



LOCUM CHIEF OFFICIER'S REPORT

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

16th May 2023

The Town Council commissioned a review in 2022 which incorporated a mass update of the Town Council's policies and website. The results from this review saw the creation of Neston's Corporate Strategy, as well as a staff restructure. Alison Kunaj, who held the role of Council Manager for the past twelve years, retired from the organisation on 31st March 2023.

Since joining Neston Town Council on 3rd April 2023, it has been a busy and hectic six weeks. I have already met with a number of stakeholders and interested parties. I held introductory meetings with both PC Alex Johnson and PSCO Eric Hardwood to form an understanding of how Neston Police Services operate within the town and how we can better improve communication and area coverage for Neston. A visit was also made to Neston Community Centre so that I could meet with Gareth Prytherch to forge positive links with other organisations who are also working hard for the town and to discuss partnership working.

A considerable amount of time has been spent on familiarising myself with Neston Town Council's operating procedures, filing systems, day to day activities, and the overall structure of the organisation. An extensive face to face meeting was held with Town Council staff to ensure that everyone is working together to achieve the main business objectives and operating as a unit. This also provided a safe space for staff to raise queries and an opportunity for me to learn about historical practices and prioritise any longstanding issues. I am currently reviewing the new model contract for staff so that contracts can be issued imminently once final approval has been received from HR committee later this month.

The Mayor of Neston, Cllr Pat Kynaston, and I held a remote face to face meeting in Christleton with Cheshire West & Chester's Localities Team, consisting of Pam Bradley and Craig Green. CW&C has some exciting plans for the 50th Anniversary of the Wirral Way which will be take place in October 2023. Discussions were also held regarding improving partnership working, clearer lines of communication and Neston and CW&C hosting a joint "Neston Networking" event once the new Council has taken office. We hope this will be an event that both Town Councillors, residents, and local businesses alike will benefit. We plan to keep an open dialogue to ensure Neston benefits from improved communication.

Neston Town Council's Annual Report was finalised last month, following a team effort, in preparation for the Annual Town meeting which was successfully held on 25th April 2023.

In mid-April I hosted a meeting with Cheshire West & Chester Property Services team Manager Penny Gibson and Laura Dutton. This site visit, for which the Mayor and Deputy Mayor were also involved, included a walkabout of Neston Friday Market and a tour of all assets, including the Sainsbury's Community Rooms and Neston Town Hall. A really positive dialogue has now been opened with the Property Services team.

The upstairs office at the Town Hall has benefitted from a complete overhaul, as well as a fresh coat of paint, thanks to willing councillor volunteer helpers. I have conducted a signage audit in the main entrance of the Town Hall, removing some of the over-bearing posters and excessive number of notices.

Finally, I hosted an induction session for Neston Town Council's newly elected members on Tuesday 9th May which was well received. I look forward to continuing my work with Neston Town Council for the remainder of my contract.

(ENDS)

Zoë Dean
Locum Chief Officer
Neston Town Council