

Bear Necessities

With News from Congleton Town Council & Community Groups

Winter 2026

New Community Diagnostic Centre Opens at Congleton War Memorial Hospital

East Cheshire NHS Trust is delighted to announce its new **Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC)** officially opened at **Congleton War Memorial Hospital** on Monday 22 December 2025, marking a major milestone in improving local healthcare services. The **£5million development**, funded by NHS England's Community Diagnostics Programme, has transformed an existing facility into a modern diagnostic hub. The new centre includes seven clinic rooms, a state-of-the-art X-ray suite, and welcoming patient areas with amenities designed for comfort and accessibility.

The CDC will provide a wide range of diagnostic tests and services, helping to reduce waiting times and support early detection of health conditions. Services include imaging (X-ray and Non-Obstetric Ultrasound), as well as cardio-respiratory physiological testing such as Electrocardiography (ECG), Echocardiograms, and other specialist tests. Comprising 13 modular units, the building was designed and constructed by Premier Modular, ensuring a high-quality, sustainable solution that will serve the community for generations to come.



Congleton Food & Drink Festival

Congleton Town Centre will be buzzing with flavour and festivity as the flagship festival returns on **Sunday 7 June**, from **10.30am–4.30pm**. Organised by Congleton Town Council, this free event is set to be bigger and better than ever, attracting thousands of visitors from across the region.

With over 70 delicious stalls, plus live music and vibrant street performances, the festival promises to be a must-visit summer highlight. Producers are encouraged to take advantage of this fantastic trading opportunity by booking a stand online while spaces remain.

For the latest event updates and information, visit: www.foodanddrinkfestival.net

There is still time to become a sponsor and gain valuable exposure while supporting this popular event. To get involved, email: Rachel.McCarthy@congleton-tc.gov.uk



Boost Your Health and Wellness

Join **Congleton Partnership** for the ninth annual free **Health and Wellbeing Fayre**,

on **Tuesday 17 March**, from **10am–2pm** at **Congleton Town Hall**. Supporting residents to improve health, manage stress, and access local services.

Over 40 exhibitors will offer advice on mental health, fitness, nutrition, ageing well, and more. All welcome, especially those aged 50 plus.

Stalls are free, and organisations wishing to exhibit can email: cathy.dean@congleton-tc.gov.uk



Congleton Unplugged Returns this March

Excitement is building for **Congleton Unplugged**, a weekend of live music on **20–22 March**. Organised by **Congleton Live**—the same team behind the hugely successful Jazz and Blues Festival, Unplugged promises more than 40 gigs across the town's favourite hospitality venues. From acoustic sets to rock and pop, there's something for everyone. For the latest updates follow Congleton Unplugged's Facebook page or visit: www.congletonjazzandblues.co.uk



Scan the QR code on your mobile device to read this issue of Bear Necessities online.

Bear Necessities is produced by Congleton Town Council. The next newsletter will be **Spring 2026**. All contributions to be sent to debbie.coxon@congleton-tc.gov.uk

Congleton Town Council - Congleton Town Hall, High Street, Congleton CW12 1BN.

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Shaping Local Services: Survey Results and Next Steps

Like many town and parish councils, Congleton Town Council is facing increasing financial pressure and uncertainty around the **future devolution of services** from Cheshire East Council. As funding reduces and responsibilities are passed down, the town council must carefully consider which services can be protected or enhanced for the community.

Thank you to the 281 residents who took the time to complete the recent survey. The results show **strong support across all service areas**, underlining how important these services are to residents. Public toilets emerged as the highest priority (59%), followed closely by highway weeding and grass cutting, green space maintenance, town centre public realm, bus services and youth facilities.

All feedback is now being considered as part of the 2026/27 budget and precept-setting process. A decision on the precept is expected by the end of January, and residents will continue to be kept informed as work progresses.

Grant Opportunities for Community Projects

Congleton Town Council awards around **£15,000 annually** to support local community projects.

The Finance & Policy Committee meeting on Thursday 26 March will allocate remaining 2025/26 funds. **Apply by Monday 16 March: www.congleton-tc.gov.uk/your-council/grants**

Projects with a cultural, environmental, or educational focus may also apply to the **Margaret Williamson Memorial Fund** before **Monday 9 March**. Find out more: www.congletonpartnership.co.uk

Join the Youth Council

The newly formed **Youth Council** will include up to 20 members aged 10–18, **meeting monthly on Thursday evenings** at the **Town Hall Café**.

Roles will include Chair, Vice Chair, Social Media Manager, and Fundraising/Activity Leads. Schools and groups are invited to nominate representatives. Members will also have the opportunity to attend council meetings and help shape local decisions.

A recent workshop and survey generated exciting ideas, top requests include a climbing wall, youth events, hangout spaces, and a drop-in centre! For more information email: cathy.dean@congleton-tc.gov.uk



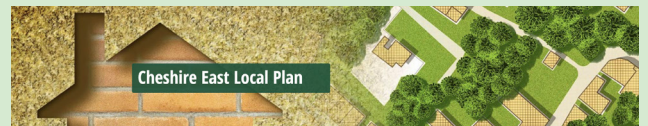
Welcome New Businesses

Several new businesses have opened in and around Congleton town centre, including El Paco, Hamiltons, Mill Street Collective, Salon Sisters, Skin & Beauty, Sugo, SYLK Flooring, The Aesthetics Sanctuary and The Black Bear.

Nominate your favourite business for a **High Street Award**, celebrating established businesses that go above and beyond for Congleton.

Cheshire East Local Plan

Cheshire East Council is preparing a new **Local Plan** to guide development across the borough until at least 2043, replacing the current plan that runs to 2030. The plan will decide where housing, jobs, and infrastructure go, balancing growth with protecting the environment. National policy changes mean Cheshire East's **annual housing target has more than doubled**, which could put pressure on Congleton's Green Belt and open countryside. The town council will keep a close eye on developments and update residents as the plan progresses.



Know Your Local Councillors

The public elected 22 councillors to serve on the town council until May 2027. They have been elected into five wards. Here are the pictures and names of your councillors. More details can be found on the town council website.

West Ward

West Heath

North East Ward

Bromley, Buglawton

North Ward



Suzie Akers Smith



Robert Brittain



Robert Douglas



Suzy Firkin



Charles Booth



Susan Mead



Rob Moreton



Shaun Radcliffe



Glen Williams



Dawn Allen



Russell Chadwick

Inclusive Community Activities

Congleton Partnership, in collaboration with **Dementia Friendly Congleton**, has produced a new leaflet listing **inclusive activities** across the town. It features a wide variety of events, including coffee mornings, gentle exercise classes, crafts, lunch clubs, and more. A warm welcome is extended not only to those living with dementia but also to the “young at heart”.

These regular activities are designed to help local people stay connected and feel an active part of the community. Pick up your copy from Congleton Information Centre.

Celebrating Local Heroes

The **Town Mayor’s Civic Awards** recognise volunteers who make a real difference in Congleton. The 2026 awards will celebrate those going above and beyond—supporting neighbours, leading projects, or protecting the environment. Nominations open this spring – help us honour our town’s unsung heroes!



Step into Spring with Congleton Ramblers

Congleton Ramblers are now offering **Wellbeing Walks** on the **first Thursday of every month**, starting at **10am** from **Astbury Mere Car Park**. These short walks are sociable, easy-paced, accessible, and free, ending with a stop at the Visitor Centre café.

Wellbeing Walks are designed to boost physical and mental health. The Ramblers also run a variety of weekly walks around Congleton and beyond.

Find out more: www.congletonramblers.org.uk or contact Jo Morgan: jo@ashtree.farm



Find Friendly Faces at the New Brew Club

Reaching CIC invites the community to its new **Brew Club** at **Orso Lounge** on **Bridge Street**. Taking place **every Tuesday** from **2pm–4pm**, the sessions offer the chance to enjoy a cuppa and meet Kerry, the volunteer host. The friendly weekly meetups help ease loneliness by bringing people together in a relaxed welcoming space.



News in Brief

Look out for the Congleton Code

Coming soon – a friendly new guide to help make the town centre more welcoming for everyone. Inspired by the Country Code, it shares simple tips for considerate behaviour in shops, cafés and public spaces.

Back by popular demand!

Steven Holbrook returns to Congleton Town Hall after two sold-out shows. See one of the UK’s most gifted mediums live on **Tuesday 24 February** at **7pm**. Tickets cost £15, from Congleton Information Centre or: www.ticketsource.co.uk/congleton-town-council

Town Mayor’s Charity Ball

The Charity Ball takes place on **Friday 17 April**, at the Town Hall, hosted by Mayor Cllr Robert Brittain. Enjoy a three-course dinner, live music and entertainment. Supporting Circus Starr, Mentell and Visyon. www.ticketsource.co.uk/congletontownmayor

Town Tidy Events

Hosted by Congleton in Bloom **every first Saturday** of the month from **10am–12pm**. Check for location updates on Facebook: (Congleton in Bloom page) or email: info@congleton-tc.gov.uk

Brown Bin Recycling

The annual scheme runs January to December; subscriptions are now open for 2026. Sign up or renew quickly and easily online at: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/gardenbin

Councillor emails are cllrfirstname.surname@congleton-tc.gov.uk

C = Conservative
L = Labour

I = Independent
LD = Liberal Democrat

EP = Equality Party

Lower Heath

South East Ward

Mossley, High Town, Timbersbrook

Central Ward

Town Centre, Newcastle Rd



Emma Hall
Amanda Martin



David Brown
Arabella Holland



Sally Ann Holland



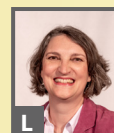
Heather Pearce



Kay Wesley



Mark Edwardson



Heather Seddon



Richard Walton



Liz Wardlaw

Springboard Congleton: New Year, New Opportunities!



Springboard's Work & Skills Hub is helping residents build brighter futures. Adults aged 19+ can access free one-to-one guidance, whether seeking work, upskilling, or exploring new careers. The hub offers courses to boost confidence and qualifications, including Functional Skills Maths & English and Essential Digital Skills. Step Forward and Thrive & Create courses develop teamwork, life skills, and employability, providing accredited certificates and practical experience.

Visit: www.springboard.me.uk or call **01260 290 682** to register.

Help keep Roads and Pathways safe

Report Highways issues to Cheshire East Council (CEC). The Highways webpage covers roadworks, gritting, repairs, road safety, and drains. Visit: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways.



For urgent dangers, call: **0300 123 5020**

(working hours) or: **0300 123 5025** (out of hours). Routine repairs, like potholes, streetlights, or kerbs, can be submitted via the traCE tool at: www.trace.cheshireeast.gov.uk. For issues not covered by traCE, report them by email: CheshireEastCouncilCustomerServices@CheshireEast.gov.uk or call: **0300 123 5020**.

Winter Wellbeing Advice

Winter can be difficult for older or vulnerable residents. Residents are encouraged to keep homes warm, stay up to date with flu vaccinations, wear safe footwear on icy paths, and ensure they have enough food and medication. Checking on elderly neighbours or relatives can make a real difference. If someone is sleeping rough, contact CEC Housing Options on: **0300 123 5017** (office hours) or **0300 123 5025** (out of hours). Warm PlaCEs offer a warm drink, friendly chat and support, organisations can sign up at: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell

WARM PLACES
Keeping Cheshire East warm

Make a Splash for Charity

Rotary Congleton invites the community to dive into the **Swimathon** at **Congleton Leisure Centre** on **Wednesday 18 March** and **Saturday 21 March**.

The event continues to be a major fundraiser, with last year's 444 swimmers raising £21,000! With teams from local schools and swimmers as young as five, the only requirement is completing one length unaided.

Funds will again support team chosen charities and two Rotary causes - Beartown Rickshaw and Friends for Leisure. Visit: www.congletonrotary.co.uk



Easter fun in the town centre

On **Tuesday 31 March** from **11am-2 pm**, Congleton Town Council will host '**Easter Treats Day**' in the town centre. Featuring crafts, seed planting, face painting, and much more. The popular '**Hop Around the Shops**' trail will run from **30 March-11 April**. Explore local shops, hunt for clues, and enjoy a special treat at the end! Trails will be available online or from Congleton Information Centre.



Dates For Your Diary 2026!

March

17: Health and Wellbeing Fayre, Town Hall, 10am-2pm

18 & 21: Rotary Swimathon, Congleton Leisure Centre

20-22: Congleton Unplugged, Town Centre Venues

31: Easter Treats Day, Town Centre, 11am-2pm

June

7: Food & Drink Festival, Town Centre, 10.30am-4.30pm

July

18: Congleton Pride, Town Centre

28: Summer Play Day, Town Centre, 10.30am-2.30pm

August

4, 11, 18: Summer Play Days, Town Centre, 10.30am-2.30pm

29-30: Congleton Jazz and Blues, Town Centre Venues

September

26: Green Fayre, Town Centre, 10am-3pm

October

28: Witchy Wednesday, Town Hall

November

7: Rotary Bonfire Night, Congleton Park

8: Remembrance Sunday, Cenotaph, 11am

27: Christmas Lights Switch-On, Town Centre, 4pm-8pm

28: Rotary Tree of Light, Community Garden, 4pm

December

17: Community Carol Service, St Peter's Church, 7.30pm

As events may change, check with organisers before attending.

