

25 June 2013

Midsomer Norton Civic Day

This year's Midsomer Norton's Civic Service was hosted on Sunday by Welton Baptist Church at Somervale School. Local residents and representatives from community groups celebrated community with hymns, readings, prayers and live drama before the event culminated with the Midsomer Awards.

"As a Council, we are very keen to acknowledge those who give their time volunteering and make such a huge difference to our town. This year there are ten awards to people nominated by residents, community groups and councillors", said Cllr Paul Myers, Mayor of Midsomer Norton.

This year's awards included:

Outstanding Design Contribution: For the design of the proposed Town Park concept, presented by Cllr Richard Robertson to **Neil Ross**.

Outstanding Officer Contribution: For commitment to the town's CAP initiative, presented by Cllr Michael Evans to **Sue Dicks** of Bath & North East Somerset Council.

Outstanding Volunteer Award: For dedicated service emptying litter bins, presented by Cllr Lynda Robertson to **Idris Smith**.

Outstanding Volunteer Award: For services to Twinning over 30 years, presented by Cllr Steve Plumley to **Roy & Molly Kemp**.

Outstanding Volunteer Award: For initiating and developing Community Speedwatch, presented by Cllr Paul Myers to **Peter Wilkins**.

Outstanding Volunteer Award: For chairing PACT and Community Speedwatch, presented by Cllr Brian Lawrence to **Michael Rich**.

Community Group Achievement of the Year: For bringing honour to the town by achieving promotion to its highest competitive level, presented by Cllr Steve Plumley to **Midsomer Norton RFC**.

Community Initiative of the Year: For creating and running library arts events, presented by Cllr Paul Myers to the **Midsomer Norton Library Team** in the library earlier this week.

Community Group of the Year: For services to wildlife in Midsomer Norton, presented by Cllr Paul Myers to **Silver Street Nature Reserve Volunteers**.

Community Volunteer of the Year: For services to the Midsomer Norton Forum, presented by Cllr Paul Myers to **Luke Barnes**.

Medals or trophies as well as commemorative certificates were presented to the award winners in front of a large audience representing many of the community groups in Midsomer Norton, as well as Town Councillors and Jacob Rees-Mogg, MP for North East Somerset. Following the service and the awards, a reception was held at which award winners enjoyed the opportunity to meet each other and members of the community over a cup of tea and an amazing selection of home-made cakes.

25 June 2103

Midsomer Norton is Blooming

As the summer weather at long last begins to make an appearance, the efforts of the Town Council, in partnership with its horticultural contractor *Flowers by Nicola*, are finally beginning to show their true colours.

Box hedging planted around the flower beds in front of The Hollies is starting to mature and evoke the style of the original Palladian architecture of the late 18th century house as it was when it was built as a large family home. In the front of the Hollies Garden, the town name has returned by popular demand and has been updated, providing a real feature as people pass down the High Street. The launch of the Midsomer Norton Community Trust on

24th June is being commemorated by the bright and fresh logo board outside The Hollies depicting community and togetherness.

Between the town name and the Community Trust logo is a bee hive accompanied by some bee friendly flowers, aimed at encouraging a greater awareness of the plight of the bee in 2013. An educational pack is being developed with Flowers by Nicola to encourage schools to come and learn about bees and their critical relationship with flowers. The bee hive is unable to be used by bees but its decorative and educational value remains.

Along the High Street, the river tubs have been replanted as efforts continue to find the right balance between allowing nature to run its course and managing the river plants to enhance the appearance of a wonderful feature of our town centre – one that both our visitors and long-time residents all have a view on. And hanging baskets supported by the Chamber of Commerce have added a wonderful display of colour to the street scene.

Further afield, our town gateway signs have emerged from their daffodil fields to be surrounded by summer flowers and the rest of the beds in the town are a picture of colour with the coal trucks providing a feature against which the flowers can really be appreciated.

The Town Council decided not to seek to compete for any floral awards this year and focused its efforts instead on working to make the displays across the town something to be proud of. “We simply could not find or justify the time that entering a competition would demand” said Councillor Paul Myers, Mayor of Midsomer Norton. “Instead, we decided that the time and money we could afford to spend would be best used to make the town floral features as bright and vibrant as we could whilst introducing some new ideas to keep the displays fresh and up to date. Judging on the feedback that we have received we seem to be getting it right and as we develop our ideas for the river and test them out with the community we hope the final piece of the jigsaw will fall in to place. Working with Nicola and Glen and a number of our volunteers has been a real partnership this spring and summer and we think it shows throughout the town.”

Plans to remove the multitude of signs at the entrance to the Midsomer Enterprise Park on Radstock Road are nearing completion and they will be replaced by a single sign, freeing up more green space. The Council are keen to hear your ideas for using this important gateway space for showcasing the town – if you think of anything do let the Town Clerk know about it – contact e mail townclerk@midsomernortontowncouncil.co.uk or call 01761 418701

19 June 2013

Vacancy for a new Councillor

Midsomer Norton Town Council will be co-opting a new Councillor to join their team as a result of the resignation of former Councillor Simon Wellington in May due to a change in his personal circumstances. Cllr Paul Myers, Midsomer Norton Town Mayor said:

“Simon’s resignation was a disappointment to the Council but we fully understand and respect his decision and the reasons for him wanting to commit more time to other things. Simon was an important member of the team and we will really miss his energy and passion – I want to publicly record the thanks of all the Council Members for his contribution since we began in 2011. The Council will be looking to appoint a new Councillor and we hope that anyone who feels they have something to offer will be prepared to put themselves forward.”

The Council have given notice of the vacancy and will be selecting a replacement Councillor at their meeting on 8th July 2013. Anyone who feels they can represent the interests of the residents of Midsomer Norton can apply to be considered. Town Councillors roles are voluntary and require evening attendance at meetings and working parties as well as a willingness to get involved on a range of projects. Applications need to be sent to the Town Clerk at the Town Hall by Friday 5th July.

19 June 2013

River Planting Moves Forward

Last Sunday saw volunteers begin work on a new trial river planting programme in Midsomer Norton town centre. Whilst overall feedback is positive on the river transformation scheme, completed in May 2011, there are those who feel that even with the current regular management the river leaves it looking a little bit too wild.

In order to address this feedback, the Town Council recently voted funds to carry out an enhanced planting trial on the stretch between Barons and Out of Asia. Once the trial is completed and has settled in, the Town Council will consult with local residents to get their views.

“By introducing a wider range of native river plants, which will be grown to create clumps of one type, we’re aiming is to create a greater sense of order and all year round colour. As a member of the team that regularly has to clear the water cress to keep the river channel clear, I hope that we can also in the process attract more volunteers to manage the river. It’s a great way to spend a couple of hours on a Sunday morning, out in the fresh air”, said Paul Myers, Mayor of Midsomer Norton.

It is largely thanks to the efforts of a dedicated band of volunteers that the River Somer in the town centre is maintained. Rubbish is removed every day of the week whilst weekend activity is focused on managing the planting. Anyone interested in taking part in the Sunday sessions can contact the Town Clerk on 01761 418701 for further details.

13th June 2013

Purple Flag

Midsomer Norton Town Council has voted to seek to gain Purple Flag accreditation for the town. Purple Flag is the national accreditation scheme for centres 'after dark'. The programme recognises excellence in the management of towns & city centres at night, providing significant recognition for people, businesses and organisations who deliver initiatives and services associated with the evening & night-time economy. The programme is positive, dynamic and practical, and is designed to benefit all who get involved.

The aim of Purple Flag is to raise the standard and broaden the appeal of town and city centres at night, changing public perceptions surrounding the evening economies resulting in a better night out for all. The scheme is a fresh approach to managing nightlife. It is linked to the standards that people expect from their town centres at night, and its methodology is based on years of research, pilot initiatives, national and international good practice.

“The wide range of recent initiatives including the Arts Programme, community cinema, Street Marshals and Designated Public Place Order have all had a remarkably positive effect on Midsomer Norton town centre in the evenings. Taking part in the Purple Flag scheme will enable us to build on this success and develop the town’s night time economy even further to benefit not just Midsomer Norton but residents across the whole Somer Valley”, said Cllr Linda Dunford of Midsomer Norton Town Council.

20 May 2013

Midsomer Norton Fayre

The future of Midsomer Norton Fayre day looks set to be secured thanks to a bold funding decision by the Town Council. The perennial problem has been that the budget has always only ever been available from April each year whilst the event takes place only 3 months later in June. This makes it virtually impossible to book any significant entertainment in time – a problem which has become acute as the event has grown in recent years. Working with the Carnival Association, who have considerable experience of running major events in the town, it has been agreed to not have a Fayre in 2013, but use the funds to book a year in advance for 2014, thus ensuring thereafter that any funding can always be used a year in advance.

Councillor Paul Myers, explaining why the decision had been taken said “Timing was a key factor in our ability to book something which befits Midsomer Norton’s aspiration for a spectacular event that would not only bring the

town together but draw in people from the whole district. At the same time we warmly welcome the support of the Carnival Association in working with us on plans for Midsomer Norton Fayre 2014. ”.

Meanwhile, the Town Council is also looking at what it can do to help the Midsomer Norton and District Carnival Association bring a full carnival back to the town and more specifically the procession of large floats along the High Street after a 20 year absence.

29 April 2013

Community Plan

The creation of Midsomer Norton's first Community Plan moved a step forward last week with the completion of the first stage of consultation with local groups.

Twelve workshops to produce questions for the eventual Community Plan Survey have taken place in the last three months, with participants drawn from community groups and representing a wide range of ages and views. Whilst some of the topics identified by the workshops are already under consideration by the Town Council, a number of new areas have been raised which will ensure that the eventual Community Plan will reflect the needs of local people in the years ahead.

“On behalf of the Community Plan Steering Group, I'd like to thank all those who contributed to the process by taking part in one the recent twelve round table discussions. It's has been truly inspiring to hear so many thoughts and ideas about issues we need to address in order to take Midsomer Norton forward in ways that will meet the needs of the whole community”, said Jenny Hillman, Chairman of the Midsomer Norton Forum.

The hundreds of questions suggested for inclusion in the eventual Community Plan questionnaire are now being studied by the Steering Group in order to produce a final survey draft which will be going to every household in Midsomer Norton in the autumn.

Further details will be made available over the coming months but in the meantime residents can find out more about the Community Plan Project by visiting the Town Council's website at www.midsomernortontowncounil.co.uk and click on *Community – Midsomer Norton Forum*, or by contacting the Town Clerk on 01761 418701.

24 April 2013

Town Park

For the last 40 years Midsomer Norton has been promised a Town Park, broadly located between Gullock Tynning and Five Arches. However, despite it being in repeated strategic plans, including the current Core Strategy, the town still lacks green space.

On the 5th November 2012 the Town Council voted unanimously in favour of the need to secure a Town Park and since then has been exploring with B&NES and relevant land owners the steps needed to deliver this and what form it could take.

More recently, the Town Council commissioned a local designer to produce a concept in order to explore what a Town Park could look like. It is not meant to be a definite plan, but the hope is that a picture will be more inspiring and help move this project forward.

The intention is to continue to work up detailed plans which can then form the basis of a full public consultation – giving residents an opportunity to have their say.

Once achieved a Town Park, in association with the Skate and Adventure Play Park will undoubtedly offer a fantastic facility to not only Midsomer Norton Residents but the whole Somer Valley attracting people to the Town.

In the short term the Town Council is also in the process of negotiating to secure other smaller green spaces in the town including St Chad's Well and the Catholic Church Garden.