

Knutsford Town Council

Annual Report
2014/15

Knutsford Town Council

looking to the past, **the present** and the future

www.knutsfordtowncouncil.gov.uk

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Introduction from your Mayor

Welcome to the Town Council's Annual Report to Knutsfordians for the civic year 2014/15. I hope you find it interesting and thought provoking as it details what has been happening in the year and highlights the council's plans for the future.

A review of the year would be incomplete without noting, with some sadness, the passing of former Mayors Beth Page and Wilson Hamman, Alan Jackson former Town Clerk and Cllr Clive Nicholson who died whilst still serving as the Town Councillor. Each an inspiration of public service.

Thanks must go to all the town's councillors (all themselves unpaid volunteers) and especially those stepping down in May. I trust they will cherish their newly found many hours of extra free time.

The Town Meeting witnessed presentations from many local third sector groups. Together they form a 'golden thread' which stitches the fabric of society together and makes Knutsford the town we know and love. Let's see how we can help them and in so doing, all benefit.



Cllr Neil Forbes
Town Mayor 2014/15



2020 Vision

In February 2014 the Council set out its 2020 Vision and during the past year set out its action plan of how it would meet the 13 key aims.

We are currently 21% of the way towards meeting our aims. During the past year we have produced a community group directory and undertaken a survey of all community venues in Knutsford. We have also produced a register of public spaces and are about to launch a business welcome pack.

You can view the full 2020 Vision and our action plan on our website.

Market Transfer



In July the transfer of the Market Hall and Market Rights was finalised. The second asset to transfer back to Town Council ownership, the council immediately set to work on demonstrating the benefit to the traders.

A new information display was installed along with displays for posters utilised for promoting the market and community events.

A new seating area was installed which has proved very popular and the Council welcomed a new trader – Jacqui, whose

stall was opened by Coronation Street star Bill Roach.

We have set out to make improvements to the front of the building and will be celebrating the 'Love your Local Market' campaign in July.

The Council is also undertaking a trial re-launch of the weekly outdoor market and investigating options for rebuilding the market hall.

Finance

The 2015/16 precept for the Town Council was set at £241,846 a 7.34% increase. The total budget for the Town Council for this financial year is £454,306.

The precept represents a band D rate of £42.95 (2014/15 = £40.07)

In addition to everything we have been delivering the new features of the 2015/16 budget include introducing a Town Ranger, supporting the CCTV in the town centre, ensuring Knutsford has a twice weekly Citizens Advice Bureau service and supporting

Knutsford Heritage Centre to help it become an accredited museum.

The Town Council has also committed to improved Christmas illuminations and funds toward the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Council is open and transparent about its finances, publishing online payment schedules, its full budget and previous audits.

We also publish routine statements on our Income/Expenditure compared to the budget.

Looking Forward

The Council is set to have another busy year ahead in 2015/16. We will be finalising the transfer of the Allotment sites and starting the process of transferring the Council Offices from Cheshire East Council.

A trial of a new Outdoor Market has been arranged and if successful could become a regular fixture.

We will be continuing to work with the Royal British Legion to establish a town centre war memorial through the relocation of the Haron Baronian statue.

We shall be continuing to drive forward a Neighbourhood Plan for Knutsford and work with Cheshire East Council on the King St enhancement scheme.



A new Town Ranger will be joining the Council very shortly to help make Knutsford a cleaner and tidier town and the Council will be looking to install a 'Changing Places' toilet enabling the carers of those with severe disabilities to visit and use our town centre.

The Council will be completing more of the actions from our 2020 Vision including investigating how open spaces can be improved and establishing the town's priorities for highway improvements.

Council Website

In March the Council launched a new website to make access to information and news even easier.

The new website hosts an array of information on the Town Council and regular news updates.

It also features more community information, from a directory of local organisations, the community



emergency plan and local services.

Visit the website to find out more - www.knutsfordtowncouncil.gov.uk

Town Awards

In June the Town Council presented the second Town Awards with Civic Awards going to Derek Empson, Kevin Hollins and Vivienne Pike.

The Community Award was presented to the Welcome and the Business Award to Gusto.



The new Youth Award was presented to Emily May Walker for her work with the 2nd Toft Guides.

Community Grants

£20,000 was given away through the Council's community grant scheme with grants made to Knutsford in Bloom, Knutsford Royal May Day, Community Spirit, Egerton Pre-School and many more organisations.

A number of projects have benefited from the funding such as

helping towards new information boards at Knutsford Heath, start-up costs for a Youth Orchestra as well as helping with the publicity for the St Cross Christmas Tree festival and operation costs of the job advice clinic.

The Council has committed to giving £29,000 in 2015/16.

Town Guide

In July a new Town Guide was released. At 56 pages the guide covers all aspects of Knutsford and focuses on introducing what Knutsford has to offer to visitors and new residents.

Produced by Burrows Communications at no cost to the Town Council, it is the 30th edition of the Official Town Guide, the earliest of which was in the 1920s. It was compiled by the Town Clerk with

content provided by local visitor attractions, such as the Heritage Centre and Tatton Park.

The guide features an A2 pull-out map of Knutsford as well as sections on Markets, the Moor, history and the town centre.

You can collect a copy from the Market Hall or view on the Council's website.

Looking Back

Here are some of the highlights of the work carried out by the committees over the past year...

Lantern Parade

The Events committee oversaw a new addition to the festive calendar in 2014- the Lantern Parade which saw around 100 people parade through the town centre with hand-made lanterns.

Wallwood Improvements

The Operations committee saw new paths laid out in Wallwood improving the area for users of the wood. The Council has also arranged two new benches, two new trees and a new sign.

Bench Refurbishment

The Environment Committee arranged for 9 benches in the town centre to be restored to a like-new condition.

Blue Plaque Scheme

The Environment Committee introduced a Blue Plaque Scheme to govern the installation of new commemorative plaques across the town.

Cemetery Improvements

The Operations Committee has been working with Cheshire East Council to improve the cemetery at Tabley Hill. The committee also arranged for the re-standing of fallen headstones to improve the look of the cemetery.



Christmas Weekend

The Events Committee oversaw the most successful Christmas Weekend, with a two-day street market and the Light Switch On event.

War Memorial

The Environment Committee has overseen the investigations into establishing a new town centre war memorial through the relocation of the Haron Baronian statue.

Empty Space

The Operations Committee has been looking into options for utilising empty space at the toilet buildings and is currently working with Scottish Power to see the installation of a new sub-station at King Street.

Sessions House

The Council arranged a public meeting to represent the community's wishes for the future of the Sessions House and has lobbied our MP and the Minister for Justice.

Neighbourhood Plan

Planning for the future is at the heart of the Town's motto and the Council's 2020 Vision.

In October the Council held a public meeting with the community expressing strong support for a Neighbourhood Plan being developed. The Neighbourhood area was set as the Parish of Knutsford.

The plan will cover eight key themes of Housing, Town Centre & Shopping,

Health, Heritage, Getting Around, Environment, Green Spaces & Leisure, Education & Community and Employment.

The Council is being supported by Cheshire Community Action and Cheshire East Council and needs as many volunteers to join the working groups as possible. If you would like to be involved, please contact the Town Clerk.

How the Council is Organised



The Town Council comprises 15 elected members (next elections held May 2015) and operates a committee structure with 6 committees.

In addition the committees a number of working groups carry out research and report into a parent committee. These working groups do not have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Town Council.

The Town Council employs three full time office staff, the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Mayor's PA. The Town Council also now employs a part time market cleaner and will be recruiting a part time Town Ranger early in the 2015/16 civic year.

Contact the Council

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Monday to Friday
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