**ALSAGER TOWN COUNCIL**

**ALSAGER CIVIC AND ASSETS COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN ALSAGER CIVIC**

**ON TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER 2026**

Present:
Councillor J Hearne (Chair)
Councillor C Venables (Vice Chair)
Councillor S Butterfield
Councillor P Hubbard (arrived at 7.12pm)
Councillor D Longhurst
Councillor W Whittaker-Large

Councillor R Fletcher (Non Committee member)
Councillor M Unett (Non Committee member)

J Mason (Town Clerk)

0 Members of the Press
6 Members of the Public

**ACA26/30 Councillor Substitution**

Further to Standing order 20.4.5 Councillors may, subject to standing orders, 20.1 and 20.2 appoint a substitute member to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer before the meeting in writing that they are unable to attend and with a nominated substitute Councillor.

To note that:-

a) That, Councillor M Unett was as a substitute for Councillor J Buckley.

b) That, Councillor R Fletcher was as a substitute for Councillor P Williams.

**ACA26/31 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Buckley, R Kain and P Williams.

**ACA26/32 Non Attendance**

No members did not attend and did not give their apologies.

**ACA26/33 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor S Butterfield declared his interest as an allotment holder.

Councillor J Hearne declared her interest as a Trustee of Jane Maddock Homes.

Councillor D Longhurst declared his interest as the Chair of the Cedars Patient Participation Group.

Councillor M Unett declared his interest as Secretary, Trustee and Manager of Alsager Social Club.

Councillor R Fletcher declared his interest as a member of Cheshire East Council and the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee.

**ACA26/34 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the Meeting dated 4 August 2026 were referred to and it was: -

Resolved: That, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Alsager Civic and Assets Committee dated 4 August 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**ACA26/35 Matters Arising**

a) Further to Min. Ref. ACA26/23 dated 4 August 2026, it was reported that the proposed market stalls charges were causing to many complications and the Clerk had revisited and was currently charging £10 per stall and £5 per extra table.

   Resolved: That, the market charges for the Wednesday Market would be £10 per stall and £5 per extra table with immediate effect.

b) Further to Min. Ref. TC26/46 dated 16 June 2026, it was noted that the fence at Lawton Road Allotment Road had been installed.

c) Further to Min. Ref. ACA26/25 dated 4 August 2026, it was noted that the work had been completed to the Civic Boiler.

d) Further to Min. Ref. ACA26/26 dated 4 August 2026, it was noted that the Civic Main Hall lights to be upgraded to 10 new LED halo down lights were due to be completed on 20 October.

**ACA26/36 Public Participation**

One member of the public attended the meeting to make members aware he had brought the old Cadet Hut in Alsager. His intention was to develop it into a community hub and already had been in liaison with community groups. There were concerns in relation to the lack on the car parking and he enquired if there was any grant funding available.

Councillor M Unett explained the Town Council's grant application process.

The other members of the public were from the Alsager Gardens Association, one wished to explain that the membership of the National Allotments Society was only for reduced seeds and products not insurance. This followed with an enquiry to an explanation as to the reason the monies could not be collected by the Town Council and transferred to the AGA to continue individual membership to NAS. There was a query in relation to the proposed refund from the Town Council to the AGA as they felt it was insufficient. One member also enquired if Councillor P Hubbard was a member of the AGA.

The Chair responded that the Clerk would provide more information in relation to the refund to the AGA and Councillor P Hubbard was not a member of the AGA. She also offered to attend the next AGA meeting if they shared the invitation. The Clerk explained that sadly the Town Council could not facilitate membership to the NAS.

**ACA26/37 Proposed fees and charges for Alsager Civic for FY2027/2028**

There was concern that the room hire was operating at a loss at times and a suspicion that hirers were consuming their own alcohol on the premises. The Committee recognised that a deposit system was required on a minimum spend of £500 at the bar. There was a recommendation that the monies would have to be invoiced prior to the event and a refund if necessary would be actioned following the event. A statement was to be added in the booking hire form that it was unacceptable to consume drinks brought off site at a Civic event.

Councillor W Whitaker- Large felt as she had stated previously there needs to a Civic Business Model. The Chair responded this could be agreed at the CDWG.

Councillor C Venables proposed that a Sunday was charged at the same rate as Friday and Saturday.

Resolved:

a) That, the Committee recommends to Full Council that the new pricing structure was adopted for FY2027-28 subject to Sunday hire rates being the same as Friday and Saturday.

b) That, the Committee recommends to Full Council, that a minimum spend of £500 on the bar is introduced on the party package option and a minimum of a 4 hour bar on the room hire option and the £500 bar deposit is paid prior to the event then a refund actioned the following week of the event following the banking as evidence of the bar takings.

**ACA26/38 Alsager Allotments**

The Committee recognised the work this had generated for the office staff and the complications of the new processes being implemented. Councillors Venables and Whittaker Large were very keen that the Town Council were not financially supporting the allotments with the precept and they should be self-sufficient.

The Clerk reported that she had instructed that all allotments holders would pay a £25 deposit from October 2027 but out of area tenants would not charge double if they were a legacy tenant prior to 2024. The invoices had now been sent out and then there would be a clear indication of occupancy levels and the waiting list.
Councillor C Venables asked if there was any indication of the cost of the allotments to the Town Council at this stage. The Clerk replied that she would be able to present these figures at the next meeting.

Resolved:

a) That, the SLA with the AGA would be deferred to the next meeting.

b) That, the refund of £1,563.93 from the Town Council to the AGA for the management of the allotments being bought back in house would be deferred until it was evidenced the works which need to be carried out on the four sites since the transfer has taken place on 1 September.

**ACA26/39 Civic Development Working Group**

Resolved: That, it was noted the next meeting was scheduled for the 20 October at 2pm.

**ACA26/40 Social Media Report**

The Chair was concerned about the level of detail in the reports from the Civic Social Media content creators. She asked the Clerk for a copy of the contract so she could check it against the figures produced for Instagram and Facebook as she felt it was misleading.

Resolved: That, the Chair would challenge the reports and feedback at the next meeting.

**ACA26/41 Public Toilets, Crewe Road**

The Committee debated the Facilities Managers report at length. The members understood the consequences and associated cost that vandalism had at the public toilets but to charge fees to enter the toilet would be too impactful for many residents. Figures from 2023 indicated that 18,000 people visited toilets each year and to implement fees either by card or cash would be a poor reflection on the Town Council. The budget of approximately £18,000 per annum was an acceptable cost to provide the service of public toilets in the town and other ways of managing the vandalism should be undertaken.

Resolved: That, the public toilets would not be chargeable for access.

**ACA26/42 Devolution of Services**

The Clerk had been called to a meeting of Town Clerk's at Congleton Town Hall on 29 September to discuss the principle of process when transferring assets and services from Cheshire East

Council. Cheshire East Council had set up a working group which included three Town Clerk's to ensure the process of transferring assets was stream lined and effective.

These are the principles that the Town Clerks wish Alsager Town Council to support:-

General Principles

a) Cheshire East Council should create a list of assets and services (by type) which it promotes for transfer.
b) Transfers should be offered consistently to all applicable town/parish councils.
c) Both sides will cooperate to manage any arising TUPE implications.

Asset Transfer

The following principles should underpin asset transfers from Cheshire East Council to Town and Parish Councils.

a) Assets will be transferred for a consideration of £1.
b) There will be no 'dowry' payment – assets transferred in present condition.
c) There will be no ongoing funding from CEC for future maintenance, all ongoing costs assumed by the town/parish council.
d) The Freehold will be transferred.
e) The transfer will include restrictions to protect the asset which, whilst protecting any investment made by the town/parish council, may include:
    i. Tapered overage agreement over a period of 15 years OR
    ii. Option agreement to buy back the asset for the improvement value OR
    iii. Restriction on title requiring consent of Cheshire East Council for disposal
f) Transfers of public open space will usually include covenants prohibiting the construction of buildings except those which are ancillary to its use as public open space.
g) Each side will be responsible for their own legal costs.
h) Town/parish councils will use an agreed legal firm to streamline legal work in transfer programmes.

Service Transfer

The following principles should underpin service transfers from Cheshire East Council to Town and Parish Councils.

a) Town/parish councils to have delegated authority via Local Government Act 1972 s101 to fully deliver any services which it does not have express powers for
b) Any transfer of service will include a SLA setting out clearly the minimum standards to which a service must be delivered with town/parish councils having discretion on service delivery above this standard

The Committee at this stage do not want the transfer of any assets but agree that a process would be of benefit.

Resolved: That, the Committee recommends to Full Council that they support the suggested principles for the transfer of assets from Cheshire East to Town and Parish Council's.

**ACA26/43 Exclusion of Public and Press**

At the invitation of the Chair it was: -

Resolved: That, in accordance with the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings Act 1960 as amended the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they could involve the likely disclosure of private and confidential information, including staffing and salary issues.

**ACA26/44 Civic Staff Absence**

Resolved:

a) That, the Committee noted the effect of a long term absence was impacting the operation of the Civic.

b) That, the Town Clerk noted due to the impact of no civic credit card the Deputy Civic Manager had been allocated an additional credit card to assist the operation.

**ACA26/45 Civic Staffing Structure Review**

Resolved:

a) That, the Committee recommend to Full Council the new staffing structure as in the enclosure pack subject to the approval of the Personnel Committee which include the following recommendations:-

i. To permanently reduce the General Assistant post to 16 hours with immediate effect.

ii. To permanently reduce the Civic Admin post to 7 hours from January 2027 and increase to SCP10-14.

iii. To permanently increase the Finance Admin contract by 7 hours per week, to fill the Civic Admin role, these additional hours will be worked on one day at Alsager Civic as Civic Admin. The post holder will remain on a standard contract for all hours at SCP 10-14.

b) To note the budget implications for FY26/27 and FY27/28.

**ACA26/46 Civic Staffing Quarterly Position**

The Clerk noted that the Deputy Civic Managers overs had been paid from July to September.

Resolved: That, the report was noted.

**ACA26/47 Town Office Lease**

Resolved:

FINAL

a) That, the Chair and the Clerk were granted delegated authority to liaise with the solicitors for the most preferred outcome on determining the lease with Cheshire East on 3 Lawton Road due to the planning permission approval for the extension of the Civic.

b) That, the Committee recommended to Full Council £3,000 from General Reserves to pay for the remaining work on the lease for 3 Lawton Road to Hill Dickenson Solicitors.

c) That, the Committee noted there was an overspend of £433 to Hill Dickenson Solicitors on legal fees to date due to the length of time on negotiations from 2023.

The meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m. and concluded at 9:30 p.m.

Signed by Councillor J Hearne
Chair

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