

The Clare Community Plan Highlights

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THE RESULTS

Where we live:

We are lucky to live in Clare with its beautiful surrounding countryside and quintessentially Suffolk buildings. Many people from outside Clare may only think of it as a tourist attraction, a place to sample local ale in one of the pubs, take a stroll through the country park or, perhaps, seek out a treasure in an antique shop or gallery.

Clare is not just a place to visit. Two thousand of us live here, work in the town, are educated in one of the schools or are enjoying our retirement. As residents of Clare, we have a lot to be proud of about where we live. We have a right to be involved in projects and ideas for the town, which is what The Community Plan is all about.

To steer our economic development, St Edmundsbury Council has designated Clare as a Key Service Centre with a good range of shops, services, small businesses, healthcare and education facilities.

Clare has a balance between its rich history and its modern services. It is a place to live and work and also a thriving tourist attraction. There are currently plans for developments in Clare that will affect the whole community, so everyone needs a chance to be involved. The Community Plan is one way in which we can all have our say.

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About The Community Plan:

What is Clare's Community Plan?

The Community Plan sets out what we as Clare's residents want to improve about our town and environment, forming a guide for the future development of Clare. It is a document which will inform the Parish Council when making decisions affecting our community.

The Community Planning Process

A Steering Group made up of volunteers from within the community was responsible for collecting the views of Clare's residents, analysing the results and then producing a Plan which accurately reflected the community's feedback.

To do this, each household in Clare received a printed questionnaire which covered key topics affecting us:

- The Community
- Shops and Services
- Education
- Housing and Development
- Leisure, Social and Sport
- Traffic and Transport
- Environment and Sustainability
- Mobility and Access to Services

This resulted in an 80% response rate for households from the community. Thank you!

Thanks also to the many 9-17 year olds who completed the Youth questionnaire. Your responses will enable us to focus on the needs of this important sector of the community.

In recognition of the important role played by businesses in contributing to the character of Clare and the quality of its service provision to residents and visitors, a Business Survey was undertaken at the same time. This was administered as an online survey by the Clare Business Association and is reported separately, direct to Clare Parish Council and St Edmundsbury Economic Development Department.

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This resulted in **an 80% response rate** for households from the community.

Thank you! ”

More information on Clare is available at www.clare-uk.com.

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-uk.com. Below is a summary of the report's key findings:

Who responded ...

Those who responded to the questionnaire can be categorised as follows:

- 45% aged 40-64 years
- 43% aged 65 years and over
- 12% aged 18-39 years
- Of these people, 46% are retired and 43% are employed

Of those that replied, 28% have lived in Clare for 31+ years, 26% have lived here between 16-30 years, 22% between 6-15 years and 23% have lived here 5 years or less.

The three most important reasons why people said they came to live in Clare and why they have stayed were 1) village life & amenities, 2) countryside, 3) family in the area. In fact, most residents are happy to stay in Clare as 90% of residents who responded have no intention of leaving within the next five years.



90% of residents who responded **have no intention of leaving Clare** within the next five years.



The Community ...

The questionnaire shows that there is a strong sense of community within Clare. However residents feel that community spirit could be improved by holding more social events. Most residents have not experienced any crime or anti-social behaviour and feel safe walking around Clare at any time of the day or night. Residents are aware of the role of and how to contact Clare Parish Council. However, there is room to improve this at borough and county levels.

From the responses to the survey it was felt that the following issues need to be looked at:

- Investigate the possibility of holding more community events, especially an annual village fete
- Inform the relevant Councils regarding current level of public awareness
- More public internet access to Clare UK website & promotion of this service
- Ensure that the Police are aware of the low level of concerns regarding how respondents contact them and the anti-social issues that a small number of respondents are experiencing

Shops and Services ...

Most residents shop in Clare using the full range of shops and services in the town. Although some felt that additional shops and services such as a dentist, clothing shop and another restaurant are required.

From your responses to the survey it was felt that the following issues need to be looked at:

- Investigate the provision of an indoor/ outdoor market
- To request the Parish Council to actively continue its current dialogue with Suffolk County Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council to resolve the parking problem
- Review provision of additional shops/ services requested by respondents and businesses
- Encourage greater use of Clare-UK website for local employment

Education ...

Residents felt that there was room for evening adult education classes in Clare. Some expressed a requirement for additional childcare facilities.

From responses to the survey it was felt that the following issues need to be looked at:

- To lobby for adult education classes in specified subjects to be provided
- To investigate the provision of holiday and after-school clubs

Housing and Development ...

There was mixed feeling about whether the current level of housing need is being met in Clare. Some residents think that there is a need for smaller, more affordable housing on previously developed sites. Some had no opinion, and some felt that they didn't want any further housing development in Clare.

The majority of you would like to see a gradual year on year increase in housing on smaller sites – rather than significant new developments on one or two large sites. There was no over-riding preference for location of possible new housing.

There was mixed feeling about whether Clare needs further light industrial units.

From responses to the survey it was felt that the following issues need to be looked at:

- To monitor and respond to future housing requirements, ensuring that the views of Clare's residents are fully understood
- To refer the preferred locations and types of housing to relevant local authorities for reference during the planning process
- To consider the provision of more light industrial facilities

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The majority of you would like to see gradual year on year increase in **housing on smaller sites - rather than significant new developments** on one or two large sites. ”

Leisure, Social and Sports ...

Clare has more than forty organisations that cover a wide spread of leisure activities and interests which cater for all age ranges, and just under half of respondents belong to one or more of these.

Clare Country Park is seen as an asset to the town but some residents felt it could be used for a wider range of activities.

A few indicated that other leisure facilities could be developed within Clare, like a swimming pool and tennis court and activities likely to appeal to the young such as a skate park or BMX track.

Most felt that the footpaths around Clare are signposted clearly. A number of residents indicated that they would like cycle routes in and around Clare.

There was a strong preference for the Clare Middle School site being made available for public use.

From responses to the survey it was felt that the following issues need to be looked at:

- To ensure local organisations are aware of ways to publicise themselves
- To investigate the feasibility of enhancing leisure facilities in Clare
- To investigate greater provision of footpaths/cycle routes
- To liaise with the Country Park management to extend the Park's facilities
- To investigate which leisure facilities at the Middle School site could be used for community use

Traffic and Transport ...

Most residents who use public transport for shopping and accessing public services feel that greater frequency, timing and more direct routes were issues.

Traffic speeding and HGV traffic through Clare are seen as problems which lead to difficulties crossing main roads throughout the town.

The majority of residents feel that there is a parking problem in Clare and suggested a new car park as a solution.

From responses to the survey it was felt that the following issues need to be looked at:

- Review the bus routes and timetables to encourage more use of public transport
- To encourage continued dialogue about parking problems in Clare
- To review again the limitation on HGVs through Clare
- Explore the feasibility of traffic calming measures within Clare
- Explore the possibilities of pedestrian crossings

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Traffic speeding and HGV traffic through Clare is seen as a problem. ”

Environment and Sustainability ...

Respondents identified that the main issues affecting the quality of life in Clare are dog fouling and traffic pollution. Generally, you feel that the level of street lighting in Clare is adequate, however, a few areas were identified where lighting could be improved.

The vast majority are happy with the rubbish collection and recycling services.

From responses to the survey it was felt that the following issues need to be looked at:

- To liaise with appropriate bodies regarding dog fouling
- To take the issue of Traffic Pollution in consideration in connection with Section 7 (Traffic and Transport)
- To liaise with appropriate bodies concerning local street lighting levels

Mobility and Access to Services ...

A significant number of respondents felt that wheelie bins and cars parked on the pavement affected mobility around the town. You also indicated a need for NHS dental and chiropody services in Clare.

From responses to the survey it was felt that the following issues need to be looked at:

- To refer the issues of pavement obstruction and poor pavement surface maintenance to the relevant authorities
- To instigate an investigation about possible provision of NHS dental and chiropody services in Clare

Youth Section ...

71 young people responded and were in the following age categories:

- 41% aged 9-11 yrs
- 32% aged 12-14 yrs
- 27% aged 15-17 yrs

Of those, 51% were male and 47% were female. Over half attend one or more clubs or organisations in Clare and some take part in activities outside of Clare. Many requested additional facilities in Clare, such as a swimming pool and youth centre.

Haverhill is the most popular place to get to and most respondents get lifts or use buses as the preferred methods of transport. The vast majority of you feel safe walking around Clare. When respondents leave school, most intend to go to college or university.

Some respondents felt that there is not enough to do in Clare and that specific facilities and shops are not available. Lack of public transport was also mentioned as an issue. However, many enjoy living in a peaceful town in the countryside.

From responses to the survey it was felt that the following issues need to be looked at:

- To investigate the provision of additional recreational facilities for young people in Clare

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Many enjoy living in a peaceful town in the countryside. ”

Next Steps for The Community Plan?

An 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.

There will be a Monitoring Group set up which will oversee the implementation of the Action Plan. If anyone would like to help on that group please contact Nigel Partridge through the Parish Clerk's office. Residents will be informed of progress through the Parish Newsletter.

Parish Clerk - Clare Parish Council

parishclerk@clare-uk.com / 01787 277559

Thank You!

The plan is a result of many hours of hard work by many people. The enthusiastic response and high return rate of questionnaires from you, the residents of Clare, means that the Community Plan that has been produced is meaningful and will help to plan for the future of Clare.