



THE CONSTITUTION

1. Name

The initiative will be known as the **Congleton Partnership**, hereinafter referred to as 'the Partnership'.

2. Historical Context

Congleton Partnership was established in 2006 to take forward the Congleton Market Town Initiative in an inclusive manner. It adopted its first Constitution in January 2007 and revised it in May 2008, to enable it to make the transition from Market Town Initiative to long term Town regeneration.

3. Vision Statement

The Partnership is an association of organisations and individuals committed to working together in order to improve the quality of life for Congleton Town (and surrounding area) residents and ensure continued prosperity for local businesses. It provides the interface at Town level for private, public and the third (voluntary and community) sectors and acts to support the appropriate department for the area of the principal local authority. Its vision statement is:

' We want to work together to ensure the sustainability of Congleton Town as a vibrant, locally distinctive Market Town, which is able to provide the facilities and quality of life to attract and retain residents, workers and visitors of all ages'

4. Key Objectives

A number of objectives have been identified through public consultation exercises and the completion of the initial Market Town Healthcheck and Town Centre Plan.

- 1) To be a strategic partner with the Town Council to formulate plans for the Town, linked to the objectives of relevant regional and sub-regional strategies and including the Congleton Town Centre Plan (or Area Action Plan) and Congleton Regeneration Strategy.
- 2) To work towards creating a clean, safe, accessible, culturally enhanced environment which complements the built and natural heritage of Congleton.
- 3) To support efforts to increase the capacity of the skill base of the populace.
- 4) To support and enhance businesses in general but specifically the retailing sector.
- 5) To build upon the local distinctiveness.
- 6) To increase accessibility and improve local, sustainable transport links.
- 7) To improve communication links both internally and externally.
- 8) To support Town Centre Management.

5. Principles

- a) To work in partnership
- b) To communicate openly and effectively

- c) To work effectively with statutory bodies
- d) To ensure meaningful engagement with all of the Town's community
- e) To promote community cohesion
- f) To encourage partners and stakeholders to operate efficiently and effectively in response to our needs and wishes, and to seek solutions
- g) To adhere to Best Value principles
- h) To undertake work that has due regard to safe and legitimate practices

The Partnership will be apolitical and non-sectarian.

6. The role of Congleton Partnership

Congleton Partnership is committed to identifying public needs and goals and facilitating the delivery of projects by:

- 1 Establishing an agenda for change
- 2 Attracting Investment
- 3 Enabling joint working within the local community
- 4 Contributing to the core strategy and helping to deliver the Community Plan at Town level.

7. Geographical area of responsibility

The Partnerships key objectives focus on the wards of Congleton Town and those surrounding rural areas that rely on the services and facilities of the Town.

8. Affairs of the Partnership

The general affairs of the Partnership shall be directed and managed by a committee known as the Executive Group (formerly Executive Steering Group) who shall meet not less than 4 times per year plus an AGM

Specific areas of interest and relevant actions within the Action Plan will be directed and managed by sub-groups who shall meet as appropriate and report directly to the Executive. They will generally, but not exclusively, be task and finish in nature and will be reviewed at the Annual Meeting.

9. Affiliations

The Partnership may join, support or affiliate to other initiatives when it is deemed necessary in the realisation of its objectives. The Executive Group will agree affiliations.

10. Membership

a) The Partnership

- i. Residents, Businesses, Community & Voluntary Groups, Schools, Churches, Learners, that live, work or learn within the area of responsibility are invited to become partnership members, irrespective of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, nationality or political or religious opinion.
- ii. Associations and organisations whether corporate or unincorporated (including national or international branches) which operate within the area of responsibility and are voluntary or non-profit distributing shall be known as affiliated groups.

- iii. All statutory authorities in whose administrative area the area of responsibility lies shall be automatically offered membership.

b) The Executive Group

- iv. The Executive shall have 20 voting members including a Chair, Vice Chair and the Chairs of Sub-Groups.
- v. Representation from the Town Council, and the principal council.
- vi. Up to four members of the local business community.
- vii. Up to two young people (under 21) appointed by Secondary Schools, other Youth organisations or Congleton Town Council's Youth Committee.
- viii. 1 Representative of surrounding rural Parishes approved by the Parishes.
- ix. Up to 8 representatives other than those who fall into the above categories.
 - o Supported by an officer or Administrator approved by the Executive Group.
 - o Individual projects may be managed by a project specific manager.
 - o A member of the local community will chair the Executive, and as of August 2007 should be independent of the Councils (including affiliated groups or statutory authorities) represented.
 - o The Chair shall retire from office at the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting but may be re-elected.

i) Sub Groups

- i. Each Sub Group will elect their own Chair, who will be a member of the Executive.
- ii. Sub Groups will consist of a blend of volunteers and advisory bodies with knowledge, experience or expertise pertinent to the groups 'theme'.
- iii. Advisory bodies and agencies will be invited at the joint discretion of the Sub Group Chairs but will carry no voting powers.
- iv. Sub Group Chairs may make decisions within the group providing they meet the vision ,key objectives and principles of the Partnership and will refer to the Executive for clarification/approval.

11. Appraisal of Projects

- v. The Executive Group shall appraise projects before passing to the Projects & Finance Committee who will monitor the progress of the said projects. Projects & Finance to make decisions on small funding support requests from sub groups up to £1k, there after major funding requests to be appraised by The Executive.

- vi. The Sub Group Chair proposing any project may attend the Appraisal meeting but will carry no vote relating to decisions made regarding their project.
- vii. The Accountable Body (Congleton Town Council) reserves the ultimate right to sanction or refuse any proposal endorsed by the Executive Group.
- viii. Any Member must declare any personal interest or interest of any organisation of which he/she is a member.
- ix. No member of the Executive Group with a personal interest in a specific project may be included in the decision making process in relation to that project.
- x. Should a funding opportunity become available with an application submission deadline prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Executive Group the accountable body have the right to endorse the application.

12. Resignation and Termination of Membership

Any member of the Executive Group may resign his/her membership by giving the Officer, Chair or Vice Chair written notice to that effect.

The Executive Group may, by resolution passed at a meeting thereof, terminate or suspend the membership of any member, if in its opinion, his/her conduct is prejudicial to the interests and objectives of the Partnership, provided that the individual membership or representative of the member organisation shall have the right to be heard by the Executive Group before the final decision is made.

13. Rules of procedure at all meetings

- 1 **Voting:** Any question arising at a meeting of the Executive or its Sub Groups shall be decided by a majority of those present and able to vote. In the case of equality of votes the Chairman shall have the casting vote.
- 2 **Quorum:** Any four members of the Executive Group shall constitute a quorum.
- 3 **Minutes:** the Executive Group shall keep Minutes and the respective secretary shall enter therein a record of all proceedings and resolutions.
- 4 **Declaration of Interest:** Members must declare interest of any kind in projects where Partnership decisions will impact on their stated interest.

14. Annual General Meeting

Once each calendar year, an Annual General Meeting of the Partnership shall be held at such time and place, as the Executive Group shall determine, being not more than twelve months after the adoption of this constitution. At least 14 days clear notice shall be posted in a conspicuous place or places in the area of responsibility.

The business of the AGM shall be:

- i. To receive the Annual Report of the Executive Group giving an account of the work of the Partnership and its activities during the preceding year.
- ii. To receive the accounts of the Partnership, if appropriate, for the preceding financial year.
- iii. To note the names of the persons appointed as members of the Executive Group.

- iv. To arrange for a social audit to be undertaken, if appropriate, to assess the impact on the quality of life the Partnership activities have had in its area of responsibility.
- v. To elect a Chair & Vice Chair for the forthcoming year.
- vi. To consider establishing or continuing any sub groups
- vii. To consider and vote on any proposals to alter this constitution.
- viii. To consider any other business of which due notice is given.

15. Records

Congleton Partnership Healthcheck and associated action plan, Town Centre Plan and other strategic and implementation plans, along with agendas and minutes of meetings will be available for inspection via the office of Congleton Partnership, or Congleton Town Council as accountable body or the office of the contracted delivery body.

Financial Information will be presented to the Public at an Annual General Meeting.

Agendas and minutes of all meetings will be circulated to all members of the Executive Group.

16. Finance

Congleton Town Council will be the accountable body for Congleton Partnership. The Partnership will not be directly responsible for holding funds but will be responsible for prioritising project-funding applications.

Financial reports and records will be the responsibility of the Town Clerk and will be presented at Annual General Meetings or periodically at the request of the Executive Group.

17. Employees

The Partnership will not be directly responsible for employing staff. Employment, development and management responsibility for the Project will sit with Congleton Town Council, who may contract this to a separate delivery organisation.

The Executive Group may make recommendations to guide and steer staff but ultimate line-management and directive responsibility lies with the employer.

18. PR and Media protocol

Press and media enquiries shall be referred to the Officer, Chair, Vice Chair and/or Group Chairs who will have the authority to prepare / make a press release on behalf of The Partnership.

19. Powers

In furtherance of the objectives but not otherwise the Executive Group may exercise the following powers:

- 1 Appraising new projects presented to the Partnership for inclusion in the Action Plan
- 2 Submit formal funding applications for projects contained within the Action Plan (with ultimate approval by the Accountable Body)
- 3 Power to co-operate with charities, voluntary bodies and statutory authorities operating in furtherance of the objectives and to exchange information and advice with them
- 4 Insuring and arranging insurance cover and indemnifying its members and voluntary workers from and against all such risks in the course of the performance of their

duties, as may be thought fit.

- 5 Power to do all such lawful things as necessary for the achievement of the objectives.

20. Disbandment

Disbandment may be decided upon by a simple majority of total membership at a General Meeting, which has been called by the Executive Group for this purpose. The Executive Group shall have the power to dispose of assets held by the organisation, in accordance with the objectives.

21. Indemnity

In the executions of the trusts hereof no member of the Executive Group shall be liable:

- 1 For any loss to the property of the Partnership by any reason of any improper investment made in good faith (so long as he/she shall have sought professional advice before making such an investment)
- 2 For the negligence or fraud of any agent engaged by him/her or by any other member of the Executive Group in good faith (provided reasonable supervision shall have been exercised)

22. Alterations to Constitution

Any proposals to alter this constitution must be delivered in writing to the Chair of the Executive Group not less than 14 days before a General Meeting at which it is to be considered. Any alteration will require approval by a minimum of two-thirds of the total membership present at a General Meeting.

23. Equality & Diversity

The Partnership will recognise the diversity within the community and seek to reflect this in the work it undertakes within that community. The Partnership will treat all its Members, partners and citizens with dignity and respect and free from discrimination.

24. Urgency

In cases of Urgency, the Officer of Congleton Partnership and Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Executive, may take any decision which the Executive is entitled to take, providing this action and the reason for it being considered a matter of urgency, be reported to the next meeting of the Executive.

25. Accommodation

The Congleton Partnership will, in accordance with the recommendation in the Congleton Town Centre Plan, seek to obtain accommodation which will also be used to facilitate other community/voluntary groups within the Town.

September 16th 2014.