



# Annual Report 2018/19

**Town Mayor**  
Cllr Peter Coan

**Town Clerk**  
Adam Keppel-Green

**Council Offices**  
Toft Road  
Knutsford  
WA16 6TA

[www.knutsfordtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.knutsfordtowncouncil.gov.uk)

# A word from the Town Mayor

Welcome to the 2018/19 Annual Report of Knutsford Town Council.

Almost twelve months ago I had the honour of being elected as Mayor of Knutsford for the second time – and what a great twelve months it has been. From representing Knutsford in our neighbouring towns to recording with the Knutsford Talking Newspaper or opening the new MUGA at Manor Park School the community has kept me busy as I had the pleasure of attending over 160 engagements.

On top of this I have attended over 60 meetings of the council and as this report testifies, it has been a busy year for the town council. I would like to start by thanking all councillors and staff for their work on the

various events, projects and activities that the council has delivered for our community in the past year.

I would particularly like to thank Cllrs Elizabeth Beswick, Tony Dean, Jonathan Farber, Julian Goodrich, Christine Gray, Simon Hutchence and Jon and Hayley Wells-Bradshaw who have not sought re-election this year, all have made a worthy contribution to the work of the council during their term(s) and I look forward to welcoming the new councillors joining us in May.

One of the jobs involved in being Mayor is raising funds for chosen charities through a programme of fundraising events. I must thank Annabel, my PA, for putting together an outstanding



programme which included dinners, a gin tasting, a BBQ a quiz night and an incredible Charity Ball. With one event to go, we are on track to raise a record-breaking amount for my four charities: Friends of the Moor, The Welcome, Knutsford Heritage Centre and Knutsford First Responders.

I am delighted to have seen two key projects complete during my term of office: the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan and the dedication of the new War Memorial.



# Knutsford Centennial War Memorial

From the start of the centenary commemorations in 2014, the Town Council began working with the Knutsford Royal British Legion on plans to relocate the statue of Haron Baronian from the soon to be demolished War Memorial Cottage Hospital into the town centre to create a central war memorial for the town.

On Saturday 6th October the Town Mayor unveiled this Centennial War Memorial, comprising two large granite plinths bearing a roll of honour

for the First World War, Second World War and since, remembering names missed from the existing town memorials.

The dedication ceremony was well attended by the community, visiting dignitaries including the Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire and two nephews of Haron Baronian, who travelled from Australia and New Zealand to attend.

The ceremony included the roll of honour being read by Air Cadet Sergeant Myles Reeve.



*Special thanks to WA16 PR for the photos in this report.*

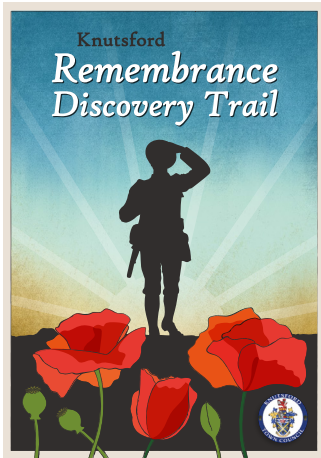
# World War I Centenary

For the centenary of the end of the First World War, we coordinated a small programme of commemorations in October and November.

An exhibition by the Cheshire Villages Great War Society was held in the Methodist Church, Silent Soldiers, handing out names of the fallen from Knutsford, attended the November Makers Market and we reproduced the commemorative window stickers.

We provided Knutsford with funding for wool to support the mammoth community knitting effort which created a sea of poppies around the new memorial and other areas in town.

Working with local historian Sylvia Chaplin we published



a Remembrance Discovery Trail, presenting a glimpse of Knutsford as it was around the time of the Great War.

# Christmas in Knutsford

Thanks to sponsorship agreements we have been able to expand the Christmas Lights to cover Church Hill and Regent Street.

Our two day Christmas Market, coinciding with the switching on of the lights and live entertainment in the town centre, was a great success. The market included a new park and ride to alleviate parking problems.

Followed by the Crib Service and Lantern Parade the following weekend.

New for 2018 we encouraged local businesses and community groups to host Christmas events during December and coordinated a bumper brochure of to help keep residents and visitors feeling festive.

# Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan

After four years of work, the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan was approved at referendum in March and is now in force. We are already seeing the Neighbourhood Plan policies being used by Cheshire East in deciding planning applications.

During the past year we completed the Regulation 14 Consultation, revised the plan ready for submission to Cheshire East Council and had an outstanding Examiner's report requiring very few changes.

The referendum saw a

turnout of 19.97% with 1,744 votes in favour and 349 against.

Developing the plan was a key strategic aim of the council and saw hundreds of hours of volunteer, councillor and officer time dedicated to its creation since 2014.

## Knutsford Music Festival

The second Knutsford Music Festival was held over a weekend in June with over 40 events taking place across 18 venues.

The festival was headlined by Miles Hunt of the Wonderstuff and Knutsford's own BBC Radio 2 present Mark

Radcliffe hosted a three-night 'Folk at the Theatre'.

Thanks to the business community and local groups which organised events as part of the festival there was almost double the number of events.

We launched a

dedicated music festival website and introduced a free family event hosted on the Moor which included a drumming workshop, crafts and acoustic stage.

The event was a huge success and delivered well under budget, it returns in June 2019.



# All the small things

## Blue Plaque Installed

We installed a blue plaque at Heathfield Square, recognising it as the first council housing development in Knutsford created as part of the post-WWI homes for heroes campaign.



## Shop Christmas Trees

We continue to arrange Christmas Trees for the front of shops in the town centre.

## Benches Repaired

Our Town Ranger has responded to resident reports and repaired two benches that would otherwise have been removed.

## Defibrillator Installed

We renovated the phone box on Woodlands Drive and installed a defibrillator to ensure one is easily accesible 24/7.

## More Bins

Following a request from Friends of the Heath we purchased four new bins to help tackle littering.

## New Noticeboard

Following a request from Friends of the Moor we installed a new noticeboard at the Middle Walk entrance to the Moor.

## Millennium Bursary

We awarded the 19th Millennium Bursary to help a student from Knutsford in their final year of university, with the Knutsford Lions making supplementary awards to two further students.

## College Wood

We compiled evidence to submit an application to register College Wood as a Town Green, which would permanently protect it as a public space.





## Street Light Listed

We were successful in our application to have the victorian street light on Tatton Street/ King Street listed as a structure of national historic importance.

## Public Right of Way Applied for

Working with local residents we submitted an application to register the footpath off Beggarmans Lane as a Public Right of Way.

## Garden Competition

We ran our first Front Garden Competition as part of our entry into Northwest in Bloom.

## Town Map

We published an updated town map, featuring a specially commissioned handdrawn map of Knutsford town centre.

## WiFi for Market Hall

In March we installed wifi in the Market Hall - making it easier for our traders to do business online.

## Extraordinary Women

As part of Heritage Open Days we put on a small exhibition of photographs of the women who have led the council.

## Supporting Business

Our Town Centre Manager continues to support local businesses and improve communications.



## Pavements Cleared

Our Town Ranger removed overgrown grass and soil from a number of pavements across the town, restoring them to full width.

## Righting the Graves

We undertook a third programme of repairing



fallen gravestones in Knutsford Cemetery.

## Clearing the Alley

We purchased a pressure washer to enable our Town Ranger to clear the ginnel next the Tower Gate ginnel of pigeon mess on a regular basis.

## Shop Competitions

We ran 'best window' competitions with local businesses for Christmas, Halloween and the Knutsford Floral Walk!

## Refill Scheme

Working with local businesses we introduced the Refill Scheme into Knutsford meaning visitors can refill bottles across the town centre - reducing the need for single use plastic.

# In Bloom Projects

This year saw changes to how the town enters the North West in Bloom competition with the responsibility for the town's hanging baskets and barrier planters returning to the council. For the third year running, Knutsford received a gold award in the competition.

In spring, the council installed large wooden

planters at the town entry signs from Northwich, Mobberley and Chelford, making the entry to our town all the more welcoming!

In November the council hosted a thank you evening for the volunteers from Knutsford in Bloom who care for the town centre planters and flowerbeds. The Chairman and Treasurer of the group stepped



down at this time and the council has temporarily appointed Cllr Jan Nicholson as chairman and the Town Clerk as treasurer, to see the group through.

## Taste Knutsford

We launched a new tourist attraction for the Town in the form of a monthly walking food tour - Taste Knutsford.

Visitors tour a selection of restaurants, bars and cafes.

Reviews have been wholly positive, and we expect to produce a small annual surplus.

## Knutsford Market Hall

Knutsford Market Hall has been developing as a central part of the community, hosting a charity quiz night, supper club, bra bank and providing charity pop-up stalls.

Our 'Love your Local Market' event included a flash mob choir and the cafe hosted breakfast with Santa event.

With the departure of a large stall we were able to reconfigure the market to create a greater number of stalls, increasing the market offer further.

We welcomed Tatton Photography, Jonty's Fruit and Veg and Lou Lou Bella Boutique (children's clothing) and will soon be welcoming the Plastic Free Weigh.



# Managing our Assets

The council undertook works to the Grade II\* listed 60 King Street including cleaning and repairs to the Gaskell Memorial Tower, this was a substantial programme of works and unfortunately unforeseen work was required to the lower tower too. The works were all funded from previous rental surpluses.

Following a number of challenging years with the council's tenant, the lease was forfeit in March and the council will be reviewing the future management of the building in the coming months.

The council had hoped that the Council Offices would transfer from Cheshire East Council this year, unfortunately this has been delayed by the borough and is now anticipated in late summer 2019 at the

earliest. In planning for improvements to the building the council had commissioned architects to produce initial proposals for reconfiguring the internal arrangements of the building and replacing the poor-quality single storey extension with a new space linking better with the building.

In July, the Cemetery Lodge was sold at auction. The house had been occupied by employees of the borough council as part of the management of the cemetery and as part of a series of changes was returned to the council. Full management of the cemetery will return to the council in 2020.

The planned improvements to the Chapel hit a series of stumbling blocks, the main being a

requirement to install a new electricity and water supply. The listed building consent application for the works has now been submitted and these are expected to take place in the summer.

Council resolved to pause the planning and implementation of works to the council offices, market hall and empty spaces in the public toilets until May 2020. Initial plans were finalised for the redevelopment of the Market Hall ready for an application for planning permission.

Following requests from the Allotment Society, we installed a new fence at the Sparrow Lane allotments. We are hoping to install compostable toilets at both sites and have submitted grant applications to fund this.

# Managing the Finances

The council received 70% of its income in 2018 from the precept which is collected as part of council tax. The precept was £326,835 meaning a Band D household paid £56.78 to the council for the year. This represented an increase of £6.94 on the 2017 figure.

During the year the council opened a number of interest bearing accounts, maximising the security of its reserves whilst also increasing return on balances.

At the financial year end (31st March) the council was in a good position. The capital receipt generated from the sale of the Cemetery Lodge has greatly boosted reserves but in line with statutory requirements can only be spent on capital projects.

Whilst expenditure was significantly higher than budget, when factoring in the planned draw from an earmarked reserve for the large programme of works at

60 King Street and an unplanned draw from the reserve to cover the deficit resultant from legal costs and reduced rent, it was overall on target.

The 2019 precept has been set at £371,070, increasing the Band D to £63.95. The council remains one of the lowest-cost Town Councils in Cheshire East.

A full breakdown of the council's budget is available on the Town Council website.

## Your Council Staff

**Town Clerk**  
**Deputy Clerk**  
**Town Centre Manager**  
**Mayor's PA**  
**Administration Assistant**  
**Town Ranger**  
**Market Hall Cleaner**

Adam Keppel-Green  
Lisa Benskin  
Sandra Curties  
Annabel Irvine  
Alex Brown  
Bob Garner  
Stephanie Chadwick

During the year the council said goodbye to Alan Bolshaw (Market Hall Cleaner) hello and goodbye to Kimberley O'Neil (Market Hall Cleaner) and goodbye to Sarah Morgan (Administration Assistant, Deputy Town Clerk Maternity Cover)



# Community Grants

The Town Council awarded over £20,000 in community grants across 14 organisations. In early 2019 the Town Council introduced a new grant scheme which has set the priority areas it wishes to fund.

<b>Knutsford Lions</b>	<b>£420 towards their new schools Poetry Competition</b>
<b>Filament Projects</b>	<b>£80 towards their performance at Knutsford Library</b>
<b>Knutsford Cricket Club</b>	<b>£400 towards the costs of a new bowdry</b>
<b>Knutsford Promenades</b>	<b>£200 to help fund the workshops for the event</b>
<b>Knutsford in Bloom</b>	<b>£1,000 for the maintenance of planters and flowerbeds</b>
<b>St Cross Church</b>	<b>£300 towards the Christmas Tree Festival</b>
<b>Canute Lunch Club</b>	<b>£450 towards their Easter and Christmas celebrations</b>
<b>Knutsford Academy</b>	<b>£2,186 to fund a video for the Old School Project</b>
<b>Knutsford Royal British Legion</b>	<b>£1,000 to send two representatives to the Great Pilgrimage</b>
<b>Manor Park School PTA</b>	<b>£6,000 towards the costs of a MUGA</b>
<b>Knutsford Scouts</b>	<b>£3,000 to send children to the International Jamboree</b>
<b>Knutsford Heritage Centre</b>	<b>A new display Cabinet costing £1,610</b>
<b>Knutsford Air Cadets</b>	<b>Instruments to form a marching band costing £4,375</b>
<b>Knutsford Ju Jitsu Club</b>	<b>New mats costing £905</b>

# Community Events

Successful Easter Saturday event, the Knutsford Bunny Hop, was handed over to the Town Council this year and little altered from its much loved format.

This year was also the council's second year as organiser of the Pumpkin Path, the event continues to grow in popularity and this year featured choirs and a fancy dress competition.

The Town Awards were presented as part of the annual town meeting; first in April 2018 and then slightly earlier than usual in March 2019.

In 2019 we introduced a new award for those in paid employment who go above and beyond for the community - won by our very own Town Ranger Bob Garner.



# Your Councillors 2018



Cllr Peter Coan  
Town Mayor



Cllr Andrew Malloy  
Deputy Town Mayor



Cllr Elizabeth Beswick



Cllr Tony Dean



Cllr Jonathan Farber



Cllr Neil Forbes



Cllr Stewart Gardiner



Cllr Julian Goodrich



Cllr Christine Gray



Cllr Christopher Gray



Cllr Simon Hutchence



Cllr Jan Nicholson



Cllr James Power



Cllr Hayley Wells-Bradshaw



Cllr Jon Wells-Bradshaw