



**ANNUAL REPORT OF  
CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL  
2011-12**



## Mayor's Overview



It is a great privilege to be Mayor of Congleton. It wasn't a role that I was expecting to hold this year, but one that I was happy to take on to support the work and charities of the late Cllr David Martin who was elected Mayor in May 2011 and who performed the role with great enthusiasm and pride until his death following a short illness in December 2011.

2011 was the Year of the Bear for Congleton – with 65 fibre-glass bears attracting thousands of visitors to our town. Mayor Bear stood proudly at the front of the Town Hall and was admired by thousands of people following the bear trails from May until October. It's been great to see the Bearmania team receive national and regional awards for this successful community project.

It was an honour to be the Mayor during a year when Congleton has received such great recognition. I was very proud of the town's achievements gaining RHS Gold from North West in Bloom, Best Kept Large Town in the Cheshire Community Pride Awards, a Little Gem Award for the Community Garden, national recognition for the Sustainability Group's apple juice project, regional recognition for Team Congleton and a Positive Action North West Award for Congleton Disabled Access Group.

As Town Mayor you get to see the best of Congleton and really appreciate what a great community we live in. I would like to thank everyone who has invited us to attend an event or share time with them. The warmth of the welcome we receive from Congleton people is second to none. Through the performances we have attended we can really appreciate the wealth of talent we have in the town. Our schools are full of enthusiastic young people, and we have a wealth of community groups and organisations working hard behind the scenes to make Congleton a great place to live.

We shouldn't forget the vital role that Businesses play in the town. It was good to meet so many local companies at the Congleton Means Business two-day exhibition and event at the start of the Mayoral year. The links between the business world and the local community can only strengthen the town.

I would like to thank everyone who has supported firstly David and then myself during this year, in particular I would like to thank Pat Martin and Hilary Parker who have shared the role of Mayoress, Aynsley Heathcote the Mayor's Cadet, Town Council staff, fellow councillors, friends and everyone who has made a donation to this year's Mayor's charities which are Cheshire East Hospice, The Stroke Unit at Macclesfield Hospital and Help the Heroes (Mercian Regiment).

Cllr. Douglas Parker

## **Leader of the Council**

We have had an incredibly busy and successful year, but, sadly our successes have been overshadowed by the unexpected passing of our Town Mayor and good friend, Councillor Dave Martin. Dave worked tirelessly both in his role of Ward Councillor and in the role that he dearly cherished, that of Town Mayor. He is sadly missed by us all.

Fortunately, Dave had the opportunity to share in most of the highlights of the year; Bearmania, which brought so many visitors into our Town. The Food and Drink Festival, which continues to go from strength to strength, the fantastic Christmas procession and lights switch on and the many awards that Congleton Town and its volunteer organisations received during the year, such as Bearmania, North West in Bloom, Community Pride Award and many others. Many of the awards (we have had 10 in all) can be directly attributed to The Congleton Town Partnership, which is a group of volunteer organisations working on many initiatives for the benefit of the Town.

Congleton now has a feel about it that says “we are on the up”. We have a Town Council that is committed to build on the work done in previous years. Congleton is consistently voted “the best place to live in the North West”, our councillors are striving to ensure that Congleton will be an even better place to live and work, in the future. The shop vacancy levels have fallen from about 20% to less than 10%, we have a number of new housing developments taking place, despite the national recession, and although bureaucracy has delayed the start of Scarborough’s Development we are confident that work on Bridestones II will get under way in the coming weeks.

We have now agreed a Public Realm Strategy that will help improve many aspects of the fabric of the Town. The strategy started with a public consultation early last year and culminated in a report that was presented to the Town Council in March this year. The report contains many aspirations for the Town which are planned to be implemented when funding is in place in the coming years. The aspirations include making Mountbatten Way more attractive and safer; enhancing the gateways into the Town; re-affirming our commitment to our cultural and night time economies and novel thinking on how we use some of our spaces to make the town a more interesting place to visit.

In a similar vein, we have, with the guidance and direction of Cheshire East Council produced a Town Strategy which helps us look forward and plan for the future. The plan covers a period of 20 years and considers the number of houses that we need to build over that period, what business development is required and of course what infrastructure is required to support that growth. The Town Strategy will form part of The Cheshire East Local Plan covering all of the other areas of the Borough.

Looking forward, 2012 is going to be just as exiting. Here is just a taster of some of the events that we have got lined up this summer. On the 31<sup>st</sup> May we have the Olympic Torch Relay coming through Congleton. What an honour that is! I hope that the Town will be out in the thousands for that spectacle. Next we have the Queens Jubilee celebrations, the 3rd June has been designated as the day when we will have lots of street parties and the 4<sup>th</sup> June will see a free Party in the Park for the whole Town. The 10<sup>th</sup> June will see Congleton’s own ‘It’s a

Knockout' in the Park; I hope that you have got your teams lined up! . The Food and Drink Festival is planned to be even bigger and better this year and is on the 17th June. As if that wasn't enough, the bi-annual Congleton Carnival returns on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July and will once again feature floats.

It has been a year of hard work, but, I have enjoyed the highs of the year and with the support of my fellow Councillors have worked through the lower ones. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve as Leader of The Council on behalf of the Town.

Councillor Bob Edwards

## Town Council

The Town Council has 20 Councillors, who are elected to represent one of the two wards in the town. Councillors are elected to serve a period of four years. **All seats are up for election in May 2015.**

### **East**

Larry Barker (C)  
David Brown (C)  
Bob Edwards (C)  
David Fletcher (C)  
George Hayes (C)  
Sally Ann Holland (C)  
Douglas Parker (C)  
Glen Williams (C)  
Rebecca Williams (C)  
Vacancy

### **West**

Dawn Allen (C)  
Gordon Baxendale (C)  
Robbie Brightwell (C)  
John Saville Crowther (IVC)  
Michael Hutton (UKIP)  
Amanda Martin(C)  
Denis Murphy LD)  
Jean Parry (C)  
Neville Price (I)  
Elizabeth Wardlaw (C)

C = Conservative, I= Independent, IVC=independent Voice of Congleton, LD=Liberal Democrats UKIP=UK Independent Party

### **Officers for the period of this annual report were:**

- Town Clerk - Brian Hogan
- Support Manager - Jackie Potts
- Town Centre and Marketing Mgr - Jackie MacArthur
- Admin Assistant (Mayor) - Linda Minshull
- Administrative Assistant -Sheron Clarke, Sue Trow
- Facilities Mgr - Chris Jones
- Handymen - Chris Banks, Mark Worthing
- 2 Halls Officers
- Casual Paddling Pool Attendants May – September
- Caretaking Staff

## Council Meetings

**The Council has a number of committees, most of which meet around 6 times a year. The dates for meetings in 2011-12 were:-**

<b>Amenities and Services</b>	9/6	1/9	6/10	17/11	9/2	22/3
<b>Community and Environment</b>	9/6	1/9	6/10	17/11	9/2	22/3
<b>Council</b>	19/5	30/6	22/9	3/11	8/12	12/1
	8/3	19/4				

**Finance and Policy** 2/6 8/9 20/10 1/12 5/1 23/2 29/3

**Planning** 2/6 7/7 28/7 25/8 8/9 29/9 20/10  
1/12 5/1 23/2 15/3 5/4

**Town Hall Committee** 7/7 2 9/9 10/11 15/3

The Personnel Committee and Strategy Working Group are held as and when necessary.

### How is the Town Council Financed?

The majority of the Town Council's money comes from a precept which is added to the Council Tax levy set by the Principal Authority. In 2011-12 the precept was £635,908. Below is a summary of income and expenditure for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.

The money is spent providing services and representing the people of Congleton. In broad terms in 2011-12 the Town Council spent the money it raised on the following:

#### Congleton Town Council – 2011-12

	2011-12 Actual	2011-12 Budget	2011-12 Variance
<b><u>Finance and Policy</u></b>			
<b><u>101 Corporate Management</u></b>			
Corporate Management:- Expenditure	121,359	150,210	28,851
Corporate Management :- Income	-18,790	-1,000	17,790
<b>Net Expenditure over Income</b>	<b>102,569</b>	<b>149,210</b>	<b>46,641</b>
<b><u>102 Democratic Rep'n &amp; Mgmt/Civic</u></b>			
Democratic Rep'n & Mgmt/Civic:-Expenditure	45,792	46,886	1,094
107 <b><u>Grants</u></b>	72,938	79,003	6,065
109 <b><u>Capital and Projects</u></b>	100,777	95,800	-4,977
<b>F&amp;P Income - Expenditure Totals</b>	<b>322,076</b>	<b>370,899</b>	<b>48,823</b>
<b><u>Amenities and Services</u></b>			
201 Paddling Pool	22,189	25,892	3,703
215 Floral Displays	10,507	10,000	-507
241 Allotments	185	580	395
251 Handyman service	43,042	46,266	3,224
262 Street furniture	0	400	400

263	Public Toilets	0	8,000	8,000
264	Shopmobility	5,050	5,000	-50
265	Play Areas	1,500	6,000	4,500
280	Devolved Services	10,960	13,000	2,040
		<b>93,433</b>	<b>115,138</b>	<b>21,705</b>

**Community and Environment**

300	Public Realm	0	0	0
301	Congleton Partnership	29,821	38,200	8,379
302	Community Development	23,173	25,441	2,268
303	Police Community Support Officers	47200	47200	0
305	Christmas Fayre/lights	2,455	2,500	45
321	Tourism	1,998	2,000	2
341	Youth and Young People	1,710	2,000	290
		<b>106,357</b>	<b>117,341</b>	<b>10,984</b>

**Town Hall**

221	Town Hall - Expenditure	155,005	150,031	-4,974
	Town Hall - Income	-104,837	-117,500	-12,663
		<b>50,168</b>	<b>32,531</b>	<b>-17,637</b>

**Total Net Expenditure**

<b>572,034</b>	<b>635,909</b>	<b>63,875</b>
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**The Town Council has supported local voluntary and community groups with nearly £75,000 worth of grants in 2011-12**

**Among those assisted were:**

**Organisations receiving grants 2011-12**

Team Congleton 2012	2,500.00
Congleton Jazz and Blues festival	500.00
Visyon	1,750.00
Cong Business Assoc	2,000.00
Congleton Harriers	250.00
Congleton Musical Theatre	500.00
Disability Bureau	250.00
Electric Picture House Artists Group	400.00
Royal British Legion	49.50
Royal British Legion	565.00
Congleton Life Savers	558.50

Congleton Harriers	200.00
Jubilee Committee	2,200.00
Team 2012	2,500.00
Bromley Farm Community Trust	500.00
Rebecca Wilson	250.00
Congleton Museum Notional rent	4,500.00
Congleton Community Projects Grant	16,000.00
Congleton Partnership Notional Rent	1,533.00
CAB Grant 11/12	15,000.00
Xmas lights	7,147.30
Carnival Committee	3,750.00
Churchyard Maintenance	1,200.00
clock maintenance	229.20
Rotary Coffee Morning	105.00
Congleton Now Event	675.00
Abba Night (Mayor Charity Event)	150.00
Congleton Choral Society	150.00
Local resident discount (dance class)	10.50
Beartown Boxing	150.00
Congleton Rugby Club	187.50
Congleton Rotary Club	28.00
Vale Juniors	300.00
Jigsaw - Bearmania Launch	38.50
CCP - food and Drink Festival	207.81
Horticultural Society Annual Show	253.75
Big Kiss Careers Fayre	630.00
Scout Fellowship Charities Fayre	87.50
Choral Society Concert	150.00
Charity Ball	150.00
ATC RAF Band	218.75
Biddulph Male Voice Choir – Mayor Charity	150.00
Local resident discount	30.00
Lions concert	87.50
Charity Ball	150.00
Local resident discount	30.00
Choral Society Concert	150.00
Mayor's Charity Craft Fayre	218.75
St Stephens Church Fayre	105.00
Local resident discount	28.00
Beartown Boxing	270.00



Local resident discount	28.00
EC Pony Club Annual Presentation	150.00
Local resident discount	28.00
Charity Ball	206.00
Fairtrade Event	70.00
Visyon	7.50
Congleton Youth Orchestra	150.00

### **What Services does the Town Council Provide:**

1. We fund 50% of the cost of four Police Community Support Officers, without our contribution there would be none
2. We operate a Handyman Service who are responsible for cleaning up a variety of areas around the Town, removing litter, graffiti, tidying open areas, clearing pathways and alleys anything to make the Town cleaner and tidier.
3. We have a Market Town Manager who organises a variety of events in the Town as well as spending time promoting the Town and its businesses
4. We have restored and refurbished the Town Hall which was inherited from Congleton Borough Council; this has cost about £750,000, although there are still some projects to complete. The finance for the work is provided by way of a low cost Government loan. And an interest free loan from the former Congleton Borough Council
5. The Council returns approximately £75,000 per year to organisations within Congleton to support their various activities, including making a significant contribution to the Citizens Advice Bureau
6. The Council provides Allotments
7. The Paddling Pool is opened and annually and maintained
8. All of our Councillors are volunteers and do not receive any remuneration or fee whatsoever

### **Congleton Town Council is the most local level of Government. It serves the town's 28,000 residents by:**

- Providing an essential link between town residents and Cheshire East Borough Council to ensure grass roots views are heard and considered.
- facilitating economic development and regeneration of the town
- examining all planning and licensing applications and giving opinions to the Borough Council on behalf of local residents
- managing a range of local services and facilities to benefit the town including the Town Hall, handy-man service, paddling pool and allotments
- Providing financial support to a variety of community groups and organisations which support the well-being of Congleton residents.

### **Some of the major achievements for 2011/12 include:**

- High Street facing office facilities open Monday – Friday 9-5pm
- Part-funded Four Police Community Officers for the Town (£47.2k)
- Improvements to the interior of the Town Hall
- Produced quarterly Town Council and Community Newsletter (Bear Necessities)
- Continued and developed the well-respected Town Handy Person Scheme
- Worked on promotion of the Town and the creation of the Beartown Brand
- Christmas Fayre and Lights Switch on ceremony
- Supported town events such as the Food and Drink Festival
- Continued to support an active Youth Committee to serve the Town
- Provided direct support to Congleton In Bloom, and Cheshire Pride Awards
- Achieved gold in North West In Bloom
- Winner of Community Pride Award
- Commencement of Regeneration Strategy projects for the Town
- High Profile Congleton Partnership & liaison with businesses
- Promoted business and retail opportunities via Congleton Means Business Expo in conjunction with Partnership
- Town Centre Management
- Negotiating with Cheshire East on devolved services and partnership working
- Acting as Pathfinder on devolved services in conjunction with Cheshire East Council
- Completed Employment Land Study
- Produced Public Realm Strategy
- Produced Story Board for the Town Hall
- Promoted the Town Hall as a Wedding Venue and held first Wedding Fayre
- Selected to be a national pilot in conjunction with Cheshire East Council for a Neighbourhood Plan, produced plan entitled Town Strategy

### **Some key initiatives for 2011-12 – taken from the Corporate Strategy are: -**

#### **An Active and Engaged Community**

- To administer the community grant scheme to help support and develop local groups including CAB and CVS
- Support the Cheshire East Community Partnership in developing a Sustainable Community Strategy
- To operate openly and share information through the Town
- Council website, community newsletter, notice boards and the media.
- To continue to engage in the town's next generation by supporting youth organisations & facilities and by working with the town's Youth Councillor Committee.
- Support sport and leisure facilities which promote healthy lifestyles and support Team Congleton 2012
- Support Congleton's Food and Drink Festival and Best Garden Competition
- Support the continuation of Congleton's Fair Trade Status
- Supported the establishment of a Shop Mobility Scheme
- Support active engagement of the community in the Jubilee celebrations

## **A Sustainable Environment**

- Continue the Town Handyperson service to keep on top of small works in the town.
- To directly support “In Bloom” initiatives in Congleton and Buglawton
- Re-established clean teams to improve the cleanliness of the town
- Fund four Police Community Support Officers to work in the town and support the work of Shopwatch
- Be the voice of Congleton on licensing applications affecting the town
- Work with the Sustainability Group to produce a Town Energy Descent Plan
- Complete the Town Hall energy improvements.
- Measure the carbon footprint of the Town Hall
- Support efforts to soften and green Mountbatten Way, included in Public Realm Strategy
- Support phases 2 and 3 of the River Dane Walkway to provide a green corridor across the town.
- Facilitate the production of a Public Realm Design Statement
- Actively support the Management Plans for our Conservation Areas
- Work with parties to ensure that regeneration and new developments reflect the heritage and traditional architecture of the Town
- Actively support the conservation area master plan
- Produced a Neighbourhood Plan in conjunction with the Partnership and other key partners in the Town

## **A Strong and Diverse Economy**

- Work with the KISS group and others to help local businesses
- Completed a Congleton Employment Land Study
- Completed registration of Bear Town Trade Mark
- Lobbied for high quality employment sites and improvement of existing Business Parks
- Provide Town Centre Management.
- Work with partners to utilize the Town’s entrepreneurial strength
- Work with partners to promote Congleton through the Beartown Brand.
- Advocate for improved public transport links
- Support the Musical Festival(Jazz and Blues)
- Work with retailers to maintain trade group(s).

## **A Celebrated and Protected Heritage**

- Complete Storyboard project for the Town Hall

**You can contact Congleton Town Council by:**

**Visiting/writing to:** Congleton Town Council, Congleton Town Hall, High Street,  
Congleton, CW12 1BN

**Website:** [www.congleton-tc.gov.uk](http://www.congleton-tc.gov.uk)

**Telephoning:** 01260 270350

**Fax:** 01260 280357

**Emailing:** [info@congletontowncouncil.co.uk](mailto:info@congletontowncouncil.co.uk)

