

CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

FULL COUNCIL MEETING (FC4/65)

20th OCTOBER 2026

Neston Town Council will soon be welcoming its third team of four primary school children to form the new Junior Council for the 2026/27 school year. Thank you to our retiring Junior Councillors and best wishes for your journey into High School.

On 15th July council representatives, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, along with officers, met with Cheshire West and Chester Ward councillors to discuss ways forward for Neston and partnership working. It was agreed that the two councils will meet every quarter, with the next meeting scheduled for later this month. Myself and the RFO had a meeting with CWaC's Property Services Manager on 29th September to discuss Town Hall ongoing maintenance and costs.

At the Extraordinary Full Council meeting which was held on 25th August 2026, Council engaged the services of a consultant from Local Council Consultancy (LCC). We are pleased to have been assigned Adam Keppel-Green BSc BA FSLCC MCMI who is the current Town Clerk of Knutsford and soon to be new Town Clerk of Congleton, over in Cheshire East. Adam has been heavily involved in asset transfer work with his Town Council in Cheshire over a number of years and has 14 years of local council experience. I have been busy compiling and preparing background information for our consultant to make the process for Neston as smooth as possible. We have met to share local knowledge and information, and held an ideas gathering session with the Vision Group to assist the process. The building condition survey approved by Council at the additional meeting in August took place in early September on a fast turnaround. We are working our way through a list of priorities that need to be met as the Town Council considers its vision for the future of Neston Town Hall. We look forward to continue working with Mr Keppel-Green as the Town Council continues its preparations for a draft business plan.

At the meeting on 20th October Council will be asked to accept the new contract for the Floral Maintenance and Greening of Neston, as well as the contract for Christmas lights installation. The Council's Community & Environment Manager has worked tirelessly behind the scenes on these projects and Council will now be in a favourable position moving forward with newly updated contracts for up to three years. Neston has been keen to have replacement Christmas lights for a number of years, having inherited an old lighting scheme from the borough Council. Christmas lighting is a very expensive commodity and the Town Council has been making budgetary savings across several financial year in preparation for the new lights. This Christmas, Neston Town Council is excited and proud to be unveiling a brand-new festive lighting scheme for the town at the Christmas lights switch on

event which is taking place on Saturday 28th November 2026. The Christmas lights switch on event will be a community spirited event featuring Father Christmas's Grotto, and performances from Neston Pirate Samba – we hope you will be able to attend for an afternoon of festive joy.

The next date upcoming for the diary is the October Halloween and Harvest Market, another highlight in our annual markets calendar. This enhanced market will feature a number of special guests. The Council is delighted to be joined again by Wirral Pomona Community Cider Making Group who will be demonstrating their apple press. Visitors to the market can bring their own surplus fruit, to use the presses and take away tasty fresh apple juice. Please do remember to bring a clean empty container for this. There will be an abundance of information about opportunities to volunteer, learning about pruning and other orchard skills. We will also be joined by volunteers from Brimstage Orchard, the Lees Lane Ponds Orchard who help to promote community orchards, tackle waste from surplus apples, and encourage the retention and growing of the many local and historic varieties of apples. The council is also thrilled to be joined by Sunlight Bees who will have their observation hive (weather permitting), and will showcase information on how to make a bee rescue station and how the bees harvest their honey from their hives. Little Actors Theatre Company will be providing a Halloween Tattoo Station. You can join the team from Ness Gardens to create an autumn inspired wreath. Children are invited to enter the free Scarecrow trail and enjoy free face-painting. The event will run from 8am – 2pm, and it is fully supported by Neston Town Council, with all activities free of charge. Halloween fancy dress is optional but encouraged!

The Council is committed to keeping up with UK GDPR laws and data security. This summer we have scoured the building and our offices for any data and paperwork which is out of date and beyond the realms of our data document retention policy. Nineteen bags of shredding were taken away to be confidentially shredded off site. We are currently upgrading our broadband connection to ensure the Town Hall building benefits from significantly faster high-fibre speeds. This will also benefit and increase the capability of our cyber security measures which are already in place.

The flat roof at the front of the Town Hall was jet-washed by our caretaker as part of the Council's public spaces improvement initiative. The front of the stage has been professionally painted in matt black, bringing together the stage refurbishment project in its entirety. Work is also now almost complete on the Main Hall's updated sound system, which has been another big project for the Market & Town Hall Committee this year, to improve user experience and inclusivity.

We are now heading into the autumn/winter budget setting period so please can I remind members to bring your aspirations and ideas for next year to the November committee meetings.

Zoë Dean
Chief Officer
Neston Town Council
15th October 2026



(Above) The refurbished Main Hall stage in all of its glory.