

The Chairman leads the war on 'grot'



From the chair

Bill McGinnis
Chairman, Nantwich Town Council

As Chairman of Nantwich Town Council, I recently arranged for a town inspection to be undertaken by all councillors. Accordingly, we spent a full morning touring within the town limits noting the high and low points. Of course, everyone knows and appreciates our old timbered buildings, the parish church ('the cathedral of South Cheshire'), the York stone square and beautiful green spaces around the town.

But what councillors also visited were locations which are not so attractive. For example:

- **An entrance to the town – the station yard and station itself.** The land next to the station looks neglected and dilapidated. Fences are broken, the bridge needs repainting, the old platform flower beds have gone.
- **Another gateway to the town – the aqueduct at Welsh Row.** The aqueduct is grey and stained, it has weeds growing from it, the brickwork is crumbling and paintwork is rusting and peeling.
- **Paving in the town centre.** Following the gas pipe work by Transco and general wear and tear from vehicles, areas of paving are cracked, uneven and dirty.
- **Pedestrianisation.** It is surely time to call a halt to traffic ranging from private cars to six axle juggernauts travelling across The Square at all times of the day. The town would benefit from a

traffic free central zone and we will be pursuing this object.

- **Overgrown river banks.** The river is a major feature of Nantwich. We are immensely lucky to have a river flowing through the town but some areas are so overgrown that the river is impossible to see. In addition grass has grown too high in many areas.

- **The lake,** which could be a magnificent asset, is also hidden in places by weeds and paths are sometimes badly maintained.

- **Old gas works site at St. Anne's Lane.** Currently used as a car park but with future development planned there is a limited amount that can be done with this land. But it could be improved for car parking by filling pot-holes and cutting back vegetation.

- **Mill Island.** Used for displays and events, the 'island' should have an alternative route for residents who are inconvenienced when the main path across it needs to be closed. The site also needs electricity and water points and an upgraded drainage system.

There are some more minor, but significant, 'grot spots' for example, between Taylor Drive and Edmund Wright Way, where there is a 'valley' where two roads should connect. Ideally, the roads should join, but in the meantime, the land could be cleared and

improved. School children use this route to walk to Malbank School and a footbridge would be an asset.

Road marking and signs are in need of review and improvement at various places. There are areas of weeds and failed tree planting at various spots in the town.

I don't want to get this out of proportion. Nantwich is a very attractive town to live in and to visit. It has some huge advantages – the lake, the river, the green spaces, the church, the ancient streets and houses. But my belief is that it could be even better. The Town Council has agreed to tackle the problems I've mentioned. Some of them are a matter of getting owners together and asking them to co-operate. Some are down to persuading local organisations to properly undertake their responsibilities. Some issues may mean the Town Council will have to chip in with funds. But whatever it takes to create a pleasant, more attractive environment in the town, the Town Council is determined to have a go.

We know we won't achieve everything at once, but in the short term we will make a start on some improvements and we will not give up until we have succeeded in our aim.

Local government reorganisation

The other issue I want to mention is local government re-organisation. I know many people consider it is a topic guaranteed to beat insomnia more effectively than any sleeping pill and it sits pretty low on most people's list of leisure pursuits but it is an important topic because it concerns many of the facilities which affect our daily lives – schools, social services, libraries, transport and rubbish collection, swimming baths and playing fields. All these services are delivered by local authorities.

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Where town councillors were less than impressed. Top to bottom: Nantwich Station, the Welsh Row aqueduct, the lake in Shrewbridge Road, the St. Anne's Lane car park, the southern end of Taylor Drive. Taylor Drive runs alongside the canal from the Welsh Row junction by Malbank School.

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Barony Ward

Clerk to the Council

Riddell Graham

From the minutes – the Town Council at work

May 2007

● The Town Council recently contributed to the lighting of a path running between Shrewbridge Road and the railway bridge over the river. The Clerk told the Council that lamp standards were in place. Electrical connections had been delayed but were anticipated in the next few weeks and the lights would soon be operating.

● Councillor Cafferty reported that extra raised beds, funded by the Town Council and suitable for people with restricted mobility or who might need smaller plots, were available at Welshman's Lane allotments site.

● The Chairman announced that Father John Daly of the Roman Catholic Church of St. Anne had accepted an invitation to be his chaplain during his year of office.

June 2007

● The Town Council agreed to write to Gwyneth Dunwoody MP urging her to support a Private Members Bill to change the definition of 'brownfield land' in planning terms. Currently gardens are defined as 'brownfield' (as opposed to 'greenfield') so it is slightly easier to get planning permission to build new houses in gardens. The bill would change that situation and the Town Council supported it.

● 'Nantwich Now' is a project aimed at attracting grants and stimulating community activity in the town. It is supported by the Town Council which gives office accommodation and a grant to help it operate. Beverley Cope, co-ordinator of Nantwich Now, told Town Councillors about recent achievements. They included money for a new bridge over the Weaver to link Welsh Row and the old gas works site at St. Anne's Lane, funding for the 'Big Battle', a major tourist event at Reaseheath, and finance for a detailed study to explore the future development of the Snowhill area near the swimming pool.

● The Council was told about the Weaver Valley Initiative, the first stage of which is to create a



Top Raised allotment beds at Welshman's Lane. More are now available. **Centre** Town councillors were far from happy when they found trees being felled in the caravan park beside Brookfield Hall. The felling was stopped.

continuous footpath running from Frodsham to Audlem, passing through Nantwich.

July 2007

● The Town Council commented on a planning application to change the use of Brookfield caravan site, next to the Town Council offices, to 'family gardens'. The caravan site is owned by the Borough Council. Two days after commenting on the application, it was withdrawn. The same week, Borough Council workers begun to cut down trees on the caravan site without notice to residents or any consultation. Town Councillors protested at this action and the press were notified. Felling was halted by the timely intervention of Paul Ancell, the Borough Council Chief Executive.

● Town Council informed traffic engineers at the County Council of the unsightly and overgrown roundabout near Cheerbrook Farm at the 'Nantwich end' of the A500. The County engineers have agreed to arrange for it to be mowed and tidied up.

● An election was held on 12 July, following the death of Councillor Jean Powell. There

were four candidates, all women. The winner of the election was Mrs Norma Simpson, the Conservative candidate, who polled 228 votes out of the 541 cast.

● Councillors considered whether to spend additional money on Christmas lights in the town. It was agreed to try to enhance the display this year and the Town Council's contribution has increased from £1000 to £3500. Father Christmas will be pleased!

Meet Councillor Simpson



Mrs Norma Simpson was elected to the Nantwich Town Council on Thursday 12 July in a by-election occasioned by the death of Councillor Jean Powell in March.

Mrs Simpson is one of the three Town Councillors representing the Wellington Ward, a ward in which she has lived for 46 years. She is not native to Nantwich having moved into the town from Stockton Heath.

A retired businesswoman, she now devotes much time and energy to fund-raising for St. Luke's Hospice and the Nantwich Museum. The museum, she says, "is very dear to my heart."

Mrs Simpson has three grown-up children and seven grandchildren.

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.

What do you think of Snowhill?

Many Nantwich people think that the Snowhill and Swine Market areas of Nantwich are two of the least attractive parts of our town. In the Nantwich Now Consultation, carried out in 2005-06, both sites were criticised for a number of reasons. Many people want to see major improvements to the unique brine pool located within the Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council swimming pool complex on Snowhill. There are also calls to pedestrianise Swine Market and renovate a number of buildings in the locality. The Snowhill Feasibility Study and Masterplan is a practical way of looking at all the choices, considering all opinions and pulling them together into one long term plan.

In May 2007, a professional partnership called Building Design Partnership (BDP) was engaged to carry out this important piece of work on behalf of Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council who own most of the land in the area.

As part of the study of Snowhill/Swine Market, BDP are expected to consider:

- an evaluation of likely interest in retail and shopping;
- an investigation into potential for housing
- the feasibility of incorporating a hotel into the scheme
- an assessment of the value and significance of Nantwich Museum's collection, and the

willingness of the Museum to relocate

- examination of refurbishing or redeveloping the existing leisure complex, including the two swimming pools
- proposals for improvements to the highway, architecture, street scene, and to parking provision and making best use of the Nantwich riverside location.

BDP will look at all these issues in depth. As a starting point only, and to provide a start to discussion, BDP have created some initial ideas. But these are not fixed proposals or a basis of the final Masterplan. BDP have been instructed that consultation with all interested parties is essential. They will be actively seeking *your* views.

Nantwich Now has temporary occupation of a shop in Beam Street (between Market Street and Pepper Street) to encourage participation and consultation.

Your views are more than welcome!

For more information contact: Beverley Cope, *Nantwich Now* Market Town Project Manager
Telephone 01270 623154
E-mail: info@nantwichnow.org.uk

The Market Town Initiative was first introduced in Talk of the Town Autumn 2004. A joint enterprise involving the County, Borough and Town councils, it is being promoted under the banner Nantwich Now.

Health centre takes shape



Councillor Bill McGinnis, Chairman of the Town Council, is the Town Council representative on the group co-ordinating the construction of the new medical centre on the Civic Hall car park.

After a delayed start, he reports it is now on target with an opening date set for June 2008.

The new facility will accommodate doctors from Kiltearn and the Beam Street medical practices and will include state of the art equipment to diagnose and treat ailments, meaning fewer trips to hospital for patients. It will also house a wider range of paramedics and other specialists.

Football crazy

The Nantwich Town Football Club has moved from Jackson Avenue to its new Weaver Stadium at Kingsley Fields near Malbank School.

The Town Council, which gave the club a substantial grant to assist in the move, are absolutely delighted, and congratulate the team on their new home and continuing success in the First Division of the UniBond League.

Nantwich Town FC, in exchange for their grant from the Town Council, agreed to ensure that their new car park was available for the public when not being used by the club. They also agreed that car park charges would always be kept at a reasonable level.

We think it's a win-win situation. The Dabbers get a new ground. Nantwich residents get additional parking and the Council get a warm glow from helping people.

Three cheers for Nantwich Town!

The Chronicle



The BIG Battle of Nantwich is about to be joined.

Over August Bank Holiday weekend – Sunday 26th and Monday 27th – the sound of muskets and cannon and horses hooves and barked orders will echo around Reaseheath.

This is Holly Holy Day writ large. A special one-off 'major muster' by some 2000 members of the Sealed Knot. With it comes 'living history', an encampment demonstrating how soldiers and their families lived their lives during the seventeenth century English civil wars.

Big battle, big event. Not to be missed.

More parking on its way

Parking is a problem in Nantwich. But the Town Council is trying to make things better in four ways:

- An agreement with Malbank School that they will open their car park for the public on special occasions, like the various festivals or other events in the town.
- An Agreement with Nantwich Football Club that they will ensure that the car park at their new stadium will be available to the public (at a reasonable charge).

● Continuing discussions with Paul Burns (the Borough Council officer responsible for overall car park provision) about additional areas for parking in the town and the possibility of residents' parking schemes and a 'park and ride' facility.

● Strong representations to the Borough Council Planning Committee when new developments are considered, that they should include adequate parking facilities and not rely on public parking provision.

From the chair

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You may know that central government thinks that all major local government services should, ideally, be delivered by one Council because it improves co-ordination and, in theory at least, saves money. Recent recommendations have been made urging the government either to have one council, covering the whole of Cheshire (combining, in effect, six district councils and the county council) or alternatively, splitting Cheshire in two, so that one council covers half and another the other half. We would be in East Cheshire along with Macclesfield, Knutsford, Sandbach, Crewe and Congleton.

Town councils like Nantwich would not be affected by this. So if either recommendation were adopted, the Town Council would still exist.

Nantwich town councillors are sceptical about re-organisation in the first place. We have said we support the current system, with six district councils and one county council performing existing functions but with improved co-operation. We fear that re-organisation will involve a lot of extra costs and create big, new, remote councils with the needs of Nantwich relegated to a low priority.

However, if either recommendation is accepted by the government, the Town Council considers it is important that the views of people are put forward in every locality. We do not want to be swallowed up into some great, anonymous local authority based at Macclesfield or Sandbach. It will be essential that town councillors have adequate opportunity to represent the interests and concerns of local people, and, whatever structure is adopted, the voice of Nantwich residents must be properly heard.

Hire Brookfield Hall

Brookfield Hall is available for hire for community use.

Charges are £25 per session (morning, afternoon or evening) for the main hall and £20 per day for the committee room.

Enquiries to the town clerk on (01270) 619224.

The rain relents and families have fun



It had rained all week but on Saturday 14 July the skies cleared and the sun shone through for the third Family Fun Day. Thousands of people flocked to the Barony to take full advantage.

The day was opened by the Chairman, Councillor Bill McGinnis, who introduced Community Princess Abbi Gowland and her two attendants Rhiannon Owen and Phoebe Gregory (pictured above). The festivities began with a performance from the Nantwich Young Voices Choir.

Although the heavy rain prior to the event meant that some activities had to be cancelled, there were still many attractions to keep all the family amused, from 'all the fun of the fair' to Punch & Judy, from the 'battle of the bands' to the life size puppets from the Elim Pentecostal Church.

Fortunately, all the trade, produce and charity stalls were able to move to the tennis courts area and their business thrived.

We are indebted to many people who worked extremely hard to ensure the event could take place. In particular, we would wish to thank Andrew Latham and the Direct Services Division of Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council, Mr Steve Barber and not least Councillor Keith Cafferty and his indefatigable committee who organised the event.

We would also make special mention of our local sponsors: Car Transplants, Golden Couture Bridal and Beauty Salon, Sienna's Florists, Head Quarter Hair Salon, Concorde Trophies and, of course, the *Nantwich Guardian*. We are grateful for their valuable support.

Next year, Councillor Cafferty aims to produce an even bigger event and we look forward to continuing good luck with the weather!!

How would you spend £14,000 on Nantwich?

This year the Borough Council decided to pay grants to parish and town councils to reflect concerns about 'double taxation'.

This is the belief that some areas, particularly rural areas, have to pay extra for facilities or services provided in the urban areas from council tax.

The Town Council has received a grant of nearly £14,000 for Nantwich. At the request of Councillor Arthur Moran, the Council considered what to do with this sum. It was keen that it should not simply be 'swallowed up' in general expenditure but be seen as providing something distinct and specific for the town. Various suggestions were made, among them:

- Lengthsman – someone paid to carry out extra litter picking and tidying up. However, would this be seen as an 'extra' when the Borough Council do it anyway?
- New facilities on Mill Island – maybe electricity, lighting or water points, to facilitate festivals and exhibitions which benefit the town.
- Additional seating and benches at various points in the town.
- Special football nets on the Barony field to encourage activity by youngsters.

The Town Council came to no definite conclusion and remains open to suggestions.

Do you have a bright idea? If so, talk to a Town Councillor or e-mail the town clerk at Brookfield Hall. You will find the address to the right.

Diary 2007

September

10 Town Council meeting
7.00pm Brookfield Hall

October

8 Town Council meeting
7.00pm Brookfield Hall
14 Town service
6.00pm Roman Catholic Church of St. Anne, Pillory Street

November

12 Town Council meeting
7.00pm Brookfield Hall
30 The Chairman's charity dance in aid of the British Legion. Todd Miller and the Joe Loss Orchestra, Nantwich Civic Hall.

December

1 Town Lights switch-on.
17 Town Council meeting
7.00pm Brookfield Hall

Meetings of Nantwich Town Council are held at Brookfield Hall 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 you are invited to make any points or ask questions of your councillors.

Contact us

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Money matters

The Nantwich Town Council accounts for 2006-07 have been sent for final audit.

Revenue

From 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007 the Council received income of about £143,000 of which £80,000 came from council tax and £63,000 from interest on capital, lettings and miscellaneous receipts.

Expenditure

Council expenditure was around £156,000 of which £27,000 was capital grants, £46,000 revenue grants and similar contributions, £50,000 staff costs and £33,000 running costs for Brookfield Hall and general administration.

Revenue account

The Council had about £106,000 in its Revenue account at the end of the year.