

**Minutes of the Town Council meeting held in The Old School Community Centre at 7.00 p.m.
on Thursday 20 February 2014**

Present: Cllrs. Keith Haisman, Chair, Paul Bishop, Derek Blake, Margaret Godwin, Gayle Mallows,
Alan Parsley and Leslie Warmington
County Councillor Mary Evans, Borough Councillor Alaric Pugh
Claire Ebeling, Town Clerk

1 Apologies for absence – Cllr.s Phil Gryce and Peter Phillips, PCSO Sophie Mitchell

2 To receive declarations of members' interests and consider requests for dispensation

Cllr. Haisman declared a pecuniary interest in item 12 b)

Cllr. Blake declared an interest in item 12 b)

Cllr.s Haisman and Blake left the room while the Clerk reported that in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 s33, two requests for dispensation had been received:

Cllr. Blake had made a request for partial dispensation for item 12b on the agenda for the term of office of Cllr. Blake.

All voted in favour of the partial dispensation.

Cllr. Haisman had made a request for full dispensation for item 12b on the agenda for the term of office of Cllr. Haisman.

Three Councillors voted in favour of the full dispensation, one voted against and one abstained.

It was agreed that Cllr. Parsley would Chair agenda item 12 of the meeting.

Section of the meeting open to the public:

3 Police Report – The Police report was circulated.

4 Parishioners' question time – Cllr. Haisman explained the 'Guidance for parishioners' document provided for members of the public wishing to speak in the public section of the meeting.

Mr Collecott referred to an email sent to all Councillors regarding flooding on Stoke Road and the infrastructure in that area in relation to the Charles Church development (see attachments).

Mr Collecott asked on behalf of the Clare Society that Clare Town Council write in support of the email from them to Suffolk County Council and also to St Edmundsbury Borough Council to ask them to monitor the conditions stipulated in the planning approval of the Charles Church site. Cllr Haisman stated that this matter would be addressed during discussion of the related agenda item later in the meeting.

Mr Trinder asked for clarification of the steel dam to be installed in the New Cut. Cllr. Haisman explained that the owner of the sluice gate is Mr John Knight, who should be contacted for details on the work to be carried out.

5 County Councillor's Report – Cllr Evans asked the Town Council's preference for locations for the HGV data gathering exercise and it was agreed that the Town Council's recommendations would be the splay to the front of Westfield and the layby outside Cavendish. Cllr. Evans will report back to the officer arranging the survey.

Cllr Evans reported that the Land Registry Tribunal had rejected a claim by Mr Marchant to a number of dedicated car parking spaces in the Country Park.

6 Borough Councillor's Report – See attached report.

Cllr. Pugh will arrange a meeting between Clare Town Council and the Planning Officer overseeing the Land East of the Granary site.

Cllr. Pugh will investigate the delivery of the agreed Section 106 money assigned to Clare library.

End of public section of meeting

- 7 **To approve minutes of previous meeting held on 16 January 2014**
The minutes were approved unanimously.
- 8 **To receive an update on actions from the last meeting**
The Clerk reported that all actions were complete or on the agenda for discussion.
- 9 **Clerk's Report** – see attached report.
- 10 **Finance**
- i) **Presentation of monthly reports** – Cllr. Blake proposed the adoption of the monthly accounts. Approved unanimously. The Finance Committee will look at the small amounts of earmarked reserves e.g Big Lottery Nuttery, Rural Grant – Nuttery, Village of the Year and Community Plan.
- ii) **Decisions required** –
- a) Cllr. Blake proposed that the Council approve the recommendation from the Finance Committee to donate £100 to 1st Clare Brownies following a request for assistance with the cost of activities planned for the 100th anniversary challenge. Approved unanimously.
- b) Cllr. Blake reported that the precept application has now been submitted to St Edmundsbury Borough Council.
- c) Cllr. Blake reported that the information gathering exercise carried out to obtain more information from Groups who receive funding from Clare Town Council has raised one issue of an organisation seeking funds from the council that was essentially run by just one person. It was agreed that this was unacceptable; in order to receive public funds organisation must be properly established and able to provide us with details of trustees, finances etc.
Cllr. Mallows reported that she is awaiting legal advice from NALC regarding the relationship between Councils and Trustees.
- d) Cllr. Blake thanked the RFO for her work on Economies of Scale project and reported that no further work is required at the present time.
- e) Cllr Blake reported that the risk assessment is to be approved at the next meeting following provision of details from the Clerk of the new items for consideration and review by the Environment and Finance Committees.
- f) Cllr. Blake reported that the BMX track has been left untended and unused for some months and contact will be made with CYAC.
- 11 **Correspondence** - see attached report.
- 12 **Planning**
- a) **Consultation on Planning and Listed Building application to be determined by Suffolk County Council (i) Clare Park Centre, Clare Castle Country Park – Elevational alterations to old railway station buildings (ii) Station Master's House, Clare Castle Country Park – Internal and minor elevational alterations**
Cllr. Mallows proposed that the response be that there is no objection. Approved unanimously.
- b) **DC/14/0100/HH - The Swallows, 12 Hermitage Meadow – (i) Erection of single-storey side link extension between dwelling and outbuilding (ii) new porch (iii) conversion of garage to ancillary accommodation**
Cllr. Blake presented his objections to the application and expressed concern in terms of the procedure followed by St Edmundsbury Borough Council that had caused the Town Council to receive the details of the application before the neighbours to the application property. Cllr. Blake then left the room.
Cllr Haisman presented his objections to the application and also expressed concern in terms of the procedure followed by St Edmundsbury Borough Council that not only caused the Town

Council to receive the details of the application before he had received a notification as the neighbour, but had also caused the Planning Officer to arrive at his property for a site visit before notification of the application had arrived. As a result, Cllr Haisman reported that he would be writing to St Edmundsbury Borough Council to suggest that their code of practice be reviewed on this and a number of other procedural matters. Cllr. Haisman urged Councillors to reject the application.

Cllr. Godwin presented reasons for the rejection of the application. Cllr. Warmington expressed concern about precedent setting.

Cllr. Bishop proposed the Council response to St Edmundsbury Borough Council be to object to the application. 5 Cllr.s voted in favour of the objection, 1 abstained.

- c) **Applications received by the Clerk between publishing the agenda and this meeting**
TCA14/0298 – Angel Barn, Nethergate Street – Fell one Eucalyptus tree in rear garden
Cllr Mallows reported that the Planning Committee recommended there be no objection to the application. Agreed unanimously.

- d) **To receive feedback on the Vision 2031 hearing**
Cllr. Haisman thanked Mr Collecott for his helpful summary of the hearing (see attachment to the minutes).

13 To receive items for decisions required by Town Council Committees and Working Parties

- i) **Environment Committee** – Following details and photos circulated by email, Cllr. Parsley proposed that the Council approve the recommendation to request that St Edmundsbury Borough Council paint semi-permanent anti dog-fouling signs on pavements where dog fouling often occurs (list of locations provided). 5 Councillors voted in favour, one voted against and one abstained.

Clerk

14 To receive an update on Clare Castle Country Park

Cllr. Haisman reported that a meeting had taken place on 17 February with Quentin Cass of Suffolk County Council. At the meeting the costs of the backlog of works in the park, the desilting of the ponds and the instability of the motte were discussed. Mr Cass will discuss these matters with senior officers and the Cabinet Member and will suggest a date for a detailed discussion of costs. Cllr Haisman also reported that the tenders for the works to the buildings have gone out and should be returned by 20 March.

Cllr Blake commented on the poor progress on the due diligence front where pressure is being applied to both Ashton and SCC's lawyers. It was noted that where we had been advised that there are 9 registered titles in the Country Park, there are in fact 23.

15 To receive a report on the reviewed risk assessment.

To be approved at the next meeting (see item 10)

16 To receive a report on the flooding around Clare including at the Land East of the Granary site.

Following correspondence on flooding, it was proposed to write to Mr Thorndike at Suffolk County Council in support of the email from the Clare Society sent to Andrew Guttridge on 19th February (see attachment to the minutes). Approved unanimously.

Concerns were raised regarding the enforcement of the planning conditions set by St Edmundsbury Borough Council planners on the Land East of the Granary site and it was agreed to write to St Edmundsbury on the following matters:

- 1) to seek copies of the confirmations submitted by SCC Highways confirming that the drainage systems were fit for purpose and needed no work.
- 2) to request that officers prepare a list of those conditions together with evidence of enforcement to date which should serve as a document which can we discuss with Cllr Pugh and the planning officer at a meeting in the very near future.

Clerk

- 17 To receive a reminder on tasks and responsibilities in the event of an emergency situation in Clare.**
Deferred to next meeting.
- 18 To receive agenda items for next meeting**
To receive a report on the reviewed Risk Assessment
To receive an update on Clare Castle Country Park
To receive a reminder on tasks and responsibilities in the event of an emergency situation in Clare.
- 19 To confirm the date of the next meeting as Thursday 20 March 2014.**
Confirmed.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

DRAFT

Attachment to minutes – Item 6, Police Report

Since the last meeting on the 20th January there have been 2 crimes of note in the area. These were:

- Theft of diesel from a piece of machinery located on a building site on Stoke Road. This occurred sometime overnight on Monday 27th January. This is the 3rd theft from the building site since it has been in place, we have contacted BT and they are now locking the gates to their site as it was identified this was where the offenders were gaining access to the building site from. Hopefully this will be a measure to help deter future thefts from the area.
- Criminal damage to an outbuilding, caravan and JCB digger all situated on a very remote piece of land located behind the allotments in Clare. A number of glass windows were smashed to the workshop and office building as well as the windows on the JCB and caravan. According to the gentlemen that owns the building there were lots of small footprints around the area so possibly children rather than an attempt to gain entry. Nothing was disturbed or stolen from the site. This occurred over a possible 2 week time frame between 31st January and 12th February.

The “Roundabout” parking issue on Callis Street/Common Street continues to be monitored and dealt with accordingly.

A few residents and business owners have recently stressed the time limit parking in the town centre being abused and overstayed. In light of this we will be conducting random time checks and dealing with offending motorists by way of Fixed Penalty Tickets. I personally did a time check patrol last week and issued 2 tickets, hopefully following a few patrols and checks, word will get round and this will hopefully deter people in the future.

We have had a recent report of youths gathering at the bottom of the High Street, outside the Baptist Church between 6pm – 9pm causing a few issues pulling pot plants out of the flowerbeds and then throwing them around. We have been conducting patrols of the area in the evenings trying to identify any youths loitering about. I have spoken with a couple of kids and we will continue to monitor the situation.

General information worth noting:

- Three men are appearing in court in connection with hare coursing after being stopped by officers in Great Barton. Police received a report of hare coursing in progress in a field off Brand Road at around 1:25pm on Friday 14 February. Officers attended the scene and a black 4x4 vehicle was stopped nearby. An 18-year-old man and two 23-year-old men all from Surrey have been reported for summons to court for hare coursing.

If you witness any hare coursing or potential suspicious activity that maybe linked to hare coursing please report it to us straight away. As part of a rural crime initiative hare coursing is a current priority for the force countywide.

- We have had a recent spate of catalytic converter thefts in and around the area. Overnight on Monday 3rd February we had 5 stolen from various villages on our patch. 2 from Chedburgh, 1 from Chevington, 1 from Cavendish and 1 from Hundon, in addition to these there was various others stolen from the Babergh and St Edmundsbury Rural North regions.

The most common vehicles targeted are usually those with high ground clearance such as Mitsubishi L200 trucks, Ford Rangers, Toyota Hilux's and 4x4's, however recently we have seen vehicles such as Ford Galaxies, Peugeot 406's and other people carrier style vehicles being targeted.

As a constabulary we currently have a countywide operation ongoing, Operation Ballgame, targeting the thefts of catalytic converters. The following is some advice and guidelines to help protect your vehicles from being targeted:

- Vehicles can be parked in such a way as to make access to the catalytic converter underneath difficult, or parked parallel with another vehicle if you own one.

- Ideally, private vehicles should be kept in a well-secured garage where possible.
- Commercial vehicles should always be kept in a locked building or compound, supported by alarms, lighting and CCTV. Suffolk Police have some warning signs to place on compounds, which are free of charge to any business that have marked all the catalytic converters on the vehicles in their fleet.
- Catalytic converters can be etched or marked with a Retaina Group kit, or SmartWater, both of which paints an invisible liquid with a unique formula onto the converter that forensically proves where the marked item comes from.
- The converter itself can be secured with a clamp and anti-tamper alarms that are available to buy. The CAT Clamp (www.catsafe.org.uk/product/catclamp-maxx/) is the first and currently only Secured By Design approved CAT security product on the market.

For details of upcoming catalytic converter marking sessions please keep an eye on the Suffolk Constabulary website or call your local Crime Reduction Officer on 101 for more details.

- A number of attempted and full thefts of BT Cables and other various types of cable have surfaced in the past few weeks or so. We have had just the one in our area from Hundon, but worth keeping an eye out for and being vigilant to any persons and vehicles particularly at the roadside who appear to be working on cables and not part of BT. Last year we had a couple of incidents in Stoke By Clare so it isn't uncommon for offenders to target this area.
- We have 3 males from the Essex area who are possible suspects in a series of vehicle crimes, burglary dwelling's and outbuilding's that have occurred in and around the Ipswich and Western area. They are believed to be using a White Subaru Impreza on false plates (original index mark R707 HTM) and also linked to a blue Chrysler PT Cruiser index mark FG55 OPC. If any of these vehicles are seen acting suspiciously in our area, please do not challenge them and report to us straight away.

DRAFT

Attachment to minutes – Item 5, Suffolk County Councillor's report

HIGHWAYS

It has been an eventful month ...

As of yesterday Alan Thorndyke, head of the highways network, is investigating the problems with the road drains along Stoke Road in relation to the flooding from the development of the site east of The Granary.

I have taken up with him the point made forcefully by John Collecot that during the planning process SCC highways assured everyone that the drains were adequate and it would seem that is not the case. I have asked Mr Thorndyke to clarify whether the assurance re the condition of the drains was made as a result of an inspection or of a desk top exercise. I have also asked for details of what action and when SCC will now take.

Regarding the start of works on the site, our development team is still annoyed that the developers went ahead without holding a pre-start meeting and without undertaking initial works on the access to the site or installation of a new drainage pipe.

Hastoe

For entirely understandable reasons you have asked me to find out (and speed up) the SCC input to the Section 106 agreement for the Hastoe development. The advice I have been given, so far, is nothing for education, and £2,376 for library purposes. I am waiting clarification whether there is anything required by highways to meet the terms of the planning approval.

Re-Surfacing

The planned re-surfacing programme for Nethergate Street/Stoke Road has been delayed until mid-June so that all the drainage works/utilities installations under Stoke Road associated with the Persimmon development can be completed.

The good news is Market Hill has now been confirmed as being part of this programme. At a slightly later date it is planned to re-surface Cavendish Road from the Bell Hotel to Stour Valley School. The whole programme will cost more than £320,000.

I have been in touch with the officer managing the programme and asked him to contact The Bell Hotel so that they will be able to try to coordinate their long awaited repairs with the road re-surfacing. I have been approached by the pharmacy because of road safety concerns about the 'blank piece' of road at the Well Lane/High Street junction when the shop moves across the road. Nick Smith fears that customers will use it as an unofficial parking place and will effectively end up driving out of the High Street the wrong way. He has suggested this space could for cycle racks. The SCC officers I have discussed this with think it is a good idea. They reckon it can be fitted into the planned programme. We would like to hear the views of the Town Council.

HGVs

Michael Attwood made his presentation last Friday about the proposed origin and destination survey. The sites he has put forward are the parking places on Market Hill, to stop lorries coming from Haverhill, and outside The Bell on Market Hill, to survey lorries coming from Cavendish.

Alan Thorndyke is now talking to our specialist survey team to see if they feel these sites are suitable and to the police to see if they would be happy to work on a traffic survey. We need police officers to ask the lorries to drive off the highway. No one else has authority to do this.

Before we go ahead SCC would want written confirmation from the owners of the premises that they were happy with HGVs being directed off the highway and onto the parking spaces outside their premises.

I appreciate if the survey is conducted in the centre of the town it will cause disruption. I know from my email inbox that some residents are opposed to the campaign against HGVS but I feel that most people would be prepared to put up with the disruption for a day if they felt it might lead to a reduction in HGV traffic. What is the view of CTC?

Kier May Gurney contract

Cllr Graham Newman and I still have this under review as there have been further complaints about the length of time routine jobs are taking and about the standard of some of the workmanship. The contract is to be examined by SCC's audit and scrutiny committees later this year. There have been problems with the new procedures for repairing potholes – teams have been going out with a list of potholes to repair and ignoring others in the vicinity. From 1 March the pothole teams will be sent out under local officer direction to work on a stretch, or several stretches, of road – tackling everything.

We are also working with the KMG on ways to make better, more permanent first time fixes rather than the current endless cycle of quick, temporary repairs.

Wales End Farm wind turbine EIA

The threat of a possible wind turbine application for a site north of Clare at Wales End Farm, Cavendish, appears to have been withdrawn. The episode exposed some worrying gaps in the provision of information about sensitive planning issues.

I had a meeting with John Griffiths and Ian Gallin to complain at the way no one locally was informed when an Environmental Impact Assessment screening request was made and that the screening decision in this instance was contradictory. The officer concluded there was no need for an EIA yet her report found that a turbine at that location would have a severe impact on the landscape. As a result of complaints made by the parish councils of Stansfield, Hawkedon and me, St Eds is submitting the officer's report to external review.

COUNTY WIDE

Home-School Transport

SCC is consulting on its home-school transport policy. There are no proposed changes to our statutory offer, or to the transport priority areas set for Samuel Ward Academy or Stour valley Community School. Do please visit the SCC website and have your say.

Budget

At our full council last week next year's budget was approved. Council tax will be frozen for a fourth consecutive year. We are making savings of £38million

Finally ... 0845 numbers

Together with a local resident I have been campaigning for the county council to change its main switch board phone numbers. Currently if you are not a client of BT it can cost 28p to ring SCC to pay a bill before you even get through to the payments department. I am pleased to report that when we bring our customer service centre back inhouse this summer the council will revert to the old area code numbers

Mary Evans, Clare Division, Suffolk County Council

Attachment to minutes – Item 6, St Edmundsbury Borough Councillor's report

This is a monthly report on activities conducted by Alaric Pugh, Borough Councillor for Clare, on behalf of the whole community, following the election on 5th May 2011. I am delighted to have been elected to represent Clare and work hard to uphold the interests of the town at St Edmundsbury Borough Council. I am Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Transport and Planning. The committees I sit on are: Development Control, Rural Working Party, Sustainable Development Working Party, and I Chair the Growth Steering Group and am a Board Member of One Haverhill. I attend Dedham and Stour Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Project Board Meetings and have shared delegated authority for aspects of Clare Country Park managed by St Edmundsbury. My chief role is to ensure Clare and its residents have a voice at the Borough Council table. I expect to be in attendance at Town Council meetings and will be happy to answer any questions from councillors or parishioners after my report. I run a surgery between 9.30 and 10.00 am on the first Saturday of the month for residents whose questions cannot be addressed at the Town Council Meeting. I can be contacted at other times: my mobile phone number is: 07930460899 and email alaric.pugh@stedsb.gov.uk

Training undertaken since last report

Council restructuring changes and future budget implications of further cuts

Civic events/business

None

Meetings attended (excluding Majority Group meetings)

Cabinet Planning	Cabinet
Joint Cabinet Planning	Development Control
Ec Dev Briefing	Full Council
One Haverhill Board member briefing	Parking briefing
Apex Panel	SCC O&S questions
Tourism strategy joint portfolio holders meeting	A1307 Transport discussion group
West Suffolk Growth Steering Group	Sustainable Development Working Party
Rural Working Party	Markets Development Meeting
Our Bury St Edmunds BID Board Meeting	Locality Officer twice

Forthcoming meetings before next TC Meeting:

Meetings include:

Meeting the new head of Planning and Regulation	Cabinet planning
Full Council	Development Control

Voting record - recent items with some significance to Clare community:

Against the Haverhill wind turbine

Against a highly visible solar farm north of Bury St Edmunds

Current Clare issues involvement/resident requests to take forward:

conversations on Country Park issues

various local planning queries

queries about land East of the Granary and the Hastoe development

Locality budgets and the work of the new Locality Officer

More generally, I am currently working on:

the delivery of a Six Point Plan for Jobs and Growth in West Suffolk

transport and skills strategies as they affect West Suffolk

innovation in rural transport solutions

Parking solutions in Bury St Edmunds

NEWS:

The implementation of the new focus on Families and Communities is beginning and I have held my first meeting with members of the Town Council on this - I hope to make further progress shortly, when locality budgets have been agreed.

The final opinion of the Peer Review Group was that the progress of the Shared Services Project was achieving its stated aims and that the results were “impressive” and a path for development was mapped
The new Head of Planning and Regulation has just started
Progress is being made on finding a Waste Transfer solution for the area
Town Centre Masterplanning for Haverhill continues
Progress is continuing very slowly with finding solutions for locating gypsies and travellers within the area of their traditional/habitual travelling patterns.

Many of these items will have further information provided at future Town and Parish Conferences.

Next surgery which will be held on Saturday 1st March.

DRAFT

Attachment to minutes – Item 13, Clerk’s Report – February 2014

Action:

- Following confirmation from CLASP of a grant for a new bench, Cllr Parsley and I have discussed with Margaret Taylor, Chair of CLASP, options for the placement of the new bench. It was suggested that a bench by the town sign in Nethergate Street would be most appropriate, as there is no bench on that side of the road and it would provide a resting place for people walking to and from the town centre from dwellings in Stoke Road/Westfield etc.
Approved unanimously.
- Following a number of requests for bike racks and difficulties establishing a suitable site, a suggestion has been made in the County Councillor’s report which may be a workable solution – ‘blank’ piece of road at Well Lane/High Street junction – for discussion.
Refer to Highways Working Party for consideration.

Information:

- Badly maintained pavement in front of No.1-5 Westfield caused a resident to fall. Reported to SCC who responded it is the responsibility of Havebury – they will carry out an assessment and update me on planned action.
- The cheque for the grant from Havebury for the two replacement benches has been received.

DRAFT

Attachment to minutes – Item 15, Correspondence:

Items for action
(all circulated to Town Councillors)

Clare In Bloom	Request to hold plant sale on Market Hill on 17th May 9am-2pm. Approved unanimously.
West Suffolk Hospital	Arthrose Appeal for funds for WSH's Trauma & Orthopaedic Department Action: Refer to Finance Committee
Stop Stansted Expansion	Request for support Declined
A Winsbury-Cutts	Request to hold fruit and veg stall on Market Hill Unanimous agreement to decline
The Clare Society	Request to endorse a letter to Suffolk County Council re drainage on Stoke Road See item 4 - Parishioners question time
Stuart Mitchell	World War 1 commemorations Cllr Godwin will contact Revd Mitchell.
Clare Combined Charities	Re-appointment of Trustees Approved unanimously – happy to re-appoint.
NHS	Notification of relocation of Clare Pharmacy Approved unanimously.

Items for noting
(copies available from the Clerk on request)

HLF	Grant for Country Park
John Knight	Update on installation of a dam east of sluice gates.

Attachment to minutes – Item 16, To receive a report on the flooding around Clare including at the Land East of the Granary site:

To: Andrew Guttridge, Assistant Director (Highways and Transport) SCC.

From: The Clare Society.

This area of Clare is prone to flooding – the gardens of the listed properties opposite the site and The Priory and Priory Farm were seriously flooded in the past fortnight – and before planning permission was granted The Clare Society (CS) and Clare Town Council (CTC) sought reassurance that the infrastructure in Stoke Road was fit for purpose and able to accommodate another 60 houses. At meetings with St Edmundsbury BC they advised that SCC Highways had confirmed that the road drains in Stoke Road/Nethergate Street were fine and nothing needed upgrading.

Last week during the heavy rains Persimmon's contractors were pumping from the site directly into the main A1092 road. The CS and CTC complained to Persimmon and SCC Highways and asked whether this was permissible. Your colleagues were helpful and said it was not. The contractors claimed that they could pump into a drain culvert in the road but with this clogged up they decided it was OK to pump direct into the road. Yesterday, under pressure from all sides, Persimmon brought in and paid for a huge tanker to pump out all the drain culverts and manholes in Stoke Road from the Granary end of the site in Stoke Road to Cliftons in Nethergate Street. They were all completely silted and clogged up and are now reasonably cleared except for the section alongside the tree lined fence adjacent to the pumping station. A manhole in this area, covered in grass, was uncovered and clearly had not been lifted for years. The tanker operators said all the way along the pipes were in bad shape and had breaks but in the section adjacent to the pumping station the pipes had been damaged by tree roots which was constraining the flow. Your colleagues advised that the road drains were scheduled to be cleared once a year but clearly this is nowhere near often enough.

In short the whole road drain section between the Granary and Cliftons needs to be replaced or relined. Ahead of planning permission on this site SCC Highways advised these drains were fit for purpose but clearly they were not. The whole section needs to be checked by camera and repaired/replaced urgently. Failure to do this will exacerbate the flood problem in this area of Clare and you will have a serious flood disaster on your hands. Our major concern is not what should have happened but what physically must be done now to upgrade the road drains to minimise the flood risk problem ahead of the building on this site of 60 houses. We ask you to address and resolve urgently this important infrastructure issue.

Best regards.

John Collecott, Secretary, The Clare Society.

Attachment to minutes – Item 12 (d), To receive a report on Rural Vision 2031 hearing

A Government Inspector, Roger Clews, is holding a series of hearings at various locations in West Suffolk to determine “Whether or not the Plan (Rural Vision 2031) sets out sound proposals and development allocations for the southern part of the Rural Area”.

On Tuesday 4 February the Inspector held a hearing at Days Inn in Haverhill at which the questions regarding Clare were “Are the Plan’s proposals and development allocations for Clare justified and deliverable” ? and “Should the Plan allocate land for mixed-use development to the rear of The Swan, Nethergate St, Clare (the Back Field)” ?

You will recall that the March 2012 Rural Vision Preferred Options document recommended development on three sites in Clare, namely Land East of The Granary (which subsequently was granted planning permission for up to 60 houses and building has started), Back Field and the land on Cavendish Road between Stour Valley Community School and Clare Hall – the latter two for development after 2021. However, as a result of English Heritage and other objections the Back Field site was withdrawn.

Those who had pre-arranged to speak were –

Adam Halford of Bidwells – on behalf of their client Charles Church (Persimmon)

Someone supporting Bidwells

Brian Flynn of January’s – for J Barber who wants to develop land at Poslingford Corner

Keith Haisman – Chair of Clare Town Council (CTC)

Bridget Burgess – resident of Nethergate Street (and Member of The Clare Society)

Anne Marie Howell – Planning Policy section St Eds BC (SBC)

Christine Leveson – Principal Conservation Officer St Eds BC (SBC)

David Eve – English Heritage (EH)

In the question and answer session led by the Inspector the main positions taken by each speaker were –

BIDWELLS

Bidwells are agents for Charles Church(Persimmon) for the site currently being developed East of the Granary on Stoke Road and we understand Charles Church have an option to purchase from the landowner Cliftons Orchard and Back Field. Consequently, Bidwells presentation was a plea to re-instate Back Field as a development site. They said Back Field was available, could be accessed either via the East of Granary access road – their preferred option – or via a new road through Clifton’s Orchard. They claimed SCC Highways had approved either access route – this was challenged by SBC, see below. Bidwells said the plan was to build 50 to 60 houses – not 75 as mentioned previously – with a car park and also some business facilities. Whilst acknowledging that the Back Field site was sensitive they believed it could be designed so that it did not encroach on the listed building of Nethergate Street north, would not spoil the views to rfrom the Town, would provide mach needed extra car parking and was within easy walking distance of the Town Centre which would reduce traffic use. They felt any flooding problems could be overcome, like the SUDS scheme being introduced on their Stoke Road site.

JANUARY’S

They felt the additional site at Snow Hill/Poslingford Corner – between the Heights and the small industrial unit – for 130/150 houses was need by Clare between now and 2031 and there was a particular need for Affordable Housing – a figure of 148 AH needed was mentioned.

CLARE TOWN COUNCIL (CTC)

CTC are convinced that Back Field, not Cavendish Road, is the next best development site because it is in the centre of Clare and can meets the CTC strategic plan to provide here more housing, some facilities for service industries like architects/lawyers/accountants etc and also solve the 30 year old problem of car parking in Clare. CTC consider walking access from the site to the High Street an essential ingredient to minimise traffic movements. CTC see Back Field as the only sustainable site within their vision for Clare and within the Government’s NPPF document. CTC are conscious of the demographics of an ageing population in Clare and the need for both housing for young people and for those who wish to downsize. CTC stressed they think 120 new

houses, between now and 2031, was OK – to include the 60 houses being built East of the Granary and the 12 AH units to be built adjacent to Westfield. CTC acknowledged that Back Field was a very sensitive site but if designed well it could enhance Clare. CTC were against the Cavendish Road site because it was on the periphery not in the centre of Clare and Cavendish Road was unsafe to cross and the narrow footpaths made walking into Clare dangerous. CTC also consider foot access to Clare Country Park Car Park is dangerous.

BRIDGET BURGESS

She felt strongly that the special historic atmosphere of Clare and the interrelationship between the ancient built profile and the green spaces would be destroyed if Back Field was developed. She also stressed that the infrastructure, sewerage, drains etc, in Nethergate Steet were inadequate.

ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL (SBC)

SBC maintained their stance that the development of Back Field was inappropriate and continued their support for the Cavendish Road site. Back Field was in the Conservation Area and near areas of Common Land, the Nuttery and much used footpaths and development would damage views of the medieval boundary of Clare and the roofscape of Nethergate Street. SBC said SCC Highways would not allow access through the East of Granary – too much traffic volume – and access through Cliftons Orchard would take away the green buffer between the old and the new. SBC stated Back Field was not the right place for a car park, there were alternative car park sites in Clare and the Country Park Car Park was rarely at capacity. SBC felt distance from Town Centre was not an argument – Cavendish Road same distance away as East of Granary site – Cavendish Road had fewer constraints, SCC Highways saw no access problems and footpaths and cycle tracks could be improved and traffic calming measures introduced. The Cavendish Road site was well screened already from SVCS and Clare Hall. SBC dismissed the Snow Hill/Poslingford Corner site as being too large and unwanted in the context of house volumes needed to 2031. They did see the need to expand the employment opportunities in Clare by expanding existing light industrial units.

ENGLISH HERITAGE (EH)

EH emphasised their opposition to the Back Field site was because it would change the dynamics of the relationship between the medieval buildings and the adjacent green landscape. They consider the settings of the Castle, Church and major listed buildings in Clare to be special and would be harmed by a Back Field development. EH said the brick/flint wall along the Stoke Road boundary of Cliftons Orchard was important and must not be breached and there should be no access road through Cliftons Orchard which the 2006 Inspector said was necessary as dividing the old and the new. EH saw no heritage benefit from a car park on Back Field.

What happens next?

The Inspector planned to visit the sites in Clare on Monday 10 February and we asked his PA to ensure, that with the serious flooding in the area he includes the Ashen Road Bridge, The Priory and Priory Farm on his itinerary.

Within the next two months the Inspector will prepare a draft report and, if he recommends adding or subtracting sites, this will go to public consultation before a final report is published and the Vision 2031 sites confirmed.