



Congleton Town Council

Historic market town

Chief Officer: **David McGifford**

9th April 2026

Dear Councillor,

Community Committee – Thursday 16th April 2026

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Communities Committee to be held at Congleton Town Hall on **Thursday 16th April 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

Congleton Town Council, Town Hall, High Street, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 1BN

Tel: 01260 270350

Email: info@congleton-tc.gov.uk www.congleton-tc.gov.uk

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 29th January 2026 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. Equal Access Advisory Group (Enclosed)

To receive the minutes of the Equal Access Advisory Group meeting held on 27th January 2026.

8.1 Equal Access Updates (Enclosed)

To receive and note a report about the ongoing work of the Equal Access Group.

9. Community Safety Working Group (Enclosed)

To receive the minutes of the Community Safety Working Group meeting held on the 19th March 2026 and receive a short update from the Chair.

10. 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 23rd January 2026 to 8th April 2026.

11. Youth Council Update (Verbal Update)

To receive a verbal update from the chair of the Youth Council.

12. Food and Drink Festival 2026 (Enclosed)

To note a report from Events Manager Rachel McCarthy on the Food and Drink Festival 2026, planned for 7th June 2026.

13. UK Town of Culture 2028 (Enclosed)

To receive a report on Congleton's Bid to be the UK Town of Culture 2028.

14. Civic Awards 2026 (Enclosed)

To approve the edition of the Team category for Congleton Town Council's Civic Awards and an amendment to the eligibility criteria.

15. Resolution to Exclude the Public and Press from Item 16

To consider passing a resolution in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that public and press be excluded from the meeting due to Commercial sensitivities.

16. Service Level Agreement Community Projects 26-27 (To Follow)

To approve the draft Congleton Community Projects Service Level Agreement.

To: Members of the Community Committee

Cllrs: 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.



Congleton Town Council

Title	Community Committee
Date of Meeting Time	29 th January 2026 7 pm
Status	Draft Minutes – to be ratified at the next Committee meeting
Reference Documents	Agenda Papers for the Community Committee – 29th January

Attendance

Committee Members	CLlr Kay Wesley (Chair) CLlr Sally Ann Holland (Vice Chair) (Left 7:40 pm) CLlr Dave Brown (Arrived 7:10 pm) CLlr Emma Hall CLlr Amanda Martin CLlr Shaun Radcliffe CLlr Richard Walton CLlr Glen Williams
Ex Officio	CLlr Robert Brittain (Mayor) CLlr Suzy Firkin (Deputy Mayor)
Non-Committee Members	CLlr Robert Douglas CLlr Heather Seddon
Officers	David McGifford (Chief Officer) Cathy Dean (Communities & Admin Manager)
Members of the Press	0
Members of the Public	2

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mark Edwardson and Susan Mead.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

CO/30/2526 resolved to approve and sign the Community Committee minutes held on the 4th of December as a correct record.

3. Declaration of Interest

Non-pecuniary interest declarations were received by Cllr Sally Ann Holland and Emma Hall for matters about Cheshire East. Cllr Glen Williams declared a non-pecuniary interest in items 12, 13 and 14: Cllr Wesley, Firkin and Walton for item 13.

4. Questions from Members of the Public

None

5. Urgent Items

No urgent items.

6. Cheshire Police

Sgt Karl Tatlock and Sgt Vicky Welch attended the meeting and provided a verbal update on the latest crime figures for Congleton (Attached Appendix 1). Pleased to report an overall drop in crime rates compared to last year. Members thanked Karl Tatlock for his work as he moves over to a new position in Crewe and welcomed Sgt Welch.

7. Committee Updates

CO/31/2526 resolved to receive the committee updates report on actions from items discussed at the previous Community meeting.

8. White Ribbon Campaign 2025

CO/32/2526 resolved to receive a campaign report on white ribbon activities during white ribbon day and 16 Days of Activism. Followed by a short update from the chair.

9. Community Safety Working Group

CO/33/2526 resolved to receive the minutes of the Community Safety Working Group meeting held on the 15th January 2026 and receive a short update from the Chair.

10. Communications Update

CO/34/2526 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 21st November 2025 to 22nd January 2026.

Members thanked Debbie Coxon for the excellent media coverage and excellent publication, Bear Necessities, which is very well received by the community.

11. Youth Council Update

Received a verbal update from Sadie Kirk, co-chair of the recently formed Youth Council.

12. Christmas Lights Switch-on Report 2025 and Plans for 2026 event

CO/35/2526 resolved to note a report from Events Manager Rachel McCarthy on the Christmas Lights Switch-on event and the planned changes for 2026.

Members thanked Rachel McCarthy and the team for their hard work during the event.

13. Congleton Partnership Update

CO/36/2526 resolved to receive a report from Congleton Partnership on activities for 2026.

13.1. No Tier Snooker Society June Showcase Event

CO/37/2526 resolved to receive a report on the No Tier Snooker event taking place in Congleton Town Hall to raise awareness of frontotemporal dementia (FTD) and early-onset dementia.

Action – C/O to write a formal letter of thanks to Ian Carter and No Tier Snooker for the excellent work on raising awareness of dementia and the publicity for Town.

14. Speed Indication Device

CO/38/2526 resolved to:

1. To make a formal request to the Cheshire East Road Safety Team to assess Macclesfield Road for the location of a SID. (Cllr Hall stated that her ward budget could be used for the costs of pole installation if required.)

2. Recommend the purchase of a second solar-powered Speed Indicator Device (SID) with data-logging capability, within a budget of £3500. Instruct officers to source 3 quotes to ensure the best value to approve at full Council.

Action – Write to Cheshire East regarding the SID device on Park Lane that is not working.

Kay Wesley
Chair

Meeting Ended 8:32 pm

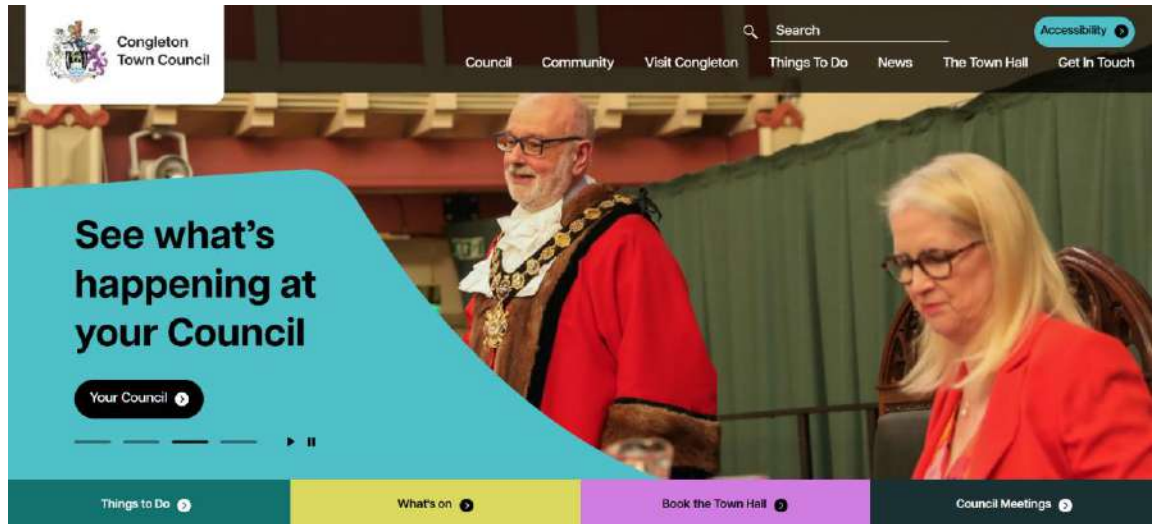
CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee					
MEETING DATE AND TIME	16th April 2026 7.00 pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall			
REPORT FROM	Cathy Dean, Communities Manager					
AGENDA ITEM	7					
REPORT TITLE	Updates Paper					
Background	<p>This paper has been written to update members on the progress of actions from items discussed at the previous Community Committee. These items do not need a full paper and are either ongoing issues, confirmation of completion, or resolution.</p>					
Updates	<p>No Tier Snooker Society</p> <p>No Tier Snooker has been announced as one of the finalists for the Dementia Community UK Dementia Awards. A fantastic achievement to be nominated, the awards gala takes place on 30th April 2026.</p> <p>The Snooker Event ‘The Final Act’ is planned for 14th June 2026 at Congleton Town Hall. Standard tickets are now sold out, with a few VIP tickets left. Steve Davis OBE & Dennis Taylor have been announced as official Ambassadors for the society.</p> <p>Also confirmed is a darts showcase on 1st November 2026 at Congleton Town Hall or ‘Congleton Pally’. A professional line-up of dart players to be announced.</p> <p>CTC/76/2526 Speed Indication Device</p> <p>Council resolved to approve the procurement of an additional SID within a budget of £3,500. A location opposite Dobson Way has been identified as suitable on Macclesfield Road, but a solar device will require pruning of trees and hedges on school grounds.</p> <p>Congleton Partnership</p> <p>Another successful Health and Wellbeing Fayre took place on 17th March 2026. Attendance was approximately 120 visitors, slightly lower than last year; however, the event once again provided highly valuable networking opportunities for the range of service providers involved.</p> <p>The Margaret Williamson Memorial Fund had £2,148 available for distribution to local groups and organisations in 2026. A total of 14 applications were received, requesting over £8,000, meaning some difficult decisions had to be made. The successful applicants were:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Our Gang - Congleton Scout & Guide Gang Show - £350</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Buglawton Primary School - £250</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Congleton Pride - £250</td> </tr> </table>			Our Gang - Congleton Scout & Guide Gang Show - £350	Buglawton Primary School - £250	Congleton Pride - £250
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Marton & District C E Aided Primary School - £150
Congleton Building Preservation Trust - £250
Congleton Youth Orchestra - £250
The Vale Allotments Association (VAA) - £300
The Big Clothes Movement CIC - £150
SOL Theatre School - £180

Congleton Town Council New Website

The redesign of Congleton Town Council’s new website is nearing completion; estimated launch date will be the end of May 2026.



PROPOSALS	To note this report.
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Equal Access Advisory Group

Virtual Meeting – 27th January 2026

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

Apologies – None.

1. Welcome from the chair – Deborah welcomed everyone to the meeting
2. Notes of the meeting of 18th November 2025 were accepted as a true record.
3. **Actions from previous minutes**

Actions

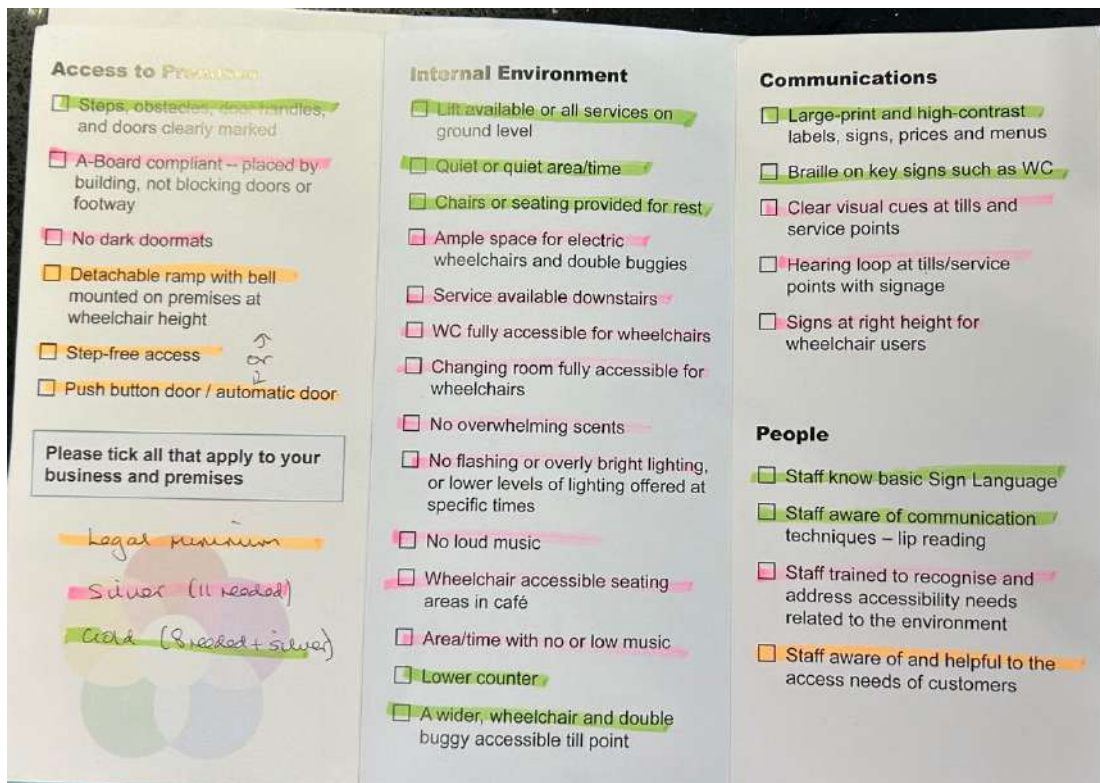
- **Action** – Dropped kerbs – Tom to survey dropped kerbs in the springtime. Cathy to provide maps and suggest routes. **(Carry Forward)**
- **Action** - Councillor and staff training, aiming for springtime to let councillors experience navigating around town in a wheelchair. Give certain tasks to complete. **(Carry Forward)**
- **Action** - Invite the Cheshire East Highways Officer to the Equal Access meeting. **(Carry Forward)**
- **Action** – Contact CAB to see if they will come to Congleton so people can have face-to-face contact. **Kay had a further discussion with David, but no response from CAB.**
- **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. **Update: The temporary ramp is also not possible due to the gradient.** Due to the distance from the back door to the Information Centre, you can't use a standard model. CIC isn't open at the same times as the building. The button on the disabled toilet is temperamental but costs around 7K to replace. **Deborah suggested contacting 'The Ramp People'. Town Hall has a full maintenance plan agreed at the last council meeting, which includes improving accessibility.**
- **Action** – **Disability Welcome Scheme Update** - Add resources to the disability page on the website. Ask for a training budget for CTC in the budget setting. The Disability Welcome Scheme leaflet is to be reorganised into new sections: Legal Requirements, Silver, and Gold. This is in response to businesses asking what makes gold vs silver, and businesses must meet legal requirements. Redesign leaflet. **Agenda Item**
- **Action** – Arrange a meeting with the Cheshire East Officer - Sam Burnard - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer. Sadly, Sam was unable to attend the meeting on 11th

November. **Cathy to send meeting dates for 2026 and Invite Sam to the next meeting.**

- **Community Toilet Scheme** - Contact other councils to see what other councils have done, contact businesses to access support for the scheme. **Kay to contact other councils to see how their scheme works.**

4. Disability Welcome Scheme

Kay has manually colour-coded the leaflet to make it easy for businesses to understand which qualities qualify as Gold and Silver. She has also been to talk to various businesses.



a) Following group discussion, it was agreed that a certificate should only be awarded where a wheelchair user can independently access all publicly accessible areas of the store, in order to ensure a consistent baseline approach to accessibility.

b) Deborah shared that in the UK, under Approved Document M (Volume 2) of the Building Regulations, minimum accessibility standards for door openings vary based on whether a building is new or existing.

External retail entrance doors:

- Existing retail buildings: minimum effective clear opening 775 mm
- New-build retail buildings: minimum effective clear opening 1000 mm

These dimensions refer to the effective clear opening width, measured with the door open to 90 degrees.

Nb. Internal retail doors for accessibility:

- Existing buildings: 750 mm (straight approach) / 775 mm (right-angle approach)
 - New buildings: 800 mm (straight approach) / 825 mm (right-angle approach)
- All dimensions are measured as the effective clear opening width.

This means that a couple of businesses would not qualify, as their doors were slightly too narrow.

- c) **Doorbells** – We discussed the purchase of doorbells for businesses, including the potential use of doorbells displaying the Equal Access logo. It was noted that some businesses that rely on removable ramps or have heavy closed doors may only need a doorbell to meet the criteria for a Silver Award.

Some group members queried whether accessibility recognition should be awarded in situations where a business does not already have a doorbell in place and is hesitant to introduce a simple, low-cost access measure.

- d) Kay noted that when going in and talking to businesses about the scheme, most are very responsive.

Action – Cathy to investigate doorbells and redesign the leaflet.

5. Community Toilet Scheme

No further action has been taken.

6. CEC Transport Strategy

No further information has been received. Deborah and Kay met with Laura and her colleague from CEC, who valued the feedback. They said they would send over the next version of the plan in due course.

7. Review Action Plan

Deborah and Kay have been maintaining and updating the action plan. At today's meeting, outstanding actions were reviewed and updated, including the prioritisation of the council training day.

If anyone else would like to view, please visit -

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1r5OPQbUOXatGj6lQn6BCtpcGtxNMZKFkAmLLQV7yrUY/edit?usp=sharing>

8. Meeting Dates

Next meeting changed to 21st April.

9. AOB

New Life Church has only 3 blue badge parking spaces – could they extend the carpark, but would need to verify land ownership first. If it is Cheshire East, it is doubtful, they would give over land to extend a carpark. Diane to instruct NLC to do a land registry search.

Diane commented that the group seems to focus on wheelchair users; The group is here to improve all access needs, and a wider, more diverse group of needs will benefit the group, all members agreed. The reason wheelchair access comes up so often is simply because wheelchair users are still the group most consistently excluded from getting into buildings or around events. Making sure people can get through the door first is a basic starting point. It's not excluding others; it's about bringing everyone up to the same baseline, so all access needs can be properly considered. Also, wheelchair access is often focused on when considering people in the built environment because improving it benefits everyone with mobility challenges, including people using sticks, frames or scooters, as well as parents with buggies. This is why 'wheelchair accessibility' is often used as a baseline, as wheelchair users experience most of the same barriers, and many additional ones.

Action - Cathy to contact the Less Able Club and send out a request via email to our list.

**CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	16th April 2026 7 pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall
REPORT FROM	Cllr Kay Wesley, Communities Chair and Cathy Dean, Communities Manager		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	8.1 Equal Access Progress		
Background	<p>The Equal Access Advisory Group continues to provide input to CTC on progressing its Equal Access Action Plan, and as part of this, has advised other organisations, including CEC, on some accessibility matters in recent months.</p> <p>This paper provides an update on progress. Councillors can see the full Equal Access Action Plan here.</p>		
Information	<p>Transport</p> <p>Following this Community Committee’s input to the Cheshire East Transport Plan Strategy, Cheshire East Officers requested a meeting with the Equal Access Group to gain a better understanding of the accessibility issues within the Plan.</p> <p>Equal Access Group Chair Dr Deborah Lawson and the Community Chair met with Cheshire East Officers on behalf of the group to go into more detail about the Group’s feedback and insights. The officers found the session very useful and took extensive notes for the next iteration of the plan. They have asked if the Equal Access Group will be available to provide input at future stages of the Transport Plan development.</p> <p>The Group continues to support Congleton Sustainable Travel’s efforts to remove barriers such as A-frames that block access to people using mobility scooters.</p> <p>Beartown Bus Timetable</p> <p>CEC asked the EAG for feedback on the new bus timetable for Beartown buses 90,91,92, 93A/C. The Group gave extensive feedback on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour contrast and improved backgrounds • Clarity and size of text. • Colour palette and layout, to avoid overstimulation of people with certain neurological needs. • Imagery – e.g. to show that diverse people, including old, young, male, female, wheelchair users, can use the bus. • Content - for example, informing visually-impaired people how to get the bus to stop if they can’t see it, letting readers know about wheelchair and pushchair access, and how to get different timetable formats. <p>The group was delighted that the leaflet designers had incorporated all the comments and agreed to review CEC document standards to ensure these things are considered in the future. You can see the ‘before and after’ leaflets in the Appendices.</p> <p><i>Appendix 1 – Beartown Bus Timetable (Before)</i></p> <p><i>Appendix 2 – Beartown Bus Timetable (After - Accessible)</i></p>		

	<p>Events The EAG continues to provide input to event organisers as they develop their accessibility plans. Congleton Live has asked for specific input for the Jazz & Blues Festival in August and has been invited to the next Equal Access Group meeting.</p> <p>Shops and Town Centre The Disability Welcome Scheme continues, with several shops due to get their Silver Award. Councillors are encouraged to take some leaflets and talk to local shops about joining the scheme, as this means they will get listed in our Accessibility Guide to Congleton.</p> <p>Astbury Mere Dr Lawson met with the team at Astbury Mere and developed an Accessibility Guide for them, which has been very well-received by the public. She also provided input on a number of accessibility queries and plans the Trust was developing. <i>Guide attached as Appendix 3.</i></p> <p>Disability Confident Training The Chair and Communities Manager attended a four-week Disability Confident Training Course, as this Committee resolved in 2023 (CO20/2324 ‘Investigate becoming a disability Confident Employer’). Next step is to sign up as a Disability Confident Committed Employer, which is free of charge and requires removing barriers to accessibility in our day-to-day work and recruitment and development of staff, as well as further training for both staff and councillors. For more information, visit: Disability Confident: guidance for levels 1, 2 and 3</p> <p>Toilets We have asked Stockport Council for information about their Community Toilet Scheme with a view to bringing something similar to Congleton, at least until we have our public toilets fully available.</p> <p>Recognition for Dr Deborah Lawson Congratulations to the Chair of the EAG, Dr Deborah Lawson, who was recently named as one of the Top 100 Women Driving Meaningful Change in the world, by Shelist. Many thanks to her for giving her time freely to the Congleton Equal Access Advisory Group.</p> <p>Feedback Recent email from a Congleton resident: <i>“I’m pleased the council is doing this work. It makes a difference. Really good about a Congleton disability guide. “I’d like to see more in the Chronicle on disability and the group’s work. Because its great. It reassures people that you are a really good council. I think you’re a better council than others for accessibility. CTC is very, very good. I’ll be spreading the word.”</i></p>
<p>Next Steps</p>	<p>The Group would like to invite Councillors to take part in a ‘wheelchair day’ in which we give them specific places to go around town to experience what being in a wheelchair is like, and ask for the Community Committee’s support for this activity. Councillors should bear in mind that this will not replicate lived experience, and that it’s not a substitute for engagement with disabled residents, but might help build awareness and understanding.</p>
<p>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</p>	<p>None – all activity in current budgets. Becoming a Disability Confident Employer is free of charge.</p>

EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS	<p>The Equal Access Advisory Group advises Congleton Town Council on making our services, events, assets and communications accessible for people with specific needs. CTC continues to get positive feedback from residents about this work, both in terms of the direct impact and the message it sends that Congleton is for everyone.</p>
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS	<p>Work on transport – both public transport and removing barriers – may encourage people with disabilities to rely less on private cars and reduce their carbon footprint.</p>
Decision Required	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Councillors note the report. 2. Agree that CTC should sign up as a Disability Confident (Committed) Employer 3. Councillors volunteer for ‘wheelchair day’ later in 2026. 4. Councillors add the Disability Confident – Committed logo to email signatures.

New! Beartown Services 93A & 93C

Adult
single fare
£1.50*

90 Congleton - Bromley Estate

91 Congleton - Mossley

92 Congleton - Buglawton

New!

93A Congleton - Barn Road - West Heath - Congleton

93C Congleton - West Heath - Barn Road - Congleton

From 10 November 2025



*£1.50 Adult and £1 Child single journey fares



Cheshire East
Bus Partnership
Connecting People & Places

90

91

92

New!
93A

New!
93C

Welcome to this handy leaflet for your improved Congleton **Beartown Bus** services.

New services **93A** (anti-clockwise) and **93C** (clockwise) now serve Viking Park and West Heath.

Whether you're heading to the shops, meeting friends in town, or enjoying a relaxed commute, there's a bus for everyone.

So get on board, sit back, relax & enjoy the ride.

Congleton's
BEARTOWN BUS
The Grrreat way to get around!
Thank you for bearing with us!

Adult Single
£1.50

Child Single
£1.00

Cheshire East Bus Partnership



**Cheshire East
Bus Partnership**
Connecting People & Places

The Cheshire East Bus Partnership is a statutory 'Enhanced Partnership' between Cheshire East Council (as the Local Transport Authority) and local bus operators to work together to improve local bus services.

For more information please visit www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/buses

Route Descriptions

Service 90

Congleton Fairground (Bus Station), Market Street, High Street, Lawton Street, Bromley Road, Borough Road, Coronation Road, Fern Crescent, Burns Road, Wollston Road, Edinburgh Road, Festival Hill, Bromley Road, Park Lane, Mountbatten Way, Market Street, Congleton Fairground (Bus Station).

Service 91

Congleton Fairground (Bus Station), Market Street, High Street, Albert Place, Canal Street, Canal Road, Leek Road, Boundary Lane, Biddulph Road, Cross Lane, Leek Road, Canal Road. Astbury Lane Ends, Lenthall Avenue, Linksway, Falmouth Road, Lambert's Lane, Canal Road, Canal Street, Albert Place, High Street, Market Street, Congleton Fairground (Bus Station).

Service 92

Congleton Fairground (Bus Station), Market Street, High Street, Lawton Street, Mountbatten Way, Moor Street, Brook Street, Buxton Road, St. Johns Road, Wharfedale Road, Harvey Road. Returns Harvey Road, St. Johns Road, Havannah Lane, St. Johns Road, Buxton Road, Brook Street, Moor Street, Mountbatten Way, Market Street, Congleton Fairground (Bus Station).

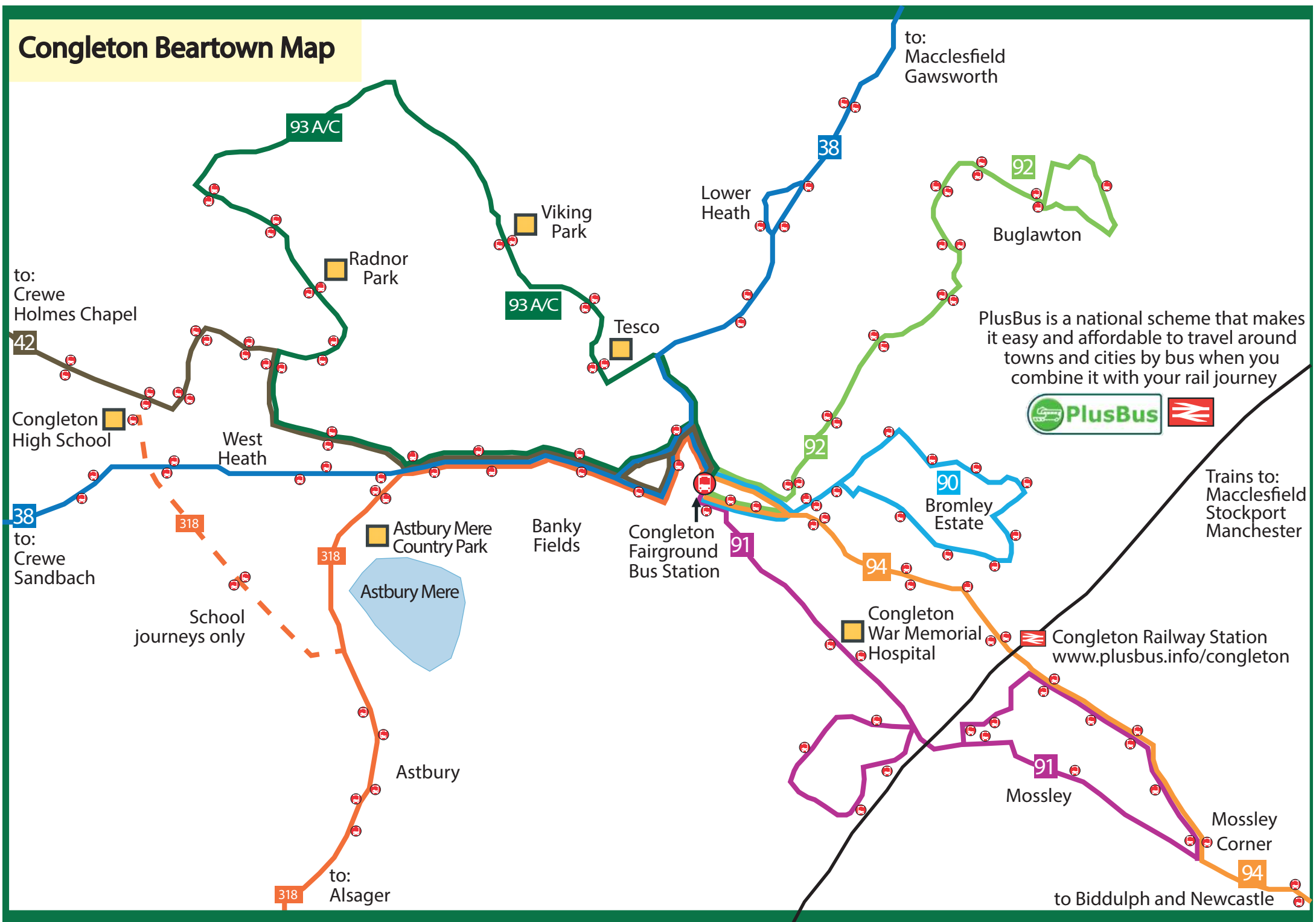
Service 93A

Congleton Fairground (Bus Station), Market Street, Mountbatten Way, Rood Hill, Clayton Bypass, Barn Road, Wolstenholme Elmy Way, Back Lane, Longdown Road, Cumberland Road, Holmes Chapel Road, West Road, West Street, Antrobus Street, Mill Street, Mountbatten Way, Market Street, Congleton Fairground (Bus Station).

Service 93C

Congleton Fairground (Bus Station), Market Street, Mountbatten Way, Mill Street, West Street, West Road, Holmes Chapel Road, Cumberland Road, Longdown Road, Back Lane, Wolstenholme Elmy Way, Barn Road, Clayton Bypass, Rood Hill, Mountbatten Way, Market Street, Congleton Fairground.

Congleton Beartown Map



PlusBus is a national scheme that makes it easy and affordable to travel around towns and cities by bus when you combine it with your rail journey



Trains to:
Macclesfield
Stockport
Manchester

Congleton Railway Station
www.plusbus.info/congleton

Congleton Bus Station 0805 0835 0905 0935 1005 1035 1105 1135 1205 1235 1305 1335 1405 1435 1505
Bromley Estate, Co-op 0809 0839 0909 0939 1009 1039 1109 1139 1209 1239 1309 1339 1409 1439 1509
Bromley Estate, Fern Crescent 0812 0842 0912 0942 1012 1042 1112 1142 1212 1242 1312 1342 1412 1442 1512

Congleton Bus Station 1535 1605 1635 1705 1735
Bromley Estate, Co-op 1539 1609 1639 1709 1739
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Bromley Estate, Co-op 0809 0839 0909 0939 1009 1039 1109 1139 1209 1239 1309 1339 1409 1439 1509 1539 1609
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Congleton Bus Station 0820 0850 0920 0950 1020 1050 1120 1150 1220 1250 1320 1350 1420 1450 1520 1550 1620

Bromley Estate, Co-op 1639 1709 1739
Bromley Estate, Fern Crescent 1642 1712 1742
Congleton Bus Station 1650 1720 1750

Congleton's
BEARTOWN BUS
The Grrreat way to get around!
Thank you for bearing with us!

Adult Single £1.50

Child Single £1.00

Congleton Bus Station 0753 0823 0853 0923 0953 1023 1053 1123 1153 1223 1253 1323 1353 1423 1453 1523
Mossley, Back Cross Lane 0758 0828 0858 0928 0958 1028 1058 1128 1158 1228 1258 1328 1358 1428 1458 1528
Mossley Corner 0800 0830 0900 0930 1000 1030 1100 1130 1200 1230 1300 1330 1400 1430 1500 1530
Cross Lane 0803 0833 0903 0933 1003 1033 1103 1133 1203 1233 1303 1333 1403 1433 1503 1533
Falmouth Road 0804 0834 0904 0934 1004 1034 1104 1134 1204 1234 1304 1334 1404 1434 1504 1534

Congleton Bus Station 1553 1623 1653 1723 1753
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Cross Lane 1603 1633 1703 1733 1803
Falmouth Road 1604 1634 1704 1734 1804

Mossley, Back Cross Lane 0758 0828 0858 0928 0958 1028 1058 1128 1158 1228 1258 1328 1358 1428 1458
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Mossley Corner 1530 1600 1630 1700 1730 1800
Cross Lane 1533 1603 1633 1703 1733 1803
Falmouth Road 1534 1604 1634 1704 1734 1804
Congleton Bus Station 1543 1613 1643 1713 1743 1813

Congleton's
BEARTOWN BUS
The Grrreat way to get around!
Thank you for bearing with us!

Adult Single £1.50

Child Single £1.00

92**Congleton - Buglawton****Mondays to Saturdays excluding Bank Holidays**

Congleton Bus Station	0815	0845	0915	0945	1015	1045	1115	1145	1215	1245	1315	1345	1415	1445	1515
Buglawton, Morrisons	0822	0852	0922	0952	1022	1052	1122	1152	1222	1252	1322	1352	1422	1452	1522
Buglawton, Harvey Road	0823	0853	0923	0953	1023	1053	1123	1153	1223	1253	1323	1353	1423	1453	1523
Congleton Bus Station	1545	1615	1645	1715	1745										
Buglawton, Morrisons	1552	1622	1652	1722	1752										
Buglawton, Harvey Road	1553	1623	1653	1723	1753										

92**Buglawton - Congleton****Mondays to Saturdays excluding Bank Holidays**

Buglawton, Harvey Road	0823	0853	0923	0953	1023	1053	1123	1153	1223	1253	1323	1353	1423	1453	1523
Buglawton, Morrisons	0825	0855	0925	0955	1025	1055	1125	1155	1225	1255	1325	1355	1425	1455	1525
Congleton Bus Station	0833	0903	0933	1003	1033	1103	1133	1203	1233	1303	1333	1403	1433	1503	1533
Buglawton, Harvey Road	1553	1623	1653	1723	1753										
Buglawton, Morrisons	1555	1625	1655	1725	1755										
Congleton Bus Station	1603	1633	1703	1733	1803										

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New!**93A****Congleton - Barn Road - West Heath - Congleton****Mondays to Saturdays excluding Bank Holidays****93C****Congleton - West Heath - Barn Road - Congleton****Mondays to Saturdays excluding Bank Holidays**

Service Number	93A	93C	93A	93C	93A	93C	93A	93C	93A	93C	93A	93C	93A	93C	
Congleton Bus Station	0810	0840	0910	0940	1010	1040	1110	1140	1240	1310	1410	1440	1510	1540	1610
West Heath, Shopping Centre	-	0846	-	0946	-	1046	-	1146	-	1316	-	1446	-	1546	-
Barn Road, Viking Park	0815	0853	0915	0953	1015	1053	1115	1153	1245	1323	1415	1453	1515	1553	1615
West Heath, Shopping Centre	0822	-	0922	-	1022	-	1122	-	1252	-	1422	-	1522	-	1622
Congleton Bus Station	0828	0858	0928	0958	1028	1058	1128	1158	1258	1328	1428	1458	1528	1558	1628
Service Number	93C	93A	93C	93A	93C	93A	93C	93A	93C	93A	93C	93A	93C	93A	93C
Congleton Bus Station	1640	1710	1740												
West Heath, Shopping Centre	1646	-	1746												
Barn Road, Viking Park	1653	1715	1753												
West Heath, Shopping Centre	-	1722	-												
Congleton Bus Station	1658	1728	1758												

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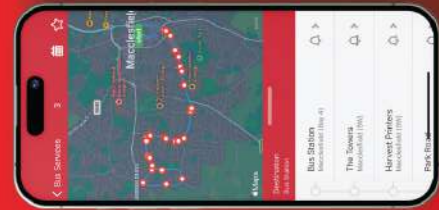
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Beartown Circular Bus Services 90-93

Adult
single fare
£1.50*

90 Congleton - Bromley Estate

91 Congleton - Mossley

92 Congleton - Buglawton

New!

93A Congleton - Barn Road - West Heath

93C Congleton - West Heath - Barn Road

Buses are wheelchair, pushchair and assistance dog friendly

updated March 2026



**Cheshire East
Bus Partnership**
Connecting People & Places

*£1.50 Adult and £1 Child single journey fares



90

91

92

New!
93A

New!
93C



Welcome to this handy leaflet for your improved Congleton **Beartown Bus** services.

New services **93A** (anti-clockwise) and **93C** (clockwise) now serve Barn Road for Tesco, Viking Park for Aldi and West Heath.

Whether you're heading to the shops, meeting friends in town, or enjoying a relaxed commute, there's a bus for everyone.

So get on board, sit back, relax and enjoy the ride.

Braille, large print, easy read and audio transcriptions of this leaflet are available on request online or from the Cheshire East Information Line 0300 123 5500.

If you are hearing or speech impaired, you can use:
RELAY UK 18001 then 0808 808 0123.

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Connecting People & Places

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For more information please visit www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/buses

Route Descriptions

Service 90 Congleton - Bromley Estate Circular

Congleton Fairground (Bus Station) • Market St • High Street • Lawton Street • Bromley Road for Coop • Borough Road • Coronation Road • Fern Crescent • Burns Road • Woolston Avenue • Edinburgh Road • Festival Hill • Bromley Road • Park Lane • Mountbatten Way • Market Street • Congleton Fairground (Bus Station).

Service 91 Congleton - Mossley Circular

Congleton Fairground (Bus Station) • Market Street • High Street • Albert Place • Canal Street • Canal Rd for War Memorial Hospital • Leek Rd • Boundary Lane • Biddulph Rd • Cross Lane • Leek Rd • Canal Rd • Astbury Lane Ends • Lenthall Avenue • Linksway • Falmouth Rd • Lambert's Lane • Canal Rd for War Memorial Hospital • Canal Street • Albert Place • High Street • Market Street • Congleton Fairground (Bus Station).

Service 92 Congleton - Buglawton Circular

Congleton Fairground (Bus Station) • Market Street • High Street • Lawton Street • Mountbatten Way • Moor Street • Brook Street • Buxton Road • St. Johns Road for Morrisons • Wharfedale Road • Harvey Road. Returns Harvey Road • St. Johns Road • Havannah Lane • St. Johns Road • Buxton Road • Brook Street • Moor Street • Mountbatten Way • Market Street • Congleton Fairground (Bus Station).

Service 93A Congleton - Barn Road - West Heath Circular

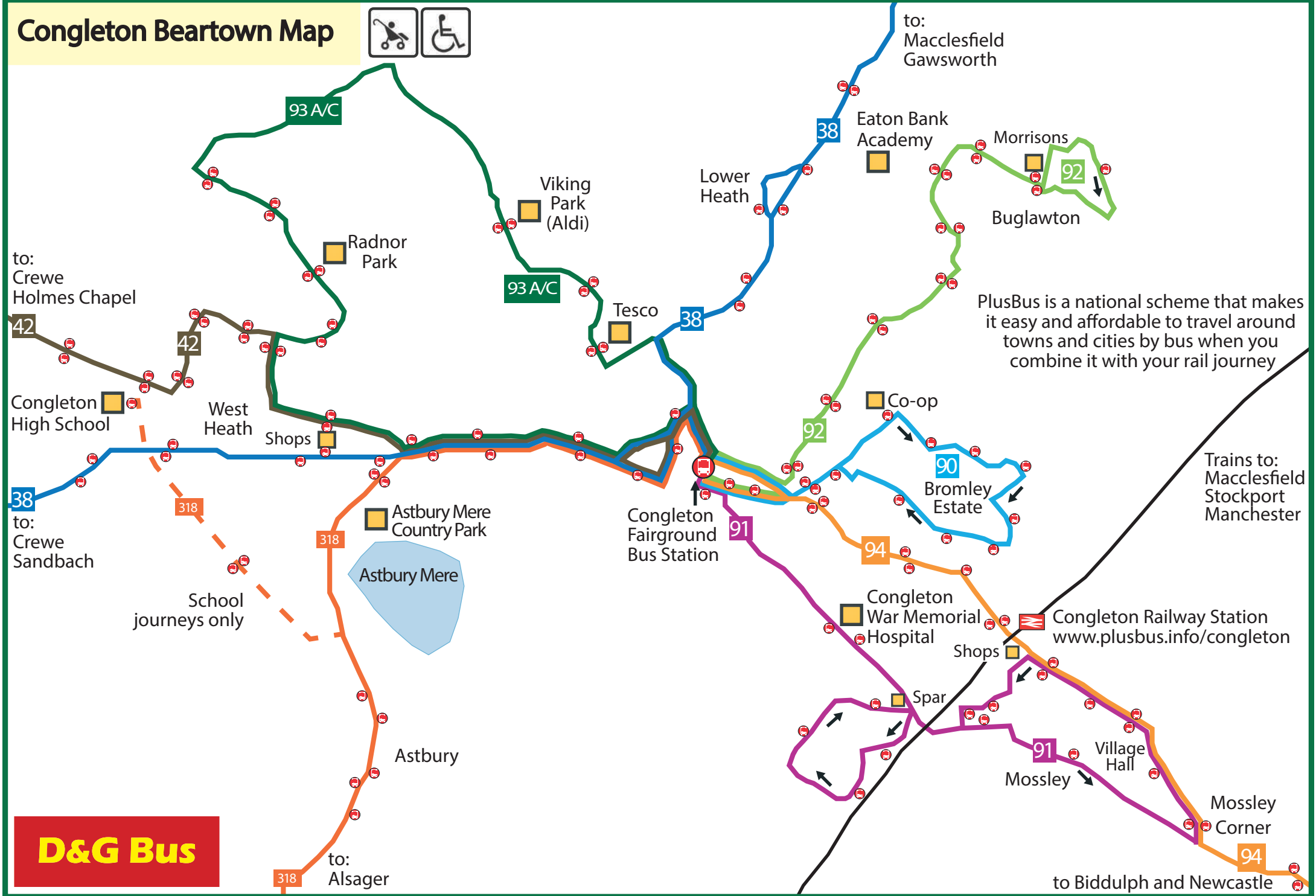
Congleton Fairground (Bus Station) • Market Street • Mountbatten Way • Rood Hill • Clayton Bypass • Barn Rd for Tesco / Viking Park (Aldi) • Wolstenholme Elmy Way • Back Lane • Longdown Rd • Cumberland Rd • Holmes Chapel Rd • West Rd • West Street • Antrobus Street • Mill Street • Mountbatten Way • Market St • Congleton Fairground (Bus Station).

Service 93C Congleton - West Heath - Barn Road Circular

Congleton Fairground (Bus Station) • Market St • Mountbatten Way • Mill St • West St • West Rd • Holmes Chapel Road • Cumberland Rd • Longdown Rd • Back Lane • Wolstenholme Elmy Way • Barn Rd for Tesco / Viking Park (Aldi) • Clayton Bypass • Rood Hill • Mountbatten Way • Market Street • Congleton Fairground (Bus Station).



Congleton Beartown Map



PlusBus is a national scheme that makes it easy and affordable to travel around towns and cities by bus when you combine it with your rail journey

Trains to:
Macclesfield
Stockport
Manchester

Congleton Railway Station
www.plusbus.info/congleton



90 Congleton - Bromley Circular

Mondays to Saturdays excluding Bank Holidays

Congleton Bus Station	0805 0835 0905 0935	then at	05 35	1605 1635 1705 1735
Bromley Estate, Co-op	0809 0839 0909 0939	these	09 39	until 1609 1639 1709 1739
Bromley Estate, Fern Crescent	0812 0842 0912 0942	minutes past	12 42	1612 1642 1712 1742
Congleton Bus Station	0820 0850 0920 0950	each hour	20 50	1620 1650 1720 1750

91 Congleton - Mossley Circular

Mondays to Saturdays excluding Bank Holidays

Congleton Bus Station	0753 0823 0853	then at	23 53	1553 1623 1653 1723 1753
Mossley, Back Cross Lane	0758 0828 0858	these	28 58	1558 1628 1658 1728 1758
Mossley Corner	0800 0830 0900	minutes	30 00	until 1600 1630 1700 1730 1800
Cross Lane	0803 0833 0903	past	33 03	1603 1633 1703 1733 1803
Falmouth Road	0804 0834 0904	each	34 04	1604 1634 1704 1734 1804
Congleton Bus Station	0813 0843 0913	hour	43 13	1613 1643 1713 1743 1813

92 Congleton - Buglawton Circular

Mondays to Saturdays excluding Bank Holidays

Congleton Bus Station	0815 0845 0915 0945	then at	15 45	1615 1645 1715 1745
Buglawton, Morrisons	0822 0852 0922 0952	these minutes	22 52	until 1622 1652 1722 1752
Buglawton, Harvey Road	0823 0853 0923 0953	past each	23 53	1623 1653 1723 1753
Buglawton, Morrisons	0823 0855 0925 0955	hour	25 55	1625 1655 1725 1755

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**Child
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New!

93A

Congleton - Barn Road - West Heath Mondays to Saturdays excluding Bank Holidays

Congleton Bus Station	0810	0910	1010	1110	1240	1410	1510	1610	1710
Barn Road, Viking Park	0815	0915	1015	1115	1245	1415	1515	1615	1715
West Heath, Shopping Centre	0822	0922	1022	1122	1252	1422	1522	1622	1722
Congleton Bus Station	0828	0928	1028	1128	1258	1428	1528	1628	1728

New!

93C

Congleton - West Heath - Barn Road Mondays to Saturdays excluding Bank Holidays

Congleton Bus Station	0840	0940	1040	1140	1310	1440	1540	1640	1740
West Heath, Shopping Centre	0846	0946	1046	1146	1316	1446	1546	1646	1746
Barn Road, Viking Park	0853	0953	1053	1153	1323	1453	1553	1653	1753
Congleton Bus Station	0858	0958	1058	1158	1328	1458	1558	1658	1758

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Thomas Smith

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12/03/2026 09:25:30

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16-19 Bus Saver



Expiry date:

31 OCT 2026

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Thomas Smith

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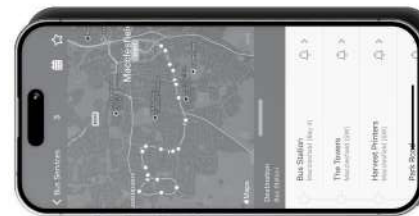
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Accessibility at Astbury Mere Country Park

Sandy Lane, Congleton, CW12 4FP



We want all visitors to enjoy Astbury Mere. The following information is designed to help you plan your visit. Please note that Astbury Mere is a country park, so while many accessible features are provided, paths and surfaces are part of a natural setting and may be uneven or bumpy in places.

Written by Dr Deborah Lawson

Getting here & parking

- The main car park entrance from Sandy Lane has a shallow kerb and a speed hump.
 - The car park surface is a mixture of hardstanding and gravel.
 - There are two designated Blue Badge spaces, exempt from parking charges.
 - Blue Badge holders may also park in any space within the car park free of charge, provided their badge is clearly displayed.
-

Entrances

- **Main entrance (Sandy Lane off Newcastle Road):**
 - Pedestrian access is via a kissing gate (manoeuvring space approx. 159 cm x 106 cm).
 - This may be difficult for some wheelchair and mobility-scooter users to use independently, and some larger wheelchairs or mobility scooters may not fit.
 - There are some uneven sections of the path between the kissing gate and the toilets, caused by tree roots pushing up through the hardstanding. These do not run the full width of the path, so they can be avoided.



- **Other entry points include:**

- Alternative step-free access is available from Ennerdale Drive, where there is an open gate. The path gradient here is steep, and there is no parking at this entrance (see left photo).
- There are steps from Wagg's Road/Banky Fields and from Astbury Street (not accessible).
- The Water Sports Centre entrance on Newcastle Road slopes down to the Mere, providing access for Water Sports Centre customers and nearby homes. Parking here is not for general visitors, and there is no wheelchair-accessible path along the access road itself.



From the car park to the Mere

- After passing through bollards, there are two staggered timber barriers to pass through (gaps approx. 112 cm and 100 cm).



- From the car park, there is a smooth gradient down to the Mere circuit via a hardstanding path.
- There are seven benches at the Mere entrance, with hardstanding in front of them and a hardstanding wheelchair space next to each bench.
- In the orchard (reachable by a path 150 cm wide), there are a further four benches (two benches are on the path, and two are on grass up a slight gradient). All have hardstanding in front of them and a space for a wheelchair to the side.

Paths & routes

- The circular route around the Mere is approx. **1 mile (1.6 km)**.



- Surfaces are firm (hardstanding and fine gravel).
- In windy weather, some dust may blow across the path.
- Paths are wide enough for a wheelchair and a companion or assistance dog, and for others to pass.

- There is a forest area off the main circuit. However, this is not wheelchair accessible due to rough, uneven terrain and tree stumps.
- After the Water Sports Centre (if passing the building on your left), the outer edge of the main path slopes slightly towards the Mere. This can be avoided by keeping towards the left of the path.
- General waste bins and dog waste bins are positioned along the route, at an accessible height. Dog waste bins have heavy lids with pull handles.



Water Sports Centre area (halfway point around the route)

- As you approach the Water Sports Centre, there is some larger gravel on the floor and uneven terrain (though the uneven terrain can mostly be avoided).
- There is a two-metre-wide hardstanding bypass around a closed gate (see the photo on the left on the next page).



- Dropped kerbs here have been improved with tarmac, but there is still a slight ridge going up and down them.
- To continue the route, visitors need to cross a raised speed hump in the road (see right photo below).



Seating & rest stops

- There are benches positioned around the Astbury Mere site. Along the circular route, there are 13 benches, positioned approximately every 100 metres.
- About half have hardstanding and a wheelchair space beside them.
- All benches have backs and armrests.

Toilets

- One accessible toilet (RADAR key) alongside male and female facilities.

- Doorway approx. 80 cm wide.
- Internal space approx. 155 cm x 190 cm, but the sink, WC and nappy bin reduce the usable space.
- Left-hand transfer when seated on the WC.
- Grab rails by the WC: one drop-down, one wall-mounted.
- Ramp access (with a single handrail) to the accessible toilet (the gradient may feel a little steep for some users).
- Points to note: the sink is slightly high if using a wheelchair; the turning space may be tight for larger wheelchairs.



Café

- The café has a ramped entrance and two small thresholds that may be difficult for some wheelchair users.
- Two wheelchair-accessible outdoor tables are provided for customers.



Dogs

- Dogs must be kept on a lead around the Mere.
- There is a large, grassed area at the top of the site where dogs can run off-lead.



- Dog waste bins are coloured red and black and placed along the route, at an accessible height. They have a heavy lid and pull handle.

Other facilities

- There are two defibrillators available on site. One at the Visitor Centre and one at the Water Sports Centre.
 - The Visitor Centre can be rented out and is wheelchair accessible via the same ramp (with a single handrail) as the accessible toilet; the gradient may feel a little steep for some users.
-

Summary:

Astbury Mere is a scenic country park, offering a one-mile circular route, regular rest stops, accessible parking and a RADAR-key accessible toilet. As it is a natural site, some paths may be uneven or sloping in places; however, overall, it provides an enjoyable and welcoming place to explore.



Minutes of Meeting
Community Safety Working Group
Thursday 19th March 2026 3 pm – 4.30 pm

Present: Cllr Kay Wesley (Chair), Rachel McCarthy, Cllr Suzy Firkin, Cllr Robert Brittain, Linda Webber, Cllr Glen Williams, Claire Dougherty, Cllr Susan Mead,

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cathy Dean, Sgt Karl Tatlock, Laura Woodrow-Hirst, Richard Walton, Stuart Hobson, Julia Pestell-Hassall, Cllr Sally Holland, Cllr Shaun Radcliffe, Emma Sneyd
2. **Notes of the meeting** of 15th January 2026 were accepted as correct.
3. **Action Log**
 - **ANPR Update/Morely Drive/Train Station**

We are still waiting for an update from Richard Christopherson regarding gate information that have been discussed, and the report from Poynton where the pilot scheme was launched. Issues with Morely Drive, a safety audit for the train station entrance and the Canal Street pinch point, waiting for a response, and a possible SID device scheme. Cllr Heather Seddon is liaising. We will ask for a meeting update asap. **ACTION RMc** There is a school streets initiative, three schools in Congleton possibly participating, problem areas with parking at school drop off and collection.
 - **Stuart CCTV report** – report not received, but we have dates for the visits to the CCTV control room, which we will circulate. The CCTV in the park has been upgraded. We need people to report crime and ASB, **ACTION DC**
 - **Congleton Police Report** – Sgt Vicky Welch couldn't attend, so provided a report for the meeting
 - **Code of Conduct review**

Poster now completed, we will launch this correctly, using Tik Tok, the youth council and social media.
4. **Police update on Crime - Sgt Vicky Welch**

Report received, attached with the minutes
5. **Police Priorities for Congleton Beat Team**

Bobby's on Bridge Street, we would like updates on PCSO Surgeries, as they seem quiet, if we can get information again, we will share on social media. **VAWG** – date has been arranged by Sgt Vicky Welch, to walk the area, highlighting potential problem areas with councillors and council staff. Visible policing is a priority, and central governing patrols still active
6. **CEC ASB Team**

No report received
7. **Street Pastors Update**

Report received, attached with the minutes, its very quiet as the weather has had an influence They are buying a power bank for mobile phones, as often people requiring help need to charge their phones.

8. AOB .

Homeless in Congleton is becoming a problem, as per the code of conduct, we need to encourage people not to give money, social media coverage to help this.

Add Plus Dane Housing report to the next agenda.

Dale Crescent has a few problems and would benefit from enforcement officers to look at the parking.

Date of Next Meeting - Thursday 21st May - 3pm

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	16th April 2026 7.00 pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall
REPORT FROM	Debbie Coxon, Marketing and Communications Manager		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	10 Communications Update		
Background	This paper has been prepared to give committee members an update on the communications activities that took place since the last committee.		

Details	<p>Social Media Overview</p> <p>Facebook Followers: 7K Instagram Followers: 1.4K</p>		

Facebook Performance Overview

Views	Viewers	Interactions	Clicks	Visits	Follows
613K	78K	3K	970	6.1K	206

Social media posts issued: 272 (excluding shared posts). Avg 3 per day

Top 5 FB Posts:

No 1 post: 36.5K views, 169 reactions, 32 comments, 19 shares



CTC social posts are usually shared to:

- Congleton Chat's Back 34K members
- Congleton News & Views 24K members

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.

Key CTC Events

- 23 Feb: Town Hall Tour (St John Ambulance)
- 24 Feb: Steven Holbrook's Evening of Clairvoyance
- 17 Mar: Health & Wellbeing Fayre
- 23 Mar: Town Hall Tour (Air Cadets)
- 31 Mar: Easter Treats and Trial

Stakeholder Events Supported

- Rotary Swimathon
- Congleton Unplugged

Press Releases: 31

Radio Interviews: 2

Other Editorial: Effective Directories- DPS in x2 editions (each circl. 51,700k)

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 Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	16th April 2026 7pm	LOCATION	Town Hall
REPORT FROM	Rachel McCarthy, Town Centre and Events Manager		
AGENDA ITEM	12		
REPORT TITLE	Food & Drink Festival 2026		
BACKGROUND	<p>The 16th Congleton Food and Drink Festival will take place on 7th June 2026.</p> <p>Over 70 vendors are already booked.</p> <p>Road closures on the pedestrian area, High Street, Mill Street and Swan Bank Stalls, gazebos and street food trailers across the entire site.</p> <p>Entertainment includes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stilt walkers and two other street entertainers • DJ Chris M booth • Music gazebo with three different bands to entertain <p>Information and lost child point located in the information centre located at the town hall.</p> <p>Portable toilets are located at the bus station where the previous toilets used to be.</p> <p>Road blockades are in place at every entry point to reduce the risk of rogue vehicles.</p> <p>Town Hall - 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. Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's zone (Mark Events arranging) • Face painter booked • Astbury Darlings soft play • Cake making and pizza making • Arts and crafts area, food related. <p>Volunteers</p> <p>The event could not run without a team of volunteers, councillors are encouraged to help support the event, please contact Rachel if you can volunteer on the day.</p>		
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	<p>£10,000 budget</p> <p>Sponsorship letters sent out, £2000 already received from local business sponsors.</p>		

<p>EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS</p>	<p>Diverse Participation: Invite participants from different cultural, ethnic, age, religious, disability, gender, and socio-economic backgrounds. Involve community groups, faith groups, schools, charities, and local businesses.</p> <p>Representative Hosts/Performers: Ensure the people performing represent the diversity of the town, to make all community members feel included.</p> <p>Physical Accessibility: Ensure the event is wheelchair accessible and has accessible toilets and clear signage.</p> <p>Sensory Considerations: Quiet zones or “sensory-friendly” area for people with autism or sensory processing needs, located at TMC The Space.</p> <p>Visual and Audio Aids: Use clear, contrasting signage; ensure audio announcements are loud and clear for people with visual impairments.</p> <p>Accessible Formats: Promote the event in multiple formats (e.g., Easy Read, large print.)</p> <p>Safe and Family-Friendly Timing: The event time is suitable for families, older people, and others who may not feel safe travelling at night.</p> <p>Anti-Discrimination Measures: Code of Conduct: Promote a zero-tolerance policy on hate speech, racism, harassment, or exclusion.</p> <p>Steward Training: Train volunteers and staff in equality, diversity, and how to handle complaints or incidents respectfully and appropriately.</p> <p>Free or Low-Cost Activities: Event is free to attend and includes free entertainment so that those on low incomes can participate.</p>
<p>Environmental Consideration</p>	<p>All vendors are asked to take rubbish home and use eco-friendly packaging. We will aim to provide separate bins for recycling and general waste. The aim is to attract vendors within a 30-mile radius where possible.</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>To note the report and request for councillors to volunteer at the event.</p>

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Community Committee		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	16th April 2026 7.00 pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall
REPORT FROM	Cathy Dean, Communities Manager		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	13 UK Town of Culture		
Background	<p>Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) in October 2025 announced the UK Town of Culture Competition, building on the success of City of Culture, with the aim to celebrate towns and help to create a lasting cultural legacy. The best small, medium and large towns will be selected and invited to make a full application to be named the first UK Town of Culture in 2028.</p>		
Updates	<p>Although the competition was announced in October 2025, it was not brought to the Council’s attention until late January 2026, when Congleton Community Projects (CCP) made contact. The deadline for submitting an expression of interest was 31 March 2026, providing a relatively short timeframe in which to prepare a bid.</p> <p>An initial meeting was held with representatives from Congleton Partnership, CCP and Congleton Town Council to consider whether to proceed with an application. To gauge local support, an email was circulated to community groups, businesses and organisations across the town, resulting in 78 expressions of interest.</p> <p>A community meeting took place on 26th February 2026, bringing together 26 participants to share ideas and help shape the bid.</p> <p>A small working group met on several occasions to develop the submission, and the expression of interest was completed and submitted on 30th March 2026.</p> <p>The guidance states that the shortlisted town will be announced in spring 2026.</p> <p>The expression of interest is attached in Appendix 1.</p>		
Financial Implications	<p>Apart from officer time, there were no financial costs involved with the expression of interest. If Congleton is selected for shortlisting, a £60,000 development grant will be given to support a full application. The winning town will receive £3million to deliver a full programme of cultural activities in 2028, two runners-up will receive £250,000 to deliver elements of their application.</p>		
Environmental Implications	<p>The Town of Culture bid places environmental responsibility at the heart of its vision, recognising the role that culture can play in promoting sustainability, influencing behaviour and supporting the transition to a low-carbon future. Environmental considerations will be embedded across all aspects of programme development, planning and delivery.</p> <p>The Council will seek to minimise the environmental impact of all cultural activities by adopting best practice in sustainable event management. This will include reducing waste, prioritising reuse and recycling, limiting single-use materials, and encouraging suppliers and partners to adopt environmentally responsible approaches. Where possible, local supply chains will be used to reduce transport emissions and support the local economy.</p>		

Equality and Diversity Impact	Accessibility and inclusion are central to the Congleton Town of Culture programme. Over the past year, Congleton Town Council has worked closely with the Equal Access Advisory Group to improve both the built environment and communications, following the social model of disability. The group will be a key supporter of the bid.
PROPOSALS	To note this report.



Department
for Culture,
Media & Sport



UK Town of Culture 2028 Competition Expression of Interest (EOI)

Thank you for your interest in the UK Town of Culture 2028.

Please ensure you have read the “UK Town of Culture 2028 Expression of Interest: Guidance for bidders” document before applying. All EOIs must be submitted using this standard template.

The form comprises four sections which each require a statement response. You are provided with a series of prompts to use as a guide. You do not need to answer each prompt individually but your responses should address all prompts. The prompts draw from the competition criteria and bidding places should refer back to the criteria when completing the form to show the potential of their programme to make a contribution to the aims of the UK Town of Culture programme.

The form has set formatting (e.g., font size and line spacing) which should be adhered to. Please note that the EOI form is strictly word limited and we do not expect at this stage detailed economic data, research or in depth fundraising or delivery plans. Responses should also only include text.

The application deadline is **31 March 2026**. Applications received after this date will not be considered. **If a large number of applications are received, an initial sift will be conducted on the section, 'Section 2: Your Story', only.**

Contact: uktownofculture2028-competition@dcms.gov.uk

SECTION 1: BID INFORMATION

In this section, we ask for information relating to your bidding team and place. The information will not be scored but will be used to confirm your eligibility.

1.1 Contact Information

Please provide contact information for the single point of contact for your bidding team.
Name, Position, Team / Organisation, Telephone Number, Email Address.

Cathy Dean
Communities Manager (Including Partnership Officer)
Congleton Town Council
T: 01260 270350 ext 7
M: 07977 065 647
Cathy.dean@congleton-tc.gov.uk

1.2 The Bidder

Please provide information for the bidder. With reference to the definitions of the Accountable Body and Delivery Body in “UK Town of Culture 2028 Expression of Interest: Guidance for bidders”. You should include information on who the lead bidder is and who the key partners are.

Congleton Town Council will be the accountable body for the programme, and Congleton Partnership will be the delivery body.

The Congleton Partnership is a community-based, volunteer organisation which draws on and utilises the skills and expertise of residents and organisations in Congleton. Since its inception in August 2008, The Partnership has had an outstanding record of project delivery, including Town Signage, Cycleways & Footpaths, Youth & Schools Projects, Art Skills Workshops, Sustainable Living in Congleton course. With some of its projects, Congleton Apple Juice, Beartown Branding and Bearmania in 2011 won national and regional awards.

Through the Partnership’s network to date, 78 organisations have confirmed their commitment to support the bid. This is a mix of local businesses, community groups, volunteers, services and residents. Key partners include Clonter Opera Theatre, Community Projects, Congleton Climate Action, Congleton Community TV, Congleton High School, Congleton Hydro, Congleton Museum, Congleton Musical Theatre, Daneside Theatre, East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce, Prickly Peach Films, and Siemens - to name a few!

1.3 The Geographical Area

Please specify the geographical area that you are bidding for, with reference to the relevant geographical boundary designations. You may want to note the town categories set out in the “UK Town of Culture 2028 Expression of Interest: Guidance for bidders”. We will use your geographical area’s population size to categorise your bid.

For the competition, the Congleton Town Parish Boundary will be used as agreed in 2024, while recognising that the surrounding civil parishes will also be involved, as Congleton is the main service centre. The population of Congleton is 31,000.

SECTION 2: YOUR STORY

In this section, we want to understand the unique story and culture of your town. [*Maximum 400 words for each section*]

2.1 Vision

Congleton is a historic market town defined by its independent spirit. In the 17th century, it famously diverted money set aside for a new town Bible to buy a bear for the Wakes celebrations. Whether myth or embellished truth, the story endures because it captures something fundamental about Congleton: a self-reliant community, unafraid to take action and make bold decisions in response to the challenges of its time.

That spirit has echoed through centuries of change — from our textile mills and ribbon weaving heritage to today's businesses, community organisations and creative groups. Congleton continues to evolve, but its character remains constant. Proudly known as Beartown, it is a place where tradition, creativity and community still go hand in hand.

We are home to Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy, a suffragist, and John Bradshaw, the judge who presided over the trial of Charles I. By celebrating the stories of the town, we will ignite a cultural revival that empowers our community to lead in environmental action and social resilience.

On the edge of south-east Cheshire, Staffordshire and the Peak District, our landscape, dominated by the River Dane and the iconic Cloud, is not just a backdrop but an active participant in our culture. Our TOC programme will celebrate this identity through three connected themes:

Bear Town Stories - will use grass-roots arts to celebrate Congleton's tradition of civic action, from the Bear legend to the community leadership that defines the town today. Residents will shape the programme through participatory arts, youth commissions and community storytelling, connecting heritage, environment and imagination. Congleton's bears will appear across the town as interactive storytellers, revealing hidden histories, celebrating creativity and highlighting our natural assets, including 30 biodiversity sites.

The Flow of the Dane - will celebrate our industrial past and environmental future. Once powering textile mills, the river now generates clean energy through Congleton Hydro, a community energy scheme supplying renewable electricity to local industry. We will animate the river through environmental arts, celebrating nature and sustainability, to inspire the next generation of artists, engineers and environmentalists.

Bear Town's Cultural Heart - will establish a new hub in the town centre, as a permanent physical legacy- a welcoming "living room" where community groups can meet, connect, and exhibit. A home for a revitalised museum, performance and exhibition spaces, a youth zone and business incubator.

Congleton is a town where heritage, creativity and environmental innovation shape the future.

2.2 Local Needs

Like many market towns across the UK, Congleton has experienced significant structural shifts over the past fifty years. The decline of the textile industry - once the backbone of the local

economy - reduced traditional employment opportunities and weakened some of the social bonds that historically connected communities.

The town also faces demographic pressures. Congleton has a growing ageing population, and the absence of further education provision means many young people leave the town to study or pursue careers elsewhere. There are also areas of deprivation, including areas such as Bromley Farm and Buglawton. In these neighbourhoods, residents may experience barriers to opportunity, participation and access to cultural activity.

Congleton is currently experiencing rapid growth. The Cheshire East Local Plan has delivered significant housing development on the edge of the town and in neighbouring parishes (Congleton being the main service centre). While this growth strengthens the town's future, it also creates a challenge: ensuring new residents feel connected to Congleton's historic town centre and part of the town's civic and cultural life, rather than simply commuting to nearby cities such as Stoke-on-Trent or Manchester.

More widely, participation in cultural life can be affected by cost, accessibility, travel and awareness. At the same time, some older residents experience social isolation, while new residents may have limited knowledge of local traditions, organisations and community networks.

In 'Connecting Through Culture', we will prioritise widening access to culture and strengthening connections across the town. Particular focus will be placed on engaging young people aged 0-25, older residents who may be at risk of isolation, new residents in recently developed neighbourhoods, and communities that are currently under-represented in cultural participation. (including people with disabilities, lower-income households and minority communities.) Activities will be delivered across neighbourhoods as well as in the town centre, ensuring cultural opportunities are visible, accessible and inclusive.

It supports the objectives of the Cheshire East Local Plan and emerging Congleton Neighbourhood Plan by strengthening community cohesion, supporting town centre vitality and ensuring that rapid growth is matched by stronger social connections. It also contributes to priorities identified in the Cheshire East Town Centre Vitality Plan, including celebrating heritage, increasing visitor activity, activating public spaces and strengthening connections between neighbourhoods and the town centre.

2.3 Empowerment

Congleton's strong voluntary sector, with more than 150 community organisations, provides a powerful foundation for this work. Artists, community groups, schools and local businesses will work together to co-create projects that celebrate the town's heritage, explore its evolving identity and bring people together through shared cultural experiences.

The ideas within this bid have been developed through collaboration with residents, community organisations and local partners. Congleton Partnership, the proposed delivery body, was created in 2008 and has evolved into an umbrella organisation that connects local groups, businesses, residents and Congleton Town Council. Through this network, more than 78 organisations and individuals have already expressed interest in supporting the development and delivery of a Town

of Culture bid. The Partnership has a strong track record of delivering town-wide initiatives and coordinating collaboration across the community.

Community engagement has also been informed by wider local consultation. In late 2024, Congleton Town Council undertook a six-week public consultation on the emerging Congleton Neighbourhood Plan, receiving more than 400 responses from residents. The priorities expressed through that process - including strengthening community life, celebrating local heritage, supporting a vibrant town centre, environmental concerns and youth provision — closely align with the ambitions of this bid.

Direct engagement has also taken place specifically around the Town of Culture opportunity. On 20 February 2026, a public meeting brought together representatives from more than 25 community groups, schools, cultural organisations and businesses to explore ideas for the programme.

Young people are playing an active role in shaping the bid. Congleton Town Council has recently re-established its Youth Council, bringing together young people aged 10–18 to represent youth perspectives within local decision-making. The Youth Council is supporting the development of the bid and will continue to play a key role in shaping youth-led elements of the programme.

Local volunteers will be supported to take part through a cultural volunteer programme, helping deliver events and activities. Congleton Community TV has a delivery infrastructure enabling continuous storytelling, participation, and real-time cultural visibility.

Accountability to the community will be built into the governance structure. A steering group made up of representatives from community organisations, cultural partners, local businesses, and young people will guide the programme's development and delivery.

By building on Congleton's strong culture of volunteering and partnership working, the Town of Culture programme will not only be delivered for the community but also created with the community.

SECTION 3: CULTURE FOR EVERYONE

In this section, we want to understand how you will design a cultural programme for all which will provide visible, accessible culture that boosts the profile of your town. [*Maximum 400 words for each section*]

3.1 Quality and Innovation

Congleton benefits from a strong but distributed cultural and heritage infrastructure, rooted in community ownership and participation. Key assets include Daneside Theatre, a volunteer-run venue supporting local performance groups (including 4 local theatre groups & 3 youth theatre groups); Clonter Opera Theatre, presenting opera and live events; Electric Picture House Artists Cooperative, an artist-led centre offering studios, exhibitions and workshops; and Congleton Museum, which delivers exhibitions and participatory heritage projects.

Congleton Town Hall and Congleton Park provide important civic and outdoor spaces for events and festivals. This infrastructure is strengthened by active organisations including Congleton Live (Unplugged and Jazz & Blues music events), Congleton U3A, Congleton Town Council, Congleton Pride, Congleton White Ribbon Group, local choirs and music groups, Congleton Sustainability Group and the Equal Access Group. Together, they demonstrate great civic pride and participation. However, these assets are not always connected or visible as a cohesive cultural offer.

The Town of Culture programme will bring these together through a coordinated, town-wide approach, activating venues, public spaces and neighbourhoods to create a more visible, accessible and joined-up cultural infrastructure.

A flagship project will be Bearmania 2: #TheNextGen - an evolution of Congleton's popular public art trail, reimagined through digital innovation and immersive storytelling. Artist-designed bear sculptures will be located across the town centre, neighbourhoods and green spaces, each acting as a gateway to deeper content accessed via a mobile app.

Using augmented reality and digital storytelling, visitors will be able to experience Congleton's past in the present, from its textile heritage to its historic streets - while discovering hidden stories, local voices and community memories. A Green Bear Trail will connect over 30 biodiversity sites, encouraging exploration of local habitats through interactive content.

This highly visible, accessible programme will appeal to all ages, encouraging exploration, increasing town centre footfall and connecting communities through a shared cultural journey.

The programme will be supported by partnerships with leading organisations, including HOME Manchester, Factory International and Cheshire Dance, bringing national-quality work to Congleton while supporting local creatives. Lead artist Petra Lea will help coordinate the programme, ensuring a coherent and ambitious cultural offer.

Crucially, the programme is designed with legacy at its core: Developing a new cultural hub in the

Town Centre will be the central connection between our existing cultural infrastructure — securing long-term cultural, social and economic impact for Congleton.

3.2 Opportunity

The Congleton Town of Culture programme has been shaped through ongoing engagement with residents, schools, community groups and young people, ensuring opportunities are closely aligned with local needs and interests. Feedback highlights a lack of youth provision, limited access to creative pathways and a need for stronger connections between communities.

A central legacy of the programme will be the creation of a new cultural heart for Beartown: a vibrant cultural square within the redeveloped Market Area, as identified in the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan. This space will bring together Congleton’s cultural infrastructure into a visible, accessible hub, including a dedicated youth zone. Located in the heart of the town, this inspiring space will provide opportunities for disadvantaged young people to connect, create and develop skills, ensuring they feel part of Congleton’s future.

The wider programme will embed learning, skills development and career awareness throughout. This will include artist-led workshops in schools, creative apprenticeships, mentoring and opportunities to work alongside professional artists and organisations such as HOME Manchester, Factory International and Cheshire Dance. These initiatives will build confidence, raise aspirations and create pathways into creative careers.

Opportunities will also respond to wider community needs. Intergenerational projects will bring together older residents and young people through storytelling and heritage activity, reducing isolation while strengthening shared identity. Community-led initiatives, including the development of “Friends of” groups for over 30 local biodiversity sites, will encourage residents to take ownership of green spaces, supporting environmental awareness, wellbeing and community cohesion.

The programme will also contribute to economic growth. By expanding existing festivals and introducing new flagship events, it will increase visitor numbers, extend the cultural offer and strengthen the evening economy. This will directly benefit local businesses, independent retailers and hospitality venues, supported through partnerships with organisations such as Beartown Brewery.

Sustainability is a further opportunity. Building on the work of Congleton Hydro, including plans for a second scheme near Congleton Park, the programme will highlight how heritage and innovation can support the transition to net zero, positioning Congleton as a forward-thinking market town.

Together, these opportunities will deliver lasting impact: improved well-being, stronger

community cohesion, increased skills and aspiration among young people, and a more vibrant, inclusive and economically resilient town centre.

3.3 Accessible

Accessibility and inclusion are central to the Congleton Town of Culture programme. Over the past year, Congleton Town Council has worked closely with the Equal Access Advisory Group to improve both the built environment and communications, following the social model of disability. Members bring lived experience across wheelchair use, visual impairment, neurodiversity, deafness, mobility challenges, and dementia. Chair Dr Deborah Lawson, a UK-based multi-award-winning Disability Inclusion Consultant, will advise on the programme to ensure inclusion is embedded at every stage rather than treated as a tick-box exercise.

All events and activities will be designed to be genuinely accessible. Festivals and public events will feature step-free access, accessible viewing areas, quiet and sensory-friendly spaces, and clear, easy-to-understand information for neurodivergent visitors and those with sensory needs. The Disability Welcome initiative (local business award scheme) will support local businesses and cultural venues to improve physical access, staff awareness, and inclusive customer experiences.

To reach the widest possible audience, activities will be delivered in familiar, accessible community spaces, with free or low-cost entry, flexible timings, and multiple formats to enable participation by families, young people, working adults, and older residents. Outreach will target those who may not ordinarily engage with arts and cultural activities, working with partners such as Ruby's, Visyon and Friends for Leisure to reach families and individuals facing barriers to participation.

The programme will also engage schools, youth groups, older people's organisations, community groups, and cultural organisations such as Electric Picture House Artists Cooperative, Congleton Museum, Dementia Friends and No Tier Snooker Society to connect with existing networks and underrepresented audiences. Activities will be co-designed with participants wherever possible, ensuring accessibility solutions reflect real needs and that all residents feel welcome and empowered.

By embedding accessibility across planning, delivery, communications, and evaluation, the Town of Culture year will be inclusive by design. It will provide equitable participation, meaningful engagement, and a lasting legacy of improved social connection, ensuring that Congleton's cultural life is accessible and welcoming to everyone, regardless of age, ability, or background.

3.4 Communication

The Congleton Town of Culture programme will be supported by a comprehensive, multi-platform communications strategy designed to reach diverse audiences across the town, surrounding areas, and the wider North West. The plan will combine traditional, digital, and community-led channels (including Congleton Community TV) to ensure messages are accessible, inclusive, and engaging for all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.

Key elements include:

Digital and social media: A dedicated programme website, alongside the new website for Congleton Town Council (built to the latest accessibility standards) and mobile app will serve as the central hub for event listings, heritage trails, interactive content, and updates. Social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and X, will be used to share engaging multimedia content, highlight flagship projects such as Bearmania 2, and encourage user-generated content, particularly from young people and local schools.

Traditional media: Press releases, local radio, newsletters and printed guides will ensure accessibility for residents who prefer offline channels. Our existing resident newsletter, 'Bear Necessities', will be expanded to reach more homes. Congleton Chronicle, a local independent newspaper, is a key backer of the bid. Other news outlets and community publications will be leveraged to promote events and showcase stories of local participants, volunteers, and businesses.

Community networks: The programme will work closely with partners, including Congleton Town Council, schools, community groups, cultural organisations, and voluntary networks to share information through newsletters, noticeboards, parent networks, and youth forums. Targeted outreach will ensure engagement with underrepresented groups, families, and residents in outlying neighbourhoods.

Inclusive communications: All materials will follow accessibility best practice, including clear language, alt text for images, captioning for videos, and easy-read versions where required. Multi-lingual and culturally sensitive content will be used where appropriate to reach diverse audiences.

Interactive and experiential communications: Flagship projects such as Bearmania 2 will integrate communications into the experience itself. Augmented reality, QR codes on public art, and location-based storytelling will encourage audiences to explore the town, creating a living communication channel embedded in the cultural programme.

Monitoring and engagement: Audience feedback, participation metrics, and social media analytics will inform the ongoing development of communications, ensuring that messages remain relevant, effective, and responsive to community needs.

Through this integrated, multi-channel approach, the programme will maximise visibility, strengthen engagement across age groups and communities, and ensure that Congleton's cultural offer is accessible, celebrated, and widely experienced, both during the Town of Culture year and beyond.

SECTION 4: MAKING IT HAPPEN

In this section, we want to understand how you will deliver a successful programme.
[Maximum 400 words for each section]

4.1 Partnerships

The Congleton Town of Culture programme will be delivered through a strong, collaborative partnership model that brings together cultural organisations, artists, businesses, funders, voluntary groups and residents. Delivery will be led by Congleton Partnership, an established umbrella organisation with a proven track record of coordinating town-wide initiatives and connecting stakeholders across sectors. A new working group will be set up to deliver the programme, the board being made up of the key delivery partners.

We have already secured strong local interest, with over 75 organisations, creatives and community groups expressing a desire to be involved. Building on this foundation, we will expand partnerships at local, regional and national levels. Cultural partners such as HOME Manchester, Factory International and Cheshire Dance will bring high-quality artistic expertise, while local organisations, including Electric Picture House, Community Projects, Daneside Theatre, Clonter Opera, Congleton Museum, and Congleton Community TV, will ensure delivery remains rooted in place.

We have received valuable feedback through a residents' survey exploring what people value about living in Congleton and what they would like to see in the future. This insight will play a key role in shaping the programme.

Local residents will be central to delivery, building on the strong community spirit already demonstrated through initiatives such as Congleton In Bloom. Residents will be encouraged to take ownership of activities within their own neighbourhoods, contributing to small-scale projects that collectively create a significant impact across the town.

Engagement will be ongoing throughout the programme, with residents supported and encouraged to get involved at every stage. As well as delivering cultural activity, this approach aims to strengthen community connections and foster lasting friendships, leaving a meaningful social legacy beyond the Town of Culture year.

Ensuring that partners are representative of Congleton's population is a core priority. We will take a proactive approach to partnership development, working with organisations such as Ruby's, Visyon, Friends for Leisure and the Equal Access Advisory Group to engage people with disabilities, young people, families and underrepresented groups. The Congleton Youth Council will ensure young people's voices are embedded in decision-making and programme design.

The new cultural square will be developed in partnership with a local developer who owns the site and local business owners. Open calls, transparent commissioning processes and targeted outreach will ensure opportunities are accessible to a diverse range of artists, creatives and organisations, including those who may not traditionally engage with cultural programmes.

4.2 Programme Management

The Congleton Town of Culture programme will be delivered through a transparent governance structure, led by Congleton Partnership as the delivery body and Congleton Town Council as the accountable body. The Partnership has a strong track record of coordinating town-wide initiatives and will oversee strategic delivery, financial management and stakeholder engagement.

Governance and delivery structure:

- **Programme Working Group (Strategic Oversight):** Representatives from Congleton Town Council, Congleton Partnership, Community Projects, Equal Access, cultural partners, community organisations, businesses and the Congleton Youth Council. Responsible for vision, accountability and key decisions.
- **Programme Director (Leadership):** Responsible for overall programme delivery, reporting to the Board.
- **Core Delivery Team (Operational Management):**
 - Producer (programme coordination and delivery through Congleton Partnership)
 - Community Engagement Lead (participation and outreach through Community Projects)
 - Marketing & Communications Lead (audience development and visibility through CTC Marketing Manager)
 - Volunteer Coordinator (recruitment and support of volunteers through Congleton Volunteer Action)
- **Delivery Partners (Implementation):** Local organisations, artists, schools and community groups delivering activity across the town.

Delivery will follow a distributed model, working with partners to co-create and deliver activity. Clear commissioning processes, partnership agreements and reporting structures will define roles and responsibilities across all contributors.

A comprehensive risk management framework will be in place, with risks reviewed regularly by the Programme Board. Key risks include:

- **Capacity and delivery risk (Amber):** Risk of over-reliance on volunteers or limited staffing capacity.
Mitigation: Early recruitment of the core team, clear role allocation, and phased programme delivery supported by partners.
- **Financial risk (Amber):** Potential shortfall in funding or sponsorship.
Mitigation: Diversified funding strategy including grants, sponsorship and in-kind support, with contingency planning built into budgets.
- **Engagement risk (Green/Amber):** Risk of not reaching diverse or underrepresented

audiences.

Mitigation: Targeted outreach through partners such as Ruby's, Visyon and Friends for Leisure, alongside inclusive programme design.

- **Delivery risk (Amber):** Coordination challenges across multiple partners and locations.

Mitigation: Strong project management processes, clear communication channels and regular monitoring.

- **Reputational risk (Green):** Risk of programme not meeting expectations.

Mitigation: Ongoing community engagement, transparent communication and responsive programme development.

Through strong leadership, clear governance and effective risk management, Congleton will deliver a high-quality, inclusive and well-coordinated Town of Culture programme with lasting impact.

4.3 Financial Management

The £60,000 development grant will strengthen the full application through detailed programme planning, feasibility work, partnership development, and community co-design, ensuring all flagship projects are fully costed, viable, and deliverable at scale.

A key focus will be Bearmania, funding research and technical feasibility for new bear designs, including innovative and sustainable production methods, prototyping, mounting, and artist commissions. It will also support early development of the digital platform, app design, and testing of augmented reality and interactive heritage storytelling.

The grant will also support costing and development of the Green Bear Trail and biodiversity network, covering over 30 sites, and scoping the Flow of the Dane art trail connecting the existing Congleton Hydro scheme at Havannah with the proposed second installation in Congleton Park. Feasibility work will explore public art, lighting, and interpretation to showcase Congleton's industrial heritage alongside its net-zero ambitions.

In parallel, funding will support design and feasibility work for the reimagined Market Area as a new cultural square, as identified in the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan. This will include concept design, spatial planning and community consultation for a flexible cultural space incorporating a youth zone - a key priority identified through Youth Council engagement - alongside potential features such as a climbing wall and a new, more visible home for Congleton Museum.

Funding / Resource	Source Amount	Value / Purpose
UK Town of Culture Investment Arts Council / DCMS	£3,000,000	Core delivery of the full programme, including flagship projects, digital heritage platform, youth zone, accessibility measures, festivals, artist

		commissions, and programme management
Business sponsorship/investment	£1,000,000	Match Funding – redevelopment of market area
Public funding/grants: Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund	£150,000	Artist commissions, workshops, intergenerational activities, and community engagement
Bear Sponsorship 80 x £500	£40,000	Sponsorships of Bears
Local authority / reallocated budgets	£50,000	Civic events, venue support, and staffing contribution
Earned income/fundraising/local grants	£50,000	Ticketed events, merchandise, crowdfunding
In-kind support	£200,000	Volunteers, venue and expertise

Congleton benefits from strong philanthropic support through Congleton Inclosure Trust, John Holford Charity, Congleton Young People’s Trust and Congleton Town Trust. Building on established partnership working, a Town of Culture award would enable us to align and pool resources with these organisations, alongside the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses, to maximise impact and deliver shared ambitions.

4.4 Monitoring, Evaluation and Legacy

Participation and Engagement: Track attendance and participation across festivals, workshops, Bearmania 2 trail, youth programmes, and digital experiences, including geographic spread across neighbourhoods such as Bromley Farm and new housing developments.

Community Cohesion and Inclusion: Measure engagement across age groups, neighbourhoods and underrepresented groups, with a focus on reaching residents in areas of higher deprivation and new communities on the town’s outskirts.

Health and Wellbeing Outcomes: Working with Congleton and Holmes Chapel Care Community, we will use local health data to monitor indicators such as social isolation, hypertension and depression. With approximately 25% of residents living in higher deprivation (IMD Quintiles 1 & 2), and areas such as Bromley Estate within the top 20% most deprived nationally, the programme aims to contribute to improved wellbeing and reduced reported isolation and depression.

Youth Skills and Development: Monitor participation in school workshops, creative apprenticeships, mentoring and youth-led projects to assess skills development, confidence and

awareness of creative careers.

Environmental and Community Ownership: Track the creation and growth of “friends of” groups linked to over 30 biodiversity sites, including membership numbers, volunteer activity and long-term stewardship of these spaces.

Economic and Visitor Impact: Measure town centre footfall, visitor numbers, and feedback from local businesses to assess economic benefits.

Baseline Information: Use existing data from resident surveys, local health profiles, event attendance, school engagement and voluntary sector participation to establish a clear starting point.

Evaluation Methods: Combine quantitative data (attendance, demographics, digital engagement) with qualitative insights (surveys, interviews, case studies). Digital platforms, including the Bearmania 2 app, will provide real-time engagement data.

Targeted Reach: Monitor participation from priority groups, including residents from deprived areas, young people, and new residents, ensuring the programme is inclusive and representative of the town’s changing population.

Legacy Measurement: Evaluate long-term outcomes including increased cultural participation, sustained community networks, continued use of biodiversity sites, and improved wellbeing, ensuring lasting social, cultural and environmental impact.

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	Council		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	16th April 2026 7 pm	LOCATION	Congleton Town Hall
REPORT FROM	Cathy Dean, Communities Manager		
AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE	14 Mayor's Civic Awards		
BACKGROUND INFORMATION	<p>On 29th August 2024, the Community Committee resolved that “The Chief Officer/Deputy Chief Officer works with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairs of Community and Environment to help design the Civic Awards Scheme and present this as a policy for approval at the next Full Council meeting.”</p> <p>CTC/40/2425 - Resolved to approve the Civic Awards, which will be held at the Annual Town Meeting in May 2025 and reviewed afterwards.</p> <p>The purpose of this paper is to propose two amendments to the awards scheme.</p>		
THIS PROPOSAL	<p>The introduction of the first Mayor Civic awards in 2025 was positively received and celebrated the great community spirit that Congleton is known for.</p> <p>The 7 award categories approved at council last year are:</p> <p>Community Involvement Award – This award recognises someone who plays a key role or takes significant responsibility in a community effort. This could include organising community events, improving facilities for a neighbourhood, supporting a charity in their own time, or offering help to individuals in need.</p> <p>Young Volunteer Award– This award is for a young person (under 25) who actively contributes to the community on an ongoing basis, whether as part of a group or individually. It could be someone who directly helps others, joins in with groups to improve the area, or supports events and activities.</p> <p>Art and Culture Award– This award recognises an individual who dedicates their time to music, art, dance, crafts, or heritage activities that benefit the community. This could include someone running a theatre group, organising an art exhibition, creating new history trails, or putting together a music festival, among other contributions.</p> <p>Environment Award – This award honours an individual who dedicates their time to conservation, sustainability, biodiversity, or the enhancement of our green spaces. This could include efforts such as establishing a recycling initiative, leading a carbon emissions reduction project, delivering active travel initiatives, or organising gardening and planting projects.</p> <p>Wellbeing Award – This award recognises an individual who supports the health, fitness, or overall wellbeing of others. This could include someone who leads a sports team, establishes a peer support group, provides one-to-one support to vulnerable people, or contributes to local health initiatives.</p>		

	<p>Good Neighbour Award – This award celebrates an individual who volunteers in a local, personal way, such as shopping for elderly or disabled neighbours, cleaning and weeding their street, or organising street parties and community gatherings.</p> <p>Unsung Hero Award – This special award is presented at the discretion of the judging panel. It is not open for direct nomination. Instead, one of the nominees for another award, who has worked tirelessly and selflessly without seeking recognition, may be honoured with this award for their significant and ongoing efforts.</p> <p>The original proposal was to recognise individuals only, as groups and businesses are already covered by other awards, such as those run by the Chamber and Retail/Hospitality awards. However, this approach fails to recognise the valuable contribution of volunteer groups in the town, which collectively do a significant amount of important work.</p> <p>Congleton Town Council proposes to add a Team award:</p> <p>Team Award – Recognises a voluntary team or group of people who work together to deliver a community effort. This could include organising community events, improving the environment, supporting vulnerable people, or improving facilities for a neighbourhood.</p> <p>The second amendment concerns the principle “A resident can only win a maximum of one award in a five-year period.”</p> <p>After reviewing other council award schemes, a 5-year blanket restriction is unusually long and arguably counterproductive; it prevents recognition of different contributions and discourages repeat high-impact volunteers.</p> <p>Common practise indicates awards will not normally be given for the same contribution or within the same category in consecutive years. This does allow for nominations in other categories, or some councils leave it up to the judges' discretion.</p> <p>Can the committee consider the proposal to remove the time limit and category restriction? The principle would read like this:</p> <p>“Previous recipients of a Mayor’s Civic Award may be nominated again; however, awards will not normally be given for the same contribution or within the same category in consecutive years. The panel may exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances.”</p>
<p>Environmental Considerations</p>	<p>This scheme includes rewarding local people for their environmental projects and contributions and highlights the importance of this work. All awards will require a sustainable approach, and prizes should be made with sustainable materials.</p>
<p>Equality Considerations</p>	<p>These awards will help reward those who support the more vulnerable in our community, which promotes equality, and all awards will require an inclusive approach. These awards should encourage more people to come forward and volunteer, which is good for our community overall.</p>

Financial Considerations	These two amendments will not incur any further costs.
PROPOSAL	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To approve the addition of the team award category.2. To approve the removal of the five-year restriction on receiving an award and to adopt the revised guidance reflecting this change in principle as noted above.