



# **Clare Town Council Annual Report 2015-2016**



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Thank you to all who contributed. Particular thanks to those who provided photographs: Phil Gryce, Alison McKenny, Peter Phillips, Ron Longland.

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

# Chair's Report

This is the first year of the new council, the last year of the 4 year plan and the second year I have written the Chair's section for the Annual Report. What a difference a year makes. We have three new councillors, Cllrs. Kimminau, Marchant & Verguson, along with the return of Cllr. Parsley. This has given a new dynamic to the team. The team has been ably assisted by Trevor Pickerin and Olive Smith, our two lay members who sit on the Environment Committee.

It has seemed a very busy year with many challenges and opportunities. Throughout the year the Environment Committee has been led by Cllr. Gryce, the Finance Committee by Cllr. Godwin and the Community Working Party by Cllr. Perceval-Maxwell.

My thanks go to our staff, Claire Ebeling, our Town Clerk; Maureen Smith, the Responsible Finance Officer; Brian and Colin, our two Street Wardens and to Keith Mison, our Cemetery Management Officer. As in previous years, they have all worked extremely hard for the benefit of the residents of Clare.

During the year we have benefitted from the excellent support and guidance of Mary Evans, our County Councillor and Alaric Pugh, our Borough Councillor. I would like to thank them both for their regular attendance at Town Council Meetings.

This is the last year of the current 4 Year Development Plan. The plan has been a very useful tool in guiding and focusing us on the priorities for Clare.

## **Sustaining a thriving and yet traditional Town**

This year saw the opening of the Hastoe Affordable Housing Development which is a direct result of the council's work on the Community Plan in 2010. Clare residents moved in during May 2015.

In the last year the Town Council has continued to comment on planning applications to ensure that developments are in keeping with the historic nature of Clare while recognising its role as a key service centre.

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Along with Mary Evans, our County Councillor, the Town Council was involved in and supported the East Anglian Daily Times feature and the pop up 'Picnic in the Park' event to mark the re-opening of the Cavendish Road which was closed to repair the gas main. Our thanks to all those involved.

Building on the summer publicity campaign promoting Clare, the Town Council decided to make tourism a major priority. To this end we have set up a Tourism Working Party which reports to every meeting.

### **Improving our Infrastructure**

The council has continued to campaign to reduce unnecessary HGV's in the Town in conjunction with our County Councillor and alongside the Stour Valley Lorry Action Group.

The council has managed to access S106 monies for traffic-calming measures and is now in the process of obtaining a vehicle-activated speeding sign which can be relocated from time to time. We have also achieved S106 money to build a new bus shelter at Westfield.

### **Protecting and Enhancing the Environment**

The Town Council has supported the Trustees of Clare Castle Country Park where necessary. We have also appointed two trustees on behalf of the Town Council and were involved in the appointment of two more in December.

During the year the Town Council completed the building works on the Station Master's House and the Visitors' Centre on budget and on time before handing them over to the Trust. We must thank Keith Haisman who project-managed the building works on our behalf. The house and the office have now been let providing a much needed source of revenue for the Trust.

## **Supporting Community Involvement**

Despite further reductions to grant funding from St. Edmundsbury Borough Council we have continued to provide financial support to many groups within Clare, details of which can be found in the Finance Committee Report.

This last year saw the council financially support the Magna Carta celebrations in June. These events were so successful that the Magna Carta Committee was able to return to the Town Council all the funds we had given them.

A new initiative we are pleased to support this year is the celebration of the Queen's 90th birthday. These celebrations are being organised by the newly re-formed Clare Community Association with a Party in the Park on Sunday June 12th.

The Annual Report contains not only reports from the council's Committees and Working Groups but also from some of the many community groups in Clare who contribute to making it a vibrant and enjoyable place to live.

The Annual meeting will be held on 11th May at 7pm in the Town Hall and I hope as many residents as possible will be able to attend.

Paul Bishop, Chair

Full attendance record for Town Council meetings can be found on the Town Council section of the website: [www.clare-uk.com](http://www.clare-uk.com)



A tree was recently planted in memory of Leslie Warmington, who died last year. His wife, daughter and grandson joined Keith Mison and Town Councillors to plant the tree in Clare Cemetery.

## Finance & Personnel Committee

Total income for the year ended 31 March 2016 was £124,364 against a budget of £106,256. The increase is mainly accounted for by increased Cemetery income (balanced by increased costs), and precept reimbursements from Magna Carta and Clare Castle Country Park. The Precept (the element of Council Tax which pays for Parish services) was £96,719.

Total expenditure for the year was £106,624, the main categories being:

Administration and Finance	£23,615
Environment (including Cemetery costs)	£30,952
Website and Chevron	£3,000
Maintenance Grants (Town Council assets)	£9,774
Grants for Community activities	£8,422
Loan Repayments	£17,175

As a result of this year's activities, council reserves at 31st March 2016 stand at £213,274.06. This is represented by a general reserve of £167,699 (£136,668 last year) and earmarked reserves of £45,575 (£275,361 last year). The decrease in earmarked reserves is mainly represented by funds being transferred to Clare Castle Country Park Trust. We still hold funds of £6,563 awaiting the final sign-off.

The financial year 2015/16 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. In an attempt to once again achieve a zero increase in the Precept figure for 2016/17, the Finance Committee has been working with local organisations who request funding through the precept. This has proved to be a very successful exercise and Clare Town Councillors will continue to investigate methods of reducing costs through shared services such as grass cutting, insurance and maintenance which have been so successful in impacting on budgets for next year. Parishioners will have seen a small reduction of 0.2% in the Parish Precept.

Parishioners will be pleased to know that the council continues to support local community organizations through the Precept Grant portion of the Council Tax bill. These organizations are run by volunteers and I am sure we all appreciate the difference their efforts make to the appeal of Clare throughout the year.

This year the Community Support figures were:

Clare Christmas Lights	£3,800
Clare Swimming Club	£500
Clare in Bloom	£2,500
Magna Carta	£1,425

(Due to the success of the Magna Carta event, we are pleased to report that this sum was repaid to the Town Council).

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

This year the Town Council has been pleased to make donations to Cruse, British Lung Foundation (in memory of the late Cllr Warmington), Kernos Centre, Firefighters Charity, Age UK, Clare Bears Pre School as well as Combat Stress, Royal British Legion 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 [clarefinance@clare-uk.com](mailto:clarefinance@clare-uk.com)

Margaret Godwin, Chair, Finance & Personnel Committee

## **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 footpaths, drainage and roadways we refer on to the appropriate authority.

The Committee spends a large percentage of the Town Council's budget. An inspection of all public trees has led to safety work being carried out. A new bench has been purchased to be placed in the High Street, partly sponsored by Clare Pharmacy. A bench in Stoke Road has been refurbished with new planks, part of an on-going programme of upkeep and replacement.

Dog fouling is a perennial problem. Dog bags, purchased by us, free to all, are available from Clare Farm Shop & Hudgies – thanks to them for providing this service gratis. Further measures are planned. The Borough Council will prosecute offenders.

Bye-laws have been prepared for the Nuttery and the Playing Fields; this will be submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. It is hoped that these will clarify the rights and responsibilities of residents towards these important public spaces.

We have been obliged to raise the cost of burial fees by 20% from this April; interment in Clare remains below the area's average. We thank our administration for ensuring our service to families is sympathetic and discreet.

We express our sincere thanks to our two street wardens and our cemetery manager for their efforts, as well as Clare in Bloom, to help make Clare a charming place to live. Residents will have admired the new spring flower displays.

Any suggestions as to improvements that could be made are welcome. We appreciate all efforts to make Clare a clean and attractive place to live, work and invest in.

Phil Gryce, Chair



## Community Working Party

Another year has flown by and the Community Working Party continues to ensure that every resident of Clare receives the quarterly publication of *Chevron* and we thank our delivery team for their dedication in all weathers to ensure the people of Clare receive their copy. This publication is an important tool in keeping the community as a whole up to date with important issues and events happening in our town. We were delighted that our latest issue included the announcement of two important new groups who are working to promote and make Clare an even better place to live and visit – a new working party within the Town Council to promote tourism and the new Clare Community Association who have already organised some wonderful Easter events for the children of Clare.

The website has been looked at and a number of alternatives have been put together to make the experience of looking at what our beautiful town has to offer more attractive and easier to use. We anticipate that after full Town Council approval this will be up and running in the next few months.

As always we continue to strive for good communication between the residents of Clare and the Town Council and we are keen to support and promote local ventures.

Loveday Perceval-Maxwell, Chair, Community Working Party

## 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](mailto:phil.gryce@clare-suffolk.co.uk)



## Clare Castle Country Park

As we come to the end of the first 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 £9,100 will be exceeded. At this point nothing has arisen that has given any indication that the park will be a financial burden on the town and it is hoped that people who use the park have been pleased with the progress that has been made.

The major achievements in the first 12 months have been to renovate the two main railway buildings, let the stationmaster's house and office, carry out a considerable amount of work with the volunteers (3 sessions a month with an average attendance



of 15), and obtain grants of c£20,000 that will enable us to make more improvements than would otherwise have been the case. In addition eight trustees were appointed with effect from 1st January, of whom five were new appointments.



**CLARE CASTLE**  
COUNTRY PARK

In the coming year the plans are to improve the play equipment in the park, open a café in the old booking hall in the main station building, and continue to make the park more attractive e.g. by work on the moat, the motte and other 'green space' areas. A revised Heritage Lottery Fund grant bid (c£1,500,000), will be made which, if successful, will enable additional improvements to be made in the next 2-5 years.

Geoffrey Bray



# Magna Carta in Clare Festival 1215 - 2015



In June 2015 Clare celebrated the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta in which two Clare barons played a significant role. This was the first community-wide event held in Clare for many years. The organisers were delighted that over 100 volunteers, local schools and community groups helped to put on the events and some 3,000 people attended the Medieval Fair, despite the poor weather early in the day.

The organisers had set two main objectives: firstly, through local engagement, to create community events which would inform, entertain and delight visitors to the Festival; secondly to donate any surplus funds from the Festival to those organisations in Clare which supported the Festival and made the events a success.

The backdrop for the week-long Festival was set with the decoration of Clare with bunting and planting in the Clare colours of red and gold. Specific events were:

- The Walk from Clare to Hedingham: 140 people took part aged between 3 and 93 and it is now permanently waymarked with a map,
- Clare Library: hosted a programme of films and commissioned a Magna Carta jigsaw,
- Clare Ancient House Museum: managed a Magna Carta exhibition and produced a booklet,
- Study Day: attended by 80 participants, with speakers covering the importance of Clare in medieval times,
- Tastes of 1215: over 100 people enjoyed an evening of medieval food, Magna Carta Ale, music and entertainment,
- Medieval Banquet: A full scale costumed banquet with original recipes, Magna Carta Ale and general revelry,





- Medieval Fair: began with a costumed procession around Clare led by Judith Shallow, High Sheriff of Suffolk, and the Bursar of Clare College, Cambridge. On return to the Country Park a huge variety of stalls and medieval craft demonstrations greeted visitors.

Through the generosity of visitors to the Festival these events generated a surplus that enabled the organisers to return some funding to Clare Town Council and also make financial contributions to over 20 Clare community groups that had helped to make the Magna Carta Festival such a great success.



Keith Haisman

## Clare Community Association



The Clare Community Association was re-established at the end of 2015 when a group of local people got together with the aim of putting on events for the people of Clare.

We have got off to a good start with activities for children in the school holidays which have been held in conjunction with the Social Club. These have included a scavenger hunt, art & craft sessions, a film afternoon and an activity afternoon.

After securing a grant from the Town Council our next event is a big one – the Queens 90th Birthday. Come along on 12th June to the Party in the Park.

If you would like to be involved with our events as a volunteer or want to see what we are up to please have a look at our web page: [www.clareca.org.uk](http://www.clareca.org.uk) Also look out for our posters with coming events.

Nikki Terry, Chair

## Clare Playing Fields Association (CPFA)

A major part of our focus this year has been the Pavilion building which has developed a number of problems with its structure and light fittings, in spite of being relatively new. Immediate repairs have been undertaken as necessary and we have had to close some areas down while we wait to commission builders. We are very grateful to Chris Hawkins for his expert advice and also the Town Council for helping us with emergency funds.

CPFA income from lettings only just covers our expenditure, but in spite of problems with the building and car park surface, we would still like to offer more to Clare in terms of new sports/activities. For this reason, we started a programme of fund-raising this year that included some new events for the town. Several quizzes, a Night of Comic Story Telling with Rob Crighton and a Night of Misrule with Day-Walker Productions – all accompanied by delicious food and a lot of laughter– have kept us busy and audiences entertained. Our grateful thanks to everyone who has helped.

A lot of background work has been undertaken this year on providing new sport opportunities, including plans for after school and summer activities for children and families. A very knowledgeable and enthusiastic group is working on re-establishing cricket at the Playing Field. Expert advice has been sought on recreating the square and maintaining the wickets, equipment is being priced and we are close to starting work on a full business plan. Cricket is relatively expensive to set up and we will need to draw on outside sponsorship and grants but, in the near future, we hope to achieve the aim of having club and friendly cricket matches, underpinned by quik-cricket lessons for young children and use of the pitch by our local senior schools. Perhaps we will even see a women's team established!





Football continues to flourish. Clare Town Football Team now has a Reserve Team and both have had a good season. The Lions have expanded considerably, thanks to expert coaching. They now have teams across 6 different age groups from 7 to 14 year olds playing in the Ipswich and Suffolk Youth Football League and have plans to introduce a younger age group. Matches are well supported, with drinks and enticing cakes available for spectators to buy. If you feel that you would like to join this friendly and active group, then do get in touch with Tony Sheppard on 01787 278516.

We have worked hard to support the local community of Clare in many different ways this year. The closure of Cavendish Road caused many problems for the town and therefore, as well as offering parking for residents and visitors, we allowed the contractor to use our parking area for site offices and the storage of excavated earth. This significantly reduced the length of time needed to complete the work and re-open the road so that Clare could get back to normal. We note that we now have many more residents and visitors using our car park and Stour Valley parents regularly use it at school drop-off and pick-up times. As usual, in July we provided a parking venue for the Clare Priory Craft Fair and both the senior and junior football teams generously provided people to help man the parking arrangements. We also helped with arrangements and equipment for the Magna Carta in Clare Festival and many thanks go to the MCiC Committee as they were kind enough to make a much-needed donation to our funds.

Finally, we would like to thank Clare Town Council and everyone else who has supported the Playing Fields with their time, sound advice and good humour. We would particularly like to thank Tony Sharp for the many years that he has given to Clare and the CPFA. We miss him and wish him and his family well in their new home. Lucky Bury St Edmunds!!

Gayle Mallows, Chair

## Clare Liaison And Support Project (CLASP)

During the past year CLASP has continued its work within the community of Clare and the surrounding villages.

Our weekly Wednesday Club meets in the Community Centre from 11am until 3.15pm where its members enjoy coffee, a three-course lunch, entertainment and afternoon tea. Those members who require it are transported by the CLASP minibus, driven by our trained volunteer drivers.



The same minibus provides transport to and from a supermarket twice a month, and once a month takes a group from Glemsford to various locations. The minibus also serves the community by helping with the Park and Ride on the Clare Priory Craft Fair weekend, and by providing extra transport for Stour Valley Community School and other local groups as and when requested. In April and June the minibus was used to transport walkers to and from Castle Hedingham for the two Magna Carta walks. There has not been any request that has not been met.

Volunteers for our Car-Aid scheme take residents to hospital and other health-related appointments in their own cars. This scheme has also met all requests during the past year.

All of the projects are dependent on our teams of volunteers. If you are interested in one of our projects or joining our team of volunteers we would be very pleased to hear from you. Please contact Christine Little, Chair on 277743 or Val Blake, Secretary on 277335 or come along to our AGM on 2nd June at 7.30pm in the Community Centre.



## **Combined Halls of Clare (CHOC)**

The CHOC Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and management of Clare Town Hall and Old School Community Centre. During the past year we have continued with planned improvements to both buildings.

2015 was the 25th anniversary of the Old School opening as the Community Centre. This was celebrated with an open day which included a display showing the history of the building. Improvements in 2015 at the Old School include the installation of a commercial dishwasher and redecoration of the kitchen. Outside, the security lighting has been improved. New single stacking chairs will soon be in place.

At the Town Hall maintenance work and redecoration was carried out to the exterior. Repair work took place to the front of the building after damage during a severe storm. Internally the toilet areas were redecorated. Improvements to the original electrical system, enhanced lighting to the main hall, and LED installed throughout the building is nearing completion.

We have identified two projects for 2016 at the Old School. Soundproofing between Hall 2 and Hall 3 should take place this summer, and we plan to have new armchairs in Hall 1.

Finally, John Laws has been involved with CHOC over many years. During the past six years John has been our Administrator but has now retired from this post. Many thanks go to John for his hard work and involvement during his years with CHOC.

We are now pleased to welcome Paul Heath as our new administrator. To contact CHOC details remain the same. Email [choc.clare@hotmail.com](mailto:choc.clare@hotmail.com) or phone 07500 642001. Visit our website [www.choc.org.uk](http://www.choc.org.uk)

Olive Smith, Chair

# Christmas Lights Committee

This past year the committee has been working hard to raise money for the lights and Switch-on event, with the added cost of replacing all the old bulbs to LEDs. We've been very successful in fundraising, organising raffles, a scavenger hunt, quizzes and an amazing Summer Fete with support from the Cock and Globe pubs. We also held a delightful Christmas Fair in St Peter & St Paul Church with their help. In addition to this, after tenacious negotiations, we managed to secure a £5000 grant from National Grid towards the new energy-saving bulbs.



The Switch-on night was yet again very successful, with a fantastic turnout and a safer change to the layout. The procession was led by a piper with children from Clare Community Primary School singing carols on stage. A big thank you to all the volunteers who helped on the night, to Carl

and his team at FES who put up and maintain the lights and to our local Fire and Rescue team for closing the roads and helping to keep us all safe.

In 2016 I am stepping down as Chair and Howard Downer is taking over. After all our hard work over the past couple of years I am pleased to announce that I can pass on just over £23,000, securing the lights for the next 3 years. Thank you so much to the whole committee and to all of you who have supported us.

Victoria Stone

## Treble C Choir (Clare Community Choir)

Since its formation in 2012 with some 30 participants the choir has continued to grow to the extent that this year we were able to register as a Charity with the Charity Commission. We now have over 90 members.



The choir has been extremely active this past year. Not only did we hold concerts in May and November which were very well attended and enjoyed by an enthusiastic audience the choir participated in the Magna Carta celebrations in June and the Clare Community Christmas Carols in December, as well as performing at the Clare

Commemorates WWI event in November. This was a moving and memorable event which received very positive feedback. In addition the choir entertained the CLASP Senior Citizens at their Christmas Lunch party.

The choir was able to contribute a substantial donation to the Magna Carta organisers to help fund the musical aspects of the event.

Whilst the primary objective of the choir is to provide a means by which choir members can participate in singing a variety of music in a relaxed and friendly environment, it is also an important aspect of the choir that members are given the opportunity to meet socially, both at choir rehearsals and elsewhere. To this end two social events are held each year (in January and August). It is gratifying to see that so many choir members participate in these events.

This next year we hope to continue to grow under the guidance of our Musical Director Nigel Partridge and our enthusiastic and hard-working committee. The support of the people of Clare at our concerts is very much appreciated, and we look forward to another enjoyable and entertaining year. The Concert dates for 2016 are 21st May and 26th November. The Choir rehearses at the URC Church in Nethergate Street at 7.30 on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month. All are welcome. For further information please contact our Secretary, Jenny Catton, on 01787 277585.

Roy Draper, Chair



14 April 2016  
Clare Common



14 April 2016  
Clare Common



## Clare in Bloom

2015-2016 has again been a very busy year for Clare in Bloom. Our contribution to the Magna Carta celebrations in June 2015 was an ornamental bed cut from the turf in front of the stationmaster's house in the shape of a chevron, the de Clare family heraldic symbol (front cover). We planted it up with hundreds of red and yellow marigolds. The challenge was to ensure that each one of the calendulas was flowering on that special day in Clare when the whole town came out to enjoy a community-happening in memory of a historical event some 800 years ago. The chevron continued to flourish throughout the summer months and we were almost sad to witness its planned demise at the end of the summer. The area has now been returned to greensward just as the centuries between 1215 and 2015 have covered the inner and outer baileys with grass.

We continued to look after the church borders and ensure that they were bright, colourful and tidy all year round. All of our 37 containers were planted up with firstly red and yellow tulips continuing the de Clare colour scheme and then for the summer we planted bright red vigorous geraniums for a blaze of colour throughout the warmer months.

In the autumn of 2015 we planted 6000 crocuses along the greenswards along Nethergate Street. In November our long-standing Chairperson Jane Haisman stepped down after 12 years in the job - we thank her for all her hard work over that time.

During 2016, we will be continuing to garden every first Wednesday of the month during the months between April and November - weather allowing. We have our colour schemes worked out already for our containers and we are aiming to renovate some areas of the Church borders, where roses in particular are becoming rather aged.

Swathes of snowdrops may well be our contribution to the town's tourist push - they will be planted in the green next Spring. We aim to increase our links with the Clare Castle Country Park and work for the benefit of the whole community in beautifying our green spaces.

We lost a much-loved supporter when Janet Burge died before Christmas - she was one of our most energetic gardeners, always up for a spot of guerrilla gardening and we will miss her greatly. With the help of her husband, Richard, we hope to be able to plant a living memorial this year. We need to say again that the financial support which we receive from the Town Council as well as many local businesses and individuals means that we can continue to make Clare a greener and better place in which to live and work.

We welcome new gardeners to join our enthusiastic team of volunteers. Please meet us at 9am on 1st Wednesday each month outside the Ancient House in the High Street. Contact Nickie on 01787 278275 email [cpetenickie@aol.com](mailto:cpetenickie@aol.com)

Nickie Carpenter, Chairperson

## **Society for Music in Clare Church (SMICC)**

In 2015 four concerts were held. In March another highly successful 'concert in a day' was organised when 80 singers rehearsed the Messiah during the day and performed to a full audience in the evening. This was followed by the Magna Carta concert when the Renaissance singers performed works from every century from 1200 to 2000. The incredibly talented Kanneh-Masons family enthralled the audience with a range of well-known classical pieces and the final concert was by JP Ekins and Michal Cwizewicz who performed piano and violin works by Beethoven and César Franck.

Two concerts have been arranged for 2016:

**May 14th. Piano recital by JP Ekins**, the outstanding pianist who performed with the violinist Michal Cwizewicz in November. He will be playing works by Schubert, Chopin, and Liszt plus the arrangement for solo piano of the Warsaw Concerto.

**September 3rd. The Goldfield Ensemble** will be returning to play the Mozart and Weber Clarinet Quintets and shorter works by Borodin and Herbert Howells.

Geoffrey Bray

## Clare Combined Charities

Clare Combined Charities is an amalgamation of several charities, responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the Almshouses in Church Lane, Clare Common, the allotments and the Upper Common, which is above them, and Goosecroft. The Vicar of the parish is an ex-officio member with eight other Trustees, appointed by the Town Council following the recommendations of The Trustees. Trustees serve for a term of four years and are eligible for re-appointment each time. There is a chairman, a vice-chairman and two sub-committees, one for the Almshouses and another for the land holdings. The clerk is responsible for administration and finance.

By deed of the constitution, Almshouses licensees must be single females who are of good health since The Charities is not a welfare organisation. Income is derived almost entirely from licence fees. A small contribution comes from COIF interest. Expenses cover painting, decorating, repairs, water supplies, the TV licence for over-75s and property owners' insurance. This year, all of that has exceeded income by around £2,000. Future plans will consider resolving the damp problems and the deteriorating external brickwork.



The Lower Common and Allotments - income covers allotment rents, agricultural rents, cattle grazing and a small contribution from the government via Rural Payments.

Expenditure covers upkeep of fences and hedges, grass topping, thistle treatment and public liability insurance. A small percentage of the excess of income over expenditure is transferable to the Common Pasture (Education) fund for local grants. With regard to allotment plots, tenants use them for growing a variety of crops and plants, not necessarily edible. If anyone is interested in taking on a plot, please contact the Treasurer.



The Upper Common is currently farmed, for which The Charities received an annual rent. The Charities does not have an obligation to maintain any of that land.

Goosecroft – This land is along the road leading to Chilton Street near to the currently disused storage yard. It is let for grazing and The Charities receives an annual rent for this as well. Recently, the dangerous hedging and trees along the roadside were trimmed back and the cost of this is reflected in an ‘overdraft’ in this account of around £750.00.

Minor Charities – Three small charities exist, being Cadges Widows, Cadges Education and Collins Dole. These are very restrictive. Income is received from COIF interest and nowhere else and can only be used to help the poor widows of Clare, as grants towards minor costs of education and the poor of Chilton Street and Poslingford.

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





## Friends of Clare Library

2015/16 has been an amazing year for the Library. Its popularity has seen it go from strength to strength. *ciné clair* and its screenings of films requested by you has become a fixture in the Clare Calendar; the Magna Carta 800 jigsaw brought in all ages and got people working and talking together who had previously never met; the Summer Reading Challenge produced a record percentage of 'finishers' despite the road closures cutting us off from some of our 'patch'; we have started to host outside events in conjunction with local business and organisations which are proving popular and entertaining; and library use is up along with membership of The Friends of Clare Library, its fund raising Trust.

***"If you have a garden and a Library, you have everything you need"***

Marcus Tullius Cicero (107 – 43BC)

2016 is officially 'The Year of Reading'. This is not just a campaign to increase literacy but to introduce or reintroduce everyone to the pure indulgence of reading for pleasure. Whether you decide to read a new author or genre of fiction; improve your mind by learning a new language; increase your culinary skills by trying new recipe books (available from the Library); vow to spend 30 minutes reading out loud with your children and grandchild or a myriad of other things, this is the year to make reading and books, whether physical or electronic, a priority.

All children in Year 7, ie the first year of secondary school, are being issued with their own Library Cards as so many at this age lose the habit of reading for their own amusement.

In 2016 we will be launching a loan scheme for tablets which will be available for everyone, regardless of age, to borrow subject to certain conditions. We foresee that this will encourage people to feel more comfortable with the digital age; to read more; be able to stream music and videos from the net; listen to audio books; take digital photos and videos and learn how to edit them - not to mention the games...

Whatever you want to do, whatever you want to know, wherever you want to go, the answer may very well lie in Clare Library.

## Ancient House Museum

For the 2015 season (April to September), the Museum was particularly active on two fronts. A new exhibition on the History of Education in Clare was presented by Secretary to the Trustees Tom Shaw, together with a booklet containing summaries of interviews with the school memories of Clare people. For the exhibition we borrowed a painting 'The Dame School' by Frederick Cotman from the Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service. A smaller exhibition was presented as part of the Clare Magna Carta Festival. This featured a facsimile of one of the copies of Magna Carta and a booklet about the two de Clare barons involved in Magna Carta, by Peggy Smith. Special notelets were designed by David Ace, and we sold copies of The Liberties of Clare. We also trialled a Treasure Trail around the Museum, aimed at attracting under-16s. A small donation was made to the project for ground-penetrating radar in the ruin of Clare Priory church, to attempt to locate the remains of Lionel of Antwerp that are reported to be there.



For the 2016 season, the same two exhibitions will run, with an additional booklet about private schools in Clare, written by Tom Shaw. An initiative to train volunteers to lead guided tours of the town and the park is being launched, in cooperation with the various projects in Clare and beyond to increase tourist visits. Future long-term exhibitions are also being developed along themes that will be especially of interest to tourists - the Ancient House itself, the castle, the Clare arms, famous people who lived in Clare, education in Clare, Clare Common, as well as Elizabeth de Burgh and the de Clare Magna Carta barons. The Museum is continuing cooperation with Clare Castle Country Park Trustees in their intention to integrate town and park, especially through its historic photographs, and perhaps some artefacts. Artefacts to be loaned to schools are also being selected for a 'handling collection'.

Richard Smith, Chair



# Clare Town Council

## **Councillors**

Paul Bishop (Chair)

Margaret Godwin

Phil Gryce

Steve Kimminau

Gayle Mallows

Chris Marchant

Alan Parsley (Vice-chair)

Loveday Perceval-Maxwell

Bob Verguson

## **Staff**

*Claire Ebeling Town Clerk*

*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

Clare Community Association Presents

# PARTY in the PARK



Join us for a  
fun-filled 1920s themed  
party in CLARE COUNTRY PARK  
to celebrate HM The Queen's 90th birthday

SUNDAY 12TH JUNE • 12PM - 6PM

STALLS • HOG ROAST • GAMES  
BEER TENT • JAZZ • BARBECUE

DIMMS & PROSECCO • STRAWBERRIES & CREAM  
1920s COSTUME COMPETITION

AND MUCH MUCH MORE!

[www.clareca.org.uk](http://www.clareca.org.uk)

