

CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

FULL COUNCIL MEETING (FC2/37)

14th JULY 2026

Neston Town Council hit the ground running at the start of 2026/27. May is always an extremely busy and hectic month for councils with the preparation of the Annual Report for the Annual Town Meeting, followed only a few short weeks later by the Annual Meeting of the Council. At the Annual Meeting, held on 19th May 2026, Neston Town Council unanimously appointed Cllr Simon Davies to his second year in the office. Many councils have found that Mayors serving their terms consecutively benefit from the continuity of the role and find that the first year is very much a steep learning curve with year two strengthening connections and confidence both with other neighbouring councils and within the community. Cllr Steve Adderley was elected as Deputy Mayor for the 2026/27 council year. Steve is excited for his new role and will relish the new experiences and challenges ahead.

Following accepted updates to a wide number of Council policies at the Annual meeting, these have all now been updated, implemented, and new approved versions uploaded to our website. Full Council will be asked to consider further policy renewal at next week's meeting, as we continue our rolling programme of policy renewal.

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, a number of Town Councillors and our Community Engagement Officer attended the Neston Village Fair earlier this month to assist The Junior Council who ran a 'free games for all' stall, featuring traditional fairground games. Our very own Junior Councillor Abigail Franks from Neston Primary School was crowned as this year's Rose Queen.

The next date for the diary is the Summer Pirate themed Market, which will take place on Friday 31st July from 8am – 2pm, featuring lots of free activities, including face painting, a temporary tattoo station, and free prizes for completing the pirate themed market trail. This event is fully supported by Neston Town Council. The guest of honour will be the Whitchurch Town Pirate who will be travelling from afar (via the A41) to help host this annual event. We look forward to seeing you all there.

The improvement works at the front of the Town Hall have now been completed. The original oak doors have been fully refurbished and painted in a beautiful traditional heritage green, the lower windows at the front of the Town Hall have been refurbished and newly painted. The permanent planters next to the front steps have been replenished with new plants and flowers. Brand new, hand-painted *Town Hall* signs, in a sympathetic fashion, have also been installed, in keeping with the building's original design and style. The entire front area has been given a wonderful new lease of life.

The refreshed works continue inside the Town Hall. The Main Hall stage has now been fitted with a stunning set of bespoke velvet gold stage curtains. This proud installation goes hand in hand with the newly sanded and refurbished stage, which was a labour of love, completed in-house, last month by our Caretaker and Market

Officer. The staff team have installed boom-bars to either side of the stage area, enabling additional lights and lanterns to be fitted onto them for theatre performances both this weekend and in the future. The old high-level fluorescent light on the stage was replaced with an LED light and positioned higher up onto the ceiling. The work to fit the spotlights on both sides of the stage has also been completed, providing enough working light for the stage area. Further planned improvement works to the front of the stage will continue in the summer, if budgets allow, pending council approval this month.

NCYC hosted a public meeting regarding the need for a banking hub in the CH64 area on 26th May 2026. Unfortunately, during this process, Neston Town Council's initial application to Access to Cash UK, lodged in March 2026, was rejected. Neston Town Council joined forces with local stakeholders at NCYC and the CWaC Ward Councillors to fast-track a 28-day appeal, after being advised that this was the best route to explore for the Neston area, rather than the town starting a new application from scratch. The premise of the appeal was based on all of the new information that had come to light through local feedback and the well-attended public meeting held at the Civic Hall. The NCYC banking hub survey attracted 308 resident responses and 23 business responses. The overall feedback from residents is that cash machines are often empty and not fully operational. There is nowhere in Neston for customers to meet privately with bank representatives to discuss confidential issues. A banking hub for Neston would benefit both residents and businesses in the wider population of the CH64 area including Little Neston, Parkgate, Burton and Willaston, helping to encourage economic growth, rather than residents and business owners needing to leave the town in order to meet their banking and retail needs elsewhere. Elderly residents are being left behind in the digital banking world, either through lack of understanding, poor access to online services, or fear of scams, as well as through digital isolation. We are keeping everything crossed in the hope that we have done enough through the extensive collaborative work on the appeal so that the banking needs for Neston will be positively reassessed, providing a favourable outcome for banking services in our local area.

