



<i>Meeting (No)</i>	Extraordinary Full Council Meeting (4)
<i>Time & Date</i>	3rd December 2025 at 6pm
<i>Location</i>	Neston Town Hall

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs: Jones (Mayor), Adderley, Braithwaite, Davies, Griffiths, Kynaston, Marple, D. Ruscoe, N. Ruscoe, Swaffer, Townsend, Warner, and Wastell.

In attendance: Z. Dean (Locum Chief Officer)

Also in attendance: CWaC Cllr Keith Millar, CWaC Cllr Martin Barker. 65 members of the public.

PART 1: Items considered in the presence of the press and public

The Mayor of Neston, Cllr Sion Jones opened the meeting with the following speech:

“Welcome to this extraordinary meeting of Neston Town Council to discuss the proposal for grant funding for Neston Civic Hall.

First and foremost, I would like to point out that the reference made to the funding application in this month’s Neston Local Magazine was factually inaccurate. Neston Town Council has not already given a £60,000 grant to the Civic Hall. It is the purpose of this meeting to discuss the proposal this evening. Corrections have been published on social media by the editor, and will be printed in the next issue.”

52 Apologies for Absence

It was RESOLVED: No apologies for absence were received.

Cllrs P. Doughty and S. Hudspeth were absent.

53 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received from members.

54 Questions and Comments from Residents

Members of the public wishing to speak pre-registered in order to provide a running order to determine length of speaking time. Each member of the public was afforded 3 minutes.

The Mayor suspended Standing Orders for the purpose of public participation.

1. A resident spoke in support of Neston Town Council funding the Civic Hall.
2. A resident spoke against Neston Town Council funding the project.
3. The Chair of Neston Flower Society spoke in favour of supporting the Civic Hall and submitted a further letter to the Mayor.
4. Cllr Keith Millar (CWaC for Neston) spoke in favour of working together to support the Civic Hall in the ‘Spirit of the Female Society to bear ye one another’s burdens’.
5. A resident expressed concern of the disproportionate risk.
6. A Trustee of Neston Civic Hall spoke in support of the funding application, noting that Health & Safety has always been a priority in the operation of the building, noting that the group had never sought to own the building or make a profit.
7. The Treasurer of Neston Players warned that there would be a loss of events, including Neston Flicks and the school holiday club if the Civic Hall is to close.

8. A resident, although in support of the Civic Hall noted that there were other ways of raising funds since the Council has no money. A collection box was suggested.
9. A resident and member of Neston Players noted that 800 people watched the recent production staged by the group, bringing support to the local economy and hospitality businesses in the area.
10. A resident suggested National Lottery funding.
11. A resident and member of Neston Players spoke in favour of supporting the Civic Hall, a building which had been a lifeline to new parents when it historically operated a new parents club.
12. A resident asked the Town Council to consider projects it funds and not to put money on the budget for things we do not need, i.e. a ranger.

Cllr Braithwaite read out an email from a resident who was unable to attend the meeting, which expressed views in support of the funding proposal.

The Mayor re-instated Standing Orders for the Town Council meeting to continue.

55 Funding Request from Neston NCYC & Civic Hall Trustees

a) The report from the Chief Officer on the funding proposal and the supporting documentation supplied by NCYC was received.

b) To discuss the funding request from NCYC.

The Mayor opened the debate up to members:

4 Town Councillors spoke on the matter.

Cllr P. Kynaston: being born and brought up in Neston there was no wish to lose the hall, however, the Town Council has no ownership or financial business interest in the building. Any grants the Council makes have to be kept within boundaries. Tonight, will be a free vote, under no cohesion. The Council has commitments and there is little appetite for Council business outside of this request.

Cllr S. Wastell: Expressed that he was sharing his personal opinions on the matter. The Town Council has no business interest in the Civic Hall. A way forward would be to continue to lobby CWaC, who are entirely responsible for the building and can increase their precept next year as the 5% threshold has been raised. Cllr Wastell urged CWaC to do their duty for the building.

Cllr C. Warner: Spoke to correct some inaccuracies – the Civic Hall building had not been disposed of by CWaC. A 2-year lease was granted and NCYC knew the condition of the building when they took it on and that they had to raise money for the purpose. It is the Town Council's responsibility to do due diligence and seek legal advice. 900 signatures out of 15,000 had been received on the petition, the vast majority of residents were silent on the matter. A consultation was previously run by NTC and one of the outcomes was the desire for a ranger role. Cllr Warner expressed a willingness to work with NCYC but asked what happens to the £10.00 per household (average) addition on the precept if it is not used? Cllr Warner noted that the Town Council receives the precept at the start of the year and the Town Council does not have £60,000.

Cllr Braithwaite: £60,000 represents an approximate increase of 13% for this alone. The Town Council does not receive government funding and needs to consider the tax-payers. This grant, if approved, could open the floodgates for an influx in the future. The funding request is twice the amount of the Council's grant budget. Which grants to local groups do we cut out?

	<p>Cllr S. Jones: The Council took advice from ChALC, which was included within our yearly membership. The Mayor noted what would be lost if other grants could not be given next year: Ladies Club, Town Fair and support to local groups. Cllr Jones stated that long term the Town Council can work with NCYC and CWaC to develop a better way of funding.</p> <p>No other councillors wished to speak on the matter.</p> <p>c) To vote on the request for funding of a £60,000 grant for Neston Civic Hall. 13 votes: Against 0 votes: For.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To not support the funding request of £60,000 for the Civic Hall.</p>
56	Date of the next meeting
	<p>The next Full Council meeting will take place on Tuesday 21st January 2025 at 6pm.</p> <p>The Mayor closed the meeting abruptly due to a disturbance from the public gallery.</p>
57	Exclusion of the Public and Press
	<p>That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.</p>
PART 2: Items considered in the absence of the Press and Public	
	No confidential business.

Meeting closed at 19:00.

Signed _____ **Dated** _____