



<i>Meeting (No)</i>	Community & Environment Committee (6)
<i>Time & Date</i>	6pm Tuesday 26 November 2024
<i>Place</i>	Neston Town Hall
<i>Document</i>	Minutes

Present: Cllrs Davies (Chair), Griffiths, David Ruscoe, Swaffer and Townsend

In attendance: A Duncan (Community & Environment Manager) and two representatives from Neston Community Energy

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

60 Public Participation

There were no comments from members of the public.

61 Apologies for Absence

The Committee received apologies from Cllr Marple (personal) and **RESOLVED** to accept the reason for absence. The absence of Cllr Doughty was noted.

62 Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received.

63 Neston Community Energy

RESOLVED to temporarily suspend the meeting to receive a presentation from Neston Community Energy.

The Neston Community Energy (NCE) representatives provided a brief update on the potential creation of a solar park on the land next to Neston recycling centre. They confirmed that the organisation was a community benefit society and that it had recently secured £38,000 from Community Energy England to conduct a feasibility study on the use of this land with the aim of installing 1,000 solar panels with a total maximum 1MW capacity to cable feed to a single customer (it was not the intention to sell to the grid). It was confirmed that the build would cost in the region of £1 million and that NCE was in discussion with various energy companies with a view to one of the energy companies acting as a capital partner. It was also confirmed that it was the intention of NCE to invest any profit from this venture into small-scale community solar projects.

The two NCE representatives left and the meeting resumed.

64 Minutes of the Last Meeting

RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the Community & Environment Committee meeting held on 22.10.24. The Chair signed the minutes.

65 Community & Environment Manager's Report

The Committee received the Community & Environment Manager's report (CE6/65) and noted there had been several items of prepayment card expenditure since the previous scheduled meeting:

- flyer printing for the Christmas lights switch-on event £103;

Chair's initials and date:

- grotto gifts/panto character sweets for Christmas lights switch-on event £69.50;
- protective mats to be used on the staging at the Christmas lights switch-on event £72.81.

66 Committee Budgets 24/25 and 25/26

- a The Committee received the month seven Committee budget and the current earmarked reserves.
- b The projected budget expenditure for the current financial year was reviewed and no changes were made.
- c The potential 25/26 budget variations as detailed in paper CE6/66 were confirmed with the addition of £1,100 to budget line 4365 to fund the 2025 Remembrance Sunday road closure. The proposed budget as amended was approved for consideration by Council.

67 Committee Objectives 2024 and 2025

- a The current status of the C&E Committee's agreed objectives was noted.
- b The C&E Manager reminded the Committee that Neston Town Council had requested that a possible small extension to the Marshlands Road allotment site be considered by Cheshire West and Chester Council as part of any development of the Marshlands Road field. It was reported that Cheshire West and Chester Council had recently made contact to ask whether the Town Council might wish to consider asset transfer of the whole field. It was agreed to reiterate to CWaC that the Town Council was keen to extend the allotment space as a distinct project, but that the Town Council would be open to the possibility of discussions about the future of the whole field at a later date once the current restoration work was completed. The C&E Manager advised that, whilst approval of any asset transfer was outside the C&E Committee's terms of reference, the C&E Committee would be able to make a recommendation to Council in due course once more detail had been provided by CWaC.
- c It was agreed that the Committee would consider focusing on either fewer larger objectives or a single large objective during 2025 in order to maximise impact and that options would be considered at the next scheduled meeting.

68 Website and Social Media

- a **RESOLVED** to provide delegated authority to officers to arrange transfer of the Town Council's website to a .gov.uk domain at a cost of £25+VAT and associated administration costs from budget 4306 (website) and to arrange annual renewal thereafter.
- b It was noted that it was the intention of the owner of Neston Life app to close this app at the end of 2024. The Committee chose to take no further action.

69 Allotments

- a **RESOLVED** that all allotment mains water accounts should be provided by the Town Council's current retail water provider in order to streamline account management. It was noted that it might take several months to transfer The

Chair's initials and date:

Ropewalk allotment site water account due to administration issues with the current provider but that this would be progressed as soon as practicable.

- b **RESOLVED** to approve leak repair work by the contractor appointed on 8 October at a cost of £1,700+VAT.

70 Ranger Service

The Committee approved the part time job description and person specification as detailed in paper CE6/70 and agreed that this should be submitted to Council for consideration.

71 Proposed Extension to 20mph Speed Limit to School Lane

RESOLVED to inform Highways that Neston Town Council was in favour of the proposed extension of the 20mph speed limit to include School Lane.

72 Remembrance Sunday & Commemorative Events

- a It was agreed that the 2024 Remembrance Sunday road closure had been successful, except for the lack of signage at the Chester Road and Brook Street entry/exit points in the long-stay car park.

RESOLVED to book the current traffic management contractor for the 2025 Remembrance Sunday road closure based on the agreed schedule (paper CE6/72a) and to emphasise the need for clearer car park signage. The C&E Manager confirmed that she would obtain a quotation from the contractor.

- b **RESOLVED** to approve the risk assessment for Remembrance Sunday 2025 as detailed in paper CE6/72b.
- c **RESOLVED** to delegate authority to officers to purchase VE Day and VJ Day 80th anniversary commemorative flags to be flown outside the Town Hall at a combined maximum cost of £150+VAT and delivery.

It was noted that the parish church would be making the necessary arrangements to ring the church bells as part of the national bell ringing in celebration of 80 years of peace.

73 Neston & Willaston Community Partnership Steering Group

The summary of the meeting held on 16.10.24 was noted.

74 Professor Clarkson Prize

The Committee discussed the series of delays associated with the introduction of the Professor Clarkson prize and the fact that the High School had not had an awards event for the past two school years. Various options were considered for progressing the situation along with options for extending the prize to include primary school leavers.

RESOLVED that the Town Council should take responsibility for arranging and presenting the Professor Clarkson prize for achievement in STEM subjects at the end of each school year and that Neston High School would be asked each year to nominate a year 11 student to receive the £100 prize.

Chair's initials and date:

RESOLVED that smaller prizes of £25 should be awarded annually to a year 6 pupil from each of the four primary schools to recognise achievement in relation to the environment and the natural world and that the four head teachers should be approached on an annual basis to each nominate a pupil to receive the prize.

Any costs associated with this project to be met from budget 4371 (youth engagement) and its associated earmarked reserve (341).

75 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting would be held on 4 February 2025 at 6pm.

76 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED 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 involved 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: paragraph three - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

PART 2: Items considered in the absence of the press and public

77 Contract for the Provision and Maintenance of Floral Arrangements

The Committee noted that the contractor had invested £3,369 to purchase Amberol self-watering hanging baskets for the exclusive use of this contract and that the contract cost had remained unchanged for 22/23, 23/24 and 24/25.

The Committee decided that the self-watering hanging baskets had been a successful addition and therefore, as per the original agreement (minute 134, 01.02.22 and minute 152, 01.03.22), **RESOLVED** to extend the current contract from 1 October 2025 to 30 September 2027 at a cost of £26,409.60+VAT per year which represented a 5% increase in the annual contract charge.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.

Signed _____ Date _____