



## AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2025

**Present:** Cllrs Rathbone (TR) - Chairman, Morgan (PM) – Vice Chairman, Fagan (PF), Harvey (SH), Freeman (AF)

**In Attendance:** E Bambrook, Clerk

1. **Apologies for Absence:** None.
2. **Declarations of Interest:** No declarations of interest were made.
3. **Minutes of the Meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025:**

***Resolved:** The minutes of the meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025 were accepted as a true and accurate record.*

4. **Tree Report:** The contents of the report were noted. The committee agreed with the Tree Ranger's assessment of the TPO work in Wood Lane. The committee noted the comments in the report regarding the removal of the hedgerow at Holly Bank. A member of the committee (in their capacity as a private individual) volunteered to report this to CEC Planning Enforcement via the online reporting tool. The Tree Ranger would be informed by the Clerk that members of the public could also report concerns in the same way.
5. **Budget Review and Monitoring:** The budget monitoring documents were reviewed. There is an issue with incorrect invoicing for village maintenance which the new Streetscape Development Manager is investigating as described in item 7 below. The Clerk advised that careful consideration would need to be given to the budget for village maintenance for 2026/27 during the planning process.
6. **Annual Plan:** Progress against the Annual Plan was reviewed and it was agreed that item 4a (work at Primrose Chase) would be marked as complete and item 4b (work to the station area) will form part of the new village improvement plan survey.
7. **Village Maintenance:** It was confirmed that the new Streetscape Development Manager at Congleton Town Council started in his role on 1<sup>st</sup> September and has contacted the Clerk. The health and safety concern raised by the Amenities Committee in the summer has been investigated by the town council and the Amenities Committee is satisfied with the outcome. During the investigation, village maintenance work was suspended and was then reinstated in August, except for Shearbrook Bank, to allow the new manager to review the protocol for this area. The Streetscape Manager will be visiting the site this week to make an assessment. Following the agreement to begin work again, the town council carried out some work to address areas of the village that urgently needed attention, however, there will be a period of 'catch up' before all areas are back to normal. The Clerk also discussed with the Streetscape Manager the issue of a large invoice which was sent to the parish council and was at odds with the usual monthly invoices and the amount quoted for the annual village maintenance contract. The Clerk has sent a copy of the invoice and the Service Level Agreement to the Streetscape Manager who will investigate this and provide an update.
8. **Primrose Chase Project:** This work was completed in July to a high standard and with excellent results. The newly exposed areas underneath the trees will need to be maintained and will require strimming prior to mowing, at least initially. As this is outside of the current village maintenance Service Level Agreement (SLA), the Clerk has asked for a quote for getting these new areas into a

position where they can be mowed more easily and the cost for including this additional mowing into the SLA. Again, the response was that the new Streetscape Manager would address this.

9. **Environmental Hedge:** Some time ago Congleton Town Council provided a quote for replacing the dead plants in the environmental hedge at the top of Shearbrook Bank. Unfortunately, the work had to be put on hold that the daffodils flowered early. The Clerk asked, during the summer, for this work to be conducted in the autumn and the person looking after Streetscape advised that they would bring this to the attention of the new Streetscape Manager when they arrived. The Clerk will follow this up now the new person is in post.
10. **Village Gates:** The reports were reviewed and it was clear that a great deal of work had already been conducted to assess the feasibility and cost of installing village gates. The proposal had been placed on the CEC Area Highways Group (AHG) list for funding, but that group was disbanded and the project did not progress. At the time, the estimated cost of installation was approximately £8,000 which did not include maintenance, replacement if damaged or at the end of the ten year life expectancy, nor insurance. In terms of effectiveness as a speeding deterrent, it is not clear that village gates are effective in the long term and whilst they may be effective in the short term, and particularly with drivers who are new to the area, they may not have the same effect on resident drivers. Speedwatch and SID data shows that many drivers speeding through the village are residents therefore the benefits of the gates may not outweigh the significant costs. It was agreed that a final decision would be deferred until after the Speeding/Road Safety meeting with residents on 17<sup>th</sup> September.
11. **Events:** The following updates were received:
  - a) **Christmas Lights Switch On Event:** The Clerk provided an update on plans for the event and everything is on schedule. Discussions with the CEC Events led to questions about the need for a road closure. Following assurances by the Clerk that previous experience of the event and existing marshalling measures had not highlighted this as a requirement, CEC agreed to accept this on this occasion. It was agreed that it would be prudent to increase the number of marshals for this year's event and to monitor this closely and make a photographic record of the event for review. More volunteers will be required.
  - b) **Seniors' Christmas Lunch:** The Clerk provided an update and all arrangements are in hand. The Clerk was asked to make the menu choices with a slight variation so that the menu was refreshed. It was agreed that the ticket price should be set at £14 per head as the cost this year would be £28 (including VAT) per head for catering with an additional cost of £250 to cover music, table decorations and crackers. It was agreed that this recommendation would be added to the next council meeting agenda to allow the ticket price to be advertised more quickly. The Clerk confirmed that she would continue to do her best to ensure that anyone who may struggle to buy a ticket made contact.
12. **Goostrey Playground Community Project:** Cllr Morgan provided an update on a recent exchange with CEC on the s106 funding. The money has an expenditure deadline of 01/01/2031 and it was confirmed that as yet no payments had been assigned to that funding. A new play equipment provider framework had been put in place so any scheme will need to be re-tendered. The Working Group will meet to discuss options for a change of scope in the coming weeks.
13. **Old Paddock Fencing:** A resident had contacted the Clerk to enquire into the possibility of planting hedgerows along the entire paddock i.e. along Main Road and then on the turn to The Old Paddock. This was in response to the poor state of the fencing and the lack of action by the housing association to repair it. The resident also felt that hedges would be more environmentally friendly. Since then the fencing has been repaired and the area looks much improved. Whilst the committee agreed with the comments about the positive environmental impact of hedges as opposed to fencing, it remained the case that the land does not belong to the council and that, should the council obtain permission to replace the fencing with hedges, the long term maintenance and

responsibility for this would fall to the council and therefore the taxpayer. The committee will continue to ensure that any future damage is reported to the housing association, as the landowner. The Clerk will respond to the resident.

**14. Bogbean Lighting for Events:** It was confirmed that the beech tree on The Bogbean would be lit appropriately for the Remembrance weekend and Armistice Day.

**15. Correspondence:** Cllr. Morgan reported the following comments received from a resident:

- That rather than mowing the bank outside St. Luke's Church, wildflowers could be planted instead. It was agreed that this comment would be passed on to the church.
- Bird and/or bat boxes, as appropriate could be sited throughout the village. It was felt that these may be appropriate at Booth Bed Lane Play Area and that Goostrey Community Shed could be approached to make the boxes.
- That the Rose Day Festival Committee should be asked to consider their use of plastics with a view to reducing or eliminating them. It was agreed that this comment would be passed on to the Rose Day Festival Committee.

**16. Minor items and matters for the next meeting:**

**Minor items:**

- It was confirmed that one of the committee members would continue to plant the Bank View planter.

**17. Date of the next Amenities Committee Meeting:** Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2025 – Budget Meeting.

**Meeting closed at 8.45pm**