

The Chairman reports on a happy and productive year.



From the chair

Steve Hope
Chairman, Nantwich Town Council

The Chairman of the Town Council is normally appointed in mid-May and holds the post for 12 months. I was elected on 15 May 2006, so my period of office is drawing to a close. I can honestly say that I do not feel as if I have been Chairman for almost a year. The time has flown by.

As Chairman, I have had the pleasure of meeting many people and attending a number of interesting events. And I have had the privilege of being in a position which allows one to obtain that extra insight into the life of the town and Jenny and I have enjoyed it immensely. There are too many events and people to list

them all, but two stick in my mind particularly.

The first is the magnificent achievement of our town's football club. I had the honour of giving the club a reception at the Civic Hall to reward their efforts in winning the FA Vase. They had never won it before and Nantwich Town Council had never done anything like it before! It was a double success and one that we as citizens of this lovely town should rightly be proud of. My thanks must go to the Borough Council for their generosity in giving us the hall free of charge.

The second, well this was hard to choose, has to be the production of *Joseph and his*

Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat by St.Mary's Parish Church at Brine Leas High School. It was brilliant, in fact you could add many superlatives to this show. My thanks to Peter Chantry, Philip Roy, Tony Metcalfe, the wonderful cast, with a special mention for 'Elvis'. This was done by local people in a local school and the effort must not go unrewarded, hence this all too brief a mention.

As far as the Town Council is concerned, there have been some important issues tackled this year. I hope what follows gives a flavour of the activities of the Council.

● **Car parking** has been a growing concern in Nantwich. At my very first meeting as Chairman, residents outlined parking problems in South Crofts. Town councillors subsequently followed up complaints about parking difficulties with representatives of Borough and County Councils. Later, at the beginning of October, around 80 Nantwich residents attended a public meeting in the Council offices at Brookfield Hall in Shrewbridge Road. They discussed the need for action on parking, the possibility of residents' permit schemes and forthcoming decriminalisation of parking, when the local authority would take over enforcement from the police. In December, the Town Council helped provide extra funding for a special police crackdown on illegal parking to combat the problems caused by the Christmas rush of cars into the town. About 250 inconsiderate drivers were issued with tickets.

● **Security and safety** in the town is something the Council has been consistently concerned about.



An extension to the sports hall at Brine Leas High School is typical of the community projects supported by Nantwich Town Council. Helping the Chairman to formally open the enlarged hall on 26 March are four Brian Leas 'sports personalities' who have gained particular distinction in their sports: (1 to r) Lorraine Newton, Carly Thompson, Patrick Madders and John Wallace.

Diary 2007

May

14 Town Council annual meeting
7.00pm Brookfield Hall

June

11 Town Council meeting
7.00pm Brookfield Hall

July

9 Town Council meeting
7.00pm Brookfield Hall

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

Celebrate St.George



The Town Council is doing its bit to raise the profile of St.George's Day. The day itself is Monday 23 April but Nantwich's celebration will be in The Square on the day before, Sunday 22 April, from noon until 4.30pm.

All the information you need is enclosed with this edition of *Talk of the Town*.

Come along, bring your pet dragon, and celebrate with us the diverse community that is England today.

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Barony Ward

The Chairman's report continued

For that reason, the Council paid £22,500 in 2006 and £67,500 the



year before to extend the Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system. It also

contributes £12,000 per year to keep the police station open. Inspector Brierley, the officer in charge of the Nantwich Community Policing Unit, regularly attends Town Council meetings. The Council has also established a committee, chaired by Councillor Edith Williams, so that representatives of the borough council, licensees, local traders and police can exchange information and suggestions on policing issues.

● Social and community

activities help make Nantwich a pleasant and interesting place to live. The Town Council gives funding to the Food Festival, the re-enactment of the Battle of Nantwich and to Family Fun Day (a modern version of the Nantwich carnival). It is also pleasing to see the Nantwich Show, the Jazz Festival, the Acoustics Festival and the new comedy club now being held at the Crown Hotel. Nantwich in Bloom received about £3,300 this year from the Town Council. This year we intend to hold a pageant to celebrate St. George's Day on 22 April (the day before the actual day).

● Other local organisations, such as the Elderly Persons Luncheon Club at the Gables and Nantwich First Responders (emergency ambulance service) were also given grants. Nantwich and District Band rehearse in Brookfield Hall and the Town Council provides office accommodation to Nantwich Now, an organisation which raises money for the town through obtaining grant aid.

Over 'my year' I had the pleasure of attending many of the Nantwich Players productions, *Terra Nova* being the most outstanding so far. Again, the Town Council awarded that organisation a small grant in 2006-07. The Council supports the museum with an annual grant.

● Sporting organisations are not forgotten. In recent years, grants have been made to the Football Club, the Cricket Club, the Rugby Club, and more recently, the Council has agreed to help fund some much needed improvements at Nantwich Tennis Club. Later in the year, at my Charity Dance in November, the Civic Hall



and its facilities were provided again without charge for the event, increasing donations to my chosen charities, Nantwich Citizens Advice Bureau and the local branch of Diabetes UK.

● The Citizens Advice Bureau was of course one of the beneficiaries of the Family Fun Day (which the Council supports). In addition, about a year ago the Town Council gave them £5000 to help maintain services in Nantwich and overcome funding problems.

● Financially, the Town Council is well managed. Our external auditor gave us a clean bill of health last year (2005-06). The accounts for this year are about to be submitted for audit. Running expenses of Brookfield Hall, plus employment of a Clerk and part-time assistant, amounted to about £90,000 for the 12 months just ending. Grants and other expenses were about £40,000. Income came to around £135,000, including £4,700 from rents and lettings. The costs of CCTV were paid out of a separate capital fund.

The full accounts for 2006-07 will be published in a few months. For next year (6 April 2007 to 5 April 2008) the Council's share of Council tax will increase. That increase is relatively modest – equivalent to 4 pence per week – just £2 per year for the average property.

● Dogs have been a source of dispute! The Town Council lead a protest against proposed Borough Council bye-laws which would have meant that virtually all green spaces were 'off limits' to dogs unless they were on a lead. In fact, I personally convened a meeting at the Red Cow public house with about eighty irate dog owners, to discuss the proposals. Thankfully, the Borough Council are thinking again about the whole scheme.

Less controversially, the Town Council provided six new dog litter bins at various points on the town's open spaces.

● Planning applications are regularly sent to the Town Council for comment by the Borough Council, the planning authority. The Council is concerned about the amount of building going on in the town, which it considers excessive. There are fears about development altering the character of the town and this year Town Councillors regularly made this point to the Borough Planning Officer.

● What else? Nantwich in Bloom covered the town in flowers and



themselves in glory by winning a silver gilt award – their highest ever award. The museum has

gained lottery funding for an officer to boost attendance. The FA Vase, as I've mentioned, came to Nantwich.

We have carried out much needed decorating and repairs to our headquarters, Brookfield Hall, which is making income from hire of rooms. The Council also has a website. Well worth a look!

A recent agreement by Town Councillors to contribute £10,000 for new paths by the river means that work will shortly begin there.

We have started a new award for the most outstanding Christmas lights which is presented annually. I also held my usual Christmas reception and Civic Service, conducted by the Reverend Peter Chantry. Many thanks to him for his advice and assistance throughout the year.

All in all, a varied and eventful year. I express my gratitude to everyone who helped make it a success, especially to you, the residents of Nantwich.

The Town Council website



<http://www.nantwichtowncouncil.gov.uk>

Ten months in minutes – some insights into how the Town Council serves the community

Some snippets from Town Council Minutes over the last few months.

June 2006

● Objections from the Town Council to a 40mph speed limit on the new section of Waterlode.

Although the new road was near schools, the intended football club and well used footpaths, and although a 40mph limit had already been rejected by Local Joint Highways Committee (which contains local Town Councillors), the County Council were recommending a 40mph limit. The Town Clerk was told to object to this again. The limit was too high for this potentially hazardous road.

● The Clerk was requested to object to the proposed merger of Cheshire and Merseyside police. The Town Council was concerned about the loss of identity and the risk of Cheshire police being 'swallowed up' in the larger force. *Subsequently, because of the general concern expressed about the intended merger, the idea was dropped.*

July 2006

● Objections to a planning application to erect three dwelling on land at The Blankney. The Town Council had already objected to the loss of open space at The Blankney but had been overruled by the Borough Council. The Clerk was asked to write and object to the planning proposal on the grounds of cramming, proposed dwellings out of character and hazardous access near Elm House

The objections, together with others from residents, were not accepted.

September 2006

● Town Centres Manager of the Borough Council, Mrs Elaine Dodd, kindly attended the Town Council meeting to discuss the Christmas lights in the town. Some Town Councillors would like to see more coloured lights, at least in some parts of the town. A number of councillors felt that the displays generally were not festive enough. Councillors decided to

explore possibilities of the Town Council paying for additional lighting in part of the town for Christmas 2007.

October 2006

● The two community princesses who appeared at Family Fun Day, Jemma Fotherington and Jemma Lange, attended Council and were thanked and congratulated for their contribution to the Fun Day by the Town Council Chairman, Councillor Hope.

● Town Council web site about to be launched.

● Council made observations on the Stapeley Water Garden housing planning application. At the Local Plan Inquiry into the development of the Water Gardens, the Inspector had suggested that around 120 houses was a reasonable allocation for the site. The latest planning application was for 190 houses, partly on green field land, and the Borough Council was urged to resist.

November 2006

● Mary Slinn, Borough Council Cemetery Manager, kindly attended the Town Council to speak about cemeteries and crematoriums in the Borough. She told the Councillors that current burials at the Nantwich General Cemetery in Whitehouse Lane were 25/30 new graves a year. With careful management, the land available would be sufficient until a new extension, currently being prepared, became operational. In Nantwich there was an intention to lease a disused chapel to a local undertaker – this would generate income, enable refurbishment of the building and provide a presence in the cemetery which should discourage vandalism. Mary talked about the 'tree of life', whereby lights were placed on trees to commemorate loved ones who had died. She also explained the process of 'promession' – ie freeze drying at very low temperatures, as an alternative to cremation, for 'green' burials. Mary made it clear that the Borough Council was not responsible for maintaining

Nantwich churchyards or the All Saints church cemetery at the Barony Road/Middlewich Road junction.

● Council agrees £300 grant for the Nantwich Senior Citizens club to provide Christmas presents for the housebound.

● Council comments made on the Borough Council's proposals for changes to the Conservation Area in the town.

● Christmas snacks and band playing festive tunes agreed for The Square. Budget of £450 agreed for 3, 10 and 24 December, to pay for band and refreshments. Nantwich and District Band plus wine and mince pies on Christmas Eve. Councillors to staff the stall and join in carol singing.

January 2007

● The Town Council considered the recommendations of the Boundary Committee to change Borough Council wards. Although not directly dealing with parish/town council wards at this time, the recommendations would result in knock-on effects on those wards. The Council looked at the area intended to be named by the Boundary Committee, 'Urban Stapeley Parish'. It was outside the current town limits but was a built up area of housing where it was very difficult to see any boundary or demarcation between Stapeley and Nantwich. The area had a similar character to Nantwich, and Councillors felt that its residents identified with Nantwich in terms of shopping, work, schools, medical care etc. The Council decided to suggest to the Boundary Committee that 'Urban Stapeley' should form part of the Nantwich Town Council area.

February 2007

● About 15 members of Nantwich Townswomen's Guild attended to observe the Council meeting. In 'public forum', before the meeting, a representative of the Walled Garden Society spoke about an appeal relating to the garden walls and a resident spoke about the slippery surface of the Wellington Road railway crossing.

● Speed Indicator Devices are available on loan from Cheshire County Council. These 'smiley faces' or 'glum faces'



indicators, are placed for short periods by the side of the road and supervised by volunteers. Councillors can arrange to borrow these to place in suitable locations to discourage speeding. A number of Councillors expressed interest.

Church's mention

About six months ago, a lady researching her family history e-mailed Town Clerk Riddell from Alberta,



Canada. Mrs Grace Church was asking about her husband's grandfather, a James Cope Church born in Nantwich in 1864.

Obviously, the name 'Church' rang a bell because of Church's Mansion. So Riddell turned to James Hall's *A History of the town and parish of Nantwich* (1883). Hall showed the Church 'pedigree' beginning in 1543 with William Church, father of Richard, the man who built Church's Mansion in 1577. He brings it to 1882 with a family of five one of whom is 'James Cope Church, born in 1864, currently living in Ontario, Canada.'

This was the grandfather that Grace had asked about! On behalf of the Town Council Riddell sent her a copy of the section of the book on the Church family.

Grace is married to Irvin Church, a locksmith. Her own family name is Cameron and she is also trying to trace her line through her grandfather who lived near Haslingden in Lancashire. Contact Riddell if you can help.

Jean Powell

1935-2007



It is with deep sadness that I record the death of Mrs Jean Powell. Jean died suddenly on the afternoon of Wednesday 28 March at the age of 72.

She was a Town Councillor, a Nantwich Independent and a valued colleague. She was a lady who always put the interests of Nantwich people first and who worked tirelessly to promote and improve the town. She will be much missed by her many friends and all members of the Town Council.

All Councillors wish to extend their deepest sympathy to her family on their sad loss.

Steve Hope

Chairman, Nantwich Town Council

Welcome Alison

Alison Horrobin has joined the staff of the Nantwich Museum. She has been appointed community learning officer and

will organise a three-year project aimed at attracting more people to the museum.

After graduating in History at York University, Alison went on to take an MA in Museum Studies at Manchester University.

She will concentrate on four tasks

- to involve schools and attract more parties to the museum
- to produce a programme of family activities and events
- to promote the museum within the Borough
- to ensure that others can continue the work she initiates.



Cracking crime

Nantwich is a safe place to live – it's official!

Cheshire is split into eighteen policing units. Nantwich and surrounding areas form one of the units and the latest figures show that the detection rates in Nantwich area are the highest in Cheshire. In addition, the number of crimes has dropped and crime figures for the area are now among the lowest in the county.

Inspector Chris Brierley, head of the Nantwich Community Policing unit says "This success can be put down to working in partnership with various organisations in the town, including traders and licensees, the use of CCTV and the policy of putting bobbies on the beat."

Inspector Brierley says he wants to maintain this encouraging trend and, if possible, improve the figures. Plans in the pipeline include:-

- Increased contact with schools – police visiting schools to discuss the problems of abuse of alcohol, drugs and carrying weapons.
- Further work with parents and youngsters to reduce the incidence of teenage drinking.
- Continued co-operation with owners of pubs and clubs.

Says Inspector Brierley, "We can't be complacent. There will always be incidents that cause concern to the police and public. But, generally speaking, in Nantwich, crime is down, detection is up, and people tell me they are happy to see uniformed police around the place. Thanks to the Town Council for helping fund some of the initiatives to make the town a safer community."



For your safety Inspector Chris Brierley keeps an eye on Nantwich. The police station in Beam Street has a feed from the CCTV control centre in Crewe. It allows the police to monitor the town centre closely and respond rapidly to any incidents.

Nantwich Now- taking off!

The Nantwich Now Market Town Project (located at Brookfield Hall) is funded by Rural Enterprise and local authorities. The aim of Nantwich Now is to bring grants and resources to the town. Recent successes are

● Funding for a Snow Hill Feasibility and Master Plan.

This is a study of the potential of the Snow Hill site and of the possibility of improvements to facilities. The site being studied includes the brine pool, the swimming pool, the area up to the Waterlode extension bypass (A534 Kingsley Fields link road) and the Swine Market. The aim is to benefit the town by considering what enhancements or changes might be made. At this stage, a consultant is putting together a report on different possibilities – backed up by research and professional expertise. There will be extensive public consultation.

● **Work has begun on an intended footbridge from St. Anne's car park** (the old gas works site) to Mill Island. The bridge will cost around £120,000 in total, paid for by Rural Enterprise, Cheshire County Council and Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council. It will link Welsh Row to Mill Island more effectively. It will be especially useful when festivals or exhibitions are held on Mill Island.

● **The Nantwich Now Community website** will soon be operational at www.nantwichnow.org.uk

The site will enable people to exchange views and news about local activities and safety in the neighbourhood. There will be special sections for certain activities or groups – for example, the Riverside project or young people. Plus all the latest developments concerning Nantwich Now and the various activities and grant applications it is pursuing to bring resources to the Nantwich area. Funding for the website has come from Cheshire Community Council.

Beverley Cope, Project manager

The Council delivers an ace

Nantwich Tennis Club is one of the many community organisations supported by Nantwich Town Council. Club president Ron Smith explains.

Because its present very basic building has such limited facilities, Nantwich Tennis Club began making plans for a new clubhouse some three years ago. After much debate, it was decided to aim for a brick building that could serve for many years to come.

The club set about fund raising in a major way and raised some £30,000. The Sport and Arts Foundation then agreed to support the project to the extent of £25,000. That left a shortfall of some £21,000. The club turned to Nantwich Town Council for help citing its service to the Nantwich community not least in promoting a healthy lifestyle for youngsters through a thriving junior section.

After receiving the club's presentations, the Council agreed to contribute the necessary £21,000. The club was delighted and thankful to the Council for making the project possible. Two Councillors have been nominated to attend its meetings to monitor progress and development.

The aim is to make the club a centre of excellence for tennis for Nantwich and south Cheshire. Such success will be attributable to the support of the Sport and Arts Foundation, and the generosity of Nantwich Town Council plus, of course, the major efforts of the club's officials.



Building work on the new Nantwich Tennis Club premises under way at Alvaston. The project enjoys Nantwich Town Council support.

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.