

TALK OF THE TOWN

The newsletter of the Nantwich Town Council Summer 2008

The Chairman's first thoughts



From the chair

Keith Cafferty
Chairman, Nantwich Town Council

As the new Chairman of Nantwich Town Council, my first task is to pay tribute to my predecessor, Cllr Bill McGinnis, who in my opinion conducted the council affairs admirably and was also responsible for a great many improvements in the town. Together with his wife Lyn, he has proved an excellent ambassador.

My first duty as Chairman was to represent the town at the Reaseheath College Festival and Open Day which proved to be a very successful venture. I had the opportunity to look at the excellent opportunities afforded to our youngsters and was most impressed with the new student accommodation now nearing completion and also with the new library and study area. The college represents a vital link between leaving school and entering employment with the necessary qualifications to play a full and active role in society.

During my term in office I shall be continuing to progress the 'war on grot' and hope to introduce a drive to encourage more use of our litter bins in the town and surrounding areas.

On the political front, the new Cheshire East Shadow Council is now active and a steering body has been elected to take it up to the changeover deadline of 1 April 2009. This will mean that the Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council will cease to exist as will

the Cheshire County Council. At this stage no one knows exactly what this means for the town but we are hopeful that your council will be responsible for taking on more of the duties previously carried out by Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council. We are confident we have the councillors, staff expertise and enthusiasm to tackle this challenge on your behalf.

Finally, may I thank everybody for their kind wishes to my wife Barbara and myself on taking on the Chairmanship and role of Consort. We look forward to meeting some of you during our year in office and if there are any events that you would like us to attend, please call or e-mail the Town Clerk.

It is my intention, during my term of office, to try to bring the community and the council closer together.

If you have a problem that you feel we can help with, tell us. If you are aware of a problem relating to the wellbeing of the town, get in touch. If the Town Council can assist, it will.

Hire Brookfield Hall

Brookfield Hall is available for hire for community use.

There is a large hall and a smaller meeting room (see website). Hire charges are reasonable.

Enquiries to the town clerk on (01270) 619224.

HHD: to be or not to be?

The Chairman writes Holly Holy Day, a celebration and re-enactment of the Battle of Nantwich in January 1644, has taken place in the town for the past 30 years or so. Run and organised by a small dedicated group, the Holly Holy Day Society is now threatened with extinction.

Finances are low because poor ground conditions on Mill Island made it impossible to charge the public to watch the 2008 show. This fact, together with the desire of committee members who have done sterling work in the past to retire gracefully, has led to the current crisis.

If Holly Holy Day is to be saved, we need five or six active committee members to come forward to help with the planning and organising for January 2009. The Town Council gives a grant each year to the Society and has agreed *in principle* to underwrite the 2009 event, so there will be no personal financial risk to organisers. But your help is vital if the event is to flourish and be part of the town's festive community events. Apart from the Christmas celebration it is the only public event held in the town during the winter months and is an important part of the town's and indeed the whole country's historical heritage.

Too many of these occasions are being lost and I feel we have a duty to future generations to remind them of their history and to learn from the past. Holly Holy Day is supported by the Sealed Knot and is a spectacle not to be missed. If you feel you can give a little time to help recreate the battle, do something for the town and probably make some new friends in the process, please contact Cllr Keith Cafferty (01270 842560) or the Town Clerk on 01270 619224.

Family Fun Day coming up



Saturday 12 July Family Fun Day, Barony Park, 10.00am–5.00pm. A real Dabbers' Day out!

Many items of entertainment have been booked, some old and some new, including Rodeo Bull, Gladiator Duel, Bungee Run, miniature steam train and the usual mixture of trade and charity stalls. Dancing troupes, Punch and Judy, donkey rides and a new attraction featuring 'artist extraordinaire' Jim Hicks, who will amaze you with his skill and dexterity.

All in all, a day not to be missed – we are hoping that the weather is kinder to us this year.

May I take this opportunity to thank the members and officials of the Fun Day committee, for their wholehearted efforts in organising the event, and for their attendance at meetings held throughout the year to prepare for the Fun Day.

Come and join us for a day packed full of fun!

Keith Cafferty
Chairman

Talk of the Town is published by Nantwich Town Council with the aim of keeping Nantwich residents fully informed about the Council and its activities.

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Clerk to the Council

Riddell Graham (contact details: p4)

Out and about

Allotments

The new allotment site at Brookfield is now up and running with all 26 allotments being snapped up very quickly. The tenants have been busy digging, hoeing and planting on what looks to be a very attractive and well tended site.

Lakeside

Three new benches and two additional picnic benches have been erected around the lake.

Work on the construction of a new pathway to provide better access will begin shortly. This will help to eliminate soggy shoes and encourage more members of the public to use the lakeside area, and enhance the natural beauty of the area without detracting from it. If you are picnicking do remember to put your litter in the bins provided and ensure plastic bags are disposed of safely to reduce risk to the wild life.

Car sharing

With the continuing escalation of petrol and diesel prices, perhaps we should consider car sharing to reduce car costs, particularly when going to work or shopping. In America, where the price has risen by a dollar in some areas, 'car type queues' have been organised where car owners pull up at a pre-arranged spot and pick up passengers who are going to town, to work or for shopping. Food for thought!!

Dabbers done good

Congratulations to Nantwich Town Football Club on a very successful season. The 'Dabbers' achieved promotion to the Unibond Premier League and won the Cheshire Senior Cup, in addition to their youth teams winning numerous trophies. All in all a very successful first season at their new stadium. We wish the club all the best for next season in the premier league. The club provides excellent coaching/social facilities which are proving to be a great leisure facility for the town.

Keith Cafferty

Chairman, Nantwich Town Council

How your voice is heard

Not all your town councillors are just town councillors. A number of them are retired but some of them are employed in full or part time work. Many are school governors, trustees of charities or involved in community groups. And some are councillors on other local authorities.

Two town councillors, Andrew Martin and Arthur Moran, are councillors on the new Cheshire East Shadow Council. The Cheshire East Council will come into being on 1 April 2009 to take over all services from the County Council and the three district councils of Crewe and Nantwich, Congleton and Macclesfield. In the meantime, the shadow authority will appoint staff and decide broad policies and budgets.

Five town councillors – Healey, Lewis, Moran, McGinnis and Stockton – sit on the Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council. Cllr Moran is also a Cheshire County Councillor.

So the voice of Nantwich Town Council is not just heard in the council chamber in Brookfield Hall. Your town council representatives put forward the interests of Nantwich at other times and other places as well!



Speaking for you: **Top** Keith Healey and John Lewis **Centre** Andrew Martin and Bill McGinnis **Above** Arthur Moran and Joyce Stockton

First Responders update

The fight to save the Nantwich First Responders service will soon arrive at Prime Minister Gordon Brown's door. Our new MP, Edward Timpson, is giving his full support to the cause and within the next few weeks, will be arranging for a petition to be presented at Number 10.

Mrs Ann Ostridge has given much of her time to gain public support and to date has obtained more than 8000 signatures – equivalent to half the adult population of Nantwich. Let us hope that the efforts of Mrs Ostridge and many others will be rewarded.

At the local level, the Cheshire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee will be considering the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) proposals on 16 July and I will be representing our views and also speaking on behalf of Alsager and Congleton Town Councils who, like us, strongly oppose the changes to the First Responders. We have also arranged a meeting with the senior executives of NWAS in July.

It is worth reminding ourselves what the changes to the First Responders service proposed by the NWAS actually mean.

If you are a parent of a child under 14 years of age who, for example, falls downstairs and is unconscious, you will have to wait for an ambulance (possibly 30-40 minutes?). The First Responders will not be called.

If you are elderly, trip on a pavement and fall injuring yourself, you will lie there until an ambulance arrives. It may be freezing and wet but you will lie there for some time. The First Responders will not be called.

If you suffer a suspected heart attack or stroke, the First Responders *will* be called but they may take some time to arrive as they will not be able to use their blue lights and sirens.

These are just a few of the scenarios arising from the proposals of the NWAS.

In a nutshell that is why we are fighting on your behalf.

Bill McGinnis

2007-08 – the outgoing chairman reports on his busy year



Cllr Bill McGinnis – retiring Chairman of the Nantwich Town Council – reviews the

Council year 2007-08. He took office in May 2007.

From May 2007 to May 2008, I was privileged to represent Nantwich Town Council at 56 events, covering a wide range of the activities carried on within our town.

The diversity of our local organisations and the sheer effort put in by so many volunteers is impressive and, in my opinion, vital to the maintenance of a decent and civilised society. The town council awards grants to many of our local groups and I do not believe that one penny is wasted.

If I may highlight just a few of my visits during the year I would choose the following:

- Joining the Scouts for their centenary and renewal of the scouting promise – an early morning assembly on the town square.
- The inaugural event of the Nantwich Fair Trade group on the town square.
- Carol service at the Roman Catholic Church of St.Anne.
- The final of the Junior Schools Indoor Sports at Malbank Sports Hall.
- Nantwich Players Youth Theatre production of *Daz4Zoe*.
- The Parish Church of St.Mary's production of *The Davidson Affair*.

My wife Lyn accompanied me to most of the events and we are so grateful for the opportunities afforded to us.

Council business

● Planning and development control

One of the main functions of the council is to examine and comment upon applications for development within the town boundaries. We have dealt with

over 170 planning applications this year and responded to consultation on housing, waste disposal and planning policies. Our response on 'eco-towns' was swift and robust.

● Car parking

This vexed question was once again prominent as the Town Council fights to secure adequate parking for shoppers and workers. I am pleased to report that good progress has been made this year and we can look forward to improvement in the next few months.

The Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council Board has also approved funds for a viability study on the possibility of some type of shuttle service linking the car parks at Nantwich Town Football Club's Weaver Stadium, Snow Hill and Shrewbridge Road and the town centre. This is something we have been pressing for over some years and it is pleasing to see tangible progress.

As expected, decriminalisation of car parking has now happened, although it did take longer than anticipated. It should now prove easier to deal with illegal and inconsiderate parking but it will be necessary for the town council to monitor progress. We are pressing for early introduction of 'residents only' parking areas where local agreement is evident.

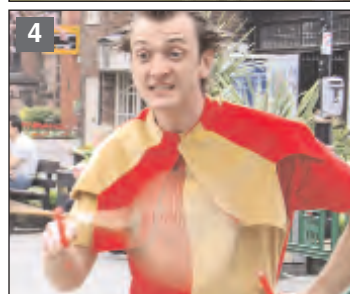
● Security and safety

The Town Council keeps a close eye on security and safety matters through the medium of our Town Watch Committee. On this body, there is representation from traders, licensees and the police in addition to our councillors. The close co-operation has been of real benefit to the town and has been used as an example elsewhere.

Once again, the Council has agreed an annual payment of £14,000 to maintain an open police station. We have also contributed £1500 towards the £2100 cost of a new hand-held 'enforceable speed gun' which will help Inspector Hassall and his team to confront dangerous driving in some well known areas.



Annie Coombs



1 The cast of St.Mary's production of *The Davidson Affair* put on in March. The director was the Nantwich Players' Jerry Park (centre). **2** Maintaining the quality of the First Responders service has been a Town Council concern during the past year. **3** New picnic tables and benches add to the pleasure of visiting the lake in Shrewbridge Road. **4** A celebration of St.George's Day is one of several events bringing visitors to the town.

● Grants

Each year, the Council awards grants of money to a large number of organisations which have met the Council's basic criteria, the most important of which is a clear benefit to the people of Nantwich. Among recent recipients are

- Brine Leas High School
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Nantwich First Responders
- The Gables Senior Citizens Luncheon Club
- The Guy Harvey Youth Centre
- Malbank School
- Nantwich in Bloom
- Nantwich Cricket Club
- Nantwich and District Band
- Nantwich Museum
- Nantwich Now
- Nantwich Players
- Nantwich Tennis Club
- ...and many more

● Council run functions

A few years ago, the Council introduced the Family Fun Day – a sort of modern carnival day out, to be held each July. It has proved a great success and Council has agreed to continue funding for this event. The success of the venture is due in no small measure to the work of Cllr Keith Cafferty and his hard-working team of volunteers. The Borough Council's Direct Services Division has also been of great help.

Last year, emboldened by the success of the Family Fun Day Council introduced a celebration of St. George's Day in the form of a medieval fair. This too was a success and it will return again on Sunday the 20 April. Once again, Cllr. Cafferty is at the helm.

● Financial accounts

This Council is well managed in its administration of our accounts.

In brief, council tax and grant income is around £106,000. Interest income from our capital reserve is some £56,000. Our revenue expenditure is around £140,000. During the year we have paid capital grants of £170,000.

For 2008-09 the Council is raising the precept by 25p per month on a Band D property to a figure of £20.78 per year.

● Quality Status

During this council year, the accolade of 'Quality Town Council' was awarded to the Council. This award signifies that



the council has met certain strict criteria laid down by government and in essence means that Nantwich Town Council is well run and in touch with its people. It is timely and important for the town as, with the advent of the new Cheshire East Council, Nantwich may be given greater scope to deal with local matters. Only councils proving to be well managed are likely to be given such opportunities.

● Miscellaneous matters

We are fortunate in having access to experts in varying fields who are willing to come to our meetings and share their knowledge with us. To mention a few, we have had informative talks from Alan Millington (Strategic Manager [Planning & Development], Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council), David Marren (Direct Services, Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council), Doug Butterill (Nantwich in Bloom), Lucy Johnson (Tourism), Ian Dale (Upper Weaver Valley) and Andrew Cliffe (plans for Brine Leas High School).

Before each Town Council meeting there is an 'open forum' where any member of the public may ask questions of the Council and raise issues relevant to our town.

Of the many groups which serve this town I would like to highlight two:

Nantwich in Bloom – This voluntary group is largely responsible for the attractive flowers and shrubs which go to make Nantwich a town to be proud of. The members beaver away in the background, often unsung, and they are not afraid to get their hands dirty. It is only justice that their efforts have brought so many awards to the town. In 2008, they are going for the big one – the Gold.

Nantwich First Responders – This voluntary service is part sponsored by the Town Council and is viewed by councillors as a key component in the emergency health services on which townspeople rely. This emergency service is usually first on the scene of an accident or medical emergency and their training and

expertise is invaluable in saving lives and giving comfort. That service is currently under threat and the Council is fighting proposals which will mean a reduction in the quality of service and may lead to its disappearance.

There have been other notable events during the year with mixed results for Nantwich:

Brookfield caravan site

Following upon the Borough Council's decision to close the caravan site, a public meeting was held at Brookfield Hall (the Town Council's offices) and, after a lively discussion and further consideration by the Borough officers, it was decided to obtain planning permission and allocate the land for more allotment plots.

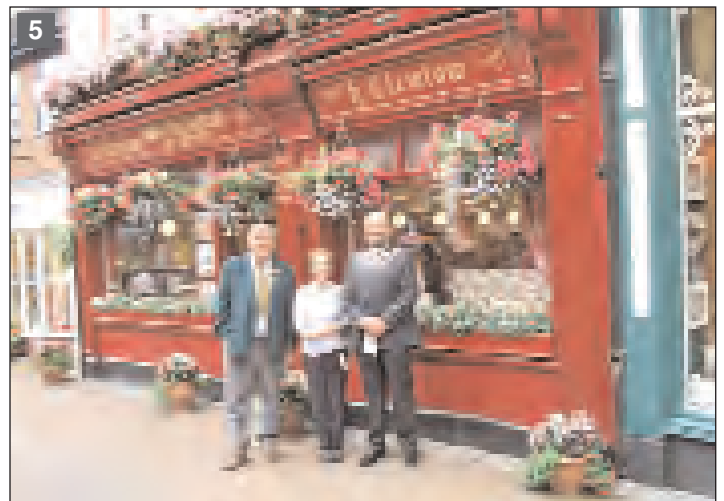
Post Office closures The proposed closure of the post offices at Millstone Lane and Meeanee Drive was greeted with dismay by councillors. The Town Council held a public meeting to gauge opinion and joined forces with the Borough Council to

vigorously oppose closures in the area. Unfortunately, the decision to close was taken, as many feared it would and we lost our sub post offices. We believe that this is a short-sighted policy which will later be recognised as a gross error.

I am grateful to other Town Councillors for the help I have received over the year and give special thanks to my wife Lyn for her encouragement and support.

In conclusion, Nantwich Town Council has had a busy year and has done its best to discharge its duty to the town. We have made progress but more work lies ahead. I am hopeful that the improvements we have seen, particularly with the new paths along the riverside, the bridges and seating on the lakeside and the tackling of 'grot spots', will be carried forward in the years ahead.

Bill McGinnis
May 2008



5 Local businesses back Nantwich in Bloom and play their part in making 'Nantwich a town to be proud of'. Nantwich in Bloom have now set their sights on a Gold award. 6 It's hard work but the Brookfield addition to Nantwich's portfolio of allotments has been warmly welcomed by the town's gardeners.

NAGS Foundation wants to give money away!

Nantwich & Acton Grammar School* Foundation (NAGS for short) is keen to give money away!

Cllr Arthur Moran, a trustee, says, "NAGS is a fund which has accumulated over many years from bequests and gifts to the school. The trustees make grants to young people (under the age of 25 at the time of application) living in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich and surrounding areas extending towards Tarporley and the borders of Staffordshire and Shropshire. Applications can be made at any time."

The trustees meet twice a year, in May and November, to consider applications. Examples of recent grants are

- An award to attend Jazzwise Summer School to improve technique on the saxophone.
- Cash to gain a professional qualification to teach English as a second language, to enable the recipient to assist in projects abroad.
- A sum to provide support for a placement as a volunteer on Fair Isle Bird Observatory in the Orkneys.
- Assistance with 'gap year projects' such as conservation work or helping with development in third world countries.

Amounts can range from £50 to £1000 for individuals and could be as much as £6000 for groups. Hobbies, arts, travel, sports and study are all suitable subjects for applications.

To get an application form, send a stamped addressed envelope to the Clerk to the Trustees, Nantwich & Acton Grammar School Foundation, Malbank School, Welsh Row, Nantwich CW5 5HD. Or go to the website http://www.malbank.cheshire.sch.uk/nantwich_acton_grammar_school_foundation.htm

As Cllr Moran says, "The money is waiting – and NAGS is waiting for worthwhile projects."

* *The Nantwich & Acton Grammar School became Malbank School in 1977. Applicants for grants do not need to be former pupils of Malbank School.*

A hard act to follow

Nantwich Town Council was well represented at the memorial service for the late Hon Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody held at the Parish Church of St.Mary on Monday 9 June.

It is appropriate that it should be.

As our Member of Parliament since 1983, Mrs Dunwoody was an independent and determined lady who fought hard for the interests of Crewe and Nantwich. All town councillors wish to extend their sympathy and

condolences to her family on their sad loss.

She will be a hard act to follow.

Our new MP, Mr Edward Timpson, has already expressed his encouragement for the campaign the Town Council is supporting to maintain our First Responders at full effectiveness. Mr Timpson has been elected to represent all the residents of Crewe and Nantwich and the Town Council welcomes him to the constituency.



John Brough

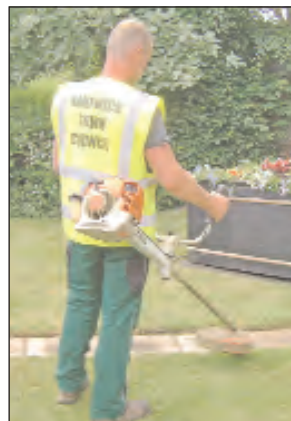
At the conclusion of the memorial service at St.Mary's for the late Gwyneth Dunwoody, the Chairman (right) says farewell to the Rector, Rev Peter Chantry, before expressing the Town Council's condolences to Tamsin Dunwoody (left).

The 'lengthsman' starts

The lengthsman has started work in the town.

Financed by the Town Council, a lengthsman is engaged to tidy up and clear land and roads which other agencies have missed or will not take responsibility for. Among

other locations, the surface of the path between Shrewbridge and Wellington Road, by the railway, has been improved and weeds in the gutters at Station View, Dorfold Drive and Waterlode have been treated.



Left Lengthsman Paul Barrett at work with a strimmer. **Right** The footpath alongside the railway between Shrewbridge Road and Wellington Road is one of a number of places which have benefitted already from his attentions.

Tidying up the station

The poor appearance of Nantwich station and its surroundings has been a concern for some time. Cllr John Lewis has been leading attempts to restore this key gateway into Nantwich over the last year with the Nantwich Now Market Town project. There are two main aspects – the station platform area (leased to Arriva) and the surroundings, particularly the old forecourt (where Network Rail and others are involved.)

The good news is that a lot of progress has been made on the station itself. Funds have been gained for a face-lift of the platform areas. Raised flower beds and troughs, hanging baskets and bicycle racks have been installed. The old station building has been redecorated and new fencing and a new side gate erected.

The Indian restaurant has been refurbished and renamed NatraJ. The owner has been most co-operative in all the developments. New notice boards are planned for posters and images of the town's main features and the history of the railway station. Sponsors will be sought to maintain the flower beds and the project has been backed by Nantwich in Bloom and the Town Council. Arriva has been very helpful.

This second aspect – the car park – is proving more difficult because of multi-ownership of the land concerned. Network Rail would like to create a car park and lease it out but the number of spaces available makes it a marginal commercial proposition. The Borough Council is also interested in the forecourt beyond the restaurant being included in the car park to increase parking space numbers.

It has obvious benefits to passengers and the town and hopefully will encourage more use of the trains and less dependency on cars – both local and national environmental priorities. Progress is slow because of the number and differing interests of the several land owners involved.

We are, however, pleased with the changes made so far and hopeful of further improvements elsewhere soon.

New uniform gives our community police officers a 21st century look



Notebook

Robert Hassall
Inspector, Nantwich
Neighbourhood Policing Unit

New uniform

Police officers, police community support officers and specials in Nantwich now have a 21st century look. Most officers have been equipped with a new uniform featuring a black T-shirt and light-weight trousers with 'cargo' pockets, a wind stopper fleece and a shorter high visibility jacket than previously. The tie has disappeared and there are new designs for the cap and helmet badges. An officer said "It is far more practical than the old uniform and a lot more comfortable with body armour. It should stay smart no matter what we have to do." In addition officers will retain a set of the formal shirt and tie for certain functions and I will certainly be retaining my tunic for when I am privileged to represent the Constabulary at the annual Remembrance parade in



How the very practical new police uniforms look. Note the difference between that adopted for police officers (PC Shane Smith, left) and the police community support officers' modelled by PCSO Sharon Jones

Nantwich. I have added a picture below showing PC Shayne Smith and PCSO Sharon Jones to show the contrast in shirts for the two.

Crime in Nantwich

Crime figures for the twelve months from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008 have become available and thought I would give you a brief summary of those relating to the Nantwich neighbourhood policing unit (NPU) comparing them with the previous year's figures.

- Overall crime was down 17%.
- Burglary from dwellings was down 45%.
- Violent crime was down 15%.
- Acquisitive crime was down 25%.
- Vehicle crime was down 23.7%.
- Criminal damage was down 17%.

Our performance in detecting overall crime was the best in the

Cheshire Eastern Basic Command Unit and our detection of violent crime was the best in the force.

Mark Twain once said "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies and statistics." The headline point here is that were 327 fewer victims of crime in the Nantwich NPU this year than last.

Nantwich Jazz Festival

In 2007 the Festival saw a massive increase

in the numbers involved; this was a wake up call re its policing. That year there were a total of 36 incidents with 14 arrests nearly all in relation to a large public disorder issue on the Sunday which involved calling on resources across the county.

This year we had an equally large number attending the festival but only eleven incidents. This was in the main due to the deployment of the resources locally including Special Constabulary in addition to the extensive use of the 'Direction to Leave' legislation.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

There have been a number of ASB incidents over this period and something we will take very seriously with plans for the summer months well under way. We have recently conducted a number of covert test purchases at local off-licences and all passed the test with no identified issues. We would welcome any information about buying of alcohol by adults for consumption by those under age. A firm line will be taken on any information we have including child welfare issues if it involves a parent or guardian of the child in question. I would remind parents of the dreadful events of last year in other parts of Cheshire and you and I would certainly not want these events to visit us here in Nantwich.



Nantwich police station is open 9.00am-5.00pm Monday to Saturday. You can call on 01244 612782 (direct line to the police station) or leave a message on 0845 458 6378. E-mail is Cheshire.cat@cheshire.pnn.police.uk However should you need a response or wish to report an incident, the emergency number is of course 999. If the matter is less urgent, ring 0845 458 0000.

Diary 2008

July

- 12 Family Fun Day, Barony Park. 10.00am-5.00pm
- 14 Town Council meeting 7.00pm Brookfield Hall

September

- 15 Town Council meeting 7.00pm Brookfield Hall

November

- 28 The Chairman's Charity Dance. Dancing to the Crewe-based VCO Big Band.

Meetings of Nantwich Town Council are held at Brookfield Hall at 7.00pm on the second Monday of the month. They are public meetings and you are welcome to attend. Before formal business begins, there is an open forum at which you are invited to make any points or ask questions of your councillors.

Contact the Town Clerk

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by letter Nantwich Town Council
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Nantwich Cheshire CW5 7AB

Website

www.nantwichtowncouncil.gov.uk



If you've not already seen it, take a look at the Town Council website. 'Nantwich Town Council' in Google finds it straightaway. There's a potted history of the town, minutes of meetings, details of councillors, latest news, links to local groups and organisations and much more...