

The Clare Community Plan Highlights

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THE RESULTS



The **Clare**
Community Plan

Clare is an historic market town surrounded by the beautiful countryside of the Stour Valley. It has a rich heritage, a country park with a ruined medieval castle, moats and walks as well as a complete former railway station. Multiple historic buildings, both ecclesiastical and vernacular make the town an interesting destination for visitors.

The town has over 2000 residents and acts as a Key Service Centre for a large area. It offers a wide range of shops, services and businesses. Many active community groups and voluntary organisations enrich the life of the town.

“

Clare is a very attractive place to live. The community spirit is wonderful. ”

About The Community Plan:

Background to the 2016 Community Plan

In 2010, a Community Survey was carried out to collect the views of Clare's residents on a range of areas affecting our community including shops and services, education, housing, leisure, traffic, the environment and sustainability. The results were analysed and a Community Plan was established to investigate issues arising from the survey.

These in turn led to the creation of a Town Council Action Plan 2012 to 2016 . This was seen as a means by which the council could be proactive, rather than reactive, in determining and addressing the key priorities of parishioners. A full appraisal of that Development Plan can be found at www.clare-suffolk.co.uk

The Importance of the Plan

Very few communities carry out such in-depth surveys or produce such strong action plans. Therefore, The Clare Community Plan and subsequent documents have been held in high regard e.g. by the Chief Planning Inspector and council officers.



About The Community Plan:

Why Have Another Survey and Plan ?

The Town has moved on in the last 6 years and some priorities have changed. We face new challenges due to national and regional legislation, the change in the economy, the pressure on local services and the need to maintain the essence, vitality and sustainability of Clare whilst changes happen across the region that might impact the town.

Having completed the Action Plan for 2012 to 2016, the Town Council wanted to have a clear picture of parishioners' current views. Survey forms were delivered to every house and business in Clare. The town was divided into

areas so that councillors could collect the forms and most councillors made three return visits, if needed. The information was then analysed and councillors met to discuss the findings and draw up an action plan. These have now formed the basis of a new Town Council Action Plan for 2017 to 2021.

The full Survey Report and the Town Council Action Plan 2017 to 2021 have been published on www.clare-suffolk.co.uk. They are also available at the Library in standard and large print versions.

What Has Changed Since 2010 ?

The population has grown. We now have a new housing development on Stoke Road which includes 18 affordable units, and an additional development planned for Cavendish Road. The successful addition of 11 Housing Association properties at Aragon Court was sponsored by the Town Council.

Whilst some shops have closed, others have taken their place and we now have over 100 businesses in Clare.

We have a new, highly respected Secondary School, our Primary School continues to flourish and Clare Bears Pre-School gives children a great start to their school career.

Community spirit has grown as hard working organisations have run some fantastic events, including special times when the whole town

came together to celebrate Christmas, the Queen's Jubilee and Magna Carta. A recent and very welcome addition to our community organisations has been the re-establishment of the Clare Community Association.

Perhaps the most important change for the town has been the transfer of ownership of the Clare Castle Country Park from Suffolk County Council to the Town Council and therefore the people of Clare. This took an immense amount of work by the councillors involved and that work continues today, as the Trustees and volunteers improve and restore the buildings and the green spaces. We thank all involved for their dedication, their energies, their skills and their devotion to this project.

Summary of The Community Plan Questionnaire ...

A few of the recommendations in The Community Plan are based on the views of minority groups. Full analysis of the questionnaire will be available within the full report lodged at Clare Library and online at: www.clare-suffolk.co.uk. Below is a summary of the report's key findings:

Who responded...

652 parishioners responded, compared to 932 parishioners in the 2010 survey. 52% were aged 65 years or over, 37% were aged 40 – 64 years and 11% were aged 18-39. This shows a swing of about 8% from the middle to the older age group.

An additional 119 children lived in the households. Of these 38% were aged 12-17 years old, 46% were aged 5-11 years, 16% were aged 0-4 years.

Why do people come to/stay in Clare ?

Most people came to the town because of its village atmosphere and amenities: more people put this as the top reason for staying.

Countryside was ranked next as a reason for coming to or staying in the town, followed by having family in the area.

Only 8.5% said that they were thinking of leaving Clare, most in order to down-size. Other reasons included wanting to be nearer family, or finding an affordable property.

What do people like best ?

The top 5 things that most people liked about living in Clare were:

- The good shops and amenities
- The friendly community
- The countryside and walks
- The small town atmosphere
- The Country Park

Other aspects included the quietness, the architecture, social activities and the schools.

What could be improved ?

Traffic and Transport: This featured highly, with 34.5% wanting improvements in parking, 15% in reducing or banning HGVs, 13.5% wanting more busses, 10% wanting better traffic management and 10% wanting better road safety and a reduction in speeding.

Amenities: 12.5% wanted more or better shops, 5.5% wanted more facilities for young people, 4% wanted more restaurants.

Local Services: 6% wanted more control of dogs, 5% more policing, 4% more community events and 3% less adverse social media.

A Town Council Action Plan based on the results of the questionnaire has been drawn up. This forms part of the complete Clare Community Plan which is lodged at Clare Library and is available on the Clare Website.

In due course, web pages will be set up on www.clare-suffolk.co.uk to provide parishioners with background information on the Action Points and progress reports.

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Young Persons Questionnaire

62 young people responded to the survey compared to 71 in 2010. 60% attend schools in Clare. 17.5% have part-time jobs and 71% plan to go to college or university when they leave school.

Many more attend clubs outside of Clare than in the town. The top 5 requested clubs for Clare are sports clubs, art, tennis, dance, skating/skateboard.

96.5% feel safe walking around Clare in daylight, 75.5% in the evening and 43.5% after dark. 20% said they had experienced crime or anti-social behaviour in the past year, mostly noise or vandalism but 6 young people had seen drug dealing. Most talked to a family member, friend or teacher about what they had seen. 88.5% said they knew where to get help from if they were bullied.

The top 3 things that they did not like about living in Clare were limited activities, infrequent buses and speeding traffic. The top 3 things that they liked about living in Clare were that it's a friendly place, there are lots of open spaces and the park.

The top 5 suggestions for improving Clare were multi-use sports facilities, better youth facilities/shops, improve bus service, zip wire in CCCP, road safety

Action Point

- *Share findings with local organisations to see if requested activities might be incorporated in their plans.*

Housing and Development

In 2010, 28% of respondents felt that the planned number of additional houses would meet the needs of the town. 40% said that they would not. Since then, at least 80 more units have been added and another 50-60 are planned for Cavendish Road. In the 2016 survey, 45% felt that this was sufficient and 21% that it was not, showing a reversal of opinion from 2010.

If further housing is to be added, then respondents felt that the priority should be given to building low cost, affordable or housing association 1 or 2 bedroom properties or bungalows.

Action Points

- *Investigate establishing a 'Town Master Plan' or 'Neighbourhood Plan' so that Clare's priorities carry greater weight at borough and regional level.*
- *Lobby for more smaller, low cost and housing association properties for people with links to Clare.*

Communication

Most people would use a telephone to get outside help in an emergency, some would contact a neighbour and few would use a call button.

82.5% have internet access. 10% are rarely satisfied with the speed of service. 64.5% said they might or would use public Wi-Fi in Clare.

Action Point

- *Continue to lobby for improved broadband.*

Businesses, Shops and Services

8% of respondents said that they run their own business and most said that their business was in a period of growth. Some said that they were in a position to employ more local people in the future and a pleasing number felt able to offer work experience.

97% of people shop in Clare, most on a frequent basis, with over 80% regularly using the Co-op, the pharmacy, the doctors, the post office or Hudgies.

The doctors and pharmacy are seen as being vitally important for 74% and 63% of the population respectively.

Action Points

- *Help developing businesses by working with the New Anglia Growth Hub*
- *Explore the possibility of expanding work experience for young people*
- *Lobby to maintain essential services*
- *Support the development of markets*
- *Encourage footfall through attracting tourists to Clare*
- *Improve parking*

The Community

45% of respondents felt that the community spirit had improved over the last 5 years, 37% felt it had stayed the same. Many respondents recognised the hard work and dedication put in by volunteers to run community events.

Large numbers attended the main town events including the Christmas Lights Switch On, Magna Carta, Party in the Park, Christmas and Summer Fetes and the Jubilee. Other smaller events such as Pumpkins in the Park and quizzes were also popular.

Traffic and Accessibility

11% of families often use public transport and 32% sometimes do. 40% and 34% of families said it was difficult to cross the road at Bell Corner and Well Lane (respectively) 85% felt that the HGV's cause problems for them with 33% experiencing problems every day and 28% every week. 71% felt that the problem had increased in the last two years.

43% of respondents do not have a garage and 47% have just one garage. Most people park their car on their own property, but not necessarily in the garage. Many people felt that the town needs a new car park but location is an issue.

Mobility was most affected by people parking or cycling on pavements, wheelie bins being left out and uneven pavements. 30% of people felt that the level of street lighting in Clare needed to be improved.

Action Points

- *Work with SCC and SEBC to improve parking.*
- *Work with other parishes to lobby for the reduction of HGVs.*
- *Use Speed Watch and Vehicle Activated Signs to reduce speeding.*
- *Encourage business owners to improve access.*
- *Produce 'Pavements for People' posters.*

Most people use Clare Focus Magazine, word of mouth, noticeboards in Pashler's Alley, posters and Chevron to find out what is going on.

Action Point

- *Continue to use start-up funding as a mechanism to support local charitable organisations running local events.*

Education

Most respondents send their children to schools in Clare. Over 50% walk to school and many who drive to school combine their journey with going else-where e.g. to work. There was interest in using a 'walking bus' but responses suggest that finding volunteers to 'man' the bus would be difficult.

45% of respondents said that they would like to see more adult education classes in Clare. Requests included languages, craft, cooking, history and keep fit/dance.

High numbers requested evening, or through the day as good times for courses but some people asked for weekend courses.

Action Points

- Support local schools with their travel plans
- Encourage the establishment of workshops linking providers, locations and times and advertising courses on www.clare-suffolk.co.uk

Police and Crime Prevention

20% of respondents had experienced crime or anti-social behaviour in the past year, compared to 36% in the 2010 survey. Most people did not report the incident. 53.5% felt that crime had increased by a little or moderate amount. 44% felt it had not increased or did not answer.

99.5% felt safe walking around Clare during the day, 92.5% during the evening but only 71% after dark.

Leisure, Sport and Footpaths

52% of respondents are members of at least one local club or association. The top 10 requests for additional activities were cricket, exercise/pilates, tennis, sport (general), dancing, youth club, park run, art, cycling, rambling/walking.

Most respondents felt that improvements could be made to the footpaths. The Town Council recently took over the cutting of the paths and the Environment Committee will oversee this and other improvement work.

Action Points

- Use the website to 'signpost' activities currently running in Clare
- Encourage the development of activities through discussions with groups and organisations
- Support the Trustees of CCCP in their projects to create activities, especially through their Lottery Bid.

Few people are part of a neighbourhood watch scheme. 5% said that they would be prepared to co-ordinate one. 53% said they would like to see CCTV in parts of Clare.

Action Points:

- Take advice from the police on the benefits of neighbourhood watch and CCTV.
- Monitor footpaths for trip hazards

Next Steps for The Community Plan?

The full Survey Report and the Town Council Action Plan 2017-2021 have been published on www.clare-suffolk.co.uk. They are also available at the Library in standard and large print versions.

In due course, web pages will be set up to provide parishioners with background information and reports on progress made towards completing the actions within the Plan.

Thank You

Thank You!

We would like to thank everyone who helped with the making, delivering, collection, analysis and production of the Plan and the Report. But, most especially, we would like to thank all of the parishioners who shared their views with us.

Your feedback has been invaluable and will help to shape the future of our town.

