Neston Town Council	*Meeting (No)*	**Full Council Meeting (4)**
	Time & Date	**20th October 2026 at 6.00pm**
	Location	**Neston Town Hall**
	MINUTES	

Present: Cllrs: Davies (Chair), Adderley, Braithwaite, Dignam-Gill, Doughty, Griffiths, Halford, Jones, Kynaston, D. Ruscoe, N. Ruscoe, Swaffer and Wastell.

In attendance: Z. Dean (Chief Officer). Cllr M. Barker (CWaC) and Cllr K. Millar (CWaC). 30 x members of the public.

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

The Mayor read out a statement regarding the Mill Lane (Ness) planning consultation which had been received by some residents in the vicinity of the area.

"It has been brought to our attention that residents are concerned about a possible development for land off Mill Lane surrounding Little Neston and Ness.
We have contacted both the planners (Lichfields UK) and housing developers (Rowland Homes) to request that they hold an in-person consultation event at the Town Hall, for which residents will be invited to voice their concerns. This is ahead of any formal planning application being submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council this year, for residents. We will work with our Ward Councillors on this."

The Mayor read out an extract from the August 2025 Extraordinary Full Council minutes, reiterating the Council's position on proposed areas for any future development which are chiefly sites in NEP02 and NEP03 only.

The Mayor then called the meeting to order.

51 Apologies for Absence

It was RESOLVED: To accept the following apologies for absence:

Cllr Jardine– work commitment
Cllr Hudspeth – illness
Cllr Marple – personal reasons
Cllr Warner – another meeting

52 Declarations of Interest

Cllr S. Wastell declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 69b – West Vale planters.

53 Minutes of the Meeting

It was RESOLVED: To accept and sign the minutes from the Annual Council meeting held on 19th May 2026 as an accurate record of that meeting.

54 Questions and Comments from Residents

Cllr Martin Barker spoke about the updates for Brook Street, noting that the previous 12-month agreement for the site had fallen through but there were two more interested parties.

Cllr Millar spoke regarding item 63a on the agenda, noting Brownfield sites which would benefit from redevelopment: Brook Street site (former Kwik Save building) and former garage sites in the town.

A number of residents wished to speak on planning concerns in Neston, namely Mill Lane, and had prepared a collective response.

	A question was asked: "How can they put in a planning application when the Local Plan is not yet formalised?" Cllr Barker explained that developers can speculate on green belt land. A question was asked: "Will the Council support previous site options?" Cllr Millar noted that Cllr Louise Gittins had also applied for a public meeting regarding possible Mill Lane development and it would be good to hold a public meeting jointly. Cllr Doughty answered the initial question as an architect with no conflict in this proposed development, noting that "The planning process is antiquated; anyone can put a planning application in. There is no the need for an application or even the landowner's permission. This does not mean that support is guaranteed by the council or planning officers. It would be ill-advised to do so without public support. Larger schemes require a longer process." A third resident pointed out that the infrastructure of Mill Lane is not currently there with reference to the road system. *Cllr Dignam-Gill entered the meeting at 6:15pm.* Cllr Doughty continued "The consultation process is an exhaustive and onerous process and very costly. The reason for a consultation is to gain public support. A project such as this cannot be done without public knowledge or the council being informed; residents have to be consulted and a set process must be followed. Until an application has gone in residents are best placed to feedback to developers." Councillors urged residents to lodge their objections directly with the developer and to keep copies of correspondence submitted. Cllr Doughty continued "Consider where reasonable developments in our borough could be. Where is population growth going to be in Neston?" The members of the public present felt the Mill Lane leaflet was misleading and were advised to complain. There was further lengthy discussion on this issue. Following a proposal from Cllr Doughty, seconded by Cllr Adderley, **It was NOTED:** That Neston Town Council is grateful for the actions of residents and the Town Council supports the planning process to ensure residents are supported throughout the planning process. The Council is to reiterate its previous principles which were laid out in August 2025." The Mayor called a two-minute recess to allow members of the public, who wished to leave the meeting at this point, an opportunity to exit.
55	**Committee Minutes**
a)	**It was RESOLVED:** To accept the minutes from the HR Committee meeting held on 08/09/2026.
b)	**It was RESOLVED:** To accept the minutes from the Market & Town Hall Committee meeting held on 22/09/2026.
c)	**It was RESOLVED:** To accept the minutes from the Finance & Administration Committee meeting held on 29/09/2026.
d)	**It was RESOLVED:** To accept the minutes from the Community & Environment Committee meetings held on 06/10/2026.
56	**Policies and Procedures**
a)	**It was RESOLVED:** To approve the revised Recording and Photography at Council Meetings Policy, with one amendment of *should* to *must* under item 7.

b)	**It was RESOLVED:** To approve and adopt the new Urgent Information Procedure Policy.
57	**Full Council Budget and EMR Report**
a)	**It was RESOLVED:** To receive year-to-date budget reports for 2026/27.
b)	**It was RESOLVED:** To receive a report on the EMRs for Full Council 2026/27. Members noted that the overall reserves were on track.
58	**2025/2026 Full Council Year-End Financial Report** Members noted that for the overall summary position the Town Hall & Market had overachieved on its income target. Council thanked the Market & Town Hall Manager and the team for their hard work in overachieving on Town Hall and Market income in 2025/2026. **It was RESOLVED:** To receive Neston Town Council's Year End Financial Report 2025/26 and supporting financial breakdown with associated reports.
59	**External Auditor's Report 2025/2026** **It was RESOLVED:** To receive the External Auditor's Report for 2025/26, noting that there are no matters arising. Council thanked the Finance Manager/RFO for another flawless external audit report with no recorded comments, which is excellent.
60	**Recommendation from Community & Environment Committee** Members were reminded that the CIL budget sits under the F&A committee and any planned expenditure for CIL would need to come as a direct proposal from the F&A committee. Members debated the current traffic flow issues in Neston Town Centre, which had been exacerbated by recent roadworks, access through Neston needed to be maintained for tourism to Parkgate. It was noted that historic monuments should be maintained, however Bushell Fountain had not always held a fixed position. **It was RESOLVED:** To defer this item.
61	**Town Hall Drainage System**
a)	Council noted that a drainage survey of the building was a requirement for the asset transfer project and needed to be investigated.
b)	**It was RESOLVED:** To appoint TechFlow to undertake a mains CCTV drain survey at a cost of £1,300.
c)	**It was RESOLVED:** To allow the Chief Officer a contingency of up to £700 (+VAT) should any unforeseen problems arise during the survey.
d)	**It was RESOLVED:** To draw down up to £2,000 from the Special Project Fund for the purpose of the Town Hall drainage survey. It was noted that if the work can be completed for less, the invoice would reflect this, meaning less money would be drawn down from the Special Project Fund.
62	**Special Project Fund**
a)	**It was RESOLVED:** To approve the cost for the LCC Consultant is drawn down from the Special Project Fund for previously agreed services.
b)	**It was RESOLVED:** To approve that the invoice for the Fisher German building survey is drawn down from the Special Project Fund for the now completed survey, £1925 (+VAT).
63	**Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan – Additional Call for Sites**

	It was RESOLVED: To submit the following Brownfield sites to CWaC: Brook Street, garages on Ringway, garages on Mill Park, any other redundant garage sites within the vicinity of Neston, The Wheatsheaf (Ness) former pub, and any other redundant Brownfield sites within the Town Council's area.
64	**Christmas Closedown 2026** Members noted that the Council offices will close for the festive period from 23/12/26 to 04/01/27.
65	**Chief Officer's Report** **It was RESOLVED:** to receive the report. Members thanked the Chief Officer for a very thorough report.
66	**Date of the next meeting** The next scheduled Full Council meeting would be held on 20th January 2027 at 6pm for final budget setting.
67	**Exclusion of the Press and Public**
	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.
PART 2: Items considered in the absence of the press and public	
68	**Christmas Lights Contract** **It was RESOLVED:** To agree the contract terms and total costs for the previously agreed three-year contract with Continuity Electrical Contractors Limited.
69	**Contract for the Provision and Maintenance of Floral Arrangements**
a)	Council noted that only one company quoted and that the contract can be reviewed if the first year is considered successful. Council requested that the C&E Minute reference (C&E4/48 – 06/10/26) was included within the minutes for clarity: *"Members were informed that invitations to quote had been sent to eight local/regional contractors and that the specification had been advertised on Contract Finder, displayed on all Town Council noticeboards, uploaded to the Town Council's website and publicised via local social media. It was noted that one quotation had been received."* **It was RESOLVED:** To appoint PDQ Landscape Maintenance be a for a one-year contract in the first instance commencing 01/10/27 at a total cost of £26,409.60 (+VAT)
b)	This item relates to watering only. Cllr Wastell abstained from the vote. **It was RESOLVED:** To agree to water and feed the three planters in West Vale at a total cost of £810.00 per annum, including this as part of the schedule for any further years.

Meeting closed at 19.35.

Signed: _____ **Dated:** _____