

Another eight weeks have passed in the blink of an eye. I am keen to ensure that Neston Town Council generates regular good news stories for the press. Since the election of the new Council, I have composed press releases to announce Cllr Wastell as the new Mayor of Neston, and also to advertise the Council's three casual vacancies, with new associated co-option forms. On 8th June I attended ChALC's online connections training event which focussed on: Appointments, Casual Vacancies and Code of Conduct. A press statement from the Council was also deemed appropriate in mid-June amidst mis-information in circulation regarding the concrete planters in Neston High Street.

I am pleased to report, following a long process of discussions with staff, and further amendments through committee, that the Council's Model Contract document was approved at an Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 20th June. Staff were consulted in depth throughout the process and I am pleased to report that all new contracts have now been issued and signed. Work was also done to refine and make slight amendments to a number of job descriptions which were discussed in detail at the HR Committee on 30th May. I held an open dialogue with all staff members individually to ensure that these documents correctly reflect the new aspirations of the Town Council, as well as being accurate for the function of the roles in question. As I am sure members can appreciate, this involved a great deal of in-depth work and focus time.

I have now received my login credentials for the Unity Trust Bank, and I have familiarised myself with the system set up. I input payment information to ensure the three-step financial process is adhered to in the absence of any members of the Council's admin team, which occurred in June during holiday time.

I met with Cllr Martin Barker on 12th May and virtually on 26th June, along with Cheshire West's Refugee and Asylum Seekers (RAS) Team Manager Shélah Semoff, to discuss the situation of finding a new home for the Refugee Assist Group, who currently use the lower community office near Sainsbury's for their charity work. Penny Gibson Property Manager – Senior Surveyor (CW&C) and I also met remotely to discuss progress with this project, prior to the second meeting on 26th June.

The Corporate Support & Facilities Officer and I worked together on a joint coffee morning paper to support Cllr Hardcastle's proposal to hold monthly charity events. This initiative was passed by the Market & Town Hall Committee on 27th June.

I facilitated our second team meeting on 26th June to bring the staff team together and provide updates on progress with the new staff contracts. We also discussed the newly agreed appointment of an administration assistant for 20 hours per week which was rubber stamped by Full Council the previous week.

On the evening of Tuesday 4th July, Neston Town Council held a successful event at the Town Hall, in partnership with Cheshire West & Chester Council, to bring community groups and businesses together for a networking opportunity. We received a presentation from CWAC on the upcoming 50th Anniversary of the Wirral Way, and discussed in groups, ideas surrounding how the calendar of events for this occasion can be supported and expanded.

In order to plan and organise the above occasion, I attended several remote Teams meetings with Cheshire West's Rural Communities and Engagement Team to discuss and map out the structure of how the event would operate. I took over the distribution of the bulk of the local invitations for this event which included creating both community and business group contact groups on outlook which was extremely time consuming. Neston's Corporate Support Officer also collated the RSVP responses for this event. It was great to see such a good turnout, especially from local groups. Councillors volunteered their time generously to assist with refreshments to ensure our guests received a warm welcome.

I am pleased to report that from 7th July the Neston Post Office in the Upper Community Office will extend its Friday hours by 1 hour and 45 minutes every week. The new times are 9.30am – 1.15pm. This a great step forward and an initiative that Neston Town Council is pleased to support.

(ENDS)

Zoë Dean
Locum Chief Officer
Neston Town Council

6th July 2023