



## Hanley Town Football Club (1966 – Present)

In **1966** a group of friends were playing mainly friendly games on a Sunday based at The Trumpet Public House in Hanley. (The building is now occupied by McDonalds, facing the Wetherspoons pub). The friends decided to join a Saturday league (Longton League) and changed their name to Hanley Town (Owen Rhead took on the managers role in 1966). That very first season the club won the Longton League and the Longton Charity Cup. The team were playing on a pitch rented from a local engineering firm Copestick & Farrell on Victoria Road just outside Hanley.

In the **1967/68** season the club moved up to the Staffordshire County League (North) and were placed in Division 2, a reserve team was formed and replaced the first team in the Longton League. The season was one of the most successful - the combined teams winning six trophies and were runners-up in two others. Washing and changing facilities were built at the ground making the club one of the first in the area to have touchline facilities.

### **1967/68 season Honours:**

Staffs County League (North) Division 1 Champions;  
Longton League Champions;  
Longton League Cup Winners (vs Meir CA)  
Hanley Cup Winners (vs Burslem Albion)  
May Bank Cup Winners (vs Milton United)  
Longton Charities Cup Winners;  
Staffordshire County League Cup Runners-Up (vs Cowlshaw Walker)  
Leek Cup Runners-Up (vs Milton United)

The success continued for the **68/69** season with the first team becoming Division 1 Champions and the reserves retaining the Longton League title. Also won were: Longton League Cup (vs Fenton BL); the May Bank Cup (vs Wereton QP) and the Hanley Cup (vs Wereton QP). The first team were also runners-up in the Staffordshire Junior Cup (vs Pelsall Villa).

In **1971** the club lost its ground on Victoria Road to developers and so the club moved into a groundshare agreement with neighbours Eastwood Hanley, who were playing in the West Midlands League at the time. The reserves were able to continue to rent a ground from Johnsons nearby. Both Hanley teams were now playing in the Staffordshire County League (North), the first team in the Premier Division and the reserves in Division 1.

The **72/73** season saw the first team became Premier Division Champions, with the reserves finishing third in Division 1. The Staffordshire FA Challenge Cup was won beating Roebuck in the final.

With Eastwood wanting to increase the rent for the **1974/75** season to an unacceptable level the club agreed a groundshare with Leek Town. It was a disappointing season on the field, the first team finishing 5th in the County Premier Division, with the reserves finishing 12th out of 14 teams in Division 1. The club were runners-up in two cup competitions the Sentinel Cup and the Roger Lomas Trophy.

For the **1976/77** season under the managerial reins of Joe Wills, Hanley Town moved into their present ground on Abbey Lane where the club started to develop the facilities. The club also took the plunge into joining the Mid-Cheshire League Second Division which was in its second season.

A 4th place finish in the Mid-Cheshire League Second Division and winning the Second Division cup, beating Knutsford 1-0 in the final was not a bad first season in the new league.

The **1980/81** season was a disappointment as the club finished in its worst league position. The cup competitions though were a success however - the new Staffordshire FA Vase was introduced by the

Staffordshire FA to replace the Intermediate Cup, 16 clubs from North and South of the County were invited to take part. Hanley Town had the honour of being the first winners defeating Chasetown over two legs, the first leg away at Chasetown ended 0-0, with the return leg at Abbey Lane, in front of 1000 spectators ending 2-1 to Hanley. The League Cup was also retained after beating Linotype 2-1.

In the **1981/82** season the club finally became Mid-Cheshire League Champions by a six-point margin and only two defeats in the league all season. The clubs attempt to defend the Staffordshire FA Vase was almost successful as we reached the final again, only to lose over two legs 2-0 to neighbours Eastwood Hanley.

The following three seasons were mediocre, but in the **1986/87** and **1987/88** seasons under the managerial reins of Peter Ward - the seasons provided the club with some success. Two third place finishes in the Mid-Cheshire League; League Cup success beating Kidsgrove Athletic 3-1 after extra-time; winning the Leek Cup; the Newcastle Charities Cup and the club were also inaugural winners of the Congleton Floodlit Cup. The reserves during this period were Staffordshire Alliance League Premier Division Runners-Up and Premier Division Cup winners. The club started a youth team, the team playing in the Staffordshire County Minor Youth League - they finished Runners-Up in the league, won the Subsidiary Cup and won the Sentinel Shield.

In **1988** the club applied for membership of the North West Counties League, but with new ground grading being introduced at the time, the club failed in its application. With the club's application turned down, the first team left to play at a higher level for Nantwich Town who were in the North West Counties League at the time. In **1988/89** ex Stoke City, Port Vale and Crewe Alexandra player Terry Lees was given the task of rebuilding an entire new first team, and over the next few years began to assemble a team that was gradually climbing the table. Terry had to step down in **1993** due to other commitments outside of football.

Thereafter, in this period, began a slow decline, to which the club nearly folded in **1995**.

Then ex-Port Vale player Neville Chamberlain, first as manager, then as chairman steadied the club. The club returned to the Mid-Cheshire League for a season and then in **1998** joined the Midland League (Staffordshire County Senior League).

Under the managerial reins of Darren Stair and Dave Price, the Midland League Cup Final was reached in **2003/04**, unfortunately losing to Norton/Adderley Green in the final. The club had had to wait till the turn of the millennium to reach a major cup final (15 years).

Success was finally achieved the following season when Darren and Dave guided a young Hanley Town side to a treble of titles: Midland (SCSL) Champions; League Cup Winners (vs Hanford 2-1); Staffordshire FA Vase (vs Audley 1-0) and the reserves won the Leek Cup (vs Audley 4-2).

The following season the club retained the league title, losing just once in the league, however losing to Ball Haye Green in the Leek Cup Final.

Between **2006 and 2011** Steve Norris (FA Trophy winner) and then Dave Wooliscroft took on the managerial reins - consistently keeping the team in the top five of the league and onto a number of cup semi-finals.

For the **2011/12** Darren Stairs brother, Colin Stair took over as first team manager after a successful few seasons as reserve and youth team manager – he was assisted by Dave Price and Glen Parkes. That season the team won the Staffordshire County Senior League Premier Division title and the reserve team managed by Mark Giblin and Steve Harrison won the Division 1 title.

The **2012/13** was a season of joy and sorrow - Colin Stair and Dave Price guided the first team to a memorable quadruple of titles. That season the first team became Staffordshire County Senior League Premier Division Champions; League Cup Winners (vs Wolstanton Utd 2-1); Staffordshire FA Vase Winners (vs Wolstanton Utd 3-1) and Leek Cup Winners (vs Audley 4-3 on pens, 2-2 after extra-time).

With four league games remaining in the season, first team manager Colin Stair suddenly passed away, the lads brilliantly saw the season through to win the fourth title for Codger.

It was Colin's ambition to get the club and manage at a higher level starting with the North West Counties Football League, which the club achieved by being accepted into the First Division of the North West Counties League for the **2013/14** season. The first season at a higher level resulted in a fourth place, with Hanley also reaching the final of the NWCL First Division Trophy, unfortunately losing on penalties to Formby.

The **2014/15** season saw the first team reach the NWCL Division 1 play-off final against AFC Darwen after beating Holker Old Boys at Abbey Lane 3-1 in the semi-Final. Unfortunately, Hanley went on to lose the final at Darwen's Anchor Road ground in front of over 900 spectators.

The **2015/16** season saw the first team banish the disappointment of missing out on promotion the season before by becoming the North West Counties League First Division champions under the new management team of Dean Owen and Wayne Johnson in their first season in charge.

Hanley's first year in the NWCL Premier Division (**2016/17**) saw them finish in a respectable 10<sup>th</sup> place.

In the **2017/2018** season, Hanley finished in 8<sup>th</sup> place in the NWCL Premier Division.

The **2018/2019** season was a turbulent one for the club, both on and off the field, with Hanley needing (and getting) a win on the last game of the season in order to secure safety in the NWCL Premier Division. Hanley ended the season having had 3 different managers throughout the season, with former player Micky Morton being the latest recruit in January 2019. Mick successfully kept the club up, turning the clubs form right around towards the end of the season.

2019/2020...

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