

Knutsford Town Council

Annual Report
2015/16

Knutsford Town Council

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

www.knutsfordtowncouncil.gov.uk

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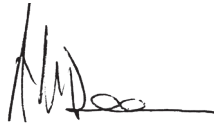
Introduction from your Mayor

It has been a truly fulfilling year as your Town Mayor and a pleasure to lead the council over the past twelve months.

This annual report highlights some of what we have achieved throughout the past year and what we are looking to achieve during the next.

I would like to thank my fellow councillors for the time they have given over the past year and the council's officers for their work.

I would also like to thank the numerous organisations which have invited me to their events during my time as Mayor; it is truly fantastic to see how vibrant a community we have and I am proud the Town Council is a key part of this.



Cllr Tony Dean
Town Mayor 2015/16



Allotment Transfer

The third asset transfer from Cheshire East Council completed in July 2015; the allotment sites at Sparrow Lane and Warren Avenue.

The allotments have been transferred through a 125 year lease to the Town Council; this follows the freehold transfer of public toilets and markets.

We will be working closely with the Allotment Society to improve facilities at the two sites and promote



the allotments to residents.

After a small investment to improve the sites from the town council the allotments will cover their own costs with all money generated through allotment rents being invested back into the two sites.

2020 Vision

The 2020 Vision was adopted in February 2014, setting out our key aims through to 2020.

We are now 35% through meetings our aims and during the past year have reviewed the schedule of Listed

Buildings in Knutsford, consulted on improvements to green spaces and began work on a number of our other aims too.

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

Neighbourhood Plan

The Town Council has made some steady progress in the Neighbourhood Plan over the past year, establishing a number of working groups across the key themes.

We are currently developing the first community survey which will help

shape the direction the Neighbourhood Plan goes in.

If you are interested in finding our more, or to get involved, visit the Neighbourhood Plan website:

www.knutsfordneighbourhoodplan.org.uk

Town Awards

In June the third annual Town Awards were presented as part of Civic Sunday. Following the Civic Service, awards were presented across four categories by the Town Mayor and a representative of the sponsors, Forum of Private Business.

The first of the three Civic Awards went to Clive Heath in recognition of his 30 years of service to the Knutsford Lions and his voluntary maintenance of the shrub beds and land on Bexton Lane.

The second award went to former Mayor Vivien Davies recognising the years of service she had given to the community as a councillor and the numerous community organisations she had been a part of including Friends of the Moor and the Civic Society.

The final civic award went to Jimmy Evans for his work on Longridge and Shaw Heath delivering football to more than 70 youngsters.

Commendations went to Elenor McAndrew, for going above and beyond the call of duty in her work at the Welcome Café and Nigel Muirhead for his vital roles in a number of community sporting groups.

The Youth Award went to Hannah Newton for her work with Community Spirit and the Welcome helping with youth activities.



The business award was presented to Sheldon's Dairy for supporting numerous community groups including the Knutsford FC and Knutsford Beer Festival as well as running a lottery in aid of Eat Cheshire Hospice.

The winner of the Community Award was Knutsford Beer Festival Committee in recognition of both delivering a successful and popular town centre event and for raising more than £9,000 for local charities in just two years.

There will be no awards in 2016, but they will return for Civic Sunday 2017.

Elections 2015

All out elections were held in May with 12 of the 15 seats being contested.

The Council now comprises 12 Conservative councillors and three Independents.

Five new councillors joined the council: Charlotte Greenstein, James Power, Jonathan Farber, Christine Gray, Hayley Wells-Bradshaw.

Town Ranger

June also saw the introduction of the Town Council's Town Ranger service. Robin joined the Council as part-time Town Ranger and has undertaken an array of tasks across Knutsford.

We created the service to tackle all those little jobs you see and think "why does somebody not sort that out".

Robin is equipped with a range of tools to help him efficiently undertake a wide range of tasks in the town, from weeding, bench maintenance, litter picking, cleaning signs, renovating street furniture and much more. Robin keeps a watchful eye on the town, reporting issues to Cheshire East Council and other responsible bodies as well as undertaking work himself.

In the Town Centre Robin has refurbished the cast iron bins, seen that the street furniture and signage is routinely cleaned and maintained and removed fly-posting.

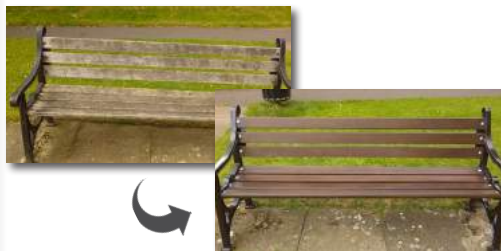
The triangle of land on Hollow Lane received his attention in the summer with the bench being refurbished, overgrowth removed and the bollards and railings re-painted.

Numerous road signs have been cleaned, bus shelters washed and alleys cleared and areas weeded. You will have probably seen Robin around town



in our distinctive van.

This service costs just under £15,000 per year and we have received some fantastic feedback from residents who appreciate seeing all these minor jobs quickly resolved.



Community Venues

As part of our 2020 Vision we have produced a directory of community meeting venues.

These are published under the community section of our website and include information on how to book and the facilities available.

Finances

The 2016/17 precept for the Town Council was set at £247,108 a minor increase of £5,262.

The precept, which is collected with Council Tax, funds the work of the Town Council in addition to the income it derives from its assets and sponsorships. In 2015/16 the precept worked out at £42.95 per year for each Band D property in Knutsford and this increases from April to £43.49, an increase of just 54p a year or 1.26%.

One of the new budget lines for the

Council is £35,000 towards the production of the Neighbourhood Plan which will be supplemented by external grant funding.

Other new budget lines include £2,000 set aside for improvements to public open spaces, £1,000 for investigating potential highway improvements.

The Council has also increased budgets allocated to the Cemetery to allow further improvement works to take place and agreed a grant of £6,000 towards the Canute Millennial events.

Community Grants

Almost £30,000 of community grants were given over the past year by the Finance Committee. £9,000 went to the Heritage Centre to support their ambitions to become an accredited museum and £10,000 went to Knutsford in Bloom for their floriculture projects.

Community Spirit received £3,400 towards the numerous projects they undertake in Longridge and Shaw Heath, whilst we awarded £1,100 to Cheshire Search and Rescue towards new radios for their team.

£200 went to the Photographic Society for new award trophies and £360 went

to the Knutsford Lions for their Young Leaders in Service scheme awards.

We purchased equipment for the Tabley Road Speedwatch group and provided a £500 grant to the Knutsford Youth Choir to help it get established.

£1,500 was given to the Brook Street Chapel to help fund emergency roof repairs and Knutsford Cricket Club received £245 for the purchase of a new net!

If you are in a community organisation and want to apply for a grant this year, contact the Town Clerk or find out more on the council's website.

Market Hall

In our first full year of managing the Market Hall, we have delivered a number of improvements, continuing to demonstrate the benefit of locally run facilities.

In May 2015 the market took part in the national Love your Local Market campaign, where we ran a number of competitions supported by the traders, which helped gather some great feedback and testimonials from users of the market.

We've greatly increased the amount of publicity with an aim of increasing the footfall. This has been helped by bringing in a new operator for the Café which saw it rebranded and fully refurbished and a new bread stall – filling a key missing gap in the offering at the hall.

The front of the market was refurbished and the entrance area was decorated too, creating a more welcoming area.



For Christmas we used some of our old town centre Christmas lights to add some festive cheer to the Market Hall.

Working with the traders we also expanded the opening hours of the market, adding a new market day meaning the market now trades every Thursday.

Over the next year we will continue to improve the market, firstly by installing a radio for ambience and installing new lighting inside.

How is the Council Organised?

The Town Council comprises 15 elected members and operates a committee structure with seven 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 Clerk and Mayor's PA. The Town Council also now employs a part time market cleaner and a part time Town Ranger!

Looking Back

Christmas Lights

The Events Committee arranged a new Christmas lighting scheme for the town centre

Christmas Weekend

The Events Committee oversaw another successful Christmas Market; although the second day was cancelled due to poor weather.

Lantern Parade

The second annual Lantern Parade was held in December and featured amazing lanterns and was followed by the Crib Service.

Open Space Survey

We surveyed residents on their thoughts for improvements to open green spaces. The results are on our website and will help inform the Neighbourhood Plan.

Commemorative Tree

To celebrate HM The Queen's 90th Birthday we planted an Oak tree on Higher Town Green.

Finger Posts

The Environment Committee has renewed the finger posts which help direct visitors around the town centre.

Parking Enforcement

The Town Council has taken on directing the parking wardens. Still employed by



CEC with the Town Council helping to set the key areas and times to tackle parking issues.

Children's Centre

The Town Council strongly objected to the de-designation of the Knutsford Children's Centre and has continued to engage with Cheshire East Council on its future.

Listed Buildings Review

The Planning Committee has reviewed the schedule of listed buildings in Knutsford and will be submitting applications to have a number of additional historic buildings protected.



Looking Forward

Blue Plaques

The Environment Committee has agreed the installation of five new blue plaques which will be installed over the next year.

War Memorial

The Council has been working to establish a new town centre war memorial and it is hoped this will be completed during 2016.

Cemetery Improvements

Our Assets Committee will be continuing to work to improve the Tabley Hill Cemetery, including installing more benches and seeking to increase use of the Chapel.

2020 Vision

We will be continuing to work towards meeting the aims we set out in our 2020 Vision.

Empty Spaces

We are aiming to conclude our investigations into utilising redundant space in our public toilets; putting it to use.

Quality Status

We are aiming to achieve Quality Gold Council status to demonstrate we meet best practice in governance, community leadership and council development.

Asset Transfers

We will be continuing to develop



business cases for the transfer of the Council Offices and a number of open spaces.

War Memorial Hospital

We will be pushing for some community payback in the event of a sale of the War Memorial Cottage Hospital.

Tour of Britain

Working with Cheshire East Council we have secured the Tour of Britain coming through Knutsford twice and will be working to ensure it brings the maximum benefit to the town.

Footpath Improvements

We will be investigating improvements to the public rights of way and various ginnels in Knutsford and working with CEC to deliver these.

Contact your Councillors

You can contact any of your town councillors by letter, phone or e-mail.
Each councillor has a dedicated council e-mail address:

firstname.lastname@knutsfordtowncouncil.gov.uk

Bexton Ward

Tony Dean	8 Trevone Close	01565 650 527
Christine Gray	8 Glebelands Road	01565 331 131
Simon Hutchence	23 Queen Street	01565 641 906

Nether Ward

Stewart Gardiner	23 Queen Street	01565641 906
Christopher Gray	8 Glebelands Road	01565 331 131
James Power	58 Stanley Road	07521 067 214

Nobury Booths Ward

Charlotte Greenstein	16 Oakleigh	01565 228 297
Jan Nicholson	39 Warren Avenue	01565 751 197
Hayley Wells-Bradshaw	35 Chelford Road	07841 417 832

Over Ward

Yvonne Bancroft	Beech House, Thorneyholme Drive	01565 631 833
Peter Coan	2 Birch Grove	01565 632 159
Jonathan Farber	1 Grasfield Way	01565 760 600
Neil Forbes	69 Westfield Drive	01565 633 465
Julian Goodrich	42 Heron Close	07876 763 942
Andrew Malloy	29 Thorneyholme Drive	07751 231 444

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