

Meeting Minutes: Congleton Sustainability Group

Date: 7th April 2026 **Time:** 6:30 pm **Location:** Congleton Town Hall

In attendance: Heather Pearce (Chair), Cathy Dean, Peter Aston, Suzy Firkin, Sergey Kamenskiy.

Apologies: Margaret Gartside, Peter Hall, Heather Seddon, Patti Pinto, Jackie Kay, Ruth Benson, Linda Aston.

Next meeting: Tuesday, 1st June (AGM) at Town Hall, 6:30 pm

1	<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <p>Heather welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p>
2	<p><u>Approval of minutes</u></p> <p>Minutes from 3rd February 2026 are accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>
3	<p><u>Matters arising from the last meeting:</u></p> <p>Action – Have a look at Cheshire Climate Alliance, Transition Wilmslow, and Macclesfield – could they come and speak? (CCA is made up of different groups, encouraged to sign up to National Emergency Briefing - https://www.nebriefing.org/. Nantwich Sustainability Groups are interested in meeting up (Suzy to follow up). Jackie encouraged us to look at Transition Wilmslow’s Nature Festival. Knutsford? Might be a good idea to meet up with other councils, discuss plans etc <i>Suzy/Heather</i></p> <p>Action – Patti is to bring in all receipts by October; some receipts have been received. (ongoing)</p> <p>Action – Water project - set up a meeting with interested parties and United Utilities to see what action, if anything, we can take. (Carry Forward) Abby (Partnership Oversight, scientist at the University of Manchester) has been put in touch with the Congleton Hydro team as they are exploring water monitoring equipment – <i>a visit arranged for 7th May.</i></p> <p>Action – Cathy to follow up with YC regarding Green Fayre, and Suzy to have a conversation with Doug (Streetscape manager) about creating an Eco hub in the park bungalow. <i>The room has been refurbished and is available for groups to hire so it won’t be available for an eco-hub.</i></p> <p>Action – Cathy to talk to David regarding gaining permission on Market Square for the disappearing nature museum exhibition. <i>Permission from Cheshire East to hold a temporary exhibition on Market Square.</i></p>
4	<p><u>Financial Update</u></p> <p>Latest figures provided on 04/03/26. The Cheshire East Healthy Eating grant to the Town Council with £100 donated to CSG funds (£383.40 total).</p>

People know the Old Saw Mill, as was, as a community hub – café and meeting space. It was forced to close at the end of 2024, in the midst of much inevitable emotion, due to rising costs threatening insolvency.

The Old Saw Mill meals to socially isolated people in Congleton was transferred very successfully to the Town Hall, the apple juice project was subcontracted to its 'old suppliers' – Dunham Apples'.

However, the work we couldn't replicate was the hub's ability to provide comradery and experience for volunteers of all ages and challenges.

We plan to use the land to fulfil this significant demand.

If we can demonstrate value in the community gardens space over the next couple of years, we will then assess the need for a community hub on the land, and seek the necessary considerable funds to bring such a project to life.

Parcel of land 2:

Thanks to help from Heather Seddon, CEC have given us access across their land for 125 years for £1 per year.

Community Gardening:

It is generally accepted that community gardening, as apposed to allotments, can be organised as a very valuable way of supporting people with a variety of challenges.

We are advised that planning permission is not required to convert a piece of land into community gardens, just the owners permission, which of course we have. Adding buildings opens up the need for planning permission. A tool shed, small container is not likely to require planning permission we are advised, but as soon as the shed becomes a meeting or resting space then planning permission will be necessary.

That's how we are approaching using this land, letting the project grow organically, if you'll forgive the pun!

Public involvement:

There are a number of dwellings surrounding the land and before we do anything we are talking to these residents to take their views into account. It's worth knowing that a commercial development of 14 houses was tabled but never pursued.

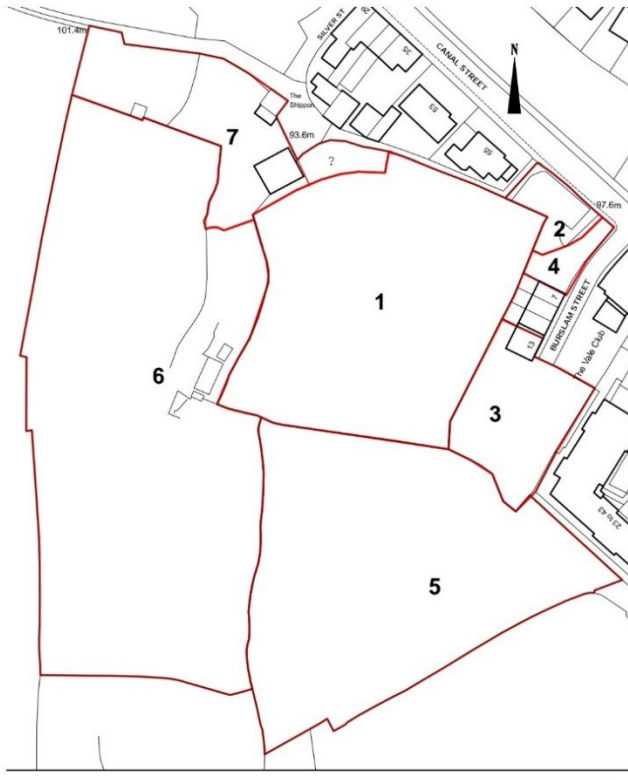
Once the residents have added their views we shall arrange a public meeting to seek a band of willing volunteers to create the gardens. We already have a man and a digger who lives on Canal Street ready to get started!

We recognise that this is not an easy piece of land to develop but its free.....

Peter Aston,

Chair, The Old Saw Mill.

← Land to S of Canal St... ☆ ⋮



LAND TO SOUTH OF CANAL STREET, BETWEEN SILVER STREET AND BURSLAM STREET
LAND OWNERSHIP PARCELS

6 **Green Fayre 2026**

A special meeting will be held dedicated to Green Fayre on the 5th May at 6:30 pm for all interested parties.

7 **Siemens Earth Day**

Event on 22nd April (Earth Day) from 11.30 -2.30, focusing on low-carbon and sustainable living.

Action – Cathy/Heather to pull together information for the stall.

8 **Upcoming Events for Volunteers**

Town Tides – 2nd May (park), 6th June, 4th July.

New set of history walks with the museum are resuming, Saturday 18 April, 11 am – “Join us for a special GEMS project presentation with David Jackson and Nancy Clark, alongside Anya Moon from Cheshire Archives and Local Studies.”

	<p>Saturday 25 April, 11am</p> <p>On 25 April, Lyndon Murgatroyd will explore the history of Congleton Park. His talk will look at why parks became so important in the Victorian period, the working life of the designer of Congleton Park, the park's design and features, the transfer of the Market Cross and the Fountain into the park, and the development of Town Wood.</p>
9	<p><u>A.O.B</u></p> <p>Next meeting on June 1st, this will also be the AGM.</p>

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 the AGM. Please send your membership form to our secretary, Cathy Dean, Cathy.Dean@congleton-tc.gov.uk.



CSG Membership
Application Form App