

Meeting Minutes: Congleton Partnership AGM

Date: 10th September 2024 **Time:** 5:30 pm **Location:** Congleton Town Hall

In attendance: Peter Aston (Chair), Glen Williams (Vice Chair), Cathy Dean (Officer), David McGifford, Amanda Martin, Susan Munro, Bob Edwards, Richard Walton, Alison Wright, Denis Murphey.

Apologies: Peter Holdsworth, Margaret Gartside, Diane Ritherdon, Jo Money, Suzy Firkin, John Davies, Kay Wesley, Anna Maluk, Patti Pinto, Jackie MacArthur, Petra Lee.

<p>1.</p>	<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <p>Chair Peter Aston opened the 18th Partnership Annual General Meeting by welcoming everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Minutes of the last AGM held on 12th September 2023 were accepted as a true record of the event.</p> <p>Actions from the last AGM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cathy to compile a list of defibs and understand the spread around the town. – Completed see Exec minutes 12th Dec 2023 • Cathy to support Congleton Solar with the share offer. – Completed share offer successfully raised £450,000 • Cathy to respond to the Financial questions put forward at the meeting. – Completed see Exec minutes 12th Dec 2023. • Working group will discuss changes to the Partnership Constitution. – Agenda item below.
<p>2.</p>	<p><u>Partnership Overview 23-24 / Group Reports.</u></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> <p>Congleton Hydro and Solar</p> <p>The group who created Archie the hydroelectric generator at Havannah Weir has raised another eyewatering sum – this time over £450,000 to build solar panels, which was a fantastic achievement. Every year the group gives away around £4000 to community groups as grants. Projects should have an environmental theme that requires art, maths, engineering, technology or science of some kind. The team are also looking at raising funds to create another hydroelectric scheme at Congleton Park, which is ongoing.</p> <p>Congratulations to the Hydro team for being Highly commended at the BBC Stoke Make a Difference awards held recently.</p>

Congleton Town Council / Partnership

The 5th Green Fayre is planned for 28th September, Big Clothes Movement and Repair Café will be inside the Town Hall. Outside we have up to 30 stalls on the high street. Face Painting, Bike Marking, Bee People will all be available for a fun family day out.

Congleton's biodiversity project continues which has now been taken up by Congleton Town Council. Continuing work to design signs with children in mind will be initiated in the coming year.

Trees for Congleton

This year's tree planting season has added over 5000 more trees and hedgerow plants to those already planted, making a total of over 22,000 plants planted since 2019. The group also performs maintenance on the trees and hedgerows already planted, in the first few years, and then once established, the area is formally handed over to Congleton Town Council for future maintenance.

The group is now part of the wider Cheshire Tree Alliance which shares information (and plants!). Many trees have been donated to other groups, from Alsager and Sandbach, Dane Valley and Macclesfield, and swaps have been received too.

The group has also arranged corporate planting sessions where employees have planted trees on the land of 3 Congleton businesses.

Many Thanks go to Ruth Benson and Patti Pinto in particular for their incredible hard work in the planning and organisation of the new planting. The group is actively looking for more pieces of land where they 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!

Glen added the number more likely to be 26,000 and this is the last year of planting.

Congleton Food4Free Group

The fairground carpark space is continuously being reworked and edible plants have been transferred from the plot outside Congleton Library. Edible plants have also been included in the Bee Garden in Congleton Park, and the War Memorial Hospital garden.

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 bike repair sessions twice a month.

Congleton Climate Action Group

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. They have had a very busy year. A massive congratulations to Jackie and the team!

Vale Allotment Association

The new charity, has raised the funds to purchase the Vale Allotment Site, to keep the site as allotments, in perpetuity. The sale is progressing and nearing completion. It is the intention that the Vale Allotment Association will purchase the site from CSG, and the land registry can then be updated.

Cost of Living Grant

The Friendship Garden has been established and is working well, a selection of hand tools and a storage shed have been purchased. The first cooking class was held last night at the Bromley hub, this is the first in a series of 9 sessions with 8-10 people in each class.

Community Projects update provided by Jo Money

Get Involved/Website. Agreed to set a date in September for a launch of the fabulous new website which has been created by Kanga. JM is learn the ropes of working it, particularly regarding volunteering and working with Alison Wright of VAC. We have had 3 messages via the site regarding activities and volunteering. We hope the site will be available for listing events and activities in Congleton as well as posting volunteer opportunities and requests. This will be a big piece of work for CCP in 2025.

We are uploading the What's On listings from the Visitor Centre. September has just been added

Get Involved organisations are listed on the site – CCP has been updating entries and Kanga have added them to the site. This has been going on all year and continues. CCP would still like to produce a hard copy for 2025 and would request that the £1,000 partnership funding for this remains ring-fenced if possible. Please visit www.congletoncommunityprojects.org

Congleton Play Day 2024: Another Successful day. The Town Council have picked up on the popularity of the event and ran 5 other successful Play Days on Tuesdays throughout the summer holidays. CCP was allocated £250 partnership funding via the Oversight Group for the event. Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booth Parish Council has also very kindly set aside £250 for next year's Play Day after hearing about the project from the Partnership.

Pride Parade went off seamlessly. The band were great and there were more people in it than last year so it is building. The day was very successful despite a small amount of harassment.

Congleton Jazz and Blues August Bank Holiday was a fantastic event for the town. It was opened by the Traditional Umbrella Parade organised by CCP. CJAB and Unplugged Festival in March is steered by Congleton Live and delivered by a fantastic team of volunteers.

Green Island Fiesta was held on Sunday September 8th: This brand new community event for Congleton will celebrate the wonders of Green Island - an area within Bromley Road/Willow St/Brunswick St and wider that was once marsh and meadow until the 1830's and the industrialisation of the town. The Fiesta will be based round Spindle Street and will celebrate the area with history, music, art, food, drink, conversation, and reminiscence. This is being funded by a Cheshire East grant.

Christmas Lights Switch- JM attending regular Christmas meetings for 2024 – agreed date is Friday 29th November. CCP will be delivering lantern-making workshops and organising the lantern parade.

Lucy Thomson-Smith, the Cultural Economy Development Manager at Cheshire East held a meeting with Jackie, Rachel, Alison (from above) Petra and Jo to discuss a Congleton Volunteer Ambassador Programme (and junior programme) with funding of £20,000 available. £10,000 has been to Partnership/VAC and £10,000 to Electric Picture House/CCP. JM and PL working on the project now to engage and recruit the young people as Cultural Champions. This is ongoing.

Cheshire Archives and Wild Rumpus are now working with CCP and the Electric Picture House, Astbury Mere Trust, local schools, Town Council to prepare for a celebratory event at Astbury Mere on May 17th 2025. It is

	<p>currently in its R&D phase. Cheshire Archives and Wild Rumpus are applying to the Arts Council for extra funding for the Beating the Bounds project for 2025. The application is being submitted via CCP.</p> <p>Cheshire East Green Events Network – this was a Zoom meeting in January about making events more sustainable. Wild Rumpus are developing a Green strategy for Cheshire East so it was the start of the discussion. JM meeting the Wild Rumpus team at the Festival for a tour of their sustainable activities – waste/recycling etc</p> <p>Elizabths Group – We have an exciting event coming up on 18th September at Congleton Library. The launch of our new book Justice is a Woman. https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/book-launch-celebration-tickets-1010261257617</p> <p>Higher Ground event - book signing for her brand new book: Justice Is A Woman! 📖👉 on Friday 4th October, 2-4 pm.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><u>Vote on Amendments to the Constitution</u></p> <p>The proposed constitution had been shared and discussed before the AGM. One amendment was that the 4 community events stated that the Partnership would run each year will include the Health & Wellbeing Fayre and Green Fayre. The first community event will be themed ‘Meet the funders’ – this will be a relaunch of the Partnership target date is late Oct/ early Nov.</p> <p>All in favour, carried by a vote of members.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><u>Appointment of Officers & Voting Members</u></p> <p>No new proposals were put forward. Roles remain as:</p> <p>Chair: Peter Aston (proposed G. Williams) and (seconded B. Edwards).</p> <p>Vice Chair: Glen Williams (proposed R. Walton) and (seconded J. Money).</p> <p>Voting Members:</p> <p>The Executive Group voting board is now replaced by the Oversight group. As agreed in the new constitution the Oversight Group consists of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chair 2. Vice Chair 3. CTC 4. CTC 5. Parish Council 6. ? 7. ? 8. ? 9. ?

	<p>The Partnership Officer & Chief Officer have no voting rights.</p> <p>The 4 positions available on the Oversight Group should be reflective of Congleton Interests like business, sports etc.</p> <p>Nominations for the 4 remaining seats of the oversight group are invited to follow.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Presentation of Accounts.</p> <p>D. McGifford gave an executive summary of the financial state of the Partnership.</p> <p>View the summary sheet here: https://congletonpartnership.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Partnership-Accounts-24-25-10.09.24.pdf</p> <p>Balance Remaining £ 39,991.94</p> <p>Unallocated £ 4,091.48</p> <p>D.M suggested as the constitution has changed that the oversight group looks at the remaining monies and decides if the projects are moving forward or not.</p> <p>R.W if the Partnership is not a grant awarding body then we need to be transparent on how members access funding.</p>
	<p>A.O.B</p> <p>S.M. – Any update on Moody Hall? As it’s not a partnership project it’s not the forum for discussion but D.M confirmed that talks are continuing.</p> <p>AGM closed at 6:16 pm</p>