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| <i>Meeting (No)</i> | Annual Council Meeting (1) |
| <i>Time & Date</i> | 19th May 2026 at 6.00pm |
| <i>Location</i> | Neston Town Hall |
| MINUTES | |

Present: Cllrs: Davies (Mayor/Chair), Adderley, Braithwaite, Davies, Dignam-Gill, Doughty, Griffiths, Halford, Hudspeth, Jardine, Kynaston, Marple, D. Ruscoe, N. Ruscoe, Swaffer, Warner and Wastell.

In attendance: Z. Dean (Chief Officer).

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

The meeting was opened by the Mayor Cllr S. Davies, who handed the meeting over to the Chief Officer for the first item.

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| 1 | <p>Election of Chairman</p> <p>Cllr Braithwaite withdrew her nominations due to political reasons, noting that it was custom and practice for councillors within NTC not to run for a political seat in an election year when they hold the office of Mayor or Deputy. Cllr Davies thanked Cllr Braithwaite for her hard work and time served as deputy Mayor during 2025/26.</p> <p>a) The nomination for Cllr Davies was seconded by Cllr D. Ruscoe, It was RESOLVED: To appoint Cllr Simon Davies as Chairman/Mayor of Neston Town Council for the 2026/2027 Civic Year. The vote was unanimous.</p> <p>b) The newly re-elected Chairman of Neston Town Council signed the Mayoral Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of members. The form was witnessed by the Proper Officer of the Council.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Election of Vice Chairman</p> <p>a) Cllrs C. Braithwaite and S. Wastell withdrew their nominations for Deputy Mayor. The nomination for Cllr S. Adderley was seconded by Cllr Warner. The nomination for Cllr D. Ruscoe was seconded by Cllr N. Ruscoe. The Chief Officer handed out ballot papers and a closed ballot was conducted. Votes: Cllr David Ruscoe: 5 votes. Cllr Steve Adderley: 11 votes. One ballot had been left blank. Total 17 ballot papers. It was RESOLVED: To appoint Cllr Steve Adderley as Vice Chairman/Deputy Mayor for the 2026/27 Civic year.</p> <p>b) The newly elected Vice Chairman/Deputy Mayor of Neston Town Council signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office for the role of Vice Chairman (Deputy Mayor), in the presence of members. The form was witnessed by the Proper Officer of the Council.</p> |
| 3 | <p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>No apologies were received for this meeting. All Council members were present at the meeting.</p> |
| 4 | <p>Questions and Comments from Residents</p> <p>No members of the public were present at the meeting.</p> |
| 5 | <p>Minutes of the Meeting</p> |

| | It was RESOLVED: To accept and sign the minutes from the Full Council meeting held on 17 th March 2026. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 6 | Declarations of Interest No declarations of interest were received. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Constitution and Terms of Reference for Standing Committees 2026-27 a) It was RESOLVED: To approve and adopt the Town Council’s Committee Structure. b) It was RESOLVED: To approve and adopt the updated Committee Terms of Reference and Schemes of Delegation for the following Standing Committees: Community & Environment, Finance & Administration, Market & Town Hall and Human Resources. c) Members discussed the committee structure in detail and the following amendments were made as shown below. Now that all Town Councillor vacancies had been filled some committees were over-subscribed. Members were reminded that they can attend additional committee meeting but would not be able to vote. It was RESOLVED: To appoint members to the following committees: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Committee</th> <th>No. of Members</th> <th>Membership</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Finance & Administration</td> <td>7</td> <td>1. Simon Davies (Mayor) 2. Carol Braithwaite 3. Paul Doughty 4. Shirley Hudspeth 5. Sion Jones 6. Pat Kynaston 7. David Ruscoe</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community & Environment</td> <td>7</td> <td>1. Carol Braithwaite 2. Colin Dignam-Gill 3. Janet Griffiths 4. Martin Halford 5. Brenda Marple 6. David Ruscoe 7. Geoff Swaffer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Town Hall & Market</td> <td>7</td> <td>1. Steve Adderley 2. James Jardine 3. Sion Jones 4. Pat Kynaston 5. Brenda Marple 6. Nikki Ruscoe 7. Christine Warner</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HR</td> <td>5</td> <td>1. Simon Davies (Mayor) 2. Steve Adderley 3. Shirley Hudspeth 4. Sion Jones 5. Steve Wastell</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Committee | No. of Members | Membership | Finance & Administration | 7 | 1. Simon Davies (Mayor) 2. Carol Braithwaite 3. Paul Doughty 4. Shirley Hudspeth 5. Sion Jones 6. Pat Kynaston 7. David Ruscoe | Community & Environment | 7 | 1. Carol Braithwaite 2. Colin Dignam-Gill 3. Janet Griffiths 4. Martin Halford 5. Brenda Marple 6. David Ruscoe 7. Geoff Swaffer | Town Hall & Market | 7 | 1. Steve Adderley 2. James Jardine 3. Sion Jones 4. Pat Kynaston 5. Brenda Marple 6. Nikki Ruscoe 7. Christine Warner | HR | 5 | 1. Simon Davies (Mayor) 2. Steve Adderley 3. Shirley Hudspeth 4. Sion Jones 5. Steve Wastell |
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| 8 | Schedule of Council and Committee Meetings for 2026/27 Following a request to move the first M&TH meeting back a week to 23/06/26, It was RESOLVED: To accept the Schedule of Council and Committee meetings, with the above amendment. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | Review of Delegated Arrangements a) Banking Arrangements: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| | <p>It was RESOLVED: To authorise the core members of the Finance and Administration Committee, the Chief Officer and the Finance Manager/RFO to be the authorised signatories, agreeing to sign the banker’s mandate for the Neston Town Council accounts.</p> <p>The Chief Officer noted that the RFO will meet with all members of the F&A Committee to explain the bank’s logon procedures and what will be required.</p> <p>b) Market and Town Hall: It was RESOLVED: To approve delegated authority to the Market & Town Hall Manager as extended to other officers during a time of absence.</p> <p>c) Insurance: It was NOTED: That the Finance and Administration Committee Terms of Reference provide delegated authority to deal with the Council’s insurance requirements.</p> <p>d) Pension Authorisation forms: It was RESOLVED: To authorise the core members of the Human Resources Committee, the Chief Officer and the Finance Manager/RFO to be the authorised signatories for all pension authorisation forms.</p> |
| <p>10</p> | <p>Banking Hub Application for Neston</p> <p>a) Councillors noted that a public meeting would be held at Neston Civic Hall on 26/05/26 regarding the need for a Banking Hub in CH64. Councillors and residents were urged to complete the online survey, as residents and also as businesses, if applicable.</p> <p>b) It was RESOLVED: To work in partnership with NCYC, ward councillors and any other stakeholders. The Chair urged as many councillors are possible to attend the public meeting.</p> |
| <p>11</p> | <p>Appointment of Representatives to External Organisations</p> <p>a) It was RESOLVED: To agree that existing representatives could continue, as such, until the first meeting of the reporting committee, with each delegate to report to the appointed committee or sub-committee.</p> <p>b) It was noted that the Community Partnership Group should be added to the list. It was RESOLVED: To appoint council representatives to the following external organisations: Neston Station Adopters – Cllr S. Wastell Wrexham-Bidston Rail Users’ Association (WBRUA) – Cllr S. Wastell NHS Community Partnership Group – Cllr S. Adderley</p> |
| <p>12</p> | <p>Data Protection Officer</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To renew the services and costs of JDH Services as the Council’s DPO.</p> |
| <p>13</p> | <p>Membership</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To approve the Council’s membership of the following organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheshire Community Action (£100) • National Association of Local Councils via ChALC and annual subscription of £1,631.80 (no VAT) • National Association of Allotments (NAS), renewal due in November 2026 • Society of Local Council Clerks £316.00 |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) and annual subscription fee of £509.00 (no VAT) • Wrexham-Bidston Rail Users' Association (WBRUA), and membership fee of £30.00 (no VAT) |
| 14 | <p>Standing Orders and Financial Regulations</p> <p>It was noted that all changes were highlighted in yellow.</p> <p>a) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the updated Standing Orders for Neston Town Council.</p> <p>b) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the updated Standing Orders for Contracts Neston Town Council.</p> <p>c) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the updated Financial Regulations for Neston Town Council.</p> |
| 15 | <p>Policies and Procedures</p> <p>a) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the revised Procurement Policy.</p> <p>b) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the revised Council Mobile Phones Policy.</p> <p>c) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the revised IT Policy.</p> <p>d) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the revised Privacy Policy.</p> <p>e) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the revised Publication Scheme.</p> <p>f) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the revised Publication Scheme – Information Guide.</p> <p>g) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the revised General Privacy Notice.</p> <p>h) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the revised Data Protection & Document Retention Policy.</p> <p>i) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the revised Subject Access Checklist and Policy.</p> <p>j) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the revised Privacy Policy for Councillors, Staff and Role Holders.</p> <p>k) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the revised Scheme of Delegation for the Market & Town Hall Manager.</p> <p>l) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the revised Personal Data Complaints Policy.</p> <p>m) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the revised Social Media policy, adding "Threads and Blue Sky" to the list of social media sites for possible future use by the Council.</p> <p>n) It was RESOLVED: To adopt the revised Cash Handling Policy.</p> <p>o) It was RESOLVED: To continue to review the remaining policies after the start of the new Council year.</p> |
| 16 | <p>Diversity Champion</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To appoint Cllr S. Adderley as the Diversity Champion.</p> |
| 17 | <p>To Approve the Minutes of the following Committee Meetings</p> <p>a) It was RESOLVED: To accept the minutes of the Community & Environment Committee meetings held on 14/04/26 and 12/05/26.</p> <p>b) It was RESOLVED: To accept the minutes of the Market & Town Hall Committee held on 28/04/26.</p> |
| 18 | <p>Finance</p> |

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| | <p>It was clarified that the documents related to two months of expenditure.</p> <p>a) It was RESOLVED: To approve current account expenditure of £100,678.60 net authorised by the RFO from 01/02/26 to 31/03/26 and Equals card payments of £374.74 net from 01/02/26 to 31/03/26.</p> <p>b) It was RESOLVED: To note the current account income of £11,536.14 Net from 01/02/26 to 31/03/26.</p> <p>c) It was RESOLVED: To agree the reconciliation of the council's three bank accounts to 31/03/2026.</p> <p>The Chair signed all of the financial papers.</p> |
| 19 | <p>Ill Health Liability Insurance</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To approve payment of £1,863.46 for the Council's ill-health liability scheme for the period of 1st April 2026 – 31st March 2027.</p> |
| 20 | <p>Year End Internal Auditor's Report</p> <p>The Chair formally thanked the Finance Manager/RFO for his diligent work on the audit and Year End.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To receive the interim Internal Auditor's Report, noting there are no actions for 2025/26.</p> <p>The Chief Officer clarified that it was usual for Neston Town Council to receive audits with no actions and this is a very good position for the Council to be in.</p> |
| 21 | <p>Annual Return for Financial Year 31st March 2026 (AGAR)</p> <p>a) It was RESOLVED: To receive and approve the Annual Internal Audit Report to 31/03/26.</p> <p>b) All of the individual statements were read out by the Proper Officer and each one was agreed by Council in turn.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To approve Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26. The report was signed by the Chair and the Proper Officer of the Council.</p> <p>c) It was RESOLVED: To approve Section 2 of the Annual Accounting Statement 2025/26. The report was signed by the Chair.</p> |
| 22 | <p>Rialtas Accounts Package Invoice 2026/27</p> <p>a) It was RESOLVED: To approve the £735.60 payment for Omega Cashbook Annual Support and Maintenance Licence for 2026/27.</p> <p>b) It was RESOLVED: To approve the £589.20 payment for Bookings Software Annual Support and Maintenance Licence for 2026/27.</p> <p>c) It was RESOLVED: To approve the £144.00 payment for Making Tax Digital for VAT Submission Annual Subscription for 2026/27.</p> |
| 23 | <p>Noticeboard Monitors</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To accept the following noticeboard monitors:</p> <p>Little Neston – Cllr Braithwaite Parkgate – Cllr Dignam-Gill Westvale – Cllr Wastell Ness – Cllr Jones Town Hall – Council staff</p> |
| 24 | <p>Christmas Lights Switch On</p> |

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| | <p>Cllr Marple introduced this item and explained the reasonings behind the recommendation. Cllr Marple highlighted that switch on events which involved road closures on the High Street had been problematic and difficult to control with inadequate traffic management support services. Staff workloads had been exceeded in previous years to an unacceptable level. The new proposal included moving the switch-on to the Market Square.</p> <p>Members debated the item.</p> <p>It was noted that more councillor volunteers were needed for the event.</p> <p>Cllr Jones requested that M&TH Committee work with C&E regarding finding a suitable location for the additional Christmas tree on Market Square, and that cost savings from the road closure be put towards the tree.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To accept the recommendation.</p> |
| 25 | <p>Locum Chief Officer's Report</p> <p>Cllr Warner thanked the Chief Officer for the tremendous work and the quality of the report. Council took a vote of thanks for all of its officers for their great work, enthusiasm, and approachability.</p> <p>The Mayor thanked the Community Engagement Officer for her help and support throughout his first year in office.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: to receive the report.</p> |
| 26 | <p>Exclusion of the Press and Public</p> <p>To consider 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 | |
| | There was no confidential business. |

Meeting closed at 19:22

Signed: _____ **Dated:** _____