



Annual Report of Congleton Town Council 2017-18



Congleton Town Mayor- Cllr Charles Booth



I've always loved Congleton, since I was a teenager it has taken a special place in my heart. Every happy and significant event in my life has taken place right here; and the opportunity to be the Mayor of the town I love is one I will never forget.

As Mayor I have been able to see so many voluntary groups, organisations and events, and more importantly what goes on behind the scenes. Every week I have met several different groups of people that have invested countless hours into projects that make Congleton such a great place to live. After a very short time I realised that there is so much going on, and so many good works that it is impossible to feel anything but positivity. We really do live in a fantastic town.

This year has been extraordinary; residents of Congleton have put in a tremendous amount of effort year after year to make the town a special place to live, and to top it off His Royal Highness the Prince Of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall decided to visit and compliment us for all the hard work we've done and to mark the celebrations of 700 years of a Mayoralty. It was breath-taking to see the crowds gathered to welcome the royal visitors. Even more-so to join the many volunteers at both the Old Saw Mill and crammed into the Town Hall, getting the chance to meet and share their experiences with Charles and Camilla.

At the start of 2018 we began celebrating 700 years of Mayoralty in Congleton which has inspired numerous other events in the town, including a 700 word writing competition and the second Sprint Triathlon hosted at Congleton Park and there is still plenty more to come.

The triathlon in particular, was quite an experience for me. A couple of months prior I had a strong aversion towards getting in the water and I couldn't manage to swim more than half a length. With a bit of help from friends, and some healthy competition from the former Mayor Cllr. David Brown, within 10 weeks I was happy swimming half a mile which was more than enough for the triathlon.

Throughout the year I've attended lots of fundraising events for a number of worthy local charities and causes, and I've received outstanding support for my own chosen charities supporting young people's organisations in Congleton; to date raising upwards of £5000.

There were numerous other highlights to my year including:

- Attending the Astbury May Day Festival at Glebe Farm
- The Beartown Bikers Charity Rally at the Church House Inn
- My Civic Parade in June
- Supporting a Volfest and a number of other fundraising festivals and events
- Getting to spectate a tournament at the Tennis Club and being invited to join the 'Wimbledon Hopefuls' to take up the sport.
- Marching in the umbrella parade and introducing some of the bands at the Congleton Jazz and Blues Festival in August
- Lighting the bonfire at the Rotary Club fireworks display on Bonfire Night.

- Meeting representatives of the Princess Irene Brigade who came over from Holland for the Remembrance Sunday Parade in November
- Enjoying the Christmas market and festivities and the Christmas Lights Switch-On.
- Watching many fantastic performances in the Town Hall, Daneside Theatre and other venues.
- Getting the opportunity to support young people at their clubs like Cadets, Scouts, and youth groups, as well as visits to schools and at the Junior Council meetings.
- Taking to the dancefloor at the Mayor's Ball in March, where Congleton's finest turned out in force.

As Mayor I have also had the privilege of being the Chairman of the Town Council for the year. I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their support and for the decisions taken this year. It was good to see action being taken to redevelop the town centre and to improvements made to the Town Hall, as well as all the financial and practical support provided to annual events that keep the town centre dynamic and exciting. Town Councillors are unpaid elected positions and I really appreciate the hard work that fellow councillors put in behind the scenes to improve our town.

I would like to thank my wonderful wife Aimee Booth for being my Mayoress and for all her support both at events and behind the scenes. I'd also like to thank Joe Krinks from the ATC for the excellent role he has played as my Cadet and Cllr Suzie Akers-Smith for her role as Deputy Mayor. I would also like to thank the Chief Officer, David McGifford, Civic Administration Officer Linda Minshull and other members of the Town Council staff for all their support.

I wish the next Mayor, who will be elected by fellow Councillors on Thursday 17th May, all the very best and hope that they enjoy the year as much as I have. It's been emotional...

Councillor Charles Booth

Councillor Charles Booth



Mayor Cllr Charles Booth with Mayoress Aimee Booth, their children Henry & Daisy and The Mayor's Cadet Joe Krinks



Mayor Cllr Charles Booth meeting HRH The Prince of Wales



Mayor Cllr Charles Booth invited to play guitar at a Visyon Fundraiser

Leader of the Council – Cllr Bob Edwards

Over the past few years I have written about how proud I feel at the way the people of Congleton turn out and support our many public events. I can't keep on repeating myself talking about the success of the events that are put on each year. But for the record – I would like to remind us all of the events throughout the year and thank the many people (mainly volunteers) that make it all happen. The Food & Drink Festival, Hidden Theatre Day, Teddy Bears Picnic, Jazz & Blues Festival; The unveiling of the Treo Statue – followed by the Half Marathon, Rotary Bonfire, Remembrance Day Parade, Christmas Lights Switch-On, Congleton Unplugged, Easter Treats Day and the Triathlon. Well done to everyone involved.

One of the other activities that bring Congleton to life is “In Bloom”. The efforts of the team continue to bring success year after year. In 2017 we won Best Large Town in the North West (this is the 4th time in the last 5 years) and because of that we have been entered in to the same category for Britain in Bloom later this year (last time we entered this we were awarded Gold). Although there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes throughout the year the first visible evidence of the season is the kids plant up in the park. The Streetscape team follow this up by preparing all of the displays – baskets, tubs, roundabouts and park beds and by mid June the Town is looking absolutely fabulous. There is a team of volunteers (we are always looking for more) who supplement the work of Streetscape by regularly organising litter picks (although there is not that much litter these days) and weeding sessions. Judging takes place in July & August. The Northwest and National awards are announced in October and we follow this with our own awards ceremony where we present all of the entrants and volunteers with their awards and certificates.



The town centre should look even better this year due to the completion of the Public Realm works. There have been many delays, disruption, heartache, frustration and mess. But all that is behind us now and I think that we have a Town Centre to be proud of. I'm hesitant to mention it but the saga of Bridestones II (now renamed The Mills) is always there. We are told that the development company is in an advanced stage of negotiations with its main potential tenant. Once that is agreed, a planning application will be submitted for consideration.

The Neighbourhood Plan, which deals with the detailed needs and aspirations of the Town and will help us determine how the Town will evolve over the next 15 years, has now been through Regulation 14 – which means that it has been out to consultation (it was sent to over 600 interested individuals and organisations). Feedback has been received and is currently being incorporated into the plan. The next stage is that it will be sent to Cheshire East for inspection, following that – the final public consultation and referendum.

There has been a National Campaign over the last year to raise awareness of dementia. Congleton has got firmly behind this campaign and is now officially recognised as working towards becoming a Dementia Friendly Town. Many people and organisations have attended awareness sessions and are more knowledgeable of what it's like to live with dementia.

Finally and returning to my opening comments, I am sure that the majority of the population of our wonderful Town will join me in thanking everyone who turned out and supported the Royal visit. Prince Charles and Camilla did us a massive honour in choosing to visit Congleton in late January. Thousands of people queued up in very cold conditions to catch a glimpse of the Royal Couple. It was a massive security operation for the Town which was incredibly well organised by a small team of Council Officers. Well done to them and thank you for making it a successful day.

As always I would like to finish off by saying, as a member of the Town Council, that I am proud to represent the people of Congleton and as Leader thank each and every one of you for the support that you have given us in the past year.

Councillor Bob Edwards

Leader – Congleton Town Council



Congleton In Bloom -
North West in Bloom Judging Day

Dementia Friends
Awareness Session



Congleton Food & Drink Festival

Congleton Town Centre Public Realm Works



Congleton In Bloom
Spring Clean

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. The election was held on 7th May 2015.

The Councillors serving in this year were:

East Ward

Larry Barker (C)
Charles Booth (C)- Mayor
Peter Broom (C)
David Brown (C)
Bob Edwards (C)- Leader
George Hayes (C)
Sally-Ann Holland (C)
Anna Morrison (C)
Harvey Richards (C)
Glen Williams (C)

West Ward

Nick Adams (C) Resigned: 29th August
Suzanne Akers-Smith (C)- Dept. Mayor
Dawn Allen (UKIP)
Andrea Armitt (C)
Geoff Baggott (C)
Paul Bates (C)
Robert Boston (L)
Amanda Martin (C)
Jean Parry (C)
Liz Wardlaw (C)
Maurice Walker (C) Elected 9th Nov

C = Conservative

L = Labour

UKIP = UK Independent Party

Officers for the period of this annual report were:

- Chief Officer- David McGifford
- Support Manager- Responsible Financial Officer - Jackie Potts
- Support Manager- Town Centre and Marketing Manager- Jackie MacArthur
- Streetscape Development Manager- Ruth Burgess
- Facilities and Development Officer- Chris Jones
- Town Hall Supervisor- Mark Worthington
- Civic Administration Officer- Linda Minshull
- Administration Assistants- Andrea Morris- Wild & Sue Trow
- Marketing and Administration Assistant- Martha Hayes
- Congleton Partnership Co-ordinator- Mike Smith
- Facility Officers- Pete Forster, Melvin Hulme, Tim Muston, Rowan Nightingale
- Streetscape Operatives- Chris Banks, James Bibby, Terry Davies, Simon Farrall, Dave Foster, Jonathan Murrell, Mick Pritchard, Rob Serwin, Mark Stubbs, Noel Stubbs, Andrew Turnock, Pete Whiston.
- Streetscape Apprentice- Jack Appleton
- Casual Paddling Pool Attendants, May- September

Council Meetings

The Council has a number of committees, the dates for the meetings in 2017-18 were:

Council: 4/5, 22/6, 13/7, 17/8, 21/9, 26/10, 7/12, 18/1, 1/3, 12/4

Planning: 1/6, 29/6, 20/7, 17/8, 28/9, 12/10, 2/11, 16/11, 4/1, 25/1, 8/2, 8/3, 5/4

Finance & Policy: 8/6, 27/7, 14/9, 19/10, 23/11, 11/1, 15/2, 22/3

Community, Environment & Services: 6/7, 7/9, 5/10, 9/11, 1/2, 15/3

Town Hall: 13/7, 28/9, 25/1, 8/3

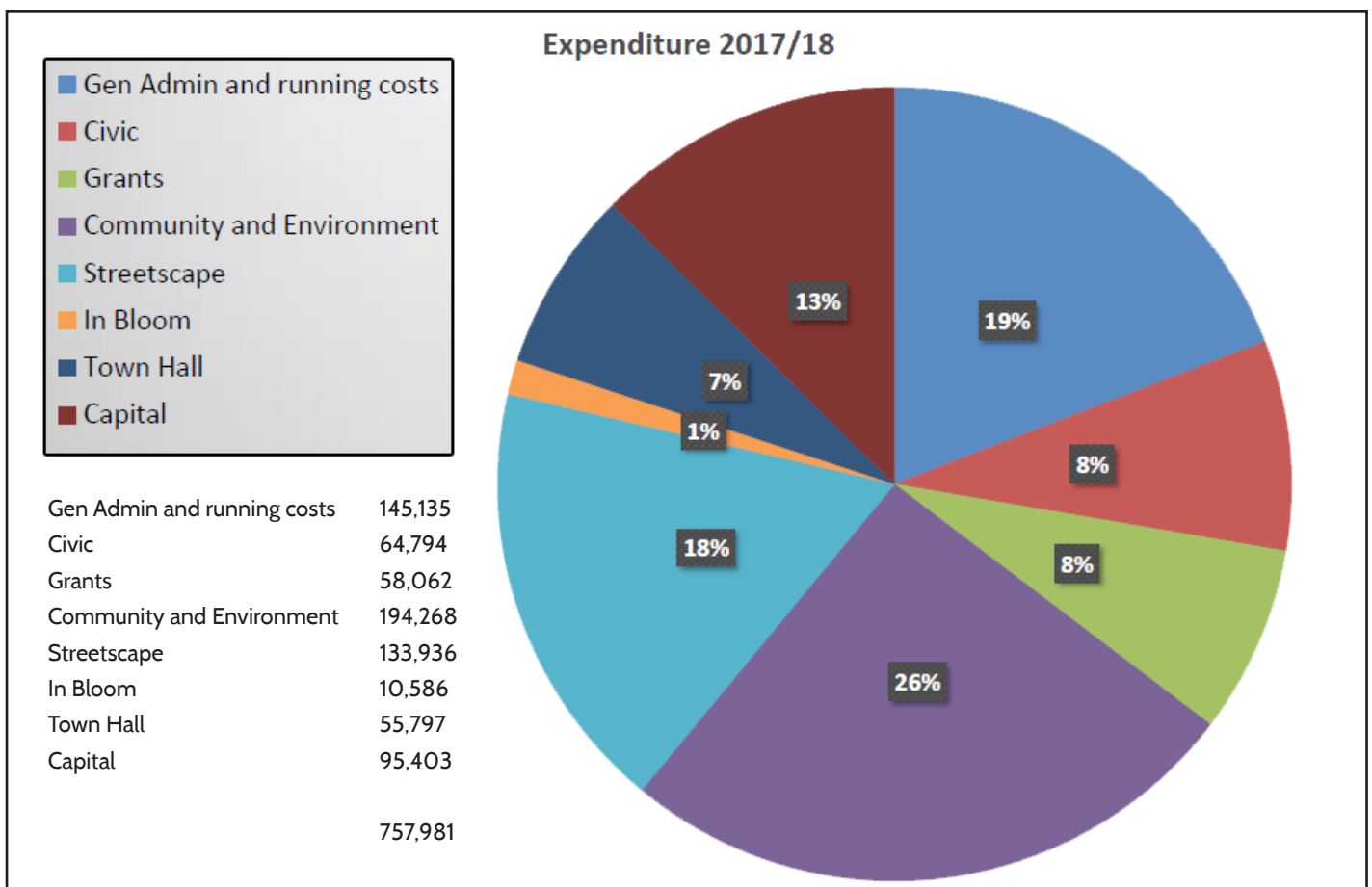
The Personnel Committee and Strategy Working Group are held as and when necessary.

How is the Town Council Financed?

The majority of the Town Council's funds come from a precept which is added to the Council Tax levy set by the Principal Authority. In 2017-18 the precept was £798,212. Total cost of Streetscape Services was £510,936 of which £366,706 is funded through the Cheshire East Council contract.

Below is a summary of income and expenditure for the year ending 31st March 2018. The funds are spent providing services and representing the people of Congleton. In broad terms in 2017-18 the Town Council spent the money raised on the following:

Congleton Town Council Management Accounts- March 2018



Grants Given

The Town Council has supported local voluntary and community groups within approximately £61,855 worth of grant in 2017-18. It also supported Partnership Projects with £15,000 and Police Community Support Officers with £47,672. Among those assisted were:

Name		£
Grants given to hirers of the Town Hall	Town Hall Hire	4,408
Congleton Museum	Notional Rent	4,500
Community Projects	Project Support	16,000
Citizens Advice Bureau	Annual Grant	15,000
Christmas Lights	Christmas Lights	9,000

TOTAL 47,611

Name	Project	£
Royal British Legion	Remembrance Day Parade	601.00
St. Peter's Church	Maintenance of Church Clock	250.00
SOL Theatre School	Summer Theatre School	500.00
Congleton Harriers	Congleton Half Marathon	250.00
	Support for Cloud 9 Hill Race	250.00
Congleton Musical Theatre	Production of "Jekyll & Hyde"	750.00
Marton School	Contribution to a Prayer Garden	250.00
Our Gang	Support for Congleton Gang Show	600.00
Congleton Community Credit Union	Support towards Audit Fees	500.00
Congleton Unplugged	Congleton Unplugged Festival	500.00
Congleton PCSOs	DNA Testing Kits	415.00
Congleton Pantomime	Support for 40th Anniversary	250.00
Ruby's Fund	Soft Play Room	500.00
Congleton Library	Summer Reading Challenge	100.00
Bromley Farm Community Centre	Bromley Farm Newsletter	400.00
Congleton Bath House & Physic Garden	Equipment for Community Events	100.00
Friends of Congleton Park	Brass on the Grass	300.00
Congleton Museum	Frontage Improvements	228.00
Congleton Carnival	2018 Carnival	7,500.00

TOTAL 14,244.00



Congleton Library



Congleton Unplugged Festival



Our Gang



Ruby's Fund

Services Provided

What Services does the Town Council Provide:

Congleton Town Council is one of the largest of the 108 Local Councils in Cheshire East. It was founded in 1980 and became fully operational in April 1981 to provide the local council tier of local government for Congleton.

It serves the local community by;

- Providing an essential link between town residents and Cheshire East Borough Council to ensure grass roots views are heard and considered
- Encouraging economic development and regeneration of the Town
- Examining 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 Congleton including the Town Hall, streetscape and grounds maintenance services, paddling pool and allotments
- Providing financial support to a variety of community groups and organisations which support the wellbeing of Congleton residents
- Streetscape Services in the surrounding Parishes

Congleton Town Council covers an area of 2255 hectares (22.55 sq km or 8.7 square miles) with a population of around 26,900.

In January 2014 the size of Congleton Town Council staff increased dramatically when the Council's long term desire to take on the streetscape operation as a devolved service was realised. Streetscape delivers Grounds and Cleansing Services for Congleton Town Council, which includes grounds maintenance- mowing, hedge cutting, pruning of shrubs etc. and street cleansing functions- emptying of over 165 litter and dog bins each day, removal of fly tips, litter picking and generally keeping Congleton a safe and tidy town to live in.

Each year the Streetscape team plant around 36,000 summer bedding plants and 30,500 winter plants, these plants are for all the different bedding areas throughout Congleton - key areas including roundabouts, Congleton Park and other recognised public open spaces. The team consists of 12 Operatives, 1 Apprentice and 1 Manager.

Congleton Town Council activities are based around five key goals:

- An Active and Engaged Community
- A Sustainable Environment
- A Celebrated and Protected Heritage
- A Strong and Diverse Economy
- Operational Quality



Key Achievements

Some of the memorable achievements of 2017/18 were:

- Honoured by a Royal Visit by TRH The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall to recognise 700 years of Mayoralty and the strength of the Congleton community
- Providing direct support to Congleton in Bloom which won the North West in Bloom competition and is working towards Britain in Bloom finals in 2018
- Completion – minus some snags – of the gas works and public realm works in the pedestrian area
- Increased the revenue raised through the hire of the Town Hall with income £20,000 over budget. Record year for bookings. Improved the commercial offer through investing in better conference equipment, event lighting, round tables and improved security
- One of seven UK towns involved in an Innovate UK funded Big Data Small User project to understand ways to improve footfall and sales in the High Street
- Worked with volunteers to provide a site and logistics for installing a statue to Treo
- Introduction of a Sprint Triathlon, encouraging exercise and raising several thousand for the Town Mayor's Charities
- Taking the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan through Regulation 14 consultation

Some key areas of work for 2017/18 were:

An Active and Engaged Community

- Administered the community grant scheme to help support and develop local groups including the Citizen's Advice Bureau, Congleton Community Projects and Congleton Partnership (see page 8)
- Continue to develop the Town Council website – it is visited by more than 3,000 unique visitors a month. Update the Town noticeboards weekly. Increased the Town Council's Social Media presence. Produce Bear Necessities four times per year, and trialed a Summer Discovery App
- Continue to engage in the town's next generation by supporting youth organisations and facilities, working with the Town's Youth Council Committee, promoting the town's play areas, produced a 40 things to do leaflet, supporting the Youth Forum and engaging with the schools
- Began a long-term project, working with Congleton Partnership to make Congleton a Dementia Friendly Town
- Support sport & leisure facilities, which promote healthy lifestyles, including activities to improve cycling and walking facilities around the town and working with the recently formed Sports Trust
- Maintain the Mayor's Cadet Scheme
- Support the work of the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan team, with assistance from volunteers and key members of the community

A Sustainable Environment

- Streetscape services target issues that protect and enhance the local environment, improve green open spaces and create more sustainable planting areas
- Encouraged more volunteers to become involved in the town clean teams, RHS It's Your Neighbourhood schemes and the wider Congleton In Bloom campaign
- Making the town safer by part-funding Police Community Support Officers, supporting Cheshire East with winter gritting, funding CCTV in the town and supporting Pub Watch
- Working with Congleton Partnership to 'green' Mountbatten Way
- Developing policies in the Neighbourhood Plan to safeguard green spaces, encourage sustainable transport and to improve and connect cycle routes throughout Congleton



A Celebrated and Protected Heritage

- Continued to support Congleton Museum's acquisition of Bradshaw House
- Start of the 700 years of Mayoralty – including a visit by Royalty
- Promoted the Town Council's Civic Role through Mayoralty and Town Crier activities
- Worked with third parties to ensure that planned regeneration and new developments reflect the heritage and traditional architecture of the Town
- Promote access to Town Treasures and the Town Hall
- Worked with volunteer fund raisers to find a suitable location for a statue of Treo, a war hero dog from Congleton
- Working with Congleton Cenotaph Group on gaining planning permission to renovate and add missing names to the Cenotaph

A Strong and Diverse Economy

- Lobby Cheshire East for use of S106 money for Town Centre Regeneration and other green area improvements, most recently Moody Street Garden
- Continue to lobby for an upgraded Leisure Centre for Congleton
- Encourage and support activities to increase the number and dwell time of visitors to the Town Centre through working with the Traders Group and the Innovate UK Big Data Small User project
- Lobby for high quality employment sites and improvement of existing Business Parks to be included in the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan
- Promote Congleton Link Road to improve access to Business Parks, reduce congestion, improve air quality and access to the town centre

Key Priorities for 2018/19

- Further reduce the deficit on the Town Hall working budget
- Develop the Streetscape Services so that they can generate income to help off-set costs and maintain the high level of service that the town expects
- Raise £230k needed to add names and renovate Congleton Cenotaph
- Take the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan through to Referendum
- Continue developing the Congleton Sports Trust and lobby to improve the playing pitch provision in Congleton
- Introduce more quality events for Congleton including a successful Makers Market and events to promote Congleton's heritage
- Gain gold in the Britain in Bloom finals
- Comply with the new GDPR regulations
- Work with the Police and other parties to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour in the town
- Obtain Gold Level Accreditation with the Local Council Award Scheme
- Respond and advise local people on Council related issues



2018 Key Events

May

- 5th- Hidden Places Theatre Day & Performance, 1pm
- 17th- Annual Council Meeting & Mayor Making Ceremony, Town Hall, 7pm
- 19th- Carnival Fundraiser- Soul Night, Congleton Town Hall
- 26th- Congleton Paddling Pool Opens

June

- 10th- Congleton Food & Drink Festival, Congleton Town Centre, 10.30am-4.30pm
- 17th- Congleton Town Mayor Civic Service, Town Hall
- 17th- Congleton Brass on the Grass, Congleton Park
- 24th- Audley Silver Band, Congleton Park

July

- 7th- Congleton Carnival
- 8th- Congleton Lions Club- Band Concert, Congleton Park, 2pm
- 29th- Rode Hall Brass Band, Congleton Park
- Congleton in the Regional and National In Bloom Judging Competitions

August

- 12th- Salt City Jazz Men Concert, Congleton Park
- 19th- Rode Hall Brass Band Concert, Congleton Park
- 25th-26th- Congleton Jazz and Blues Festival

September

- 1st- Congleton & District Horticultural Show, Congleton Town Hall
- 6th-9th & 13th-16th - National Heritage Days
- 8th-23rd- Congleton Heritage & Antiques Festival
- 9th- Eighth Annual Congleton Lions Duck Race, Congleton Park, 2pm
- 9th- Congleton Paddling Pool Closes

October

- 7th- The 35th Sting-In-The-Tail Half Marathon, meeting at Congleton High School, 9.30am

November

- 3rd- Rotary Bonfire, Congleton Park
- 11th- Remembrance Parade & Service
- 24th- Congleton Christmas Festival, Town Centre, 10am-6pm

Contacts

You can contact Congleton Town Council at:

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