

**CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	29th January 2026 7.00 pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall
REPORT FROM	Cathy Dean, Communities Manager		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	13 Congleton Partnership Update		
Background	<p>Founded in 2006, the Partnership originated from the Congleton Market Town Initiative, evolving significantly since its first constitution in January 2007. The Partnership continues to respond to the needs of the community and support the VCFSE (Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise) sector, leveraging local resources to enhance Congleton.</p>		
Details	<p><u>Events in 2026</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Wellbeing Fayre – 17th March • No Tier Snooker Society – 14th June • Green Fayre – 26th September • Christmas Tea Dance date TBC <p><u>Partnership AGM</u></p> <p>A successful Partnership AGM was held in Nov '25. The remaining positions on the oversight groups have now been filled. Kate Fallon – representing CARE communities, Jeremy Lee – representing Congleton Rugby Club, Abby Smith – representing Congleton Pride and Stewart Price – representing Congleton Rotary.</p> <p>It was also agreed that the Partnership Officer join the meetings of CARE communities to represent volunteering and community support for mobilising projects.</p> <p>The minutes of the AGM are included in Appendix 1. In the minutes is a list of ideas/projects that were requested in a brainstorming session that the oversight group will work through.</p> <p><u>Aims for 2026</u></p> <p>Deliver a programme of 4 membership events themed around a subject such as funding, arts and culture, accessibility etc</p> <p>Relaunch the Partnership website to reflect new members and direction, which forms a wider goal of improving communications and promoting the Partnership.</p>		

Financial Implications	None. Work is delivered within the reserved funds for Congleton Partnership.
Environmental Implications	Considered as part of each piece of work.
Inclusivity Diversity Impact	The Congleton Partnership uses communication tools to meet different audiences and provides events/activities that try to reach isolated members of our community.
Decision Required	That Councillors note this report.

Meeting Minutes: Congleton Partnership AGM

Date: 25th November 2025 **Time:** 5:30 pm **Location:** Congleton Town Hall

In attendance: Peter Aston (Chair), Glen Williams (Vice Chair), Cathy Dean (Officer), David McGifford (Chief Officer), Richard Walton (Oversight), Amanda Martin (Oversight), Suzy Firkin (Senior Forum & Oversight), Vic Brown (Oversight), Jonny Gribbon (Cheshire East), Kate Fallon (CHOC), Ian Carter (No Tier Snooker), Kay Wesley (Bromley Farm Hub Group), Paul Bernardi, Jeremy Lea (Congleton Rugby Club), Sam Ruck (Visyon), Linda Webber (Street Pastor), Simon Bamford & Amanda (Wild Spirit Woods), Ruth Benson (Trees for Congleton), Patti Pinto (William Dean Trust), Stewart Price, Simon Fallis (Congleton Rotary), Brian Rogers (Rode Hall Silver Band), Paul Nixon (Refugees Welcome), Aoife Middlemass (CVS), Pete Marsden & Lesley Turner (Changing Lives Together).

Apologies: Adele Cook (Cheshire Learning Partnership CIC), Jo Money (Community Projects), Helen van der Veken (East Cheshire Eye Society), Lesley Turner (Bromley Farm Hub).

1.	<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <p>Chair Peter Aston opened the 19th Partnership Annual General Meeting by welcoming everyone with a round of introductions.</p>
2.	<p><u>Partnership Overview 24-25</u></p> <p>Peter gave a summary of the projects & events that had taken place over the last year.</p> <p>Events Over the Last Year</p> <p>Following the adoption of the new Constitution at the AGM on 10 September 2024, Congleton Partnership continued to strengthen its role in supporting community engagement, collaboration and wellbeing across the town. Over the past year, a diverse programme of events was delivered, reflecting the refreshed direction of the Partnership and its commitment to bringing organisations and residents together.</p> <p>Our first community event under the new structure—the Meet the Funders Event held on 19 November 2024—proved highly successful. With more than 80 attendees, the event offered local groups the opportunity to connect directly with funding bodies, gain guidance on applications and explore new routes to support their work.</p> <p>In early December, the Christmas Tea Dance brought festive cheer to residents on 4 December. With entertainment provided by Andrew Bell, the event welcomed guests from local care homes and residents from West Heath, Mossley and Buglawton. The afternoon offered companionship, music and celebration for some of our most isolated community members.</p>

Working in partnership with Congleton Volunteer Action, we held **Discover Volunteering** on 11 March 2025 at Congleton Town Hall. The event shone a spotlight on the many volunteering opportunities across the town, introduced the work of CVA and celebrated the invaluable contribution of our volunteer community—the “Congleton Crew.”

On 18 March 2025, we delivered the **Health and Wellbeing Fayre** at Congleton Town Hall, with more than 40 exhibitors taking part. This wide-ranging event showcased the breadth of health, wellbeing and support services available locally, covering everything from fitness and mental health to community groups and specialist care.

We also marked the **80th anniversary of VE Day** on 8 May 2025 in partnership with Congleton Town Council. Inspired by national guidance from the VE Day 80 campaign, we hosted a fish-and-chip or 1940s-themed lunch for local care home residents and individuals who may otherwise have spent the day alone, ensuring the anniversary was observed with dignity, gratitude and a strong sense of shared community.

Later in the year, the **6th annual Green Fayre** took place on 27 September 2025, bringing together around 30 stallholders representing local businesses, groups and environmental organisations. The Fayre provided an accessible way for residents to explore sustainability issues and discover practical, local solutions to help care for our environment.

Projects supported over the last year

Congleton Volunteer Action - CVA, led by Alison Wright, continued to provide a personalised approach to volunteering in Congleton. With support from Cheshire East and Creative Champions funding, the project expanded its ad hoc volunteering offer and supported events such as the Food & Drink Festival. CVA attracted a steady flow of new volunteers and opportunities through partner organisations, social media, and referrals, and began working with Cheshire East on potential volunteer involvement in hospital discharge support.

Case Study

CVA successfully supported a neurodiverse young person who had struggled to find a suitable role. After several trials, they were matched with The Bath House, where supportive mentoring helped them flourish. They have since progressed into paid employment in landscaping.

[Appendix 1 CVC report from Alison Wright.](#)

Christmas Hampers - £1000 grant from Plus Dane and £300 Partnership funds allowed us to create 130 Christmas Hampers for people receiving Old Saw Mill meals.

No Tier Snooker Society – The Partnership helped to support Ian in his quest to set up a group for those diagnosed with early-onset dementia. Supported by Diane Ritherdon, our Dementia Friends ambassador.

Buddy and Befriending telephone scheme with Changing Lives – in total a 196 Congleton residents have been supported.

Congleton Hydro & Solar – New solar installations have been completed on local buildings, Astbury Golf Club, Havannah Primary Club and Daneside Theatre, all of which are performing to plan. Congleton Hydro at Havannah has recently reached another milestone: 900 MWh. The team are actively looking at new sites to install more hydro's with planning permission granted for Congleton Park.

Congleton Repair Café – now has a new home at the Masonic Hall and continues to run monthly sessions.

Dementia Friends – Diane continues her work, and a new edition of the Young at Heart Leaflet has been produced.

Defibs – an 11th Defib has been installed at the Rams Head in Congleton in partnership with Congleton Lions.

Community Transport – The Partnership continues to operate community transport with New Life Church. Successful application to the Flourish fund, awarded £8200 for driver training to increase our pool of volunteer drivers for Partnership buses (D1 Category is a license requirement to drive a 17-seater.)

Grants Supported

Partnership provides admin and marketing support for 2 grant programmes –

Margaret Williamson Memorial Fund – a yearly fund distributing around £2000-4000 to local groups and good causes.

Congleton Hydro & Solar Community Trust – a bi-annual fund which distributes around £10,000 each year to local groups and good causes with an environmental focus.

Future Plans

The next event is the Christmas Tea Party on 17th December.

The Partnership working with CHOC has been successful in the Healthy Neighbourhood Grant to continue and expand the Buddy and Befriending service, the telephone scheme will continue, and a new warm welcome group will be set up in 2026.

The annual Health & Wellbeing Fayre returns on the 17th March at Congleton Town Hall.

Redesign/Relaunch Partnership website.

Action – Provide a list of new member organisations which have joined the partnership over the last year, as well as legacy members/groups.

Included in Appendix 2.

3. **Member Updates**

Vic Brown shared an update on a new Community TV channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/@CongletonCommunityTV>

Richard Walton shared an update on the white ribbon campaign. <https://vimeo.com/1138921825>
#WeSpeakUp

3. **Ideas session:**

What do you want from Congleton Partnership?

Project Ideas –

- Elizabeth Archive / Museum Resources
- I remember...feature community TV
- Community Transport Scheme – expanding minibus
- Biodiversity Bear Trail (Linking Biodiversity sites)

Environment

- Get residents to grow trees into saplings for planting by Trees for Congleton.
- Trees for Congleton / CTC biodiversity sites invite schools to take part
- Appearing Nature – Response to the local museum's disappearing project.
- Environmental Fund – establish an annual environmental fund so that biodiversity and other enhancements can be properly planned.
- Pride in our local green spaces, 'friends' groups for areas, give the spaces names.
- Youth rewilders group – lots of work to increase the diversity of local green spaces

Locations/Space

- Reuse of Vétérans Café
- Mainly Networking – shared interests, rural site where various events can take place
- Youth Cafe Location (Town Hall ?)
- Reuse Warehouse/Library of Things
- Meet the geek – Geek retreat
- Homework / Study drop-in
- Storage space – eg furniture
- Sports Facilities

Products

- Bleed Kits – Support similar to defibs

Music

- Free Concerts Showcase
- Clonta Education Trust – bringing live music to a younger audience

	<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rough Sleeping – what can be done about rough sleepers around the town? • Work carried out to cover all priorities from the neighbourhood partnership meeting, which are mental health, Social Isolation, Drugs, Alcohol, Smoking and Transport. • Clarity on how to ask for support from the Partnership
<p>4.</p>	<p>Business of the AGM</p> <p>Accepted the minutes dated 10.09.24 as an accurate record of the meeting. No outstanding actions.</p> <p>No new proposals were put forward. Roles remain as:</p> <p>Chair: Peter Aston</p> <p>Vice Chair: Glen Williams</p> <p>Oversight Group</p> <p>As agreed in the constitution, the Oversight Group consists of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chair (Peter Aston) 2. Vice Chair (Glen Williams) 3. CTC (Richard Walton) 4. CTC (Amanda Martin) 5. Parish Council (Vic Brown) 6. Suzy Firkin (Chair of Senior Forum) 7. ? 8. ? 9. ? <p>The Partnership Officer & Chief Officer have no voting rights.</p> <p>The 4 positions available on the Oversight Group should be reflective of Congleton Interests, like business, sports, etc. S Firkin has expressed a wish to step down from the oversight committee.</p> <p>Nominations for the 4 remaining seats of the oversight group are invited to follow this meeting, the next oversight committee takes place on the 5th December which interested parties will be invited to attend.</p>

Presentation of Accounts.

Cathy Dean gave a summary of the financial state of the Partnership.

[View the summary sheet here in Appendix 3.](#)

Income & Balance carried forward = £ 46,605.00

Spend 2025 = £12,094.75

Allocated = £20,503.29

Unallocated = £14,000.96

Balance remaining = £34,510.25

Action – Clarify Partnership funding position

A.O.B

AGM closed at 7:15 pm