

## Meeting Minutes: Congleton Partnership AGM

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023 **Time:** 5:30 pm **Location:** Congleton Town Hall

**In attendance:** Peter Aston (Chair), Glen Williams (Vice Chair), Cathy Dean (Officer), David McGifford, Margaret Gartside, Kay Wesley, Patti Pinto, Amanda Martin, Jackie MacArthur, Susan Munro, Bob Edwards, Anna Maluk, Olga Whitmore (Resident), Steven McDermott (Resident), Vic Brown, Diana Ritherdon, Chris Booth (Resident), Richard Wharfe (Resident).

**Apologies:** Peter Holdsworth, Heather Sneddon, Diane Ritherdon, Jo Money, Suzy Firkin, John Davies.

1.	<p><b><u>Welcome</u></b></p> <p>Chair Peter Aston opened the 17<sup>th</sup> Partnership Annual General Meeting by welcoming everyone to the event and inviting all to stay for the Executive Meeting that follows the AGM if they so wish.</p> <p>Minutes of the last AGM held 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022 were accepted as a true record of the event.</p> <p>Outstanding Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A project request form and feedback report has been actioned, all new funding requests/projects need to fill in the form. <b>(Completed. Attached with the minutes).</b></li> </ul>
2.	<p><b><u>Partnership Overview 2022/2023 / Group Reports.</u></b></p> <p>Peter gave a brief summary of the projects that had taken place/were still active across the subgroups. This list is not exhaustive but a sample of activities.</p> <p>CSG – Group Update:</p> <p>As CSG is an umbrella group, bringing other environmental groups together in the town, we have many successes to report on, and here are a few:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dane Valley Community Energy (DVCE)</b>, the hydro-energy project at Havannah Weir is now generating electricity. This has enabled £9000 to be donated to community projects. Volunteers at the site have worked hard to rewild the area, and planting continues.</li> <li>• <b>DVCE-Congleton Park Ltd</b> has been launched, which aims to produce renewable energy from solar panels mounted on commercial, industrial, or public sector roofing – and potentially another hydro scheme at Congleton Park Weir. There will be opportunities to become a shareholder in the solar panel scheme, and for the Congleton Park hydro scheme too, which we will keep you informed about.</li> <li>• June 22: <b>Plastic Free Congleton</b> volunteers receive certificates from Congleton Town Council to celebrate the group receiving Plastic Free Community status.</li> <li>• July 22: The opening of the <b>Bee Garden</b> in Congleton Park which is now flourishing. Well Done to Patti Pinto who organised the planting and the 150 volunteers who helped.</li> <li>• Sept 22: The 3rd <b>Green Fayre</b> is a big success; outside stalls from local environmental groups plus a Repair Cafe and Clothes swap event inside the town hall. Talks, walks and open days were arranged.</li> </ul>

- The **Congleton Plant Swap and Gardening for Wildlife** group has arranged several successful plant swap events – Many Thanks to Lisa Miller and her group for organizing these events.
- Oct 22 to Mar 23: The **Trees for Congleton** Group has been extremely active in this year’s tree planting season, adding over 2000 more trees and hedgerow plants. The group has also maintained the trees and hedges planted from previous seasons. Many Thanks go to Ruth Benson, Patti Pinto, Glen Williams and Margaret Gartside in particular for their incredible hard work in the planning and organization of the new planting.

We are actively looking for more pieces of land where we can plant more trees and hedges, so please do get in touch if you know of any farmers or land owners, or people with large gardens who would be happy to have trees planted on their land – The Trees for Congleton group would be delighted to hear from you! [Climate Change Emergency - Planting 30,000 trees in Congleton \(congletonpartnership.co.uk\)](https://congletonpartnership.co.uk)

- Congleton Food4Free: The overgrown garden at the rear of fairground car park is in the process of being restored to create a 2m strip at the front dedicated to edibles, with ornamental plants for pollinators behind, and a mix of native plants for insects at the back of the slope. Perennial edibles and ornamental pollinator plants have already been moved here from the ex-demo plot by the bus station. There is also a CF4F area in the Bee Garden in Congleton Park.
- **Congleton Repair Café.** The Repair team have continued their monthly Repair Café events on the last Saturday of the month at The Old Saw Mill, and they now also have pop-up tool sharpening facilities. There are also regular bike repair sessions at Bromley Farm Community Centre, which tend to occur on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month – Well Done to everyone involved. Ben Casey has now handed over to Jenny Drew as the Repair Café contact.
- Thanks also go to Jackie Kay from the **Congleton Climate Action Group (CCAG)** who regularly attends CSG meetings to keep us informed of their activities. The group has had a very busy year with giving out free seeds, starting a food growing project at the United Reformed Church on Antrobus Street (the Haven Garden), campaigning for a replacement Household Waste and Recycling Centre and advising residents on insulation and keeping fuel costs down. A massive congratulations to Jackie and the team!
- Mar 23: As part of the CCAG, a new group, Congleton Sustainable Travel, has been launched, focusing on people- and climate-friendly local travel. The group aims to improve sustainable and responsible travel opportunities for all in order to reduce our carbon footprint, prevent further climate change, have cleaner air and a healthier life for ourselves and future generations.
- A new **Vale Allotment Association**, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation has been formed to raise funds to purchase the Vale Allotment Site. It is the intention that the Vale Allotment Association will purchase the site from CSG, and the land registry can then be updated.
- Apr 23: Congleton’s **biodiversity project** was launched, sponsored by Congleton Town Council. Many Thanks to Ruth Benson for her expertise in designing site-specific biodiversity plans for 30 sites across Congleton. The launch event on 6 April on Stirling Close was a big success. Many thanks to everyone involved. [Biodiversity - Congleton Town Council \(congleton-tc.gov.uk\)](https://congleton-tc.gov.uk)

#### Dementia Friends:

The Alzheimers Society have clarified their strategy from 1 January 2024. Dementia Friends Awareness sessions will continue to be run by Ambassadors such as myself, either in company or by public sessions.

	<p>Unfortunately there are no plans, yet, to recruit and train new Ambassadors. The main change will be the recognition of Dementia Friendly Companies (the stickers) will cease as will the accreditation of towns.</p> <p>The Dementia Friends leads from the 5 towns will continue under their own steam and are in the process of creating their own version of Dementia Friends Programme.</p> <p>Cathy is investigating the re-issue of the Gentle Activities Leaflet. Many activities take a break over the Summer months, so the plan will be to do something for the Autumn.</p> <p>We will be attending the Makers’ Market in October. Ideas include items from the swap shop and a flyer about our key activities.</p> <p><b>Elizabeth’s Group Update:</b></p> <p>Elizabeth celebrated her first birthday in March 2023, we have been busy doing lots of talks and presentations. Currently putting together a publication about women’s lives.</p> <p>Partnership Group Report attached:</p> <div data-bbox="245 927 312 992" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Congleton Partnership Report Se</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><b><u>Appointment of Officers &amp; Voting Members</u></b></p> <p>No new proposals were put forward. Roles remain as:</p> <p>Chair: Peter Aston (proposed K. Wesley) and (seconded M. Gartside) carried be vote of members.</p> <p>Vice Chair: Glen Williams (proposed P. Aston) and (seconded P. Pinto) carried by vote of members.</p> <p>Subgroup Chairs remain in Post.</p> <p><b>Voting Members:</b></p> <p>1 Proposed change Congleton Museum representative, stepping down Linda Hulse, proposed Anna Maluk, carried by vote of members.</p> <p>Members with voting rights as follows:</p> <p>J. Davies, J. Money, B. Edwards, J. MacArthur, G. Williams, K. Wesley, D. Murphy, P. Aston, P. Pinto, P. Houldsworth, M. Gartside, S. Firkin, A. Maluk, A. Martin, S. Munro, D. McGifford.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Presentation of Accounts.</b></p> <p>D. McGifford gave an executive summary of the financial state of the Partnership.</p>

No further grant funding is received from Cheshire East from March 2023, this resulted in Alsager and Middlewich Partnerships closing. Holmes Chapel Partnership is carrying on and applying for charity status.

Diane commented that she appreciates the support of the Partnership as it allows Dementia Friends to operate without having to set up its own bank account and formal status having seen what other groups have had to go through because of their Partnership's closing.

Executive Financial Summary.



Congleton  
Partnership Executive

RW asked 3 questions querying the financial information of the Partnership.

1. In previous years the website stated Balance Sheet available on request, why isn't a balance sheet being supplied?

This refers to the above document. A traditional balance sheet that a limited company would produce details assets and liabilities, the Partnership hasn't got any assets, it doesn't own anything and has no liabilities (There is no legal requirement as a constituted group to produce a balance sheet). The document above details the funds the Partnership manages and what it spends. The Partnership doesn't have its own bank account, it has a ringfenced accounts within CTC. These are prepared via the Partnership Officer, checked by CTC Financial Officer and independently audited.

2. Inclusive Roundabout project - Inclusive Roundabout vs expenditure, plus missing entries anomalies. Richard stated in the meeting that Friends of Congleton Park applied for the Bruce Wakefield Trust Grants, this is incorrect. Congleton Partnership applied directly for the grant towards the roundabout.
3. Tree Project - . Tree Income vs expenditure anomaly.

Due to the details nature of the questions. Peter Aston requested that the questions be sent into Cathy as Partnership Officer who can then reply with the details. (Due to event commitments this will be early October). These will also be circulated to the group.

Olga asked a question regarding the Green Fayre budget, the Green Fayre is a joint project between CTC and Partnership. £5000 has been reserved, all costs won't come in until after the event has run (30<sup>th</sup> September). This will be reflected in the next Financial report.

5. **Motions before the AGM**

Peter proposes to call an Extra General meeting in December to accept changes to the Partnership constitution. The Partnership constitution hasn't been reviewed and given the new groups in town and the significant growth of surrounding parishes/new estates of which Congleton will be seen as the service centre we would like ensure the Partnership is fit for purpose for a growing town.

Vic Brown Chair of Hulme Warfield Parish Council is keen to work closely to the benefit of all residents.

The area can be defined in a new constitution but if doesn't have to be as rigid as the Town Council.

A small working group will discuss the constitution propose changes. Please let Cathy know if you would like to be involved.

AGM Closed at 18.11pm

Actions:

Cathy to compile a list of defibs and understand the spread around the town.

Cathy to support Congleton Solar with the share offer.

Cathy to respond to the Financial questions put forward at the meeting.

Working group will discuss changes to the Partnership Constitution.

**Next Meeting Dates (All take place at Congleton Town Hall).**

**12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 5:30 pm**

