

## Meeting Minutes: Congleton Sustainability Group

**Date:** 1 December 2023      **Time:** 6:30 pm      **Location:** Zoom

**In attendance:** Heather Seddon (Chair), Margaret Gartside, Kay Wesley, Ruth Benson, Peter Aston, Patti Pinto, Cathy Dean (Secretary), Jenny Drew, Linda Aston, Barry Fox, Peter Hall.

**Apologies:** Alex Scaresbrook

**Next meeting**      **7 February 2023**      **at The Old Saw Mill, 6:30 pm**  
**Spotlight topic:** **What do we want to achieve in 2023? – bring your ideas!**

1.	<p><b><u>Welcome</u></b></p> <p>Heather welcomed everyone to the meeting. Great to welcome Jenny to the meeting who is helping at the repair café.</p> <p>Outstanding Actions.</p> <p>PA – To contact a volunteer at the Bathhouse to ask about tool sharpening for the Tree group. Ask the Repair Café if they can help.</p> <p>Ruth to enquire about planted trees at Bath Vale &amp; GymTech – Gym Tech Planning application approved, Ruth, is in talks with the centre manager. Ruth make contact re Bath Vale.</p> <p>Cathy/Kay/Ruth actioned the promotion of consultation for tree planning sites. Please see. <a href="http://www.treesforcongleton.co.uk">www.treesforcongleton.co.uk</a></p>
2.	<p><b><u>Financial Update</u></b></p> <p>Thanks to Linda for sending in the accounts prior to the meeting.</p> <div data-bbox="252 1283 308 1346" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="217 1352 344 1402">I E CSG Dec 2022.pdf</p> <p>Repair Café has an outstanding invoice to send in. There is still grant money assigned to projects which are not yet completed.</p>
A	<p>Jenny / Linda to chase the outstanding invoice.</p>
3.	<p><b><u>Repair Café Spotlight</u></b></p> <p>Congleton Repair Café (CRC) has been operating since January 2022 and has gone from strength to strength throughout the year. We are a volunteer-led, free, pop-up event held on the last Saturday of the month. To date we have held 11 main repair events at The Old Sawmill, as well as 6 bike only repair events at Bromley Farm Community Centre. Though we do not currently have accurate numbers regarding the amount of items fixed, we estimate that this has led to approx. 200 successful repairs. Our group has steadily grown in numbers to a healthy roster of 17 volunteers, which will likely continue to increase, moving into 2023. We have been supported with funding from the Inclosure Trust, the Margaret Williamson Memorial Fund and donations at each event. Recently we have also been approached by Ansa Environmental Services, owned by Cheshire East Council, regarding sponsorship – though nothing at present is confirmed.</p>

	<p>What we fix is based on the expertise of our Repairers - predominantly electrical appliances, clothing, furniture and bikes, but also clocks &amp; watches, jewellery, children's toys, scooters and anything in-between (that isn't a smart device or computer). The majority of our fixes are electrical appliances, with lamps, toasters and hoovers appearing frequently.</p> <p><b>MOVING FORWARD</b></p> <p>We identified mid-way through the year that advertising was a limiting factor in the attendance of our events. Where there was a consistent social media presence throughout the month, a notably higher attendance was seen at the corresponding event. In the latter months of 2022 we have focused much of our efforts into advertising and signage, namely paid Facebook advertising (very successful), canvassing leaflets and sourcing branding work from AD Profile - the same team to design branding for the Jazz &amp; Blues Festival, Congleton Unplugged, and the Green Fayre.</p> <p>Despite continued efforts we have struggled to source volunteers willing to organise the events, man the reception and help with the wider logistics of improving our group moving forward. We have plenty of volunteers with experience of fixing things, but very few who are willing to aid outside of the event day. Our lead organiser does not live in Congleton and performs their role remotely, this is not sustainable to keep the group operational. We have recently taken on a new volunteer who suits this role well and has been a fantastic addition, but more are needed to share various responsibilities and ensure CRC can consistently operate in an effective way. With plenty of ideas and various offers of funding, we feel there is great potential for our group, but a few more additions are still required.</p> <p>Group discussed ways to advertise events –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Notice boards</li> <li>• Press release</li> <li>• Leaflets in Chronicle</li> <li>• Events on Facebook</li> <li>• General Posts</li> <li>• Congleton Radio</li> </ul>
A	Cathy to contact Jenny / Ben to support social media activity.
4.	<p><b><u>Volunteer Events</u></b></p> <p>Please see the tree planting dates posted on: <a href="https://www.congletonpartnership.co.uk/project/trees-for-congleton-22-23-season/">https://www.congletonpartnership.co.uk/project/trees-for-congleton-22-23-season/</a></p> <p>Congleton Repair Café – 28<sup>th</sup> January 10 am – 2 pm Old Saw Mill</p>
5.	<p><b><u>Communications</u></b></p> <p>A Heather is to send a letter to Chronicle promoting Congleton Repair Café</p>

6. **A.O.B**

Vale Allotment Update:

- Congleton Sustainability Group (CSG) is the owner of the land at the Vale Allotment Site.
- Congleton Green Space Ltd (CGSL) acts as the landlord and members of the Vale Allotment and Gardening Association (VAGA) pay an annual fee for their plot.
- The land was bought in Dec 2016 from individual lenders, through CSG.
- The loans from the original lenders have partially been repaid, from a fund-raising campaign to save Vale Allotments (2016-2017).
- CSG is not involved in the running of Vale Allotments, and it was always intended that CSG would pass on the land to CGSL.
- It is now the intention that members of VAGA, alongside others as required, will set up a CIO, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This CIO will fundraise in order to secure the site as allotments in perpetuity, the lenders will be repaid, and CSG will transfer the land to the CIO. CGSL will be wound up, any monies remaining will be transferred to VAGA.
- The new CIO will keep CSG informed of progress. Ruth Benson who is already a member of CSG through the Trees for Congleton group will also be the Vale Allotments contact to report back.

Trees for Business – Any contacts with Businesses looking to plant trees or ideas on how businesses can get involved please forward them to Ruth B.

Eco-Schools – St Marys back on Track, Patti to follow up with Green Flag in the New Year.

Suzy / Margaret is in talks with the high school about the green agenda. Ben is very keen to take the repair café into schools, maybe focusing on Bikes which has been a great success at Bromley Farm. Jenny / Margaret/ Patti work together for a joined-up approach.

CTC Green Marketing – a joined-up approach between the green groups in 2023 would be great to see. Jackie has organised a zoom meeting in early January. (18th January 6pm TBC)

Actions:

- Jenny / Linda to chase the outstanding invoice for RC.
- Cathy to contact Jenny / Ben to support social media activity.
- Heather is to send a letter to Chronicle promoting Congleton Repair Café

**CSG Subgroups:**

CSG Members		Subgroup	Facebook Page
Peter Aston	<a href="mailto:peterjaston@gmail.com">peterjaston@gmail.com</a>	The Old Saw Mill, Dane Valley Community Energy	<a href="#">Congleton Hydro</a>
Heather Seddon	heather.seddon2@btinternet.com	Plastic Free Congleton	<a href="#">Plastic Free Congleton</a>
Patti Pinto	Pattipinto1@gmail.com	Eco-schools, In Bloom	<a href="#">In Bloom</a>

Margaret Gartside	cllrmargaret.gartside@congleton-tc.gov.uk	In Bloom	
Barry Fox	gbarryfox@gmail.com	Green Living Course	<a href="#">Green Living Course</a>
Alec / Val Scaresbrook	cycling@cheshirecycleway.co.uk	Congleton Food4Free	<a href="#">Congleton Food4Free</a>
Ruth Benson	benson1ruth@gmail.com	Trees For Congleton	<a href="#">Trees For Congleton</a>
Peter Ranson	peterjranson@btinternet.com	Old Saw Mill	<a href="#">Old Saw Mill</a>

## Useful Groups:

CSG Members		Group	Facebook Page
Suzie Akers Smith	<a href="mailto:Cllrsuzie.akerssmith@congleton-tc.gov.uk">Cllrsuzie.akerssmith@congleton-tc.gov.uk</a>	Beartown Rickshaw	<a href="#">Beartown Rickshaw</a>
Jackie Kay	<a href="mailto:Jackiekay28@hotmail.co.uk">Jackiekay28@hotmail.co.uk</a>	Climate Action Group	<a href="#">Climate Action</a>
Adam Linnet	<a href="mailto:alinnnet@cheshirewt.org.uk">alinnnet@cheshirewt.org.uk</a>	Cheshire Wildlife Trust	<a href="#">Cheshire Wildlife Trust</a>
Matt Axford	<a href="mailto:ASTBURY@cheshireeast.gov.uk">ASTBURY@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a>	Countryside Ranger (Astbury Mere)	<a href="#">Astbury Mere</a>

## New members

There is a short membership form for new members, to be completed once. Members receive e-mails from the Group and having voting rights at CSGs annual AGM. Please send your membership form to our secretary, Cathy Dean, [Cathy.Dean@congleton-tc.gov.uk](mailto:Cathy.Dean@congleton-tc.gov.uk).



CSG Membership  
Application Form App

## Important Dates

**Next meeting 7 February 2023 at The Old Saw Mill, 6:30 pm**  
**Spotlight topic: What do we want to achieve in 2023? – bring your ideas!**

CSG Meetings are typically scheduled for the first Tuesday of the month.

The CSG AGM will be held in June 2023.