



ANNUAL REPORT OF CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

2012-13



QUALITY
TOWN
COUNCIL

Mayor's Overview

Well, what a fantastic year it has been, I, my consort, and Cadet feel very privileged to have represented Congleton in such an eventful and winning year with the Queens Jubilee / London 2012 and the following awards won through the effort of fellow Congletonians

A winning Year



- Best Kept Largest Town,
- Best Community Website
- Little Gem award for our Fountain in the Park
- Gold standard in the North West in Bloom awards
- Bearmania - Community Police Award
- Team Congleton - Embrace the Games award

Firstly, I would like to thank the many volunteers, organisations and companies that invest time and money to ensure that Congleton is what it is today, “very special”. I have learnt so much in my year and did not realise the extent of the many organisations and volunteers active in our historical market town, we must all acknowledge and support the fantastic work they do. Therefore, I have chosen to support the youth of Congleton as the beneficiary of my charity monies raised,

which to date stands at £9,480.

“Monies raised through - Afternoon tea, Children’s teas party, Golf Event, Mayors Ball and School Calendars”

My term started on May 9th 2012, when it seemed like the whole of Congleton lined the streets to proudly welcome and wave on the Olympic torch en-route to opening the 2012 Olympic Games.

Throughout my year I have attended as many local events as possible and far too many to list, however the following are some of the events that stood out for me.

Annual Food Festival – Congleton looked its best as over 5,000 visitors packed the streets of Congleton

Loverlee Jubilee - our beautiful Victorian Park put on a great show as Congletonians came out to celebrate the Queens Jubilee in glorious sunshine.

Its Knockout – headed up by our very own Olympic champions Robbie and Ann Brightwell “Team Congleton” saw a weekend of fun and laughter as teams battled with the many challenges that lay ahead.

Christmas light switch on – a very special time of year for all and the annual event once again packed the streets of Congleton as officially Christmas had arrived in Congleton.

Congleton High School Carol Concert – In my term I have attended many church services including my own, however on this occasion I didn't expect to see Astbury Church packed to the rafters with standing room only as the school put on an amazing performance.

Daneside Theatre – I have attended every production throughout my term and I congratulate Daneside as they truly do put on a great show.

It has been a complete pleasure and honour to serve Congleton as Town Mayor and offer my sincere thanks to my predecessor the late Cllr. David Martin and his family plus the many people that have helped and supported me in my term in office.

Cllr. S. A. Holland

Consort – David Holland, Cadet – Tom Heyes, Chaplain – Paul Withington

Leader of the Council

Where does the time go? It really does seem only a couple of months ago that I was sitting down to pen these few words looking back at 2011 and forward to 2012. Here we are doing the same again for 2012 and 2013.

The thing that stands out for me looking back at 2012 is the incredibly busy summer that we had (if we can call it a summer). In the six weeks between the end of May and the middle of July we had the Olympic Torch relay, followed a few days later by the many street parties held to celebrate Queen Elizabeths' Diamond Jubilee. Although the weather wasn't kind to us for the street parties, the following day was much better and we all had a fantastic day of celebration at the lovely Jubilee Park event. The following weekend, again with the weather being kind, we had our very own 'It's a Knockout' tournament. Seven days later we enjoyed the ever successful Food and Drink festival and then after a couple of weeks rest, the Carnival came to Town. In amongst all of that – we had to prepare the Town for the annual 'North West in Bloom' judging. All in all a very hectic summer - but what made it so special was the turnout to all of these events. Congletonians, and I suspect, a few others from further afield, turned out in their thousands to help us celebrate and enjoy the different activities that had been organized by a few very special people. Thank you to all of the volunteers that made the events possible and a big thank you to the people of our Town who show their appreciation by making the effort to join in.

What else have we been doing? Well, I mentioned the North West in Bloom judging earlier – we were awarded the RHS Gold Award for the third year running and in addition, we picked up a clutch of awards at the Cheshire East Civic Pride awards including the best kept Large Town.

Both Town and Borough Councillors and officers have been lobbying for a new road to the North of the Town to alleviate some of the traffic and air pollution problems and to provide easier access to our business parks which should help those businesses with ambitions to grow. This new road, which has been incorporated into our Town Plan and therefore the Cheshire East Local Plan, is now known as the Link Road. There is a political will to see a start on this road within the next few years. A group of local businesses have got together, calling themselves 'Link 2 Prosperity' to help promote and support the plans.

I did say last year that we expected to see a start on the new Bridestones Centre. Unfortunately, due to a variety of technical and bureaucratic reasons the project stalled. Cheshire East Council is working hard to try and unblock the obstacles and hope to announce their progress fairly shortly.

Looking forward, our summer is not planned to be as busy as last year but we do have 'Park Live' to look forward to which will be a combined Music and Eco festival lasting 3 days. If this is successful – it could well run alternate years with the Carnival.

We will also be hosting a parade on the Thursday the 14th of June to celebrate the homecoming from Afghanistan of the Mercian Brigade. We are hoping for a massive turnout of both the schools and general public for our very brave troops.

And of course, our very popular and ever increasing food festival will be held on the following Sunday.

Finally, your Councillors will continue to fight any unplanned development on your behalf, in particular, where it encroaches on our much loved green spaces within the Town Centre.

Once again, it has been a year of hard work, but, I have enjoyed every minute of it (well most anyway!). It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve as Leader of The Council on behalf of the Town.

Councillor Bob Edwards

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)
- Guy Brittain (C)
- George Hayes (C)
- Sally Ann Holland (C)
- Douglas Parker (C)
- Glen Williams (C)
- Rebecca Williams (C)
- Paul Bates (C)

West

- Dawn Allen (C)
- Gordon Baxendale (C)
- Robbie Brightwell (C)
- Louise Bours (UKIP)
- John Saville Crowther (IVC)
- 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 Manager - Jackie MacArthur
- Admin Assistant (Mayoral) - Linda Minshull
- Administrative Assistants - Andrea Morris-Wild, Sue Trow
- Facilities Manager- Chris Jones
- Handymen - Chris Banks, Mark Worthington
- 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:-

Community, Environment & Services	7/6	30/8	4/10	13/11	9/2	7/2	21/3
Council	31/5	21/6	20/9	1/11	6/12	10/1	7/3 18/4
Finance and Policy	31/5	30/8	18/10	29/11	3/1	14/2	28/3

Planning	24/5	14/6	19/7	23/8	6/9	27/9	18/10
	8/11	29/11	3/1	14/2	14/3	4/4	
Town Hall Committee	28/6	27/9	8/11	14/3			

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 2012-13 the precept was £681,629. Below is a summary of income and expenditure for the year ending 31st March 2013.

The money is spent providing services and representing the people of Congleton. In broad terms in 2012-13 the Town Council spent the money it raised on the following:

Congleton Town Council - Management Accounts 2012-13

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total
<u>Finance and Policy</u>			
<u>101 Corporate Management</u>			
Staff Costs (re-allocated)	105,077	118,606	13,529
Travel	961	1,200	239
Training / Conferences	1,794	2,600	806
Rent Payable	13,950	13,950	0
Reception - TIC	2,499	2,499	0
Miscellaneous Office Costs	150	270	120
Telephone/Fax/Internet	1,660	1,400	-260
Postage	3,152	3,360	208
Stationery & Printing	1,725	1,800	75
Subscriptions & Publications	1,991	1,890	-101
Insurance	3,584	3,800	216
Computer/IT Costs	3,979	4,045	66
Photocopy Charges	2,803	3,465	662
Recruitment Advertising	112	500	388
Other Advertising	146	200	54
Equipment Replacement\Tools	0	100	100
Bank Charges	12	200	188
Audit Fees - External	1,900	3,000	1,100
Audit Fees - Internal	1,200	1,200	0
Accountancy Support	2,684	3,675	991
Legal & Professional fees	1,525	1,500	-25
HR & HS support	2,641	2,501	-140
Central Overheads reallocated	-29,355	-29,147	208
Tfr to EMR Elections	15,000	0	-15,000
Tfr to EMR Digital Display	25,000	0	-25,000

Corporate Management:- Expenditure	164,190	142,614	-21,576
CEC Double Taxation	-18,751	0	18,751
Interest Receivable	-8,461	-3,000	5,461
Corporate Management :- Income	-27,212	-3,000	24,212
Net Expenditure over Income	136,978	139,614	2,636
102 <u>Democratic Rep'n & Mgmt/Civic</u>			
Staff Costs (re-allocated)	20,032	21,569	1,537
Training / Conferences	631	3,000	2,369
Stationery & Printing	130	250	120
Marketing/Promotions	1,447	1,500	53
Council Newsletter	4,104	5,178	1,074
Council Website	2,050	2,000	-50
Members Expenses	105	500	395
Mayor's Allowance	2,600	2,600	0
Deputy Mayor's Allowance	260	260	0
Civic Expenses	4,520	4,500	-20
Civic Regalia	1,292	100	-1,192
Hall & Room Hire	4,501	7,000	2,499
Civic Artefacts and Treasures	148	1,000	852
Election Expenses	14,979	0	-14,979
Central Overheads reallocated	3,476	3,451	-25
Democratic Rep'n & Mgmt/Civic:-Expenditure	60,275	52,908	-7,367
107 <u>Grants</u>	62,604	77,013	14,409
109 <u>Capital and Projects</u>	98,173	96,800	-1,373
F&P Income - Expenditure Totals	358,030	366,335	8,305
<u>Community, Environment & Services</u>			
201 Paddling Pool	21,126	24,811	3,685
211 Congleton Park	0	0	0
215 Floral Displays	12,312	15,000	2,688
241 Allotments	163	500	337
251 Handyman service	45,245	68,851	23,606
262 Street furniture	0	250	250
263 Public Toilets - EMR	6,000	0	-6,000
264 Shopmobility	5,000	5,000	0
280 Devolved Services - EMR	27,250	27,250	0
301 Congleton Partnership	31,226	34,391	3,165
302 Community Development	27,760	31,798	4,038
303 Police Community Support Officers	47,200	47,200	0
305 Christmas Fayre/lights	3,871	4,000	129
321 Tourism	2,560	4,000	1,440
341 Youth and Young People	1,382	2,000	618
351 Fellowship House	760	0	-760
Tfr to EMR Capital Contingency	20,000	0	-20,000

		251,855	265,051	13,196
	<u>Town Hall</u>			
221	Town Hall - Expenditure	168,543	160,643	7,900
	Town Hall - Income	96,813	110,400	13,587
		71,730	50,243	-21,487
	<u>Total Net Expenditure</u>	681,615	681,629	14

The Town Council has supported local voluntary and community groups with approximately £65,000 worth of grants in 2012-13

Among those assisted were:

Grants awarded 2012-13

Congleton Museum	Notional rent	4500
Community Projects	Rent/Project support	16000
Congleton Partnership	Rent	1533
Citizens Advice Bureau	annual grant	15000
Christmas Lights	Christmas Lights	9000
Carnival Committee	Bi-annual Congleton Carnival	3750
Royal British Legion	Remembrance Day Parade	713.5
St Peter's Church - churchyard	Churchyard Maintenance	2650
St Peter's Church -clock maintenance	Church clock maintenance	236
Buglawton Community Group	Flowers for Buglawton	500
Congleton Museum Trust	Olympic exhibition	250
Congleton Harriers	Congleton Half marathon	250
Congleton Pentecostal Church	Seating for lounge area	250
Congleton Musical Theatre	Support for Annie	500
Congleton Film Festival	Film Festival	250
St John Ambulance Congleton	CPD posters	250
Park Run Congleton	Park Runs -	250

Congleton Players	Support for Calendar Girls	500
Congleton High School	Disabled music equipment	300
Congleton Harriers	Support for Cloud 9 race	250
Beartown Patchwork Group	Support for exhibition 2013	100
Jazz & Blues Festival	Jazz & Blues Festival 2012	500
Sol Theatre School	Summer theatre school 2013	1,000
Congleton Learning Partnership	Replacement of old/obsolete computers	1,000
Team Congleton 2012	Legacy projects	1,500
Rotary of Congleton	Support for Youth Makes Music Project	200
Grants given to hall hirers		4,131
Total		65,364

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 in the Town
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 £65,000 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 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 26,500 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 2012-13 include:

- High Street facing office facilities open Monday – Friday 9-5pm
- Part-funded Four Police Community Officers for the Town (£47.2k)
- 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
- 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
- Retained Quality Town Status
- Winner of Community Pride Award
- Commencement of Regeneration Strategy projects for the Town
- High Profile Congleton Partnership & liaison with businesses
- Promoted business and Link2Prosperity
- Lobbied for inclusion of a By Pass in Cheshire East Local plan
- Provided 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 Town Strategy with involvement from key stakeholders
- Promoted the Town Hall as a Wedding Venue and held further Wedding Fayre

Some key initiatives for 2012-13 – 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 the CAB
- Support the Congleton Community Partnership
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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 and promote phase 1 of the Public Realm Strategy

- 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
- Produced a Town Strategy in conjunction with the Partnership and other key Stakeholders in the Town

A Strong and Diverse Economy

- Work with the KISS group and others to help local businesses
- 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.
- Lobby Cheshire East for use of S106 money for Town Centre Regeneration
- 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

- Held an Open day for Town Treasures and Ancient Records

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

Telephoning: 01260 270350

Fax: 01260 280357

Emailing: info@congletontowncouncil.co.uk

