

Bear Necessities

With News from Congleton Town Council & Community Groups

Spring 2026

Hop on Board the improved Beartown Bus Service



Two local bus services introduced in November 2025 and funded through the Government's Bus Service Improvement Plan and Section 106 contributions - the **93A (anti-clockwise)** and **93C (clockwise)** link Congleton Fairground, Barn Road, Viking Park, West Heath Shopping Centre, and key streets, with **buses running every 30 minutes**, Monday to Saturday.

Congleton's **circular bus route** is a great way to get around town, with the **90-93 timetable** enclosed with this publication. Whether you're heading to the shops, meeting friends in town, or enjoying a relaxed commute, there's a bus for everyone!

The town council and D&G Bus continue to work in partnership with Cheshire East Council to develop these and other local bus services to increase patronage along with ongoing discussions about expanding services and boosting bus use across Congleton.

For more information visit: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/buses



Countdown to Congleton Food & Drink Festival



Excitement is building as Congleton prepares for the return of the popular **Food & Drink Festival** on **Sunday 7 June**, from **10.30am - 4.30pm**. Organised by Congleton Town Council, this free event promises a bigger and better experience than ever, drawing thousands of visitors from across the region.

The town centre will be alive with flavour and festivity. With **over 80 food stalls**, visitors can sample the finest local produce alongside an exciting range of international street food—from savoury favourites to indulgent sweet treats. A tempting selection of craft beers and gins will also be available, adding to the festival atmosphere.

Families will find plenty of fun, with **children's activities** inside the town hall, plus live entertainment, music, face painting, and circus skills. An **inclusivity area** in The Space offers a quiet retreat for those needing a break from the crowds, ensuring the festival is welcoming and accessible for everyone. Stall layouts have been carefully planned with safety and accessibility in mind.

Due to the large crowds, visitors are asked to leave dogs at home. **High Street, Mill Street, and Swan Bank will be closed to traffic from 7am - 6pm** to accommodate the festival safely. With preparations in full swing and anticipation building, the Food & Drink Festival is shaping up to be the highlight of the summer! Visit: www.foodanddrinkfestival.net

Thanks to the generous support of our **sponsors**, whose contributions help make this vibrant community event possible.

Platinum Sponsor: **Congleton Eats**

Gold Sponsors: **Barley Hops & Grape** and **Stephenson Browne Estate Agents**.



Splash into Summer!

Get ready to make a splash as **Congleton Paddling Pool** opens its gates on **Saturday 23 May!** The pool will run **two daily sessions** during school holidays from **10am - 1pm** and **2pm - 5pm**. During term time, it's closed Mondays and Tuesdays, but from **Monday 20 July**, it will be open **seven days a week** for the summer holidays. No booking is required; entry is first-come, first-served with a 140-person limit per session. Opening is weather dependent. Please visit the town council's website and review the **FAQ** before attending.



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 **Summer 2026**. All contributions to be sent to debbie.coxon@congleton-tc.gov.uk

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

☎ 01260 270350

✉ info@congleton-tc.gov.uk

🌐 www.congleton-tc.gov.uk

Congleton Bids to Become First UK Town of Culture!

Congleton has officially entered the race to be the **UK's first Town of Culture**. The bid, put together by Congleton Town Council, Congleton Partnership, and Congleton Community Projects, celebrates the town's **unique heritage**, "**Bear Town**" identity, and **vibrant cultural scene**.

At the heart of the programme is community-led culture, with local residents, artists, schools, businesses, and voluntary groups helping shape events ranging from heritage projects and storytelling to festivals, contemporary arts, and family-friendly activities.

The bid also aims to boost the local economy, support wellbeing, and inspire new partnerships. Submitted ahead of the 31 March deadline, we now await news on whether Congleton will make the shortlist for the full application stage, with the programme planned for 2028. Watch this space!



New Ranger in Town

Andy Stubbs has been appointed as Congleton Town Council's new **Countryside Ranger**. He will manage and maintain **countryside recreation** and **nature conservation sites** across the town and surrounding parishes, bringing extensive local experience in green space management, habitat creation, and community engagement.

You may recognise Andy from his work with Cheshire Wildlife Trust, supporting residents and community groups across Cheshire, or from his recent role with Groundwork in the West Midlands, managing sites like Hassall Green Nature Reserve and Silverdale Country Park. Andy is dedicated to **enhancing Congleton's green spaces** for everyone to enjoy. Keep an eye out for upcoming events and volunteering opportunities at Astbury Mere and across the town.

To get involved, email: andy.stubbs@congleton-tc.gov.uk



Mayor Making Ceremony

Continuing Congleton's civic tradition, a new town mayor will be elected at a public ceremony in the town hall on **Thursday 21 May at 7pm**. Witness the incoming mayor make their official pledge. The **Mayor's Parade and Civic Service** will be held on **Sunday 13 September**. If you are organising an event that supports the local community, celebrates a special occasion, or promotes a local business or initiative, you can invite the mayor to attend.

Email: mayor@congleton-tc.co.uk

Community Grants Open for Applications

Local community groups, registered charities, and not-for-profit organisations are invited to **apply for funding** to support projects and events that benefit the **Congleton community**. Grants are reviewed and approved by the town council's Finance and Policy Committee. To find out more, check if you're eligible, and download an application form, visit: www.congleton-tc.gov.uk/your-council/grants



Have Your Say

Residents are invited to attend the **Annual Town Meeting** on **Thursday 14 May at 7pm** in the town hall. This is an opportunity to share your views, raise local issues, and take part in discussions on matters affecting the town. The meeting will begin with the presentation of the **Town Mayor's Civic Awards**, celebrating the town's outstanding volunteers.

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



Suzie Akers Smith



Robert Brittain



Robert Douglas



Suzy Firkin

North East Ward

Bromley, Buglawton



Charles Booth



Susan Mead



Rob Moreton



Shaun Radcliffe



Glen Williams

North Ward



Dawn Allen



Russell Chadwick

UK Dementia Awards Finalist!

Congleton's No Tier Snooker Society has been recognised nationally for its outstanding support for people with early-onset dementia. As Bear Necessities goes to print, the **UK Dementia Awards** will be announced at a gala ceremony on Thursday 30 April. Good luck to **founder Ian Carter** and all members who make the group truly special.

Did you know 1 in 20 people over 65 in Cheshire East are living with dementia? Join No Tier Snooker every **Wednesday** at **Congleton Snooker Club**, people with dementia—including Frontotemporal Dementia—and their families, friends, and carers enjoy a friendly, relaxed space. Staying socially active through familiar activities like snooker boosts wellbeing and reduces isolation.



Step into Adventure with Congleton's Army Cadets

Based on Rope Walk, Congleton, the parade **meets twice weekly on Mondays and Thursdays** from **7pm – 9.30pm**, offering young people aged 12–18 exciting opportunities beyond the ordinary. Cadets can take part in camps, adventure training, fieldcraft and shooting, while developing confidence, leadership and lasting friendships. Activities include the **Duke of Edinburgh Award**, vocational qualifications, leadership development, communication systems, cyber skills, first aid, STEM, skill at arms training and sports. With varied weekly experiences and **annual camps**, the detachment also welcomes adult volunteers keen to inspire others and gain recognised qualifications. Drop in for a visit or head to the website to book an informal chat: armycadets.com/county/cheshire-acf



Preloved, Recycled, and Ready to Wear



The Big Clothes Movement gives new life to women's and children's clothes, shoes, and accessories through a series of preloved fashion events.

All donations are quality-checked, size-sorted, and made available to anyone attending.

Entry is free, with a £2 charge per large shopping bag to fill on the way out.

Upcoming events include:

Tuesday 5 May, 7.30pm at Congleton Town Hall - women's preloved fashion evening.

Tuesday 9 June, 7.30pm at Congleton Town Hall - combined women's and primary school-aged children's event.

Wednesday 1 July, 7pm at All Hallows College, Macclesfield - a children's event for ages newborn to five.

Congleton u3a Open Day

Congleton u3a will host its Open Day on **Saturday 9 May** from **10.30am - 3pm** at New Life Church, West Road, Congleton. Visitors are invited to explore over **100 member-run groups** offering activities indoors, outdoors and even on the dance floor! For more than 25 years, the organisation has supported retired and semi-retired people in developing interests, forming friendships and enjoying new experiences beyond working life, all within a welcoming and supportive community environment.

u3a Congleton & District
Charity number 1076203

Open Day

Saturday, 9th May
10:30am – 3:00pm

New Life Church

Danesford Community Centre,
West Rd, Congleton CW12 4EY
www.congletonu3a.org.uk

Over 100 groups offering a diverse selection of subjects from Arts and Crafts, Languages, Science & Technology, variety of Games, History, Music & Dance, Walking & Cycling and various Indoor & Outdoor Sports.

**learn
laugh
live**

Councillor emails are
cilrfirstname.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



Amanda Martin



David Brown



Arabella Holland



Sally Ann Holland



Heather Pearce



Kay Wesley



Mark Edwardson



Heather Seddon



Richard Walton



Liz Wardlaw

Congleton Police Boost Town Centre Safety

Throughout March, **Cheshire Police** ran Operation Watchmaker to support Business Crime Awareness Week, with Congleton's Neighbourhood Policing Team playing a key role. Officers focused on **tackling prolific shoplifters**, working closely with local stores and partner agencies, while providing a **visible presence** across the town's retail areas. They also spent time with retail staff, offering advice and support to help them feel confident and safe. Thanks to these efforts, Congleton has achieved a **60% positive outcome rate** for reported shop thefts this year, highlighting the team's commitment to keeping the town safe.

The team has also launched "**Bobbies on Bridge Street**", a new town centre beat meeting, ensuring officers remain accessible and responsive to residents, retailers, and visitors. Congleton welcomes **two new police officers** and **Sergeant 37412 Vicky Welch**, now supervising the Neighbourhood Policing Team.



Go Wild in your Gardens!



Rotary Congleton's Wildlife Friendly Garden Competition

welcomes participants of all ages and garden sizes—from window boxes to country estates. Running until Friday 21 August, residents are encouraged to do a little bit to **support endangered wildlife**. Open to anyone owning or renting a home in the **CW12 postcode**, entry is completely free. Two categories are available: Garden and Courtyard, Patio, Balcony, or even just a Window Box, with a **£100 prize** for winners and runner-up prizes. Sponsored by Timothy A Brown Estate Agents and Smithy Farm Nursery.

Full details are available at:
www.congletonrotary.co.uk

Switch Off and Clear the Air

Traffic is a major contributor to **local air pollution**, affecting health—especially for children, older people, and those with heart or lung conditions. **Engine idling**, when vehicles run while stationary, increases harmful emissions, wastes fuel, and damages engines. Residents are encouraged to switch off engines when parked for more than a minute. As part of **Clean Air Month (1–31 May)** and ahead of **Clean Air Day (Thursday 18 June)**, everyone is encouraged to take simple steps to reduce pollution. Choose to walk, cycle, or use public transport where possible. Schools and nurseries can also download Cheshire East Council's Anti-Idling Resource Booklet: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/environment/air-quality/anti-idling-toolkit-1.pdf



Think Before You Park

There has been an increase in reports of **nuisance parking** across several areas of Congleton. Cheshire Police have produced **posters** to highlight the dangers of inconsiderate parking, which will be displayed on lampposts and street furniture. Parking on pavements or near junctions can create serious hazards by reducing visibility and forcing pedestrians into the road. Congleton Police and the town council are working together to address the issue.

Residents can report problem hotspots and request the installation of posters via the town council.



Adopt a Station: Opportunity for Congleton

Congleton Town Council is backing the campaign to **restore Sunday train services**, and work continues to get the service back. Northern Rail is inviting communities to adopt a station, and Congleton could get involved. **Station adoption groups**, often known as "Friends of..." groups help bring stations to life through gardening, artwork, heritage boards, biodiversity projects, and community workshops. With many passionate members in the **Congleton Train Users Group**, this is a perfect way for locals to enhance the station. Interested in getting involved? Contact Congleton Town Council. For more information on the scheme visit: www.northernrailway.co.uk/community

Step Into History

Congleton Museum is launching a new season of **heritage talks and guided walks**, with four speakers and guides leading a varied programme through to October.

Saturday 9 May, 11am – Bossons Factory Talk, led by Brenda Proudlove

A talk on the history of the Bossons Factory, one of Congleton's most remarkable and overlooked local stories. Founded in the mid-20th century, Bossons became internationally known for its distinctive plaster wall sculptures. The talk will be given by a former Bossons factory artist, who worked there for over ten years and will share first-hand memories of the creative process and daily working life.

Sunday 17 May, 2pm – Leisure and Entertainment walk, led by Heather Watson

A walk around Congleton recalling the places that once provided relaxation and entertainment for the town's hard-working residents. Did you dive off the high board at the swimming baths? Which picture house did you visit? The walk may bring back a few memories. All walks start at Congleton Museum, followed by a complimentary cream tea. For tickets and the full programme, visit: www.congletonmuseum.co.uk



Boost Your Skills Now

Boost confidence and **career** prospects by enrolling on a free course with **Springboard Congleton**. Starting in the summer term offers an ideal opportunity for learners to develop new skills and head into September feeling prepared and motivated. With local employers continuing to report skills shortages, improving maths, English and digital abilities can have a significant impact, **enhancing a CV** and opening the door to new job opportunities and career progression. To find out more about the full range of courses, call: **01260 290 682**, email: info@springboard.me.uk, or visit: www.springboard.me.uk



News in Brief

Thanks to everyone who nominated a local volunteer for the **Town Mayor's Civic Awards**, which celebrate individuals making valuable contributions to the community. Good luck to all nominees! The finalists will be honoured at a special ceremony during the Annual Town Meeting on Thursday 14 May.

Congleton Library now hosts a **Clothes Library** for seasonal needs, offering coats and jackets. Visitors can pop in during opening hours to pick up a free coat. Donations of clean, wearable, and functional coats are warmly welcomed to support this community initiative.

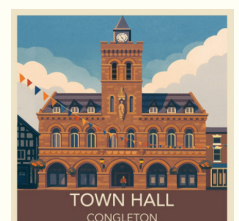
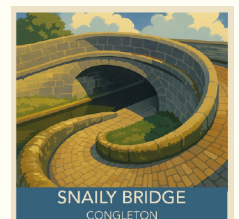
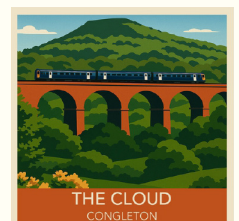
A recent visit by 230 (Congleton) Squadron Air Cadets to Congleton Town Hall showcased the town's rich history and civic life. The **Town Hall Tours** combine talks, quizzes, and guided access to the gothic building's unique features and civic memorabilia. Community groups are invited to book by contacting Congleton Information Centre.

Congleton Chess Club has settled into its new home at Orso Lounge, Bridge Street. Meeting every Wednesday at 7pm, the club offers a friendly, inclusive environment for all skill levels. Members can enjoy sociable games, receive coaching to improve, and connect with fellow chess enthusiasts. Attendance is free, to get started email: mscholes73@gmail.com

Discover, Shop & Explore Congleton

Congleton Information Centre serves as a hub for all things Congleton, providing a welcoming and helpful resource for both visitors and residents. As the main reception for the town council and town hall, the team provides assistance with enquiries and plays an important role in supporting the local community. Visitors can discover a selection of **unique local gifts** and souvenirs, such as the **newly designed cards, coasters and tea towels** – the perfect keepsakes to remember Congleton!

The centre offers a selection of **locally sourced treats** such as honey and apple juice, as well as maps, guides, and free leaflets to help plan outdoor adventures. Tickets for local events, the Daneside Theatre, and more are also available.



Sunday Funday

Congleton Park will be the place to be on **Sunday 12 July**, with two fantastic events lined up for the whole community.

Ducks on the Dane

The annual **Congleton Lions Charity Duck Race** promises excitement on the River Dane. The **corporate race** takes off at **2pm**, followed by the **main race** at **2.15pm**. Cash prizes for first, second, and third-place winners! Tickets are available in advance from **Congleton Information Centre**.



Bark in the Park

Fun for family, friends, and furry companions from **12.30pm - 5pm**, organised by the local **RSPCA, Congleton Community Projects**, and **Friends of Congleton Park**. The highlight is the **fun dog show at 2pm**, but there's plenty to keep everyone entertained, including craft and retail stalls, wildlife and charity stands, live music, and delicious refreshments. If you'd like to have a stall or volunteer, contact **Jo Money: jo@congletoncommunityprojects.org**



Summer Music Concerts at Congleton Park

Friends of Congleton Park present a fantastic lineup of **band concerts** throughout the summer. Bring a picnic, blanket, and enjoy the music! All performances are free and take place at the Bandstand on **Sundays, 2.30pm - 4.30pm**. Concerts booked so far: **14 June** - The Extractions, **5 July** - Lions Youth Brass Band and **2 August** - Saxophone Quartet.

Daneside Drama

Congleton's independent **Daneside Theatre**, open since 1984, hosts talented local amateur groups, showcasing dramas, musicals, and comedies. Upcoming productions include **Disney's The Little Mermaid Jr** (13 - 16 May, Congleton Amateur Youth Theatre), **The Full Monty** (20 - 23 May, Phoenix Theatre Company), and **Bouncers: Remix** (9 - 13 June, Congleton Players Amateur Theatre Club).

Don't miss these exciting performances!

A Night at the Musicals

Congleton Choral Society presents their summer concert on **Saturday 25 July** at Congleton Town Hall, **7.30pm**. Enjoy hits from West Side Story, Les Misérables, The Sound of Music, and more. Tickets available from Congleton Information Centre.

Celebrating Community and Connection



Celebrate **Congleton Pride's** seventh anniversary on **Saturday 18 July**, with fun-filled events centred around Congleton Town Hall. From **10am - 5pm**, visitors can enjoy family-friendly festivities, information stalls showcasing local organisations and support services, and celebrate the town's rich diversity and spirit. From 7pm to midnight, the **Evening Event** will be held in the town hall featuring two performances from **popular local entertainers**. As a thank you to the community, Pride have made this year's evening celebration free, with tickets available online.

Summer Play Days

Get ready to play! **Every Tuesday** during the summer holidays (**28 July - 18 August**) from **10.30am - 2.30pm**, enjoy free family fun in the pedestrian area. From sports, crafts, and music, there's something to spark every child's imagination.

Hidden Bath-House Tours

Discover Congleton's hidden **bath-house and gardens**, tucked between Lawton Street and Colehill Bank. The gardens are open at all times, while the bath-house opens only occasionally. Don't miss the **Open Days on Saturday 9 May** and **Saturday 12 September**, from **10am - 4pm**, featuring history tours of the warming room, plunge pool, and garden shelter, plus guided walks of the Physic Garden with a Medical Herbalist.

