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Cheshire East  
Council



# Annual Report of Congleton Town Council 2018-19





# Congleton Town Mayor- Cllr Suzie Akers Smith



Fred Jackson, Mayor in 1918 adorns the mayoral chain

Congleton is known as 'the Little Town with a Big Heart', which is a statement you truly understand after spending a year as the Town Mayor. In 1918 the Mayor was Cllr Fred Jackson, the Mayor in 2118 has not even been born yet. Life goes on, and being part of the history of Congleton is a memory I shall cherish forever. I am very grateful to the people of Congleton for affording me that privilege and the honour of serving them as the first citizen of the town.

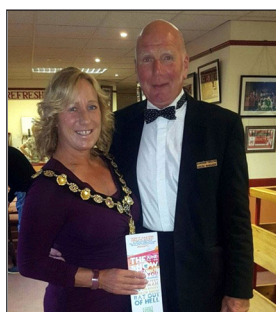
Engagements that I have attended, from cutting the ribbon at the opening of the new home for the Electric Picture House, to being looked after by the many wonderful volunteers at Daneside Theatre, and engaging with people from all walks of life make you appreciate that Congleton is such a wonderful place to live because of the people that live here.

We are very fortunate to have organisations such as Congleton Community Projects, Congleton Jazz and Blues Team, Friends of Congleton Park, Congleton Partnership and Congleton Town Council who work hard to put on fabulous events for the town such as Congleton Unplugged, Congleton Jazz and Blues, Food and Drink Festival, Health and Wellbeing Fayre, Christmas Lights Switch-On, Easter Treats Day and Brass on the Grass. These established events, along with new events such as the monthly Makers Market which started in April 2018 and is held on the last Saturday of the month, encourages residents and visitors to come into town. These events rely on a huge amount of time and effort given by volunteers.

It has been an incredible year for women! During the year that women celebrated 100 years of women over 30 being able to vote, as well as myself as Mayor, we had females in the roles of Deputy Mayor and Mayor's Cadet. After the elections of the 2nd May, Congleton also gained national recognition as the first town in the UK to elect a Women's Equality Party councillor.



Logo for the 700 years of Mayoralty celebrations



Nicholas from the Daneside Theatre escorting me to the best seats in the house

Other notable achievements and anniversaries are the:

- 11th November 2018 - 100 years since the end of the Great War, which saw an incredible turnout at the town's cenotaph. This is due to be renovated with the addition of 250 missing service personnel names
- 20th anniversary of Congleton in Bloom, who secured a gold for the town in the National In Bloom Finals and was awarded 'Best Kept Town in Cheshire' through Cheshire Community Pride
- 20th anniversary of the successful University of the 3rd age in Congleton
- 10th anniversary of the increasingly successful Congleton Food and Drink Festival
- 10th anniversary of Congleton's award winning apple juice made at the Old Saw Mill



November 11th 2018 -  
100 years since the Great War



The Old Saw Mill,  
home of Congleton apple juice



Congleton In Bloom 20th Anniversary





Buckingham Palace garden party in June 2018



Local business helping kids get fit for life



Award winning Sgt Clara Jackson at Dining In

Those who know me, know my greatest passion lies in getting more people, more active, more often. After visiting Buckingham Palace for a garden party in 2018, a reward for organising the 2017 and 2018 Triathlons to encourage people to get fit, it made me even more enthusiastic to help get people active. The Triathlon in 2019 saw 70 children and 65 adults taking part. It has grown in popularity year on year and is hosted in Congleton Park and Congleton Leisure Centre. It takes more than 60 volunteers to host this event. I would like to thank all involved. Fitness is a lifelong commitment and best started young! Please encourage your children to take part in the upcoming Young Guns events on the 10th August in Timbersbrook, getting fit and enjoying the countryside, life doesn't get better than that!

As a charity event, the triathlon raises £3k - £4k for the Mayor's chosen charities. The event I will remember with great fondness is the Mayor's Purple Ball, which is the culmination of the Mayoral year in raising funds for the charity. In my year of office I have raised around £15,000 which will be shared amongst my chosen charities, Ruby's Fund and LOL Foundations and a number of other youth organisations in Congleton.

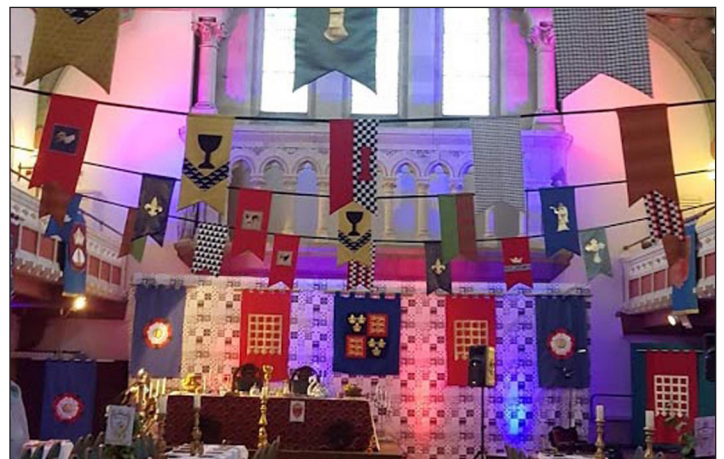
During the year we have celebrated 700 years of having a Town Mayor with a magnificent medieval banquet in the Town Hall and the wonderful King Edward's Musical Society of Macclesfield who played on the 24th February as a final event for the celebrations included a specially commissioned piece of music. You can watch it on YouTube.



KEMS celebrating the Mayoralty



Mayor's Purple Ball



A Medieval Town Hall



I make no apologies for encouraging Congleton to walk and cycle more. With the town's population growth over the next 15 years it is something we should all be thinking about, not only to improve the air that we breathe but for the health and enjoyment of our town.



Sustainable bamboo bikes



Beartown Boxing getting kids fit and active



Congleton Mountain Biking Club  
on Bosley Cloud

As Town Mayor I have had the privilege of being the Chairman of the Town Council for the year and would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their support and for the decisions taken this year. The recent elections have led to many changes at the town council and I would like to thank all the former councillors for their commitment to the town over the past years and to welcome the new town councillors which are unpaid elected positions.

My biggest vote of thanks is to my wonderful family for their support, my husband Peter for being my consort, my boys Harry, Ed and Tom for being self-sufficient throughout my Mayoral year, my friends who have stood in as my Consort and my award winning Mayor's Cadet Clara Jackson from the Congleton ATC 230 Squadron . I would also like to thank Cllr Sally-Ann Holland for her role as Deputy Mayor, 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 23rd May, all the very best and hope that they enjoy their year in office.

*Councillor Suzie Akers Smith*



Town Mayor Cllr Suzie Akers Smith  
with Consort Peter Akers Smith





Congleton In Bloom Celebration Evening



Dementia Buddy Scheme Launch



Town Centre Works Completed- April 2018



Events in the Town Hall



Brass on the Grass Event



Congleton War Memorial



# 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, from the election held on 7th May 2015 until 2nd May 2019.

The Councillors serving in this year were:

## East Ward

Larry Barker (C)  
Charles Booth (C)  
Peter Broom (C)  
David Brown (C)  
Bob Edwards (C)- Leader  
George Hayes (C)  
Sally-Ann Holland (C)- Dept. Mayor  
Anna Morrison (C)  
Harvey Richards (C)- Resigned Nov 2018  
Glen Williams (C)

## West Ward

Suzanne Akers Smith (C)- Mayor  
Dawn Allen (I)  
Andrea Armitt (C)  
Geoff Baggott (C)  
Paul Bates (C)  
Robert Boston (L)  
Amanda Martin (C)  
Jean Parry (C)  
Maurice Walker (C)  
Liz Wardlaw (C)

C = Conservative

L = Labour

I = Independent

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

- Chief Officer- David McGifford
- Support Manager- Responsible Financial Officer- Jackie Potts
- Support Manager- Town Centre & Marketing Manager- Jackie MacArthur
- Streetscape Development Manager- Ruth Burgess
- Town Hall Supervisor- Mark Worthington
- Civic Administration Officer- Linda Minshull
- Administration Assistants- Andrea Morris-Wild & Sue Trow
- Marketing & Administration Assistant- Martha Hayes
- Congleton Partnership Co-ordinator- Mike Smith
- Facility Officers- Pete Forster, Tim Muston, Rowan Nightingale, Melvin Hulme- until Dec 2018
- 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 2018-19 were:

**Council:** 17/05, 14/06, 12/07, 09/08, 20/09, 18/10, 06/12, 17/01, 21/02, 04/04

**Planning:** 24/05, 14/06, 19/07, 09/08, 06/09, 04/10, 25/10, 22/11, 03/01, 24/01, 07/02, 07/03, 28/03

**Finance & Policy:** 07/06, 05/07, 13/09, 11/10, 29/11, 10/01, 14/02, 21/03

**Community, Environment & Services:** 28/06, 02/08, 27/09, 08/11, 31/01, 14/03

**Town Hall & Assets:** 26/07, 15/11, 04/04

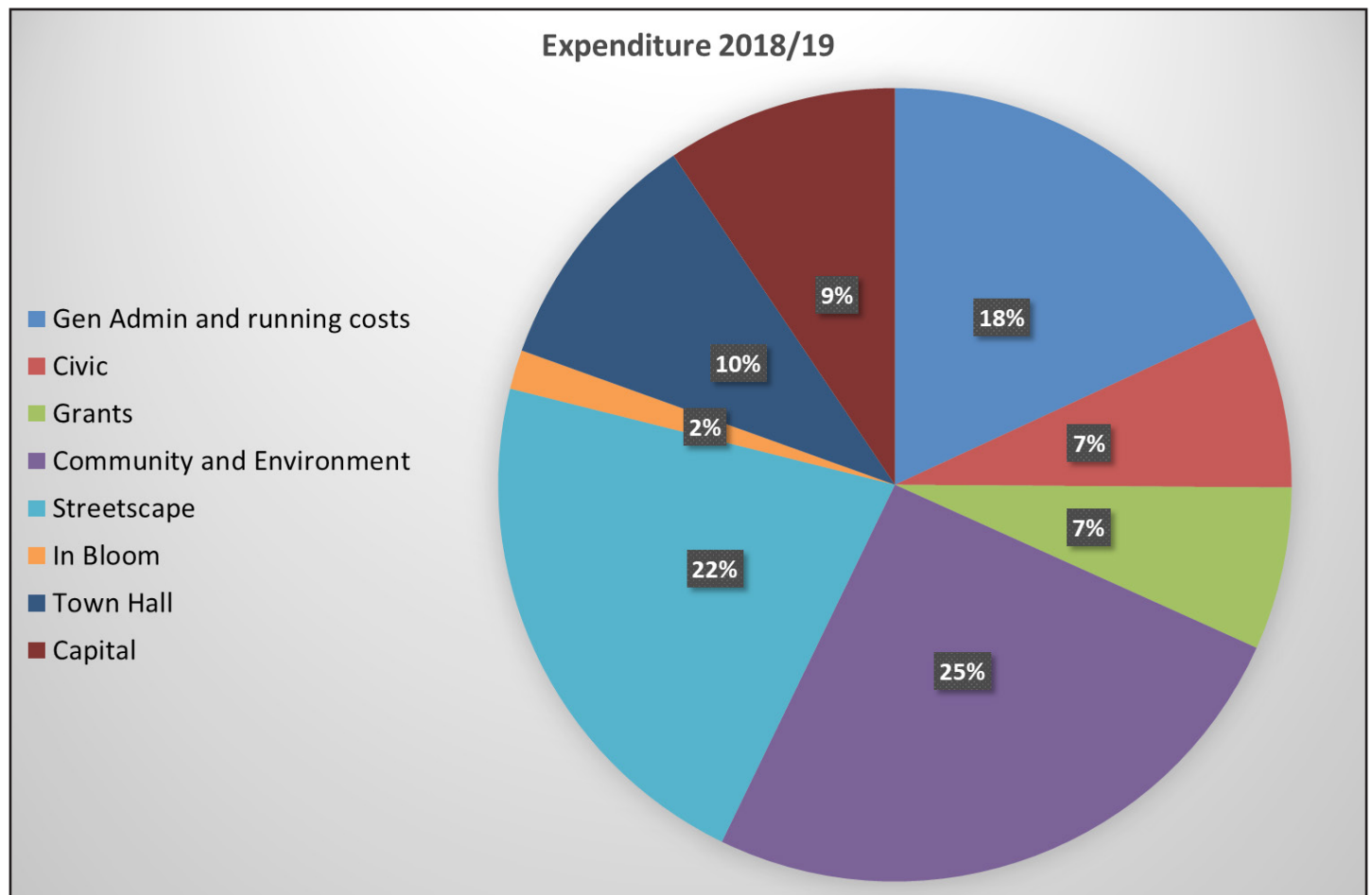
The Personnel Committee and Strategy Working Group are held as and when necessary.

## 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 2018-19 the precept was £836,152. Total cost of Streetscape Services was £562,650 of which £366,706 is funded through the Cheshire East Council contract.

Below is a summary of the income and expenditure for the year ending 31st March 2019. The funds are spent providing services and representing the people of Congleton. In broad terms, in 2018-19 the Town Council spent the money raised on the following:

## Congleton Town Council Management Accounts- March 2019



Gen Admin & Running Costs: 134,324 ~ Civic: 51,872 ~ Grants: 49,191 ~ Community & Environment: 188,666 ~ Streetscape: 161,021

In Bloom: 11,855 ~ Town Hall: 74,714 ~ Capital: 69,903

**TOTAL: 741,546**



# Grants Given

The Town Council has supported local voluntary and community groups within approximately £54,000 worth of grant in 2018-19, it also supported Congleton Partnership projects with £15,000.

Among those assisted were:

Name		£
Grants given to hirers of the Town Hall	Town Hall Hire	£4,768.80
Congleton Museum	Notional Rent	£4,500.00
Congleton Community Projects	Project Support	£16,000.00
Citizens Advice Bureau	Annual Grant	£15,000.00
Royal British Legion	Remembrance Day	£1,000.00
<b>Total:</b>		<b>£41,268.80</b>

Name	Project	£
Congleton Harriers	Congleton Half Marathon	250.00
	Support for Cloud 9 Hill Race	350.00
SWANS CIC	Counselling Sessions	500.00
SOL Theatre School	Summer Theatre School	500.00
	Support with Summer Show	600.00
Congleton Community Credit Union	Membership CVSCE	45.00
Jazz & Blues	Support for Festival	500.00
Visyon	Promotional Booklet	250.00
KEMS Orchestra	700 Years of Mayoralty Music	200.00
Congleton Unplugged	Support for Event	500.00
230 Squadron Air Cadets	Support towards Minibus	500.00
U3A Cycling Group	Support towards Hi-Viz Shirts	400.00
Beartown Patchwork & Quilters	Support for 2019 Exhibition	350.00
Rode Hall Silver Band	Support for Uniform	600.00
Friends of Congleton Park	Brass on the Grass 2019	300.00
Ruby's Fund	Teddy Bears Picnic	500.00
Friends for Leisure	Support for Group Event	230.00
Congleton Bath House & Physic Garden	Support with Marketing & Advertising	500.00
Congleton Library	Summer Reading Challenge	150.00
Bromley Farm Community Centre	Bromley Farm Newsletter	400.00
Changing Lanes	Support towards Administration	297.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7,922.00</b>



230 (Congleton) Squadron,  
Air Training Corps



Ruby's Fund



Congleton Unplugged



Congleton Harriers



# Services Provided

## What Services does the Town Council Provide:

Congleton Town Council is one of the largest of the 108 town and parish councils in Cheshire East. The Town Council was founded in 1980 and became fully operational in April 1981. The Town Council provides the most local tier of 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, street cleansing 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 (figure from the 2011 census).

Since January 2014 the Town Council has delivered Grounds and Cleansing Services for Congleton, via a devolved services agreement with Cheshire East and ANSA. This includes grounds maintenance - mowing, hedge cutting, pruning of shrubs etc. and street cleansing functions- emptying of over 175 litter and dog bins each day, removal of fly tips, litter picking and generally keeping Congleton a safe and tidy town to live in.

The Town Council is the accountable body for Congleton Partnership, and also provides substantial grants to Congleton Community Projects (£16K), Congleton Partnership (£15k) and Congleton's Citizen's Advice Bureau (£15K). In addition Congleton Town Council supports the full costs of an additional Police Community Support Officer (£33k) for the Town.

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 2018/19 were:

- Providing direct support to Congleton in Bloom which received a gold standard in both the National Britain in Bloom finals and the North West regional competitions and was the overall Champion of the Cheshire Community Pride Competition.
- Events to celebrate 700 years of Mayoralty in Congleton, including a medieval banquet in the Town Hall, a musical concert, placing Mayor's pictures in the Grand Hall and revamping the Mayor's Roll of Honour, listing Mayors back to 1318.
- Cross-party group set up to fight for health services for Congleton and the War Memorial hospital
- Massive turn-out at the cenotaph to remember 100 years since the end of WW1
- Regular monthly Makers Markets started in April - last Saturday of the month.
- Taking the Neighbourhood Plan through regulation 15 and submitting to the Examiner
- Being present at the sod cutting, marking the start of the Congleton Link Road construction
- After consultation with the public, submitting a bid to purchase Bradshaw House on Lawton Street
- Three play areas were improved thanks to the support of Congleton Partnership and Ansa.

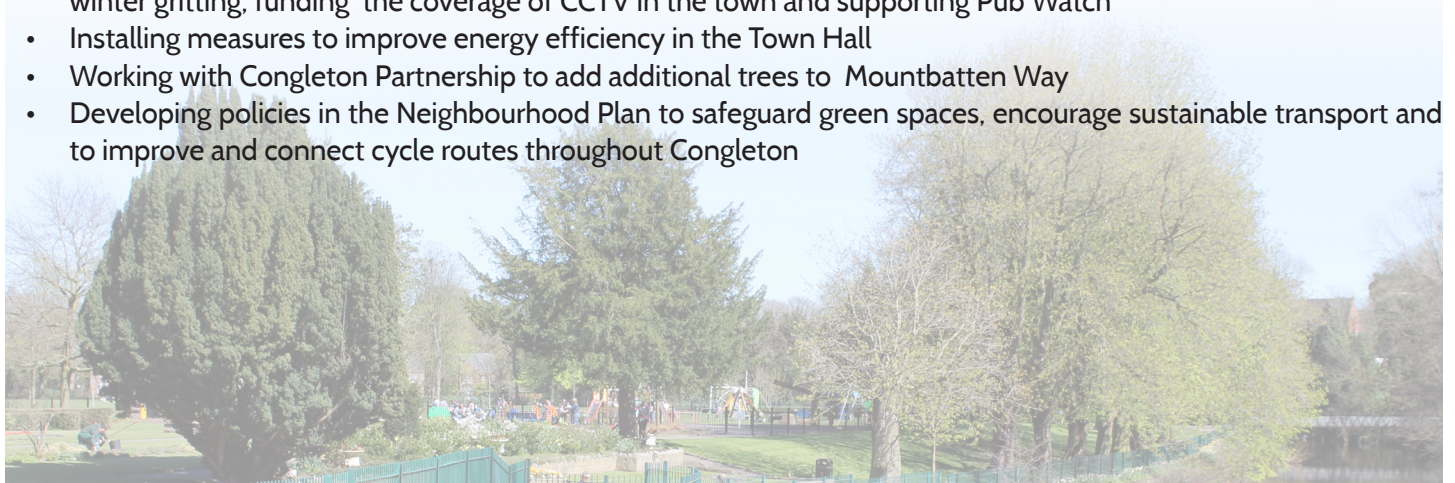
## Some key areas of work for 2018/19 were:

### An Active and Engaged Community

- Administered the community grant scheme to help support and develop local group
- Supported the re-modelling and creation of a more suitable cenotaph for the town by agreeing a £90k underwrite.
- 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 other promotional material
- 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, assisted in the first play day in the Town Centre, supporting the Youth Forum and engaging with the schools
- Continued to work with Congleton Partnership towards creating a Dementia Friendly Town.
- Support sport & leisure facilities and activities which promote healthy lifestyles, including activities to improve cycling and walking facilities and sports pitch provision for Congleton
- 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 to get the plan to a stage where it could be sent to the Examiner.
- Held a second Sprint Triathlon, encouraging exercise and raising several thousand for the Town Mayor's Charities

### 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 funding an additional Police Community Support Officer, supporting Cheshire East with winter gritting, funding the coverage of CCTV in the town and supporting Pub Watch
- Installing measures to improve energy efficiency in the Town Hall
- Working with Congleton Partnership to add additional trees to 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
- 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 and joined in the first Congleton Heritage and Antiques Festival.
- Working with Congleton Cenotaph Group to renovate and add missing names to the Cenotaph and agreed an under-write of £90K to enable this project to progress with confidence.

## A Strong and Diverse Economy

- Saw the completion of the Public Realm improvement scheme in the pedestrian area
- Lobbied Cheshire East for use of S106 money to improve areas in Congleton
- Continue to lobby for an upgraded Leisure Centre for Congleton – planning permission was granted in April 2019.
- Increased the number of events in the Town Centre with the intention of encouraging greater footfall and new visitors into the town centre.
- Continued to work with the Institute of Place Management as 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
- Lobbied for high quality employment sites and improvement of existing Business Parks to be included in the emerging Cheshire East Local Plan
- Witnessed the start of the Link Road construction which should benefit the town by reducing congestion, improve air quality, better access to industrial estates and the town centre

## Key Priorities for 2019/20

- Further reduce the deficit on the Town Hall working budget through an uptake in bookings and efficiency costs
- Continue to 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
- Help raise additional funds required for the renovation of Congleton Cenotaph so that the Town Council under-write can be reduced
- Make sure that the Congleton Neighbourhood Plan is fit for purpose and one that local people will want to support at Referendum
- Maximise opportunities for the retention and enhancement of Green Open Spaces in the town
- Support the development of high quality indoor and outdoor recreational facilities.
- Introduce more quality events for Congleton and improve the marketing of the town as a great place to live, work, visit and do business.
- Work with the Police and other parties to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour in the town
- Work with all political parties to safeguard local health services for Congleton and the surrounding area.
- Obtain Gold Level Accreditation with the Local Council Award Scheme
- Win North West in Bloom
- Respond and advise local people on Council related issues



# 2019 Key Events

## May

- 23rd- Annual Town Council Meeting & Mayor Making, Town Hall, 7pm
- 25th- Congleton Paddling Pool Opens for the Season

## June

- 2nd- Congleton Town Mayor's Civic Parade & Service, 2.30pm
- 2nd- Pantonic Steel Orchestra Concert, Congleton Park, 2.30pm
- 8th- Beartown Patchwork & Quilters Exhibition, Town Hall
- 9th- Congleton Food & Drink Festival, Town Centre, 10am-4pm
- 9th- Cry Baby & the Hootchi Cootchi Band, Congleton Park, 4.30pm
- 16th- Brass on the Grass 2019, Congleton Park, 1.30-5.30pm
- 23rd- Audley Silver Band, Congleton Park, 2.30pm

## July

- 7th- Lions Youth Brass Band Concert, Congleton Park, 2.30pm
- 13th- Congleton Youth Orchestra Concert, Town Hall, 7pm
- 14th- Barnton Silver Band Concert, Congleton Park, 2.30pm
- 20th- Congleton Pride Event, Town Centre, 10am-4pm
- 20th- Congleton Choral Society Concert, Town Hall, 7pm
- 21st- The Friday Night Band Concert, Congleton Park, 2.30pm
- 25th- North West In Bloom Judging Day
- 28th- Rode Hall Brass Band Concert, Congleton Park, 2.30pm

## August

- 4th- The Encores Concert, Congleton Park 2.30pm
- 10th- Young Guns Challenge, Timbersbrook
- 11th- Pasty Shoes Concert, Congleton Park, 2.30pm
- 18th- Rode Hall Silver Band Concert, Congleton Park, 2.30pm
- 23rd-25th- Congleton Jazz and Blues Festival, Town Centre

## September

- 6th-7th- Congleton Horticultural Society Exhibition, Town Hall
- 8th- Congleton Lions Annual Duck Race, Congleton Park, 2pm
- 8th- Congleton Paddling Pool Closes for the Season
- 13th-22nd- National heritage Open Days

## October

- 1st- Health & Wellbeing Fayre, Town Hall, 10am

## November

- 2nd- Rotary Bonfire, Congleton Park, 5pm
- 8th- Remembrance Concert, Town Hall
- 10th- Remembrance Parade and Service
- 12th- South Cheshire Floral Society Demonstration, Town Hall, 4pm
- 23rd- Congleton Christmas Lights Switch-On, Town Centre
- 30th- Congleton Youth Orchestra Concert, Town Hall, 7pm

## December

- 21st- Congleton Choral Society Concert, Town Hall, 7pm

Monthly Makers Markets on the last Saturday of every month, Town Centre, 10am-4pm  
Congleton Market Days, Tuesday, Saturday and Car Boot on Sundays.

## Contacts

You can contact Congleton Town Council at:

Congleton Town Council, Congleton Town Hall, High Street, Congleton, CW12 1BN  
[www.congleton-tc.gov.uk](http://www.congleton-tc.gov.uk) - 01260 270350 - [info@congletontowncouncil.co.uk](mailto:info@congletontowncouncil.co.uk)