



# Annual Report 2019/20

**Town Mayor**  
Cllr Andrew Malloy

**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  
2019/20 Annual  
Report of Knutsford  
Town Council.

I have enjoyed and felt  
highly privileged to  
serve you as Mayor of  
Knutsford over the past  
year during which I have  
attended 160 varied  
engagements ranging  
from a street party in  
Lilac Avenue to opening  
a picture gallery in  
Sharston House.  
As Town Mayor,

I have worked hard to  
raise funds for a new  
skatepark and youth  
sporting activities.  
I hosted a summer  
BBQ where the rain  
just about held off,  
some great fundraising  
dinners at local  
restaurants and a family  
disco at the Shaw  
Heath Social Club and  
a pub quiz. My thanks  
go to Civic Events  
Officer Annabel who  
coordinated these great

events for me and all  
those who helped out  
and made each event  
possible.

Alongside those events  
the Mayoress and I  
also undertook an epic  
100-mile sponsored  
cycle ride of Cheshire  
East, visiting each  
town in the borough!  
Unfortunately, my  
sponsored Cheshire  
three-peaks walk has  
been postponed.

We end the year in  
uncertain times amid  
the global coronavirus  
pandemic, now in a  
national lockdown. But  
it is heartening, though  
not surprising, to see  
how well the Knutsford  
community has come  
together to support one  
another through We  
Are Knutsford.

Stay safe.

**Cllr Andrew Malloy**  
Town Mayor



## Knutsford and District Youth Council

At the beginning of  
2020, the Knutsford  
and District Youth  
Council was officially  
established.

Comprising children  
from the Knutsford,  
High Legh, Mobberley  
and Lower Peover  
primary schools and the  
Knutsford Academy,  
the creation of a youth  
council was led by the  
Town Mayor who will  
attend its meetings.



# Cemetery returns to Local Control

As we entered 2020, the Town Council marked the new year by becoming a burial authority as it took back management of Knutsford Cemetery.

Since 1974 the cemetery at Tabley Hill had been managed by the borough council but after an options review in 2018 it was decided it would be best operated directly by the Town Council.

The Town Council is committed to making

the cemetery one of the best in Cheshire.

We have employed a dedicated part-time groundskeeper to maintain the cemetery and already we have begun to make some minor improvements with the installation of new bins across the site.

Over the coming months we will be replanting trees, introducing new flower beds and installing a new potting bench.

## Council Staff Review

During 2019, the Personnel Committee undertook a fundamental review of the council's staff structure.

The work was led by Cllrs Barbara Hamilton Coan and Jan Nicholson and the Town Clerk and involved a thorough appraisal of all job roles and redesigning the council's staff team.

Through this review, the position of Deputy Town Clerk was made redundant and two new senior roles were created, Events Officer and Planning and Facilities Officer.

The new structure also includes additional administration time for the management of the cemetery and a new position of Cemetery Groundskeeper.



# Town Council Elections

The May 2019 Town Council elections were uncontested, with 14 candidates for the 15 seats. The 14 candidates were therefore all elected unopposed, leaving a vacancy for Over Ward.

Seven of the 2015-2019 term councillors were re-elected and

we welcomed five first timers - Quentin Abel, Lesley Dalzell, Katherine Fletcher, James McCulloch and Matthew Robertson.

We also welcomed back Barbara Hamilton Coan and Mike Houghton who last served in the 2011-2015 term.

The vacancy for Over Ward was filled by co-option in June with Cllr Elizabeth Beswick returning to the council.

A list of councillors is on page 12 and their contact information can be found on our website.

## Community Governance Review Proposals

The Town Council has submitted proposals to Cheshire East Council as part of the borough wide community governance review.

The Town Council is recommending the town's ward boundaries are redrawn to work with the planned development from the Local Plan.

Under our proposals

the Town Centre will move from Nether Ward into the new Bexton and Town Centre Ward, whilst Over Ward will be split into two equal sized wards: St John's Wood and Crosstown.

Cheshire East Council will review the proposals and publish its proposed changes in the summer.

## Obelisk Adopted

In January 2020, the Town Council adopted the Grade II listed Obelisk on Chelford Road.

Grant funding has been secured for a project which will see the area landscaped as a formal amenity space and repairs and repointing undertaken to the obelisk to once again make it a key feature at the entry to Knutsford.

# Town Centre Masterplan

Following the adoption of the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan in March 2019, the Town Council commenced work on a Town Centre Masterplan.

The masterplan was a commitment in the Neighbourhood Plan and the first

stage was to develop proposals for changes to traffic and parking arrangements.

A consultation was held in February-March 2020 on the 'From Top to Bottom Street' proposals which include multi-storey car parks, new pedestrian

squares and changes to traffic flow.

658 consultation responses were received and We are now working to analyse every comment and tick before finalising proposals for submission to Cheshire East Council.

## Shaping Developments

Throughout 2019 the Town Council has worked alongside community groups to influence the detailed proposals for the Redrow development of 190 houses on Northwich Road.

Taking a positive and cooperative approach, the Town Council was able to encourage Redrow to introduce a number bespoke designed houses, additional open space and a new ginnel to

make the development more in keeping with the rest of Knutsford.

The plans, which were approved by Cheshire East Council in January were a vast improvement on the original proposals submitted.

The council has held similar meetings with Tatton Estates, who will be submitting revised proposals for their Parkgate Lane site later in the year.

## Community Events

# All the small things

## Marshall House

The Town Council gave thorough consideration to the suggestion that it purchase the vacant Marshall House but determined the purchase cost and amount of work required made it an unviable project.

## College Wood

Following our application last year, in December 2019 College Wood was registered as a Town Green, ensuring the public will forever have access. We are now looking to work with the owners to improve the woodland for the community.

## New Noticeboard

A new noticeboard was installed opposite The Welcome on Longridge. This will help residents in this area keep up-to-date with council news.

## Shop Christmas Trees

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

## New Town Guide

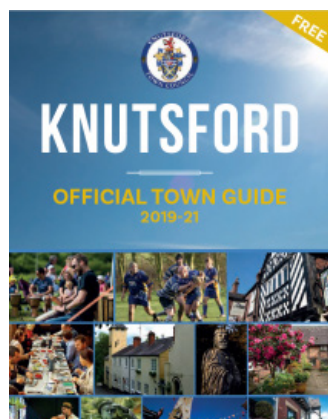
We published a new Official Town Guide promoting Knutsford to visitors and new residents.

## Planning Applications

Between April 2019 and April 2020 the Town Council has reviewed and commented on 299 planning applications!

## Town Wins Gold Again

Thanks to the combined efforts of the Town Council and volunteers at Knutsford



in Bloom, Knutsford once again won Gold at the North West in Bloom Awards!

## Heath Forum

Alongside Friends of the Heath and Tatton Estates, we have held regular meetings to discuss the management of Knutsford Heath.

## Window put to use

We've been using the empty window at 60 King Street to host pop-up displays by local businesses.

## Remembrance

We held an additional remembrance service in June to commemorate the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

# Managing Our Assets

In June, La Belle Epoué, the council's tenant at 60 King Street vacated the building after forfeiting the lease. This followed years of problems of non-payment of rent and unauthorised works.

After an options appraisal the council has resolved to retain the building and in autumn appointed Savills to find a new tenant. We are currently in discussion with a prospective new tenant and hope to be able to agree a new lease later in 2020.

During the past year we have been working with our public toilet contractor, Danfo, to renegotiate the lease of the buildings.

Agreement has been reached on new lease terms which will see the Town Council take

back responsibility for the redundant space in the buildings to convert it to office/ retail space. We hope to undertake this work by September.

Also during the past year we have been making the arrangements for the refurbishment of the cemetery chapel; permission has just been given for the installation of the septic tank and we now just need to satisfy the planners' conditions before we can greenlight the works to commence.

Throughout the year we have been pushing Cheshire East Council to finalise the transfer of the Council Offices, there is little work to be done on the transfer and we are hopeful that it will transfer by the summer.

# Award for Plan

The new Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan received a commendation at the Royal Town Planning Institute's North West Planning Excellence Awards.

The judges praised the wide range of policies, clear diagrams and user-friendly document.

The RTPI commended it as a good example of a community led plan which provided opportunity for engagement and raised awareness and understanding of planning issues in the community.



# Nature Action Plan

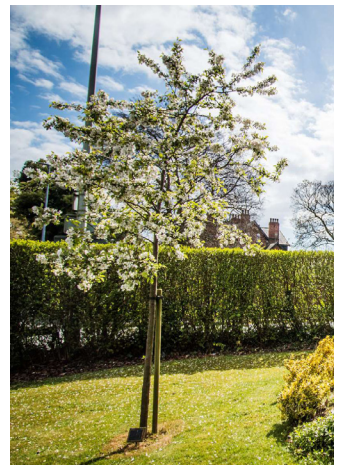
The Town Council has adopted a Nature Action Plan, which sets out its commitment to improve Knutsford for nature.

The plan sets out three core missions - to plant a tree for every resident, to increase the amount of wildlife friendly planting and to improve biodiversity

and connect green corridors.

The plan was adopted by the Environment Committee in March and over the next year we will be putting it into operation with projects from planting trees to installing bird and bat boxes.

We will also be working with landowners



to promote wildlife corridors on the fields surrounding the Town.

## Community Events

The Knutsford Bunny hop took place the Saturday before Easter and once again we were delighted with the strong participation from local businesses and the number of children out on the day trailing the town centre.

On Halloween we hosted our Pumpkin Path which again was hugely successful with King Street packed the whole evening and visitors travelling from

miles away to attend. For 2020 we will be looking how we can manage numbers to ensure the event does not grow too big.

Our Christmas Weekend was again very successful albeit freezing cold! The two-day Christmas Market accompanied the Christmas Lights Switch on and our new Santa Parade which replaced the traditional reindeer parade.

## Bob up for Award

Our Town Ranger, Bob Garner, was as finalist in the Active Cheshire Neighbourhood Superhero Awards. He was nominated by a member of the public and its testament to how valued his role is within the community, and how great he is at doing it!

You can follow Bob's work on twitter @townranger



# Supporting the Town Centre

Since the appointment of a dedicated Town Centre Manager, Sandra, in 2017, the Town Council has continued to increase the level of support it provides to businesses in the town centre.

In May we worked with local fashion retailers to launch 'Knutsford Flash Fashion', where 15 retailers offered giveaways, had models demonstrating their

goods and even offered a glass of fizz for shoppers.

In February 2020 we took part in 'Fiver Fest' highlighting a great range of deals for £5 available from an array of traders.

We entered Knutsford into the GB High Street of the Year awards and whilst Knutsford didn't get shortlisted it was a good exercise

to assess where the town was strong/weak. As part of the awards we nominated Pulse of Perfumery's Peter Murray for the High Street Hero award and he was shortlisted from over 100 entries!

We held a number of well attended 'Taste Knutsford' tours and the scheme celebrated its first birthday. This provides both a visitor attraction and supports local eateries.

In September we hosted a Social Media workshop for local businesses and we have continued to support the PCSO's training for Dementia Friends.

This is all alongside our role supporting businesses in their everyday Knutsford queries and interfacing with Cheshire East Council.



# Managing the Finances

The total budget for the current financial year was £585,256. The council has carefully managed its finances and, with one notable exception, delivered an underspend.

However, the Town Council has had some financial challenges this year due to the debt left by La Belle Epoque, the council's former tenant which is now in administration and the resultant loss of income.

A significant debt write

off of around £65k is expected later this year when it is confirmed the company cannot pay.

This, alongside the staffing review, has led to the council being required to increase the precept for 2020 to £511,118 corresponding to a Band D council tax of £88 for the year.

The council is on track to secure a new tenant in 2020 and expects to be able to significantly reduce the precept in 2021.

# Knutsford in Bloom

In 2018, the Town Council stepped in to support Knutsford in Bloom when their Chairman and Treasurer stepped down and the group was at risk of folding.

Cllr Nicholson stood in as acting Chairman whilst the Town Clerk managed the finances.

During 2019 new volunteers were recruited and we were pleased to hand back the reins to a new Chairman, Barry Tilby and Treasurer Chris Matthews.

## Your Council Staff

**Town Clerk**  
**Planning and Facilities Officer**  
**Town Centre and Marketing Officer**  
**Events Officer**  
**Civic Events Officer**  
**Administration and Support Officer**  
**Administration and Support Officer**  
**Town Ranger**  
**Cemetery Groundskeeper**  
**Market Hall Cleaner**

**Adam Keppel-Green FSLCC**  
**Bob Allen**  
**Sandra Curties**  
**Alex Brown**  
**Annabel Irvine**  
**Dan Wheatcroft**  
**Jill Webb**  
**Bob Garner**  
**Fergal Owens**  
**Stephanie Chadwick**

During the year the council said goodbye to Lisa Benskin (Deputy Town Clerk)

# Knutsford Music Festival

The third Knutsford Music Festival was a great success in June, with 44 performers across 20 locations.

The Town Council hosted a blues night in St John’s Church, String Infusion at the Courthouse Hotel and a ‘main event’ at Vermillion Studios.

This was alongside three nights of specially

curated folk music in partnership with BBC’s Mark Radcliffe at Folk in the Theatre.

The Music on the Moor event enjoyed glorious sunshine and the main stage hosted some great performers.

A number of town centre businesses took part hosting events in bars, restaurants and hairdressers.

# Community Grants

The Town Council awarded over £6,335 in community grants across six organisations.

Knutsford Lions	£500 towards their new schools Poetry Competition
Knutsford Tennis Club	£1,285 towards works at their courts.
2nd Knutsford Scouts	£1,500 towards works at their HQ
Knutsford in Bloom	£1,500 to fund their work in 2020
Knutsford Talking Newspaper	£1,350 to purchase new recording equipment
Knutsford Hosts	£200 to purchase Queen’s Award badges for volunteers.

# Flowers in Wallwood

To coincide with RHS Tatton, we launched our new Flowers in Wallwood ‘event’.

Primary schools in Knutsford decorated wooden flowers which were planted in Wallwood.

Given the theme ‘eco’ by RHS judges, the children made an impressive array of displays using cork, bottle tops and tissue paper.

The flowers were then taken back by the schools and replanted in the school grounds.



# Your Councillors 2019/20



Cllr Andrew Malloy  
Town Mayor



Cllr Sewart Gardiner  
Deputy Town Mayor



Cllr Quentin Abel



Cllr Elizabeth Beswick



Cllr Peter Coan



Cllr Lesley Dalzell



Cllr Katherine Fletcher



Cllr Neil Forbes



Cllr Christopher Gray



Cllr Barbara Hamilton Coan



Cllr Mike Houghton



Cllr James McCulloch



Cllr Jan Nicholson



Cllr James Power



Cllr Matthew Robertson