



Clare Town Council Annual Report 2016-2017



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Thank you to all who contributed. Particular thanks to those who provided photographs.

If you require an electronic or large print copy of the report please contact the Town Clerk.

Chair's Introduction

This year saw the resignation of Alan Parsley who, after many years as a councillor, decided to retire. I would like to personally thank him for all his efforts as a councillor, a longstanding Chair of the Environment Committee, and the Vice-Chair of the council.

As Vice-Chair of the council he has been supportive of me by standing in on many occasions, chairing meetings and attending functions and events that I was not able to attend.

His work and involvement in the council will be sorely missed, not only by fellow councillors but by the residents of Clare and those in Westfield in particular. I wish him well for the future.

Alan has been replaced by Robin Stone who was elected after a hard-fought election on 26th February 2017. We welcome Robin to the council and hope that he fits into the team well.

The councillor team has been ably assisted this year by our two lay members, Trevor Pickerin and Olive Smith, who sit on the Environment Committee.

I must thank our staff: Claire Ebeling, our Town Clerk; Brian and Colin our two Street Wardens; and Keith Mison, the Cemetery Management Officer. Special thanks must go to Maureen Smith, the Responsible Finance Officer, who this year has taken on all the duties of the Finance Committee which we disbanded last year.

May I also extend thanks to Mary Evans, our County Councillor, and Alaric Pugh, our Borough Councillor, who have both regularly attended Town Council meetings and supported us in our work on behalf of the residents of Clare.



Community Survey and Plan

Much of this year has been taken up with the recently completed community survey, a report of which residents have just received. The results of this survey have now been analysed and will inform a new development plan for the council, the actions for which can be found in the survey report. The results of the survey will carry weight with both the County Council and the Borough Council when considering matters relating to Clare. The major decision facing the Town Council in the near future is whether to undertake a full Neighbourhood Plan, which will have even greater weight with the planning authority, the County Council and government. Whatever decision is taken it will involve all residents in the town.

I would like to record my thanks to Cllr. Mallows who has led this project from the start.

Planning

One of the major roles of the Town Council is to comment on planning applications. This has been led by our Planning Working Party, consisting of Cllrs. Godwin, Gryce, Mallows and Perceval-Maxwell. All planning decisions are taken at Town Council meetings based on recommendations from the Planning Working Party. This year their workload has increased dramatically because of the major application for 50 houses on the Cavendish Road site. It is expected that the application will be formally lodged in the next few weeks.

Tourism

Tourism Clare, the council's Tourism Working Party, has developed over the last year, bringing in a wide range of stakeholders. Applications for Leader Funding have been delayed because of the Brexit vote but are now back on track. I hope that we will soon begin to see the fruits of all the work that has been going on behind the scenes this year. Thanks to Cllr. Gryce for all the energy he has put into leading the council's tourism initiative.

Clare Castle Country Park

By far the largest draw for visitors to the town is the Country Park, and the Town Council continues to work closely with the Trustees in the development of the park and the securing of the £1.5million HLF Grant. I think it important to publicly thank Geoffrey Bray and the Trustees for all the hard work they have done for the benefit of Clare in the last year.

Community Funding

During the last year the Town Council has continued to support those community groups as listed in the Finance Report overleaf. In particular, we were able to grant-fund the Clare Community Association to organise a Party in the Park to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday. This was a true community event with an opportunity for local groups to raise their profile and funds. It was such a success that the council has agreed to fund the CCA to organise another Party in Park on 1st July this year.

The Annual Report contains not only reports from the Town Council but also from some of the community groups in Clare that we support and that make Clare such a vibrant place.

The Annual Town Meeting will take place on Wednesday 10th May in the Town Hall at 7pm. I hope as many residents as possible will be able to attend.

Paul Bishop, Chair.

* A full attendance record for Town Council meetings can be found on our new website www.clare-suffolk.co.uk

Finance

Total income for the year ended 31st March 2017 was £119,229 against a budget of £107,705. The Precept (the element of Council Tax which pays for Parish services) was £96,791. Total expenditure for the year was £98,161, the main categories being:

Administration and Finance	£23,365
Environment	£21,684
Cemetery	£13,874
Website and Chevron	£2,870
Maintenance Grants (Town Council assets)	£8,434
Grants for Community activities	£10,123
Loan Repayments	£17,175

As a result of this year's activities, Council reserves at 31st March 2017 stand at £235,873.40. This is represented by a general reserve of £182,977.96 (£167,699 last year) and earmarked reserves of £52,895.44 (£45,575 last year). The increase in earmarked reserves is mainly represented by funds being received from Suffolk County Council on the last day of our financial year in respect of the dowry for the Country Park. This will be immediately paid to Clare Castle Country Park Trust and will be reflected in next year's figures.

The financial year 2016/17 once again saw a further reduction in Council Tax Support Grant and the Rural Grant following the unilateral decision taken by St Edmundsbury Council to phase out both grants over 4 years - a reduction of 20% of our total income. For 2017/18 these grants will no longer be available.

In an attempt to achieve a zero increase in the Precept figure for 2017/18, the Town Council has been working with local organisations who request funding through the precept. Clare Town Council continues to investigate methods of reducing costs and I am happy to report that we have cut costs this year by bringing our website in-house, re-negotiating the grass cutting tender, and cemetery income continues to offset cemetery costs.

We have investigated rising costs of telephone/broadband and are confident we will be able make a saving in the coming year.

The Christmas Lights Committee have informed us that they are now self-sufficient as far as fundraising is concerned and will therefore not require a precept grant for 2017/18. The Town Council wishes them well and will continue to support the Christmas Lights in any way it can.

Once again I am pleased to report that we have been able to avoid any increase in the Parish Precept, and in fact parishioners will see a small reduction of 0.04%.

Parishioners will be pleased to know that the council continues to support local community organisations through the precept grant portion of the Council Tax bill. Run by volunteers, I am sure we all appreciate the difference the efforts of these groups make to the appeal of Clare.

This year the Community Support figures were:

Clare Christmas Lights	£3,641
Clare Swimming Club	£750
Clare in Bloom	£2,500
Clare Community Association (CCA) - Queen's Birthday Celebrations (due to the success of the event the CCA were able to refund £300 to the Town Council)	£2,500

The Precept also helps us to maintain and support Town Council grounds and buildings including Clare Playing Field and the Combined Halls of Clare. Volunteer trustees generously donate a great deal of their time to ensure residents and visitors can continue to enjoy these wonderful assets.

This year the Town Council has been pleased to make donations to The Kernos Centre, Citizens Advice Bureau and Fresh Start, as well as the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal and Boys' Brigade Band as part of Remembrance Day Services and WW1 commemorations. These donations were made under Section 137 of the Local Government Act of

1972. This allows the council to incur expenditure which, in its opinion, will bring benefit to their area, or any part of it, or all or some of its residents.

Further information, including summary sheets detailing income, expenditure and reserves may be obtained from the Council Office or by e-mailing finance@clare-suffolk.co.uk

Maureen Smith, Responsible Finance Officer

Environment Committee

The Environment Committee is responsible for the upkeep of the Cemetery, Nuttery, Churchyard, benches, greenswards, grass cutting & trees, litter bin emptying and street cleaning. Problems with drainage and roadways we refer on to the appropriate authority.

The Committee is responsible for a good percentage of the Town Council precept. An inspection of all public trees takes place every two years which leads to a programme of safety and conservation work being carried out. New benches have been placed in the Cemetery, one partly sponsored by Paintins, the other replacing a commemoration of a family member. The churchyard gates have been treated and re-painted. A steel shed has been installed discreetly behind the laurels near the cemetery entrance opposite the chapel for storage of equipment. Trees in that area have been managed to allow the better growth of major species such as oak and field maple and reduce further work on boundary trees in the longer term.

At the current level of fees, the Cemetery should no longer be running at a loss. We are indebted to our administration for making sure our response to families is both discreet and sympathetic.

The Council has taken over responsibility for those footpaths that were formerly cut by Suffolk County Council; three cuts a year rather than two will be carried out, and paths widened and levelled where appropriate.

The Council fully supports the work of the Walks Group in creating leaflets and maps of circular walks and in the incorporation of the town in the 'Walkers are Welcome' project.

Any suggestions as to improvements we can make are welcome: just contact our Town Clerk. We express our warmest thanks to our two street wardens and our cemetery manager for their efforts. The welcoming frontages of so many businesses and homes contribute so much to the beauty of the town along with the work of Clare in Bloom and its hard-working volunteers.

Phil Gryce, Chair

Tourism Clare

The Town Council has put together a group to come up with plans for making Clare a better-known tourist destination, linking closely with the Clare Business Association, the Park Trustees and other stakeholders, such as the churches and the Ancient House Museum.

A programme of walks and tours has been drawn up and will be advertised through Suffolk's Year of Walking. A tourist website is proposed as well as new leaflets and apps.



A **Wool Towns Association** has been formed, of which Clare is an equal partner with Hadleigh, Lavenham and Long Melford. Each location will continue to manage its own promotion/marketing, but as a group, we will be able to command greater attention and encourage an observable growth of visitors to our region throughout the year. There is a wealth of historical and architectural ties between ourselves within a hinterland that offers a quality and range of amenities that should be better known to visitors. Plans are now being drawn up to attract funding. Further information is available from Phil Gryce 01787 278192 or phil.gryce@clare-suffolk.co.uk.

Phil Gryce, Chair

Clare Castle Country Park

As we come to the end of the second year of managing the park it is encouraging to be able to report that the budget surplus we had projected at the start of the year of c£8,000 should be exceeded. The other major achievements in the year include:



CLARE CASTLE
COUNTRY PARK

- the award of a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant of £206,000.
- the award of non-HLF grants of £25,000. This means that in the first two years of Clare owning the Park £45,000 of other grants have been obtained. This has enabled more improvements to be made than would otherwise have been the case.
- the opening of a café in the old station booking hall.
- continuing to rectify the previously neglected maintenance of the 'green spaces'; most noticeably the clearing of the motte and the area round the moat, and creating small grassy areas in different parts of the Park.
- the development of six circular walks of 4-7 miles each starting in the Park.
- keeping people informed of progress and plans by holding two public meetings, issuing monthly newsletters and more frequent postings on Facebook and the website.

In the coming months the plans are to:

- complete the considerable amount of work on Phase One of the HLF project; this will involve extensive consultation which has already started.
- submit an application for a Phase Two HLF grant of £1.5 million by the end of 2017; if successful this would enable a start to be made in 2018 on the plans that will be developed in Phase One.
- install new equipment in the playground.

Geoffrey Bray



CLARE CASTLE
COUNTRY PARK



Clare Community Association

Thanks to our wonderful volunteers, Clare businesses, other local organisations and the community of Clare, we have been able to organise a series of well-supported events during the past twelve months. The



Party in the Park was our first major event, followed by Pumpkins in the Park and the Clare Remembrance Day Parade and Service. Clare Community Association was pleased to help with the Social Club's Easter Egg Hunt and to organise the Clare Christmas Fair with the Parochial Church Council. We also put on 13 events for

children during school holidays, ranging from a Scavenger Hunt to the very popular Water Fight, and the committee is planning to run a series of similar events this year.

Plans for Party in the Park 2017 are well under way. There are lots of exciting attractions already booked and we hope to see you all in the Country Park on July 1st from 12 o'clock!

The CCA team members are: Jo Everitt, Chair; Gary Brown, Vice Chair; Tina Humphrey, Secretary; Margaret Godwin, Treasurer. Also Christine Brown, Christina Glover, Mary Denton, Loveday Perceval-Maxwell, Portia Brown and Neil Cameron-Rollo.

We are very happy for people to contact us to volunteer to help with the Party in the Park this year or with ideas and suggestions for events.

Jo Everitt, Chair



Combined Halls of Clare (CHOC)

Clare Town Hall was opened in 1912, and the Old School opened as Clare's Community Centre in 1990. The CHOC Trustees are responsible for overseeing the management and maintenance of both buildings. During the past year we have continued with various improvements.



In the Town Hall electrical work, included upgrading the lighting in the main hall, and installing LED throughout. This was funded from a £10,000 Lottery grant.

At the Old School we have 120 new stacking chairs. Part of the cost was met by the balance

from the Lottery grant, plus a grant from Havebury Housing Association. Towards the end of 2016 we were able to buy ten new armchairs. Donations from CLASP, the Royal Clarence Lodge of Freemasons in Clare, and Haverhill & District Rotary Club supported this project. We have installed soundproofing between Halls 2 and 3. This was part funded with a grant from our County Councillor's Locality Fund.

CHOC Trustees have now completed their three year plan of improvements. During 2017 we will be looking at future projects, including energy saving.

Both halls are available for public and private hire. The Town Hall has a licensed bar and catering kitchen. The Old School has rooms of varying sizes, and a well equipped kitchen. To enquire about other facilities in the buildings and information about hiring, please contact the Administrator, Paul Heath:

Email: choc.clare@hotmail.com

Mobile: 07500642001

www.choc.org.uk

Olive Smith, Chair

Clare Playing Field Association (CPFA)

The Playing Field (originally the football meadow) has been used by Clare residents for football and cricket since before the 2nd World War. In those days cattle had to be herded off the field prior to games and the cow pats shovelled up from the one pitch available. An old shepherd's hut on wheels was the cricket hut and football teams changed in the Red Lion pub in Bridewell Street, accessing the meadow via a bridge over the Chilton Brook. In 1970, Mrs Iris Johnston of Clare Hall 'gifted' the land to the people of Clare on the understanding that it would be used **for the benefit of sport and recreation**. A legal covenant was therefore placed on the land and, this year, the CPFA Trustees have taken legal advice to be certain that this covenant cannot be overturned.



Other major 'behind the scenes' work this year has focused on gaining **Charitable Incorporated Status** which provides better financial cover for the Trustees. It has also involved the re-writing of the constitution so that it is up to date in terms of legal requirements and best practice. A major benefit of this work is that more people have come forward to act as Trustees. We have sufficient numbers now to create four working groups to focus on management, the buildings, sport and fundraising. We have completed our last 3-year development plan and have now started work on the 2017/2019 plan, which includes launching our website.

Building work this year has included reducing heat loss and fuel costs, improving the car park surface (thanks to Cllr Alaric Pugh's kind donation from his locality budget) and commissioning the replacement of the retaining wall behind the pavilion and the internal modesty walls in all of the changing rooms. We hope this will be completed this summer.

2017/2019 plans for buildings include replacement signage for the entrance to the site and on the gable-end wall, the addition of noticeboards, internal redecorations, the provision of a new cooker, the

continued upkeep of the car park, adding a fence and gate across the main entrance to the field, and (possibly) improving the boiler system.

Sport - Football continues to flourish with two senior teams playing in the Cambridgeshire League and six junior/youth teams (from under 8 to under 15) playing in the Ipswich and Suffolk Junior/Youth Leagues. Games and training sessions are regularly held at the Playing Field, led by well qualified and experienced coaches. The teams are always keen to welcome new players, including girls. Contact secretary@clarelions.com (junior teams) For the senior teams contact Ben Kaye on 07917 887883.

Other activities include:

Pilates on a Thursday morning and evening (contact fiona@pilateseanglia.co.uk)

Yoga on Tuesday mornings (contact joanneadele27@hotmail.com)

Bootcamp on Tuesday evenings (contact Gareth Williams 07554 992125)

Clay workshops for children during school holidays (contact timeforclay@aol.com)

The pavilion and field are available for hire for parties and other events or activities. Please email info@clareplayingfield.co.uk for more information and costs.

2017/2019 plans for sport include marking out a running or athletics track for the summer months, increasing holiday activities for the young, looking into the feasibility and costing of astro-turf alternatives, a kick wall, touch rugby, junior cricket nets and additional games equipment.

Fundraising We have held some very enjoyable quizzes this year, raising sizeable funds in the process. 2017/2019 plans include working with the CCA on some larger ventures, including theatre and also music. We hope to hold some family events and are also looking into the possibility of holding some car boot sales on our shingle car park area. Please look out for details.

The Trustees would like to thank everyone who has helped and supported the CPFA this year, particularly Tony and Robyn Sheppard, Colin Atkinson, Roy Mallows and Matt Lovejoy. Grateful thanks go to the Town Council which helps to fund insurance cover, grass cutting and line marking (thus enabling us to keep costs down for people who want to use the pavilion and field for sport), also Clare Priory and Cllr Pugh.

Gayle Mallows, Chair

Friends of Clare Library

It has been a mixed year for the Friends. As you will know, Harriet Loram, founder member and Chair of the Friends, died suddenly in October of 2016.

Harriet was the driving force behind many of the activities and related events at the library and she is sorely missed. As a group we have pulled together and in doing so realised just how much Harriet did for the Library big shoes to fill!

On a positive note, the children's reading challenge based on Roald Dahl 'The Twits' was a success and any of you who came into the Library last summer will have seen the Twits display which was amazing.

Party in the Park - Author Rory Clements attended and gave us an overview of his novels. Several volunteers read pieces reflecting the Queen's 90th birthday

Out of the funds we have raised we have purchased the following:

- iPads- regular training sessions are held to help people get the most out of them.
- Book Trolleys



- Fridge (for staff use at the library)
- Umbrella (for use at outside books sales and other events)
- Blackout blinds for use on cinema nights
- Wine glasses (cinema evenings and other events)
- Printer/scanner
- 3D Printer (money from donations in memory of Harriet)

Cine Clair continues to thrive after a short blip. We now have a full programme of upcoming films. The next one is *Woman in Gold* on 27th April - hope to see you all there!

The setting of the monthly sealed envelope quiz has now been taken over by Christine Mitchell, to whom we are very grateful.



Upcoming events: Series of outside book sales at the Co-op throughout the summer; Party in the Park; Gainsborough evening (fundraising event); Quiz with fish supper.

Those of you who have been in the library in recent months will have noticed the new layout which has resulted in a sense of space and light and is very welcoming. It should be noted that these changes to a large part are due to the efforts of Matt, Karla's husband, who carried out the work at no charge to the library. Added to that there have been a number of events including an astronomy evening, pottery workshop and an archaeology afternoon, with more events to follow.

The library is fast becoming a real hub for the community.

Diana Power, Chair

Christmas Lights Committee

Everyone remembers the Christmas Lights and the Switch-On event. More families than ever attended the parade and the entertainments, and the environmentally-friendly lights can be switched on earlier, as dusk approaches, making the Market Square and High Street “like a fairytale” as was reported by grandchildren. Many, many thanks from the committee to our firemen for the road closure and their emergency support, to the local volunteers who provide hours of unpaid work, and to the shops and businesses who make it a real hands-on community event. In 2016 the lucky person to lead the parade, Sam Hardy, had been selected by the Clare Bears preschool. But when he arrived at the stage with toastmaster County Councillor Mary Evans, and the carol singers from the Clare Community Primary School, Father Christmas was nowhere to be seen! Our local amateur dramatic society, CADS, leapt to the rescue with a mini-panto that found him, reunited him with his missing pants and found the red button, so that the lights went on! Local Christmas light-spotters will have noticed that lights now go all around Market Square, and the Wayman & Long building is now lit up as well.

There is lot to do for 2017. Our mechanical light controllers are now over twenty years old, and need to be replaced. We have now sourced our own PA system and are working with CADS to provide a local staging system, rather than having a contractor from Bury. Due to staff shortages and operator sickness, the traditional fairground rides that have taken part for many years were down to only a single ride last year. For some as yet unexplained reason the Christmas tree delivered in 2016 was smaller by several feet than the big one provided in 2015, which would only just fit in the hole! After extensive discussions the Christmas Lights Switch-On event for 2017 will be on Saturday 2nd December. The main reasons to change to a Saturday were the fact that we have had increasing problems with the traffic on Friday, in fact in 2016 we actually had a white van zoom around the safety marshal who was trying to stop traffic - causing the parade to be delayed! - and the fact that many working parents cannot get away in time to be with their children, or to be volunteers. Clare Christmas Lights now receives no council money, and is funded by generous local people and businesses, making a great community event free for all to attend.

Howard Downer, Chair

Treble C Choir (Clare Community Choir)

Treble C: Clare Community Choir continues to flourish under musical director Nigel Partridge, with membership currently standing at 92. Whilst most of our members live in Clare we now have singers from many nearby villages. When the choir was set up in 2012 the recruiting poster posed the question: 'Would you like to sing for fun?' That really is the essence of all the choir's rehearsals. Some pieces are more challenging than others but much fun is had on the journey towards (we hope) perfection. We continue to sing a cross-section of songs: lullabies, madrigals, African Township songs, songs from shows and sacred songs, some in French, Latin or Spanish. As Gareth Malone (BBC's Choir series) said: "singing is a joyful thing and to sing in the company of like-minded people is truly uplifting." I'm sure most of our members would agree with that statement. A warm welcome is extended to anyone who would like to join us.

A survey was conducted during the year amongst members to ensure everyone had a say on all aspects of Treble C, especially song choices. We have recently developed our own website www.clarecommunitychoir.co.uk

There is always a great sense of the community at our popular twice-yearly concerts in the Town Hall and we are very grateful to everyone who supported our events last year. We are currently working towards our next concert on 20th May.



Bryan Thurlow, Chair



Clare in Bloom

The Clare in Bloom committee consisting of 7 local volunteers continues to meet monthly. We plan to ensure ongoing upkeep of the flower containers in the centre of town as well as the Church borders. 2016 saw us planting red geraniums, million bells and plectranthus in the containers. The warm summer ensured they flourished. In June we held a Plant Stall at the Party in the Park followed by a coffee morning in the Clare Castle Country Park centre. We made sure the Church borders stayed colourful and weed-free. Members and friends enjoyed an afternoon out at Marks Hall Arboretum in September. Autumn 2016 saw us planting thousands of new crocus bulbs on the greensward at the Granary and Ashen Road. Autumn /Winter containers were planted with blue pansies, white hyacinths and yellow tulips.



2017 will see us helping in the Clare Castle Country Park to spread snowdrops in the green. We will be planting Big Red begonias to add a splash of colour through the town. We hope to also create impact when we host our Open Gardens weekend on Saturday and Sunday June 3rd and 4th 2-5pm on each day. We aim to have 10 gardens open, some never seen before, to attract visitors from far and wide.

We say a grateful thank you to our sponsors, Clare Town Council, as well as individual and business supporters. Not forgetting our energetic volunteers who give their time so willingly. We meet at the Ancient House at 9am on the first Wednesday of the month throughout the summer months. Come and join us.

Contact Nickie Carpenter cpetenickie@aol.com Tel 01787 278275

Clare Walks Group

The Group was formed in early summer 2016 following the Country Park's successful bid to Suffolk Community Foundation's 'Get Suffolk Moving' fund for the production of leaflets and a notice board map in respect of circular walks from the Park. The Group comprises 11 people from across the community in Clare, all of whom have a strong interest in walking. We are fortunate that the Chairman of Sudbury Ramblers, Keith Brown, lives in Clare. He was rapidly recruited to the team, and his advice has been invaluable.

During summer and autumn last year, the Group set about deciding on suitable walks, walking them and producing all the information needed. This comprised mapping, directions, points of interest, photographs and the like. Following design and printing, the leaflets have been available since March this year. We have had one minor hiccup with a permissive path on one of the walks being closed from 1st February, but have quickly decided on an alternative route that retains most of that particular walk. The leaflets are downloadable from two websites:

www.clarecastlecountrypark.co.uk

www.clarewalks.co.uk

Hard copies may be obtained from Platform 1 and the Library.

We are now producing a summary leaflet about the walks, and in the summer will be putting a large map in the Country Park car park.



The Group has gone on to instigate monthly Saturday morning walks from the car park, and these have proved very popular. Our post-Christmas walk was enjoyed by 52 people and our last walk, to Houghton Hall, in March had 30 (29 people and 1 dog!). We are varying the walks this year by introducing some linear walks as well as the 6 circular walks, including the Bury to Clare and Magna Carta Walks. Again, details are on the websites. All are welcome, do please come along.

We are for the first time participating in the Suffolk Walking Festival by leading a circular walk to Cavendish on 20th May. This sold out before the end of March despite us agreeing to double the numbers so there is real demand for walking in the area. We are also hosting the Suffolk Challenge Walk to a (light!) lunch on 27th May.

In addition to these initiatives we are assisting with the town's application, agreed by the Town Council in November, to become a 'Walkers are Welcome' town. This is a national initiative that accredits towns that meet 6 key criteria, and is designed both to attract walkers and boost the town's economy. More details can be found at www.walkersarewelcome.org.uk. There will be a short presentation on this subject by Suffolk County Council's Green Access Manager at the Annual Town Meeting on 10th May and people will be able to sign up in support at that meeting and at our stall at the Party in the Park on 1st July.

Derek Blake, Chair

Society for Music in Clare Church (SMICC)

Two concerts were arranged in 2016. In May JP Ekins gave a piano recital of works by Schubert, Chopin, and Liszt plus the arrangement for solo piano of the Warsaw Concerto. In September the Goldfield Ensemble performed Mozart and Weber Clarinet Quintets and shorter works by Borodin and Herbert Howells.

With Tony Taylor and Pamela Garlick both withdrawing from the small group that organises the concerts, SMICC are only arranging two concerts again in 2017. Ely Cathedral Boy Choristers (28th April) and the Goldfield Ensemble (24th June); the programme of the latter will include Dvorak's American Quartet and Brahms Clarinet Quintet.

However, the PCC have organised a number of other concerts in 2017 so there will be plenty of opportunities to hear different types of music in the church during the year.

Geoffrey Bray

Clare Combined Charities

The Charities is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the Almshouses in Church Lane; for Clare Common; the allotments and the Upper Common which is above them; and Goosecroft, along Chilton Road. There is a chairman, a vice-chairman and three sub-committees for the Almshouses, land holdings and support funding. The clerk is responsible for administration and finance.

The Charities' income comes from a variety of different sources, including rents and Defra. Work is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commission, Defra, Natural England and as The Trustees decide is necessary. For the Almshouses, there has been electrical upgrading and fire prevention. Expenses and income almost matched for 2016-2017. Spending on the common, mainly the primary school pond, meant that expenses exceeded income by around £6,000. Later this year, the pond will begin to fill properly and be maintained as necessary thereafter.



Access to the common will be improved in the next year subject to the availability of grant aid. A major concern is the continued dog fouling and trespass across both the common and the allotments. The upkeep of the common will continue throughout 2017-2018 in accordance with appropriate regulations and guidelines.



A summary of The Charities, together with finances and current Trustees, may be found on the Charity Commission website.

Ron Longland,
Clerk to Clare Combined Charities



Clare Liaison And Support Project (CLASP)

CLASP have once again had a busy year. Our Wednesday Club had a great time at their party to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday in June (see photo). The Wednesday Club offers a 3-course, home-cooked lunch



and afternoon tea every Wednesday in Clare Old School with various entertainment including monthly chair-based keep fit classes which are enjoyed by many. We also have regular trips out. We are always open to new members, and our minibus provides free transport, driven by our trained volunteer drivers.

We also use our minibus to provide transport fortnightly to Sainsbury's in Haverhill, and have been able to help many other charities with transport when requested.

Our Car Aid volunteers have also been busy taking local residents to hospital and other health-related appointments in their own cars.

Clare Town Council have offered to help with printing and distribution of leaflets for CLASP for which we are very grateful.

All of the projects are dependent on our teams of volunteers. If you are interested in one of our projects or would like to help with volunteering, please contact Christine Little on 277743 or Val Blake, Secretary, on 277335, or come along to our AGM on 25th May at the Community Centre.

Christine Little, Chair

Ancient House Museum

For 2016, exhibitions on the history of education in Clare and on the Magna Carta de Clares continued, with a new booklet *A History of Clare Private Schools* by Tom Shaw. The Museum's collaboration with the Magna Carta Barons Association secured large pop-up banners, a facsimile of one of the copies of Magna Carta, and copies of the handsomely produced book *The Magna Carta Barons* to sell. In collaboration with the Clare Tourism group, a training session to 'Become a Clare Guide' was held. This led to a series of new, free, guided tours during the summer of 2016: Park and Town, Castle and Market, Priory and Parish Church, and Historic Buildings. Publicity was handled jointly with the new Clare Walks programme.

In June the Museum installed and unveiled a plaque about the history of Market Hill, at the corner of Well Lane and Market Hill. This was made possible by a Locality Grant from St Edmundsbury, thanks to Councillor Pugh. In February a booklet *The Market in Clare: Historical Notes* by Peggy Smith was issued.



For 2017 there will be a new permanent exhibition: 'The Story of Clare'. Its 10 chapters cover Clare Castle; the de Clares and their royal connections; the de Clares who took part in Magna Carta; Elizabeth de Burgh, Lady of Clare in the 14th century; Clare Common; schools in Clare; the trail of the Clare Arms; eleven notable Clare residents; the Ancient House itself; and reflections of 20th century Clare in the donations to the Museum of Doris Gregory. A booklet about Doris and her life in Clare will be issued.

Collaboration with the consultation phase of Clare Castle Country Park will continue, especially concerning the interpretation of the Castle's history. A booklet about the history of the Castle is in preparation by Anne Davies and Peggy Smith.

Richard Smith, Chair



Clare Town Council

Councillors

Paul Bishop (Chair)

Margaret Godwin

Phil Gryce

Steve Kimminau

Gayle Mallows

Chris Marchant

Loveday Perceval-Maxwell

Robin Stone

Bob Verguson

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Claire Ebeling

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Maureen Smith

Finance Officer

Keith Mison

Cemetery Management Officer

Colin Smith

Street Warden

Brian Watts

Street Warden

County/Borough Councillors

Mary Evans

Suffolk County Councillor

Alaric Pugh

St Edmundsbury Borough Councillor



PARTY IN THE PARK

2017

SAT. 1ST JULY 12 - 6PM

Even bigger & better!