) Beartown Voice (circl. 12k), Food & Drink feature</p>
Proposal	For Councillors to note the report and for the officer team to take on board suggestions and recommendations from Councillors.
Financial Implications	Work is delivered within the annual budgets set by the Town Council
Environmental Implications	Considered as part of each piece of work. Carbon-neutral certificates are obtained for Bear Necessities and paper from sustainably managed sources used for other work.
Inclusivity Diversity Impact	The team uses different channels and communication tools to meet different audiences.
Decision Required	That Councillors note this report.

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Community		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	17th July 2025 7 pm	LOCATION	Town Hall
FROM	Cathy Dean, Communities and Admin Manager		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	12 Food and Drink Festival 2025		
BACKGROUND	The Congleton Food and Drink Festival has been a vibrant celebration of culinary delights and community spirit since its inception. This flagship event, previously organised by Congleton Community Projects, came back to Congleton Town Council under the leadership of Events Manager Rachel McCarthy.		
SUMMARY	<p>The 15th annual Food and Drink Festival took place on 8th June, 10:30 am until 4:30 pm.</p> <p>Road closures were in place on Mill Street, Swan Bank, Market Street, Moody Street and High Street. Where possible, we blocked all entrances into the festival with vehicles to act as a physical barrier. An extra 10 blue badge parking spaces were created on Mill Street, 4 or 5 vehicles used these.</p> <p>In total, we had 55 stalls, 24 gazebos and 12 trailers, which generated an income of: Total - £7336</p> <p>Independent Street also held a market in the CMQ market area, which complemented the main festival on the High Street. The footfall seemed to be busy all day</p> <p>Thanks to the event sponsors CMQ, Independent Street, Beartown Brewery and Bridestone Shopping Centre. Sponsorship generated - £1550</p> <p>Marketing:</p> <p>CTC team rebranded the festival, creating a new logo, website, banners, leaflets and maps.</p>  <p>Food & Drink website - https://foodanddrinkfestival.net/ - website stats from year to date:</p>		

Insights



Compare

👁️ Pageviews	8.4K
2.2 pageviews per session	
📄 Sessions	3.8K
00:01:08 per session	
👤 Visitors	3.1K
98.2% are new visitors	
🏠 Bounce Rate	26.9%
1388 visitors bounced	

No data available for comparison

Facebook Page – 2.6K likes • 2.9K followers

Insights

Learn how your Page is performing.

Last 90 days: 8 Apr-6 Jul ▼

[See all](#)



169,799 ↑ 4,025%

Views ⓘ



1,325 ↑ 3,387%

Interactions ⓘ



↑
net fol



Recent ads

Completed

2 Jun

View results

Website visitors

Bread Making Workshops! Congleton'...

11,865

6,338

212

\$39.98

Views

Reach

Link Clicks

Spend of \$8.00 per day

Completed

19 May

View results

Event responses

Don't Miss Congleton Food & Drin...

42,471

17,847

664

\$85.86

Views

Reach

Event responses

Spent out of \$93.00

Volunteers

The event could not run without our team of volunteers, thanks to the Congleton Rotary for providing volunteers. And Alison Wright, who managed a team of 8 volunteers from VAC (Volunteer Action Congleton). In total, we had 26 volunteers (including 6 councillors), 7 staff members and 4 streetscape operatives.

The information point at Congleton Town Hall coordinated all activities on the day, which worked well.

PLANS 2026

The 16th Congleton Food and Drink Festival will take place on 7th June 2026.

Plans for 2026 include making better use of the Town Hall, potentially by creating a kids' zone or soft play area. The space also offers valuable shelter in case of rain and has generated interest from visitors wanting to look around, making it a great opportunity to promote room hire.

Providing electricity for stallholders continues to be a challenge. Many traders are experienced with events that do not offer power. For 2026, we are considering not providing electricity and are researching the option of hiring quiet generators as an alternative.

Also looking to expand stalls down Mill Street to complete the circle with the market quarter.

Financial Implications	<p>Under the Tourism cost centre, the approved budget for events and their promotions is £18,000. Included in the £18,000 is £6,000 for the Food and Drink Festival, which came from a reduction of the grant budget to Congleton Community Projects, who historically have run the festival.</p> <p>The current outcome for Food & Drink is:</p> <table><tr><td></td><td>Budget</td><td>Actual</td><td>+/-</td></tr><tr><td>Income</td><td>£0.00</td><td>£8,916</td><td>£8,916</td></tr><tr><td>Expenditure</td><td>£6,000</td><td>£11,667</td><td>(£5,667)</td></tr><tr><td>Outcome</td><td></td><td>Surplus*</td><td>£3,249</td></tr></table> <p>* Due to be committed to future events</p>		Budget	Actual	+/-	Income	£0.00	£8,916	£8,916	Expenditure	£6,000	£11,667	(£5,667)	Outcome		Surplus*	£3,249
	Budget	Actual	+/-														
Income	£0.00	£8,916	£8,916														
Expenditure	£6,000	£11,667	(£5,667)														
Outcome		Surplus*	£3,249														
Environmental Implications	<p>Steps are being taken to reduce the carbon footprint around events through sustainable signage, waste collection and agreements with those exhibiting or selling at the events.</p>																
Equality and Diversity Impact	<p>Event guidance is followed where possible to improve accessibility for all. The events team works with the Equal Access advisory group. Creating events where all members of our community feel welcome, engaged and connected is the aim of all CTC events.</p>																
DECISION REQUESTED	<p>To note the report and plans for 2026.</p>																

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	17th April 2025 7.00 pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall
REPORT FROM	Cathy Dean, Communities and Admin Manager		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	13 Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnership Strategy for 2025 - 2028		
Background	Cheshire East is developing a refreshed Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnership Strategy for 2025 – 2028. A consultation is now open to capture views on this.		
SUMMARY	<p>The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 was introduced to address the local authority's response to the provision of support for victims of domestic abuse. Key elements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authorities are required to ensure that victims of domestic abuse and their children have access to safe accommodation and support services • Local authorities should prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their area, having regard to the needs assessment • Local authorities should give effect to the strategy (through commissioning/decommissioning decisions) • Local authorities should monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy <p>You can view the draft strategy and/or the summary document by clicking on the links below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheshire East Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnership Full Strategy 2025-28 (PDF 468.9 kb) • Cheshire East Domestic and Sexual Abuse Partnership Strategy 10-Page Summary Document (PDF 232.4 kb) <p>Please submit your consultation response by 25 July 2025 by completing this questionnaire. https://surveys.cheshireeast.gov.uk/s/0GIXOG/</p>		
PROPOSALS	To encourage councillors and interested parties to submit their feedback to strengthen the strategy.		

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	17 July 2025 7 pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall
REPORT FROM	Cathy Dean – Communities and Admin Manager		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	14 Speed Indication Device		
Background	<p>The Town Council has received several requests from people wanting Speed Indication Devices (SIDs) fitted on their roads. Although Road Safety is a Cheshire East function, and speeding is a criminal offence dealt with by the Police, the requests find their way to Town and Parish Councils.</p> <p>The Town Council does not currently own any working Speed Indication Devices; those in existence in Congleton are owned by CEC. Current locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Buxton Road – near the junction with Buxton Old Road (inbound towards Congleton Town)• Park Lane – adjacent to 32A Park Lane (inbound towards Congleton Town)• Newcastle Road – opposite Astbury Garage (inbound towards Congleton Town)• Padgbury Lane – two locations, one in each direction• Leek Road – two locations with flashing 30mph signs, one in each direction• Leek Road (Railway Bridge) – one location with a "Slow Down" flashing sign activated when exceeding 30mph <p>Speed Indication Devices are effective in warning drivers about their speed and usually result in drivers slowing down.</p> <p>CO/17/2425 – Resolved to add Speed Indication Devices to a list of items being taken into Business planning and budget setting activities.</p>		
Summary	<p>Cllr Heather Seddon has requested a Speed Indicator Device set up on the A34 Newcastle Road by The Mount, to slow the speed of traffic along that stretch of road.</p> <p>Cllr Seddon's Cheshire East ward budget would be used to purchase the pole for the SID (around £2000). SID devices can be fitted to suitable poles, like signposts, if available in the location.</p>		



Mobile Solar-Power SID

The only viable option is a device powered by solar, which eliminates the need for a power supply or changing/charging of batteries.

Basic data-logging is included in hardware, but cloud access or real-time reporting will come with annual fees. Essential for measuring impact and justifying continued investment. Include approx. £250–£500/year for cloud subscription, depending on provider and usage.

CEC Highways will charge £115 for a licence for the SID, and £115 for a consultation if the SID is to be relocated.

Cheshire East Speed Management Strategy (2003) states: “There is a strong preference for SIDs to be a temporary device that can be moved between locations on a regular basis, thereby they can be used over a wider area in an urban setting as a visible measure for the wider local community.”

SIDs should be placed on a relatively straight stretch of road to allow the radar device to accurately judge the speed of approaching motor vehicles. There must be a suitable post at the location to affix the sign to.

Example costings:

Roundel sign - £2,295 + VAT

Solar - £1,245 + VAT

Bluetooth data - £379 + VAT

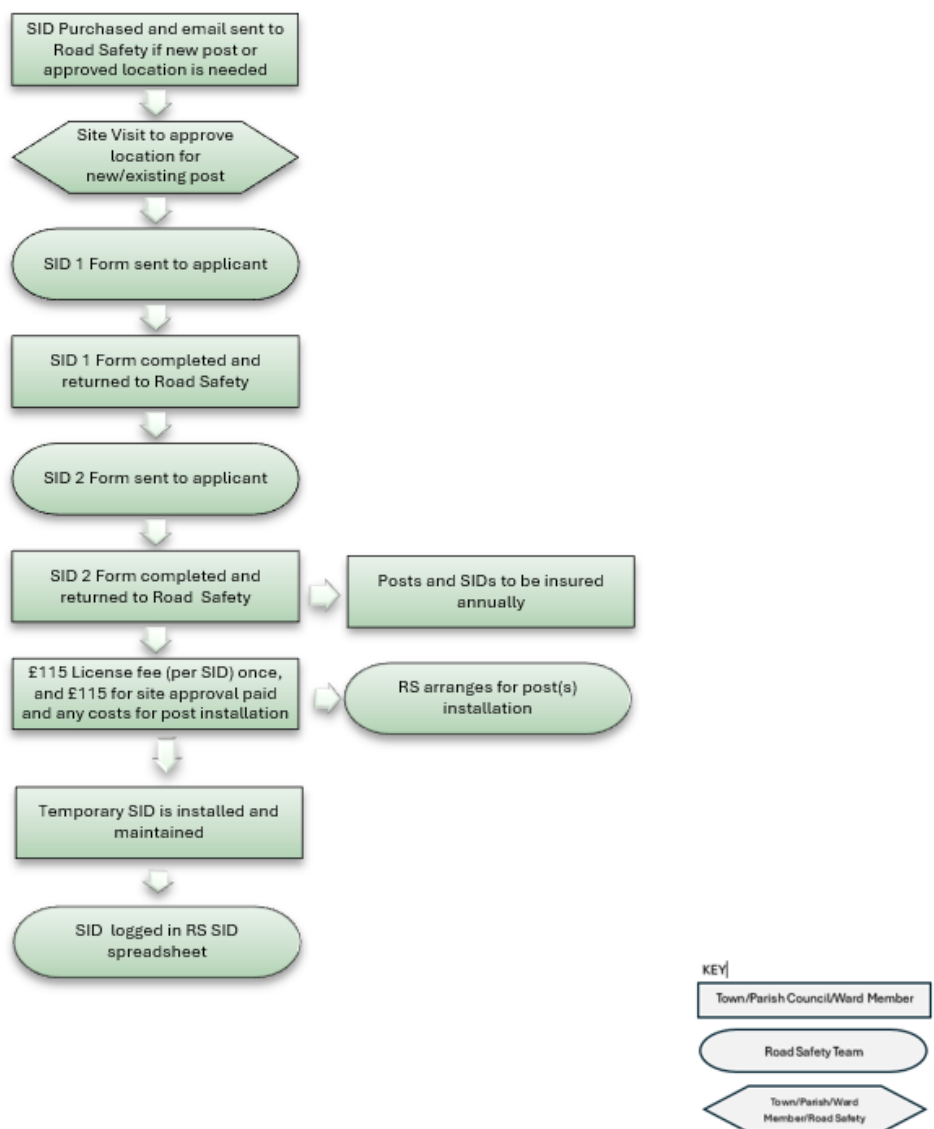
Installation - £350 +VAT

Cheshire East Licence/Assessment - £230

= £4499 + £854 VAT

It may be beneficial to identify two or three additional locations around the town where the SID could be deployed, ideally where a suitable pole is already in place. Please note that relocating the device may incur a fee if not carried out by a member of staff.

Financial Implications	The capital cost to purchase a SID would be between £3500-£4500, with ongoing costs of data, installation and licensing depending on relocation of the device. Currently, there is no budget for the purchase or for running costs of a device apart for an earmarked reserve of £4357 for traffic calming /Crime prevention. Our last resolution, as above, states that this needs to be discussed at business planning and budget setting.
Environmental Implications	Solar-powered models are ideal for the environment. They minimise maintenance and keep operating costs low.
Equality and Diversity	The product is aimed at reducing speeds, which has positive benefits for all sectors of our community, but especially for pedestrians and cyclists.
Decision Requested	Recommend the purchase of a solar-powered Speed Indicator Device (SID) with data-logging capability, within a budget range of £4,000 to £6000, and submit 3 quotes to Full Council during business planning and budget setting for approval.



Cheshire East Council's flow chart for managing Speed Indication Devices. (April 2024)