



Neston Town Council



Annual Report 2022/2023



LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
FOUNDATION

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Welcome to
Neston Town Council's
Annual Report 2022/2023
Cllr Pat Kynaston
The Mayor of Neston



The role of Chairman/Mayor for a Town Council is a balance between the formal regular business of Council and the public facing role of representing the Town at both local and Civic events.

During the 13 years since the Town Council was first formed, the Parish has changed significantly and Councillors felt it was time to review the current strategy. You can read about the process and results further in the report.

Meanwhile, it was business as usual as the Committees worked with staff to provide all the regular services such as Grants, Community Support — liaising with Cheshire West & Chester Ward Councillors, as well as the Police, to ensure Neston remains visible and, where practical, involved in decision making.

Councillors regularly attend events held by Cheshire West & Chester to ensure we are up to date on what is happening within the Borough. Over the past few years, Neston Town Council has made significant efforts to forge links outside the town, creating opportunities to exchange knowledge and ideas with other Town Councils and Civic Dignitaries.

2022/2023 was an eventful year within the Civic Community - both joyful and sad. Her late Majesty's Platinum Jubilee was a cause for much celebration and the Parish marked the momentous occasion in many different ways including a special market and financial support for many highlight events - trees were planted, a garden created, and the Female Society had red, white and blue ribbons attached to their staffs to honour the Queen. As Mayor, I represented Neston at a celebration service at Chester Cathedral in June 2022.

Sadly, this was followed quite soon after by the death of Queen Elizabeth II and the Council immediately joined the nation in a pre-determined ritual of mourning. During that time I was privileged, on your behalf, to be invited to Chester Town Hall to hear the Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire read the Proclamation of the Accession of King Charles III, which was certainly a moment in history.

Town Mayors were each given a copy of the Proclamation to take back to their districts, to be read out in a public space. This is a practice going back to times when news was carried to Towns and Villages by couriers on horseback. Fortunately, I had 'horse power' and was back in Neston to join the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, who read out the Proclamation that afternoon.



Photo courtesy of Pegasus Prints.

The annual Christmas Market and Lights Switch-on, held on 26th November 2022, was a great success and thanks are due to everyone who worked tirelessly to make it a truly great festive occasion for Neston residents and visitors.

In February 2023, myself and Councillors hosted Neston Town Council's Civic Service at St Mary & St Helen Parish Church. The service was attended by The Lord Mayor of Chester, The Mayor of Wirral and the Mayor of Ellesmere Port with other visiting Mayors and dignitaries from surrounding areas and North Wales. We were also joined by representatives from local associations at the service which was followed by tea and cake, with an opportunity to exchange news and views. This all helps to forge excellent links for future connections.

I could not finish this report without recording our thanks to our retiring Town Clerk, Alison Kunaj. Alison joined the Town Council almost at its inception and has seen the Council through both difficult and successful times; notably the completion of the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillors have come and gone but Alison has always remained with guidance and support to ensure the Town Council's activities continually remained within the boundaries of the local Council remit.

During the last year Alison worked tirelessly with the Council's consultant to ensure our Strategy document was completed in time for the coming Council year. We wish her well in her retirement.

We also welcome Alison's replacement, Locum Chief Officer Zoë Dean, who joins us to take the Council through the initial stages of implementing the Strategy Plan. Zoë has already made a start in guiding Council through this process and we look forward to working with her in the coming months.

As we look forward to what we hope will be warmer weather, may I wish you all a happy and healthy summer and a successful coming year.

Cllr Pat Kynaston - Mayor of Neston Town Council

Photographs of the Mayor's Civic Year 2022/2023



Photograph above courtesy of Robert Clive



(Above & left) King Charles III
Proclamation Day in Neston

Photographs courtesy of Cllr B. Marple

(Right) 1st October 2022, part of Great Big Green Week, *Sow Your Solidarity Campaign*. In the grounds of the United Reformed Church. With CW&C Cllrs: Gittins, Millar and Barker, plus Cllr Pat Kynaston, Cllr Janet Griffiths and Cllr Brenda Marple and the Neston Fairtrade Town Group.



Planning for the Future

During 2022 Neston Town Council consulted with residents about how the Council should develop and the priorities we should use to guide this development. The result of this review was the creation of a vision for the future. Full details can be found in the Neston Town Council Strategy 2022-25, a copy of which can be downloaded from the Town Council website. In summary, however, the resulting vision, mission, values and goals listed below have provided a solid foundation on which to build and will guide the Town Council's development in future years.

Our Vision: An engaged community working together and with others, to bring about continuous and sustained improvement which ensures the Town is an attractive place with a strong identity where people want to live, work and visit.

Our Mission: We are helping to create an environmentally sustainable and thriving market town for Neston's residents, businesses and visitors by fostering a strong community spirit and improving and increasing the range of locally run services.

Our Core Values: Transparency & accountability

Working with others to maximise effectiveness

Inclusiveness & Accessibility

Flexibility and Proactivity

Robust with Resources

Our Strategic Goals:



Supporting the Community

Grants

During the financial year 2022/23, Neston Town Council provided grants totalling £11,718.20 to support the work of local community organisations.

Little Actors	2022-23 season of theatre	£2,500.00
CH64 Age Matters	Purchase of a laptop	£429.00
Parkgate Society	Interpretation boards	£500.00
Rotary (Wirral & Neston Hub)	Christmas float	£1,235.00
Hip & Harmony	Music Zone plus adult outreach	£2,450.00
Neston Community Cybercentre	Replacement computers	£2,500.00
NADAS	2023 annual art exhibition	£471.20
Parkgate Society	Bench for viewing platform	£500.00
Wirral Riding Centre	External defibrillator purchase	£700.00
Neston Singers	Purchase of sheet music	£433.00

Community Events and Commemorations

Neston Town Council continued to support popular local events.

The Town Council funded the Ladies Day entertainment, as well as the Christmas Lights Switch-on Event by providing donations to Hip & Harmony to organise these events. In addition, contributions were made towards the cost of the Village Fair and West Vale Park Family Fun Day and the Town Council funded the publicity costs associated with the Neston Music Festival. The Town Council also took lead responsibility for the Remembrance Sunday commemorations.



**Neston Village Fair:
£1,700**

**Ladies Day:
£3,600**

**Christmas Lights Event:
£7,600**

**West Vale Park Fun Day:
£1,600**

**Neston Music Festival:
£1,000**

**Remembrance Sunday:
£945**



Celebrating the Platinum Jubilee

The Town Council was very pleased to be able to support the community to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022 at a total cost of £8,100. The community found a wide variety of ways to celebrate including a Big Jubilee Lunch in Stanney Fields Park, a party on The Parade, various coffee mornings and afternoon teas, and commemorative tree planting. Possibly the biggest achievement was the creation of a Jubilee community garden at the Parkgate and Neston United Reformed Church.

(pictured below)



The Jubilee Community Garden was formally opened by the Minister of the United Reformed Church, which was an event attended by the Town Mayor, Cllr Pat Kynaston, as well as local residents.

Comments received from those who attended were very positive and included:

"Beautiful layout", "Such a restful atmosphere" and "What an achievement!"

In addition to supporting community events, the Town Council organised a special Jubilee Market which took place on Friday 3rd June 2022. As well as activities for children, entertainment by Little Actors Theatre Company, and The 64 N'Ukes, the Town Council provided commemorative Jubilee tote bags to shoppers which were available free of charge.



Commemorative tote bags provided additional advertisement for Neston Market

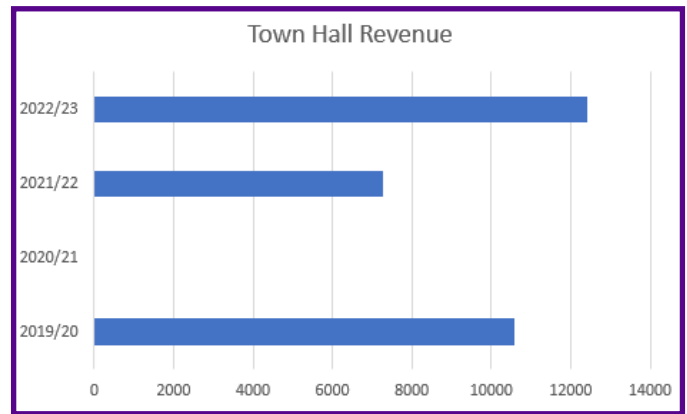


Pictured: Cllr Sion Jones & Cllr Pat Kynaston

Town Hall and Market Square

Town Hall

The number of Town Hall bookings rose considerably during 2022/23 and annual revenue exceeded pre-pandemic levels. In addition to one-off bookings, there are now regular bookings on six days of the week. The Town Hall has also been used during the year to support community events such as the Christmas Day dinner.



During the cold weather, the front of the Town Hall became a warm welcome space on most week day mornings. The space offered comfortable seating, access to local information, a book swap area and free Wi-Fi. User feedback has been positive and the area will continue to be made available to residents throughout the year.

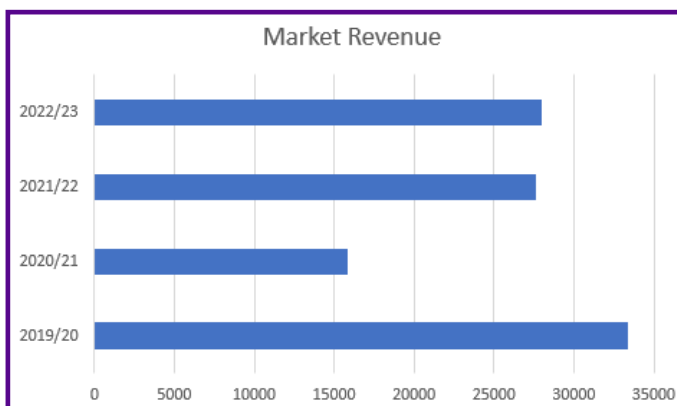
New Services on Market Square

In December 2022, a defibrillator was installed on the outside of the Town Hall thereby ensuring 24-hour defibrillator availability within the town centre.

The Town Council facilitated a twice-weekly post office service in the town centre by providing accommodation in the Upper Community Office adjacent to Market Square.

Neston Market

2022/23 saw Neston Market continuing to build back gradually during challenging economic times. Whilst not yet reaching its pre-pandemic revenue levels, the Town Council encouraged footfall throughout the year by organising several special event markets to coincide with Easter, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Halloween and Christmas. The special event markets will be further enhanced during the coming year by the addition of indoor artisan food and craft stalls. The Council also continued to recognise the commitment of traders with the annual Trader of the Year Award, which in 2022 was presented to Little Bear's Fudgery.



Supporting the Local Environment

Enhancement of Public Spaces

During 2022/23, Neston Town Council provided floral displays throughout the town including a variety of hanging baskets, as well as planters at the front of the Parish Church and Town Hall, around Bushell Fountain and on the railway station platforms. There were also planting schemes on the railway station approach, in Ivy Farm Drive, West Vale and Ness and beneath the various Welcome to Neston and Welcome to Parkgate signs.

In addition, regular watering services were provided for Parkgate planting in Mostyn Square, the Middle Slipway, Station Road, The Parade and School Lane.



Neston Town Council contributed £5,000 from Community Infrastructure Levy funds to upgrade the equipment at the Ringway Play Area. This was a collaborative project in association with Cheshire West and Chester Council as part of the Neighbourhood Pride Scheme.

Plastic Free Neston was launched in 2022; a community initiative supported by the Town Council to encourage a reduction in single-use plastic and the resulting plastic pollution. Plastic Free Communities is a national scheme with five objectives that need to be met to in order to achieve accreditation. Neston has so far achieved four of the objectives and is on target to gain full accreditation status during the coming year.

The Neston Looking Better Group is a Council working group comprising councillors and volunteers that represent Neston, Ness, Parkgate, Little Neston and West Vale. The group continues to work hard to maintain and improve public spaces throughout the town and has been actively weeding and litter picking throughout the year.

Allotments



Neston Town Council currently operates a total of three allotment sites located in Raby Park Road, The Ropewalk and Marshlands Road. All sites are fully tenanted and the rental income from the pitches is used to maintain the sites.

Demand for allotments has increased in recent years and there is now a considerable waiting list. Wherever possible, full plots have been halved when they become vacant in order to increase the overall number of allotments available for rent. The Town Council is investigating the possibility of increasing community growing spaces and has an open dialogue with Cheshire West & Chester Council, should suitable land become available in the future.

The Marshes and Mosquito Monitoring



Mosquito Monitoring

In Summer 2022 work was carried out at Parkgate to create a new pool near the site of the Old Baths and to clear stretches of the main gully. Neston Town Council worked collaboratively with Cheshire West and Chester Council on this project and contributed £9,250 towards the total cost of the work.

The Town Council is grateful to Dr Peter Enevoldson for taking responsibility for mosquito monitoring, data collection and analysis. This analysis helps to inform the Town Council's future programme of marsh works. Dr Enevoldson's 2022 report is available to read on the Town Council website.

The weekly Mozzie Watch forecast proved very popular during 2022. The forecast, which was viewed 2,810 times on the Neston Life app throughout the course of the season, was provided by Dr Enevoldson and based on analysis of the monitoring data.

Both the monitoring work and the forecast continue to attract attention and Dr Enevoldson is engaged in collaborations with research scientists at Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, the Veterinary School at Leahurst, Edge Hill University and University of Oxford.

It is with sadness that we report the death of Professor Michael Clarkson in September 2022. Professor Clarkson instigated local mosquito monitoring and data collection/analysis and played an important role in developing environmentally sustainable methods of mosquito control on the marshes. The Town Council is grateful for his valuable contribution.



Parkgate Marshland. Photo Z. Dean



Neston Town Councillors at 31 March 2023

NESTON WARD

Cllr Ellie Cragg
Cllr Karen Flockhart
Cllr Janet Griffith
Cllr Maureen Hinks
Cllr Christine Warner

LITTLE NESTON WARD

Cllr Sion Jones (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr Pat Kynaston (Mayor)
Cllr Stephen Wastell

PARGATE WARD

Cllr Simon Davies
Cllr Paul Doughty
Cllr Shirley Hudspeth
Cllr Brenda Marple
Cllr Susan Samuel

STAFF TEAM

Alison Kunaj—Council Manager
Audrey Duncan—Governance & Operations Manager
Trevor Godfrey—RFO/Finance Manager
Nicky McMahon—Market & Town Hall Manager and Support Co-ordinator
James Jones—Market Officer & Caretaker