



Chevron

Not all parishioners may be aware of the, frequently unseen, work undertaken by Clare Town Councillors. In order to shed some light on our work we will produce a series of articles in the next few editions of Chevron which we hope you will find of interest. This month's article is about how councillors are elected and how we organise our workload.

Councillors are elected by parishioners every 4 years and the next election in Clare will be in May 2015. There are 9 seats on Clare Town Council (CTC) and if more than 9 candidates stand then a public election is held; if there are fewer than 9 candidates then those people are "elected unopposed" without the need for a public vote. Should there still be vacancies then further councillors can be "co-opted". Once elected the councillors select a Chairman from among their number, and also create the committees they believe are necessary for the proper running of the town. This process is repeated every year until the next public election.

The principal legal requirement placed upon a Town Council is to manage properly the funding it receives from St. Edmundsbury, the "precept", which forms a small part of parishioners' council tax. Beyond that, it is for each council to decide how much, or how little, work it wants to take on. A few years ago Clare Town Council decided to sponsor the Clare Community Plan which led to the Council developing a 4 Year Plan for Clare. We report on that Plan every year through the Clare Annual Report which is delivered to every household.

The current councillors believe that an active and engaged Town Council is vital to the sustainability of Clare and, in line with the 4 Year Plan, has created a number of committees and working groups to implement the plan:

Planning:	CTC is consulted on every planning application for Clare and, on contentious applications, speaks in the Planning Meetings in Bury.
Environment:	manages the street cleaners, the cemetery, the Nuttery and cares for the general appearance of Clare.
Highways:	campaigns and liaises with Suffolk County Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council on road, traffic and parking-related issues to improve safety.
Finance & Personnel:	manages our budgets, controls expenditure and is responsible for all staffing matters for the Council's 5 employees.
Community:	produces Chevron, works with community groups on initiatives and keeps our website under review.

In addition, Councillors have been heavily involved in strategic planning for the future of Clare through Vision 2031, grappling with planning applications for wind turbines, pushing for a solution to HGV's through Clare and, for more than 3 years now, trying to reach a sensible basis for the transfer of the Country Park from Suffolk County Council.

On your behalf, we are a very busy Council.

In the next edition of Chevron we will feature the Environment Committee.



Magna Carta is coming!

Put mid-June 2015 into your diaries for the Clare celebrations of the Magna Carta's 800th year. Two de Clares were among the 25 rebel barons, so expect some special events! A Magna Carta in Clare committee has been set up and will be contacting people in the next few weeks to explain how you can join in the fun by helping to run the various activities - from making bunting and manorial banners, to singing madrigals, to helping with a medieval banquet, to being part of a medieval fair and much more. Meanwhile, watch this space!



COMBINED HALLS OF CLARE

Registered charity 280136

CHOC is looking for new Trustees. Do you have a few hours to spare each month?

We are responsible for Clare Town Hall and Clare Old School Community Centre.

To find out more please contact

Administrator John Laws 07500642001, email choc.clare@hotmail.com

Chairman Olive Smith 01787 277082

The Ancient House Museum Update

Clare Ancient House, one of the town's most picturesque Grade I listed buildings, has a split existence. Half is a Landmark Trust holiday let, and the rest serves as the town Museum. On this lovely medieval building there is some of the best decorative pargeting in the country. The Museum's exhibits focus on Clare's history, for its residents and visitors from all over the world. From time to time descendants of former Clare residents turn up with very interesting stories to tell. Our Stewards are the public face of the Museum. Their job is to greet these visitors, point them to the exhibitions and occasionally answer a few questions. A training session each year sets them up. The Museum Trustees are currently recruiting volunteers in order to keep the numbers up. Usually Stewards sit in the Museum for one 3-hour session a month, between April and the end of September, afternoons Thursday to Sunday. If you are interested, please contact Tony Taylor at 277421.

For the 2014 season, the Museum will continue to show the exhibition about Elizabeth de Burgh, the last de Clare to live in Clare Castle for any length, and a great lady in her own right. Among other charitable deeds, she founded Clare College Cambridge, which has loaned several artefacts for the exhibition. Also on show are a panel about the 200th anniversary of the cast iron bridge on Ashen Road, and new for this season, a small display about the late medieval brick and tile kiln which was uncovered at the Stoke Road site where the new housing estate is to be built.

See the website www.clare-ancient-house-museum.co.uk

Chimney fires on the increase

SCC's Fire and Rescue Service is warning people across Suffolk to check their chimney flue, to ensure it is clear, before lighting a fire. There has been a 42% increase in chimney fires in Suffolk in the past year. In December 2013 there were 37 reported chimney fires, compared with 26 in December 2012. Anyone trying to find a suitable chimney sweep can visit www.checkatrade.com, which is the on-line directory of local tradesmen and women who have been checked by SCC Trading Standards.

Police Update

Police are asking for help with the following:-

- o Information regarding the theft of a saddle, hedge trimmer and chainsaw from a tack room in Stoke by Clare (6th January), the theft of a push-along lawn mower from a garage in Stoke Road, Clare (7th January), the theft of a box style trailer with high mesh sides stolen from a barn in North Street, Hundon. (8th January) and the theft of power tools from the building site on Stoke Road (10th to 13th January.)
- o Also, police are keen to hear from anyone who has seen a suspicious silver ford focus YR63 YBT touting for gravel, a yellow flatbed truck DU02 FLE or a white lorry KF51 GGJ.

Any sightings of these or any other vehicles or persons acting suspiciously should be reported to 101.

Police have increased their focus on illegal parking in Clare and CTC are pressing them to make more regular inspections, particularly of those cars which exceed time limits on parking spaces in the centre, thus damaging business. Don't forget that a one year parking permit in the Country Park costs just £20!

If you do not have a Neighbourhood Watch in your part of Clare, then you may wish to contact the Community Watch & Safer Neighbourhood Team Liaison Officer at diane.townsend@suffolk.pnn.police.uk for more information. **Neighbourhood Watch is easy, effective and it works.**

Visit to Châtillon, France in 11-14 July 2014

Once again our friends in Châtillon have invited Clare parishioners to join them for a weekend of fun, frolics and French food over the Bastille Day holiday weekend. Please call Mo Smith on 277559 or email clarefinance@clare-uk.com for more details.

