

## How the Town Council fights your corner



### From the chair

**Bill McGinnis**  
Chairman, Nantwich Town Council

Since the last edition of *Talk of the Town* was published, the Town Council has been involved in a number of issues which have the potential to impact heavily upon our town and the following is a brief summary of action taken on your behalf.

#### Community First Responders

If you have not yet met the First Responders team, consider yourself lucky! This is the voluntary quick response team which attends the scene of accidents and medical emergencies. Many people in town have good cause to be grateful for their service, as this council acknowledges. The service is funded partly by North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) with additional sponsorship from Car Transplants and the Nantwich Town Council.

The ambulance services of Lancashire, Manchester and Merseyside were recently merged to form the NWAS. The NWAS is 'standardising' all its First Responders teams and a decision has been taken which will

substantially affect the service and may lead to its cessation.

At present, the service is often first on the scene and the team, trained to a high standard, is able to assess the need and deploy the appropriate equipment and a limited range of drugs designed to help in cases of cardiac arrest, diabetes and pain relief.

These common drugs are to be barred even though the staff at Nantwich are trained in their use. The reason given for this reduction in the quality of service is that there needs to be uniformity across the new regional ambulance authority. In other words, to meet the new service standards, the quality we have enjoyed must be lowered!

The Town Council heard the news with disbelief – after all, one of the drugs banned is aspirin! Much has been published about the benefits of aspirin, taken early enough when a heart attack or stroke has occurred. Lives may be at risk if these restrictions are imposed.

The Town Council fears the decision will lead to a situation akin to the recent case where police community support officers (PCSOs) were at the scene of a drowning but would not enter the water as they were not authorised. We understand what this would mean for professionally trained staff and we recognise the danger that the service, volunteer in nature, may cease completely. We have contacted the Central and Eastern Primary Care Trust, local GPs and our MPs seeking their support and if you share our views, may I respectfully suggest you contact your MP and make your feelings known.

#### Post office closures

By the time you read this, the sub-post offices in Millstone Lane and Millfields will have closed for post office business. Your Town Council wrote to every centre of influence we could think of, including our MPs, the managing director of the Post Office and even the Prime Minister. I also chaired a public meeting at the Civic Hall where strong opposition was demonstrated. Petitions were organised by members in their wards and duly delivered. All to no avail. The 'public consultation' has been exposed for the sham it is and the town has suffered a substantial cut in services.

We believe that the remaining post office in Pepper Street may have difficulty in coping with the extra load and we will be monitoring the situation.

#### The 'eco-town' \*

As part of a consultation exercise carried out by the Borough Council, we were asked to comment on several matters in relation to the new draft development plan. Included therein was a question regarding a possible 'eco-town'. As a Town Council, we responded by declaring our opposition to such a development giving some sound

reasons. We were astounded when, a few weeks later, the story broke about the Calveley site. Fortunately, the developer has withdrawn the application but it shows that we must be watchful.

\* *The government is aiming to establish a number of new 'eco-towns' across the UK. They will provide 5000-10,000 homes built to a standard that puts an emphasis on a 'zero or low carbon impact'. Thus, for example electricity generating solar panels and windmill generators are likely to be much in evidence. The preference is that they should be developed on 'brownfield' sites.*

#### Theatre to help schools?

The Town Council is engaged in discussions with Nantwich Players and the local primary school with the object of encouraging youngsters to read more. The idea is to utilise the dramatic skills of Nantwich amateur actors to bring well known stories to life. We are hoping that a pilot scheme will begin in the near future.

#### Park and ride for Nantwich?

The prospect of a shuttle service linking car parks in Nantwich is now a good deal closer. The car park at Nantwich Town Football Club will soon be available for public parking and in addition the Borough Council has earmarked capital to convert Shrewbridge Road into a fully serviced car park. The idea is that a shuttle service could link the football ground, Snow Hill, Waterlode and Shrewbridge Road car park, possibly on Thursday, Friday and Saturday to begin with. The Borough Council has provided funds for a viability study and we are looking forward to discussions with Borough and County officials. This is a project which I have felt for some years should be encouraged.

*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.



Miss you! The sub-post office in Millstone Lane is one of two Nantwich sub-post offices recently closed in spite of strong representations from the Nantwich Town Council and the public.

## Your Town Councillors

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Clerk to the Council

**Riddell Graham** (contact details: p4)

# The Town Council's budget – how Nantwich benefits

**The Town Council has set its budget for next year (1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009) and it looks like good news for a variety of local organisations.**

The income for the Town Council comes from rental and hiring of Brookfield Hall (the council offices in Shrewbridge Road), interest on investments and council tax.

The council tax the Town Council requires for an average band D property is just under 40 pence per week, £20.78 for a full year. That contrasts with the £145 the Borough Council request or the £1300 the County Council demand. Of course, those other councils provide many valuable services but the Town Council's 40 pence a week provides much of the funding to help support a variety of local organisations.

This year the Town Council looked at applications for assistance from a range of community organisations and agreed to give grants to

- Nantwich Cricket Club, for equipment to maintain the greens and assistance to encourage youngsters to enjoy the game (£3000).

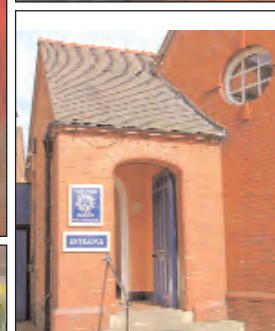
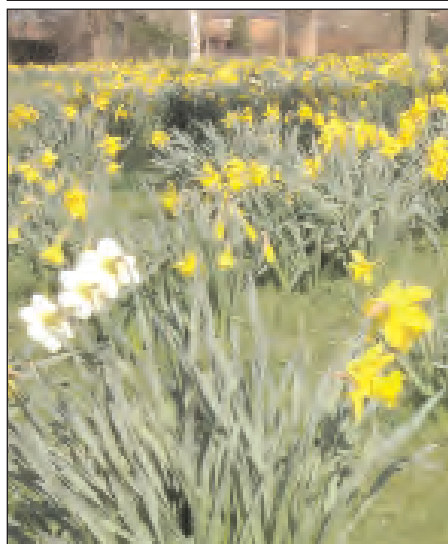
- Nantwich Citizens Advice Bureau, to help provide advice and assistance to Nantwich residents struggling with debt or family problems (£1100).

- Nantwich Players, to help in providing activities for young people and to encourage the theatre group to involve schools in their drama (£2300).

- Nantwich Family Fun Day Association, to organise a fun filled day of fairground rides, dancing and stalls, including charity stalls, on the Barony Park in the summer (£10,000).

- Nantwich in Bloom, so the gardens and flower beds of Nantwich can look their best and win the town a gold award this year (£3500).

- Nantwich Museum Trust, to encourage its ground breaking outreach work with schools and young people, helping them understand some of the history of



Among the beneficiaries of the Town Council's 2008-09 budget. Clockwise from top left: the Family Fun Day – remember 2007 Community Princess Abbi Gowland and attendants Rhiannon Owen and Phoebe Gregory?; the Nantwich Players; Nantwich Museum; Nantwich in Bloom who with the aid of schools and the local authorities play a major role in making the town a very pleasant place to be.

the town (£5200).

- Nantwich First Responders – emergency, initial response, first aid volunteers who, in a specially equipped car, are often first on the scene of accidents and provide life saving treatment to injured people (£1000).

- Nantwich Food Festival – a celebration of the town's best produce and first class cuisine, organised by the Borough Council each year and held on Mill Island, bringing visitors to see our beautiful town (£2000).

- Cheshire Police Authority, to keep the police station in the town open and the front desk staffed as a service to the public (£14,000).

In addition, the Council put money aside to provide small sums to assist the organisers of Holly Holy Day, the pensioners'

luncheon club at The Gables, the Nantwich and District Band and provide presents for the housebound elderly.

Says Council Chairman, Councillor Bill McGinnis, "Last year, apart from similar grants, town councillors approved contributions to the Borough Council to improve the town's Christmas lights and to create a footpath along the riverside at Mill Island. An extra 2500 bulbs were planted in Nantwich green spaces in addition to the bulbs and flowers the Borough Council normally plant. Value for money is what all town councillors are keen to see, to make sure that our 40 pence a week benefits community groups and makes our town more attractive to residents and visitors."

## Quality counts

Nantwich Town Council is now a Quality Council... it's official!

The Quality Council scheme was set up by the government five years ago to improve the organisation of local councils. It is a sort of kite mark for town and parish councils. The Town Council gained the award last November.

Says Council Chairman Bill McGinnis, "To obtain quality status the council has to show it communicates regularly with residents, has elected locally involved councillors and is properly run so far as meetings, records and accounts are concerned. In other words, it needs to show that it is well managed and committed and active in the community. Only about 500 out of the 8000 local councils in England have gained this award – it's a real feather in our cap!"

Adds Councillor Steve Hope, Chairman of the Council's Quality Status Working Group, "Having Quality Status may well be important following local government reorganisation. In the next 18 months, a new authority, East Cheshire, will be formed. There is a possibility of some services or facilities being managed by the Town Council and having quality status will show that we could take those on board."



So that's how it's done! The new £130,000 footbridge linking Mill Island and the old gas works site was lowered into place on 26 February. Funding came from grants obtained by Nantwich Now and included a contribution from the County Council.

## The war on 'grot' – the chairman reports from the front line

The campaign to clear up the town's grot spots is continuing. Where Nantwich Town Council acts itself, we manage to get things done more quickly. The Borough Council has also been very co-operative in the drive to make our town even more attractive.

Recently, the Town Council has

- Provided finance to plant an extra 2000 daffodil bulbs and 500 crocus bulbs to help beautify our green spaces.

- Submitted a grant application to construct a path on the far side of the lake to improve access for everyone, especially elderly and disabled people. The Town Council will contribute to that if the grant is awarded. We have already funded a path along the side of the river on Mill Island.

- Arranged the purchase of new picnic benches by the lake at a cost of around £4000 – with a welcome additional £1000 grant from Cheshire County Council. The benches should be installed by April.

- Persuaded the Borough Council to mow the river banks even more closely, so the river itself can be clearly seen.

- Agreed to employ a lengthsman, to 'top up' the work already done by the County and Borough Councils on roads and green spaces. His work will begin soon.

Arriva have taken steps to clear up the railway station and with the help of Nantwich Now there will be planting, painting and posters to improve the platform and surrounds. Nantwich in Bloom have helped with advice and planting to cheer up the area.

For some months it was difficult to get any information about the land next to the station, which is controlled by Network Rail.

However, there has been a very heartening response to a personal letter from me to the director responsible for looking after Network Rail property. The site is going to be tidied up and considered for car parking. The Council is delighted that, at long last, measures are to be taken to brighten up this important

gateway to the town and I would give special mention to the efforts of Councillor John Lewis, Nantwich Now and Nantwich in Bloom in bringing about this very welcome change.

Not so positive is the response from British Waterways regarding the aqueduct over Welsh Row.

British Waterways say they simply have not got enough money to improve the appearance of the aqueduct. When asked for a rough cost of cleaning and painting it, they have given an astonishing estimate of around £100,000! While the Town Council might be prepared to chip in something, councillors were not contemplating anything like that sort of expenditure. British Waterways suggest grant applications – the structure is listed – so that is one avenue we are still exploring with them.

Finally, lots of people arrive by car to walk by the river, exercise their dogs, go fishing or simply enjoy the fresh air. So the news that the car park in Shrewbridge Road is to be improved by the Borough Council is welcome. It will be 'pay and display' but the intention is to offer the first hour and a half at a reduced rate so that there will be an opportunity to enjoy the riverside, a stroll into town or a picnic by the lake.

Bill McGinnis

## The 'lengthsman' is on his way

The Town Council has appointed a lengthsman, the person who will help look after roadside verges and generally keep an area clean and tidy.

The appointment has been made possible by the receipt of £14,000 from the Borough Council to compensate for 'double taxation' – that is, the money spent in Crewe for services the Town Council provides in Nantwich (see *Talk of the Town* Autumn 2007).

The first sites to be tackled by the lengthsman will be selected by the chairman of the Town Council very shortly.

## Meet...James Thompson

James Thompson is the Riverside Project Officer.



He is employed part time for Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council and works with a

number of partners to protect and improve the River Weaver and the green spaces nearby.

Says James, "Strictly speaking, I work 22 hours a week on the riverside project although in practice in usually ends up being quite a lot more. The area is large and there is always lots happening in the town.

"Of course, I couldn't begin to do everything myself. I receive huge support from the project partners including Nantwich Town Council, the Borough Council grounds maintenance department and volunteer groups whose boundless enthusiasm are extremely important in getting feedback on the management of the area and assisting with improvements on the ground. I also have regular contacts with local schools and colleges using the riverside for field work."

"I really enjoy my work and have been given a great welcome here in Nantwich. I just hope that when a new local authority comes into being, they will continue the initiative. In the meantime, I will be doing all I can to raise the profile of the riverside project and ensure its continuity."

James, 31, has a degree in environmental management and civil engineering qualifications. He previously worked in Lincolnshire as an environmental engineer in the flood defence industry, managing landscape and wetland habitat improvements.

He lives in Nantwich and is married with two daughters, one just five weeks old. When not by the river, James keeps himself occupied with family life and his home and garden maintenance business.

James can be contacted at the Borough Council on 01270 537061.

# Says the Inspector: "If you speed, take heed."



## Notebook

**Robert Hassall**  
Inspector, Nantwich  
Neighbourhood Policing Unit

Speeding is one of the concerns of local people of which we are well aware. Until now we have not been able to respond as effectively as I would like to complaints about speeding vehicles.

This is because there is a limited number of what are called 'enforceable speed guns' in Cheshire and we have to take our turn with other areas which may have even worse problems. I'm pleased to say that after a request to Nantwich Town Council and three local parishes, we are able to purchase an enforceable gun for the Nantwich Policing Unit, for use locally.

The cost of the gun is £2100 and the Town Council has contributed £1500 of that. So shortly we will be tackling what the public consider is an important problem of dangerous and thoughtless speeding motorists.

### A happy Christmas

Christmas and New Year seems a long time ago now but I am pleased to report this was a relatively quiet and well behaved period with only a couple of arrests in the town. I was personally on duty on a number of late shifts (until 4.00am) including New Year's Eve.

One new power the police have been given recently is a 'direction to leave'. If someone (over 16) is involved in an alcohol related disorder they can be simply told to leave a location and not return for up to 48 hours or, simply put, "Get out of town." We used this over the Christmas period but unfortunately the person concerned did not take the hint and returned to the area shortly afterwards. This led to the arrest and subsequent conviction of this individual for failing to comply with the direction. I am told this

was the first successful use of the legislation in Cheshire.

### Holly Holy Day

January saw the Holly Holy Day event taking place in town. We advised on the organisation of the street closures and traffic re-routing and helped to police the event. The atmosphere in town was good-natured and relaxed. I applied to the organisers for a couple of pikemen for use in emergencies but, surprisingly, was not successful.

### The Jazz Festival

The Jazz Festival is coming up shortly. We have been assisting the organiser, Phil Martin of the Crown Hotel, and I am hopeful that with his co-operation and a new 'arm band admission system' we will avoid any problems during what promises to be a very enjoyable occasion.

Finally, we rely on the co-operation of the public in keeping the peace and welcome your calls, suggestions and information.

*Nantwich police station is 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.*

### 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 £15 per session for the committee room.

Enquiries to the town clerk on (01270) 619224.

## More allotments at Brookfield

After a public meeting organised by Nantwich Town Council last year, Borough councillors have decided that the Borough's former caravan park next to Brookfield Hall should be laid out as allotments. Twenty-six new plots will extend the existing allotment area behind Park Road. Trees, which were apparently unstable, have already been felled.

Most residents were unhappy to see the trees taken down but pleased that the land was to be used for allotments.

But there has been some concern that the town no longer has a camping and caravan site. The Town Council feels strongly that the town needs a location for camping and caravans. It is, after all, a tourist destination.

The allotment site is expected to be in operation by the summer, so if you want a plot, get your name down now. Talk to Glyn Ollier of Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council on 01270 537882.

## Fair enough?



Once again Nantwich Town Council is helping local residents celebrate St. George's Day. It is promoting a Medieval Fair on Sunday 20 April.

Says organiser Councillor Keith Cafferty, "The Irish, Scots and Welsh all make a big thing of their patron saints and we felt the English should have their turn as well. But we are keen for everyone to join in the fun – the event is intended to celebrate the diverse community that is England today."

The Fair is to be held in The Square from 12 noon to 4.00pm. There will be stalls, music, dancing, representation from local schools and puppet shows, children's rides and much more.

## Diary 2008

### March

10 Town Council meeting  
7.00pm Brookfield Hall

### April

14 Annual Town Meeting  
6.45pm Brookfield Hall  
Followed by the Town Council meeting  
20 St. George's Day Medieval Fair, The Square

### May

1 Election of the new shadow authority for East Cheshire  
12 Annual Town Council meeting when the new chairman will take office  
7.00pm Brookfield Hall

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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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...