



Nantwich Civic Society

Town Centre Audit

We all love Nantwich - that's why we are members of Nantwich Civic Society. But we realised last year that members had kept commenting on individual spots and problems for months, so we decided to do a comprehensive survey to see IF and then HOW bad the situation really was.

We thought we knew our town but, once we had looked specifically at this particular topic with a critical eye, the results were quite frightening.

As Civic Voice readers will already know from your own experiences, we found –

- Sunken pavings ;
- Tarmac and concrete had been used for so called “temporary repairs” – which have been there for ages.
- Puddles all over the place
- Peeling paint on relatively new lampposts
- Stained pavements especially outside takeaways.
- bollards knocked over
- Plastic and iron seating needing a good wash
- Far too many Street signs for No Waiting, No Parking and direction signs that are not needed and/or rusty, bent or just filthy, with old stickers left on.

As for the private sector –

- Many shop fronts look scruffy and untidy
- We have weeds in front of the florists- and estate agents,
- Lots of unauthorised signage, quite inappropriate to a Conservation Area.
- Then we get to the A-Boards! We counted 30 one day alone

Nantwich Civic Society realise that shops and businesses need to advertise and we are worried that because we are against A Boards, that we must be anti business. This is not true. We know from experience in other towns that too many boards create clutter as well as dangerous obstructions for shoppers. They become self-defeating fairly quickly. Once one shop does it, they all fall in behind.

What about the Reactions, so far?

So – leading by example - The Civic Society decided to do our own Spring Clean Up, as well as continue to lobby for improvement and reactions have been really positive.

- The local newspapers covered the story – although one has concentrated on the A Boards issue (but this is the press!)
- Cheshire East Council has been really positive - as far as they can be these days- with a Regeneration Officer coming to see us inside 5 days of publication.
- We have a good working relationship now with the various Council departments offering help on several fronts. They have agreed to paint the lampposts already – not trusting us volunteers with this high level job (rightly so, I think).
- We have had offers of small funding as well as cleaning materials for our forthcoming Volunteer Days – the Big Nantwich Spring Clean Up.
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- The Council is doing a Review of the Conservation Area and our work will be feeding into this.
- Nantwich Town Council has offered help in kind and with funding. They have promoted a TRO to restrict damage done by large delivery vehicles in town during trading hours.

Critically - Volunteer help is at hand too:

- A number of local people have come forward to be volunteers, including a local mum and toddler group.
- Our activities have attracted attention and help from the regional Barclays HQ, with their staff volunteering days as well so we are organising a Big Wash and Brush Up for Nantwich on 7th and 8th April.

So what about the Longer Term?

- Big investment will need to be done in future.
- The current pavements, signs and street furniture all need replacing - to the high quality like most other similar (and lesser) towns in region.
- Millions will be needed, so planning and lobbying are essential.

Unless Nantwich has a Community Town (parish) Plan in place with items like this on the "Community Shopping List" – there will be no chance of turning the problems mentioned about around.

Civic Societies need to keep vigilant and apply pressure wherever they can to ensure that maintenance does not get forgotten in the new world of public cutbacks. After all, what can be more sustainable - and cost effective – than properly looking after what we already have? That's Conservation in practice, I think.

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