



# CLARE TOWN COUNCIL

## **Clare Castle Country Park update**

**30 April 2013**

Some progress has been made since our last communication to parishioners, although not as much as we would have wished.

### **The Listing of the Railway Buildings**

Following an application from a Clare resident and local interest group, the railway buildings in the Park were Grade II listed by English Heritage in February 2013. Whilst desirable in terms of preserving the buildings, the timing of the listing has implications for the transfer of ownership of the Park. The listing will require a more detailed planning application with correspondingly increased professional fees and an extended timeline for approval. It will also place higher demands on the contractors used and we anticipate higher costs.

We have met with the SEBC Conservation Officer and are seeking initial quotes from a contractor in order to gauge the increased workload, timeline and costs. We fully expect to have to renegotiate an increased financial settlement with SCC.

We are advised only to agree to the transfer of ownership to Clare Town Council once the planning application for change of use and listed building consent, together with any conditions, have been approved. A conservative estimate is that the listing will extend the timeline of the transfer by at least 3 months and we should not therefore expect the transfer to take place and the works completed in 2013.

### **Appointment of trustees**

Following interviews with a small number of parishioners who put their names forward for consideration it has been agreed only to appoint the minimum number of trustees actually needed now and to increase numbers as the transfer of ownership becomes more certain and the workload increases.

Clare Town Council has agreed a team of trustees-elect who will become trustees and become responsible for the management of the Park at the time of the transfer of ownership. They are:

Geoffrey Bray (Chairman-elect)

John Knight,

Peter Phillips – Clare Town Council nominee

Margaret Godwin – Clare Town Council nominee

Keith Mison

Derek Blake and Keith Haisman will be trustees initially and only while the ownership is transferred and building works are undertaken. They will both step down at that point.

A number of those who applied to become trustees, but were not appointed, have agreed to become members of working groups such as events, fundraising, railway heritage, etc and we are grateful to them for lending their time and expertise.

### **Negotiations with SCC**

Progress with SCC has disappointingly not been as fast as we would have wished. Only this month has SCC agreed fees for solicitors to commence due diligence and we are hopeful that they will soon agree to some funding to begin the professional work required to draw up architects plans and start work on the planning applications.

SCC continues to regard this a straight-forward property transaction with no authority delegated to the officers with whom we are required to deal. We have escalated matters to SCC Chief Executive level in the last 10 days and this seems to have had some effect.

### **Use of the Park buildings over the summer**

We are in discussion with SCC to obtain use of the Clare Park Centre for use by community groups:

- Clare Scouts have offered to paint the interior of the Park Centre as part of Scout Week in mid June.
- We hope to agree with SCC that the Park Centre can be made available for use by the Clare Youth Association Committee and the Budding Artists during the school summer holidays.

We hope to have a positive response on both these issues by the time of the Clare Annual Meeting on 8 May.

Clare Town Council  
30 April 2013