

# **Clare Town Council Annual Report 2013-2014**



*Clare Town Council  
The Old School, Callis Street, Clare CO10 8PX*

*clerk@clare-uk.com 01787 277559  
www.clare-uk.com*

# Contents



## Clare Town Council

Chairman's Report	3-5
Finance	6-8
Environment	9-10
Highways	11
Planning	12-13
Community	14
Emergency Planning	15
Clare Castle Country Park	16-17

## Groups receiving funds from the Town Council

Combined Halls of Clare (CHOC)	18
Christmas Lights	19
Clare in Bloom	20
Clare Swimming Club	21
Clare Playing Fields Association	22-23
Clare Community Choir	24

## Community Groups

The Society for Music in Clare Church	25
Clare Ancient House Museum	26
Clare Liaison and Support Programme (CLASP)	27

<b>List of councillors and Council Staff</b>	<b>28</b>
--	-----------

## Chairman's Report

I have great pleasure in reporting on what has been another very busy and eventful year for your Town Council. Councillors have been working harder than ever on the key aspects of our 4-year plan as well as dealing with some one-off matters as they arose. My thanks go to our councillors who have worked so hard and also to Claire Ebeling, Town Clerk, and Maureen Smith, Responsible Finance Officer, for their excellent support. Our streets continue to look their best through the marvellous efforts of Brian and Colin who frequently complete their work before most of us have ventured onto the streets.



*Clare from the air*

A new member of our team is Keith Mison who has become our Cemetery Officer and he already has a plan in place to ensure that our cemetery is managed in the best possible manner.

Peter Phillips decided in March that he would step down from the Council after many years of excellent service and support to the community. In addition to being Vice Chair of the Council, Peter took on some the most difficult of challenges such as highways matters and the problem of HGV's through Clare. He always led on these issues with great determination and enthusiasm and our thanks are due to him for his contribution to the community.

During the year we have also benefited from excellent support and guidance from Alaric Pugh, our Borough Councillor, and Mary Evans, our County Councillor.

In terms of our 4-year plan 2102-16 we have progress to report.

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

I am pleased to report that building has begun on the development of affordable housing which the Town Council has sponsored and which should be completed by the end of 2014. This proposal is a direct result of the Clare Community Plan that we undertook in 2010 and which showed the demand for a range of small and medium sized homes, which will be reserved for Clare families and people with close associations to Clare.

Within the Vision 2031 consultation, councillors represented Clare before the Planning Inspector.

On the development at the Land East of the Granary, we have been disappointed at the road flooding and related issues and have taken up these matters most strongly with St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

### **Improving our Infrastructure**

During the heavy rains this winter we have tried to improve our access to information from the utility companies on where flooding will cause problem for both drainage and electricity so that we can alert parishioners and public services. We will undertake more work on this over the summer months.

At long last we have agreed with Suffolk County Council that road resurfacing is urgently necessary in Clare and works are now planned for mid-year on Market Hill, Nethergate Street and Cavendish Road. We may at last be rid of some of our potholes!

## **Protecting and Enhancing the Environment**

A great deal of councillors' time has once again been taken up with the continuing negotiations with Suffolk County Council on the transfer of ownership of the Park. Those conversations have now been going on for three and a half years!

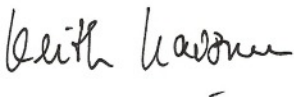
There is a strong team of trustees-elect, led by Geoffrey Bray, who have done a very professional job of developing the longer term plans for the Park. Geoffrey has kindly provided a separate report on the Park, and we have invited Cllr Richard Smith, the Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member, to speak at the Annual Meeting on 6 May.

## **Supporting Community Involvement**

Despite the tightening of budgets, the Council has continued to provide financial support to the much-loved activities in Clare including the Christmas Lights, CHOC, Clare in Bloom, Clare Swimming Club and the Playing Fields. Details are in the Finance Report.

A new initiative that we are pleased to support is the Magna Carta in Clare committee which will be organising a series of events in June 2015 to celebrate the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic document, that was supported by many earls, including two lords of Clare.

This Annual Report provides a number of updates from community groups which we hope you will find interesting and informative.



Keith Haisman  
Chair  
Clare Town Council



# Finance and Personnel Committee Report

## FINANCE 2013/14

Total income for the year ended 31 March 2014 was £126,563, against a budget of £108,329. The increase in income is accounted for by a Heritage Lottery Fund Start-up Grant of £10,000 in respect of the Country Park, a £4,000 contribution from the Christmas Lights' Committee (over half of which has been taken into earmarked reserves) and higher than anticipated Cemetery income (balanced by increased costs). The Precept (the element of Council Tax paid for Parish services) was £103,479.

Total expenditure was £112,779, the main categories being:

	£
Administration and Finance	24,733
Environment	31,530
Website and Chevron	3,023
Maintenance Grants (Town Council assets)	11,897
Grants for Community activities	17,202
Loan repayments	17,175
<b>HLF Start-up Grant</b>	<b>7,219</b>

## RESERVES

As a result of this year's activities, taking account of VAT payments and reclaims, Council reserves increased by £11,538 to £193,375, represented by a general reserve of £138,512 (£137,208 last year) and earmarked reserves of £54,862 (£44,630 last year). The National Association of Local Councils recommends that Parish and Town Councils hold an amount equal to 100% to 150% of annual expenditure in general reserve: our figure currently stands at 130%.

The Precept has been set at £101,786 (planned expenditure of £106,636 offset by income of £4,850), a decrease of £1,693 (1.6%) on 2013/14. This reduction follows a review to ensure both continuing best value in respect of all the Council's expenditure and continued support for initiatives that benefit the whole community. We have also facilitated discussions between some of the larger organisations we support, aimed at helping them reduce their expenditure by combining together in the purchase of goods and services. This is a long-term initiative that has already resulted in insurance savings.

St Edmundsbury Borough Council took a unilateral decision towards the end of last year to phase out, over a four-year period, their funding to local councils of both the Council Tax Support Grant and the Rural Grant. These Grants form some 20% of our total income, with the first 5% removed for 2014/15. **The Town Council was thus confronted with the choice between accepting the reduction and in turn reducing support to much loved community activities, or increasing our own share of the Council Tax bill in order to compensate and continue to support our community. We chose the latter option and also reduced our cost base as much as possible. As a result,** despite the reduction in expenditure shown above, Council Tax in respect of Clare Town Council will rise by 4.6%.

Along with other local councils we have objected strongly to this course of action by the Borough Council, particularly since the withdrawal of the Council Tax Support Grant is against the wishes of Central Government which continues to fund Principal Authorities with this money for 2014/15.

Council Tax bills in Clare will accordingly show that the increase in Council Tax is entirely the responsibility of Clare Town Council. I hope that this explanation demonstrates that the true situation is a little more complex.

For Band D Council Tax payers this means an increase from £107.69 to £113.87, an increase that is less than 12p per week.

## **PERSONNEL**

The Council has five paid staff, all of them employed on a part-time basis, the total wage bill for all five being under £40,000. In addition to the Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer (positions we are required to have), we employ two Street Wardens who do sterling work in keeping Clare looking neat and tidy, and now employ a Cemetery Management Officer to ensure that the Cemetery is kept in good order.

We remain very grateful to this small team for the dedicated way they go about their duties, invariably giving time above and beyond to do a first class job for the community.

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)

**Derek Blake, Chair of Finance and Personnel**



*The Parish Church of St Peter & St Paul at night*



# Environment Committee Report

Working on a reduced budget the Environment Committee has maintained the standards expected for the upkeep of the Cemetery, Nuttery, Churchyard, greenswards, trees, grass cutting and street cleaning.



*A new bench in Callis Street*

Our thanks to the Street Wardens and Clare in Bloom for their efforts to improve the appearance of the street scene in Clare. With grants from Havebury and CLASP we have added two benches (and a third to follow shortly) for public use.

Sadly we still have a dog fouling problem and will continue to work with other agencies to ease the situation.

The Nuttery is maintained by volunteers led by Keith Mison and work continues apace.

The Cemetery reorganisation is well under way. Keith Mison is now our Cemetery Management Officer and his hard work on site has had an immediate effect on the landscape. The new administration system has been extremely effective and the Cemetery is now financially self-sufficient. We are hoping this year to put a power supply into the chapel and explore methods of use for this recently restored building.

Due to national and local government cuts in grants we have to be prudent in our financial decisions for the future but we can assure you that we will maintain the high standards of service that our residents and visitors have come to expect.

**Alan Parsley, Chair**



*Spring Flowers at Clare Church*

# Highways Working Group Report

Speeding, parking and HGVs. These are the subjects most frequently mentioned when talking with our residents, business owners and visitors about highway safety. As a community we can continue to work together to make a real difference in Clare.

When Suffolk police conducted a traffic survey in Stoke Road 18 months ago the results were astounding. During the survey period of 7 days, over 29,000 vehicles drove along this road. More than 27,000 exceeded the 30 mph limit - some at speeds approaching 70 mph! Pedestrians and cyclists report similar problems in Bridewell Street, Snow Hill and Cavendish Road. The Town Council has successfully campaigned for funds to implement traffic calming measures and we are currently working with our County Councillor and Suffolk County Council Highways dept. on how and where these will be most beneficial.

Overstay parking continues to be a problem in the town centre. Did you know that an annual parking permit for the Country Park car park is still only £20? Parking permits are available from St Edmundsbury Borough Council Parks Department, telephone: 01284 757088.

Finally, HGVs and the damage they continue to cause in Clare. Many thanks to our parishioners who have submitted photographs and videos of these large vehicles and the impact they have on buildings, pavements and other vehicles in Clare, and to those who took the time to fill in our Chevron survey on the subject telling us of their safety concerns. In a rural area we appreciate the need for agricultural traffic to use our roads, and we certainly wouldn't wish to impact on deliveries to local businesses, but the Highways Group will continue to try and reduce the threats posed by HGVs using the A 1092 and B 1063 through Clare as short cuts to and from the docks in Felixstowe and Harwich and other destinations.



**Margaret Godwin Chair**

*A tight turn at Bell Corner*

# **Clare Town Council Planning Committee**

## **Supporting the Planning Work of the Full Town Council**

This year SEBC joined with Forest Heath and major changes have taken place within the Borough planning department. However, amidst this change, the Town Council has pushed for links with the Borough to be strengthened and we appreciate its desire to actively listen to and work closely with us. This is critically important because broad decisions made at Borough level e.g. through Rural Vision 2031, impact directly onto the long term future of our town. As a Town Council, we understand what that impact could look like and whether or not it answers the needs of the town as expressed through the Community Plan. Clare is set for a period of growth and it has been our role to ensure that that growth helps to ‘sustain a thriving historic town with a vibrant community.’

We have therefore carefully analysed and made detailed responses to the major Borough planning documents, emphasising the need for measures to promote the sustainability of our community and pressing the point at a major planning enquiry. We have been involved in numerous discussions with planners, developers and community groups to improve the quality of detailed plans for Clare in terms of architecture, infrastructure, range and type of housing and how to address potential issues such as flooding. We have fought for more appropriate S 106 funding (levies on developers) to address the direct needs of Clare e.g. for traffic calming measures, and we are constantly monitoring developments in progress and addressing the unusual, such as what to do about the medieval kiln.

Improving the quantity and quality of affordable housing for people with strong links to Clare is a good example of our work this year. Having interviewed housing association providers, we appointed Hastoe to build 11 new homes north of Lutus Close. Unhappy with the original designs, we pressed for a new layout and architecture resulting in final plans that have been recommended as exemplars for other housing associations to follow! Similar pressure improved both the number and type of affordable homes originally planned for the Stoke Road development.

Other work this year has included responding to applications to build solar farms and actively opposing the plan to build a wind turbine in the locality. Individual planning applications arrive on a weekly basis covering everything from the need to remove a tree, to illuminated signs, to building cart lodges to building small or substantial annexes. Some can be dealt with by the committee but most go through the full town council.

Looking to the future, we know that there is a need to put a new vision in place– be it a Neighbourhood Plan or a Market Town Plan – something that would ensure the vibrancy of Clare. Both would require full community involvement, but our much praised Community Plan shows that that is entirely possible!

**Cllr Gayle Mallows**  
**Chair of Planning Committee**



*The brick kiln discovered at the site of the Charles Church development*

# **Community Working Group Report**

This working group has two main functions. Firstly its role is to improve communications with the community on the activities of the Town Council and any matters which affect the well-being of residents or impact on our Town. Secondly it has undertaken to encourage and support community events, particularly where a large number of groups of residents are involved.

Apart from the noticeboards in Clare, Chevron continues to be our major means of communicating with Clare parishioners. We try to keep our articles to 2 pages and to produce an edition every 2 months. Feedback continues to be very positive.

We have also supported the production and delivery of newsletters covering developments on the Country Park and will continue to do so. Producing 900 paper copies of Chevron, plus the Country Park newsletters and delivering them to every household in Clare is of course an expense which we continue to monitor closely.

We are very aware that the Clare-UK website is becoming more and more difficult to keep up to date, especially as it tries to provide information to Clare residents as well as visitors, and has many pages relating to businesses, clubs and societies which it is increasingly difficult to maintain. The strategy we had for this ‘all-Clare’ approach to the website was appropriate when we last re-engineered the website over 6 years ago. Technology has moved on and it is now much easier for groups to set up and maintain their own websites and have a link to the Clare-UK site.

With this in mind work has begun on designing a much smaller and more flexible site that will concentrate more on the activities of the Town Council and matters affecting Clare residents.

**Keith Haisman, Chair**

# **Emergency Planning Committee Report**

The Town Council's Emergency Plan exists for the unlikely situation of the Town being isolated and where normal relief services are unable to help for a period of time. The Emergency Plan can be activated by any Town Councillor or on the reasonable recommendation of a parishioner or following advice from the emergency services. The nominate control and refuge point is the Old School Community Centre, however this may change depending on the nature and location of the Emergency. The Old School will offer food and beverages and blankets for warmth as well as temporary accommodation until the situation is resolved

Following recent power outages and out of the ordinary extreme weather conditions the Council are looking at extending the Emergency Plan to offer a warm refuge where some food and hot beverages will be available. This will occur in the event of extended power outages and other circumstances where residents need to seek temporary respite but would not be classed as a full emergency.

We are seeking to compile a list of vulnerable people who may be adversely affected during an emergency. If you wish to feature on this list please contact the Clerk on 01787 277559.

**Peter Phillips**

**Chair Emergency Planning**





# Clare Castle Country Park

The transfer of the Park from Suffolk County Council (SCC) has been under discussion for about four years. In August 2012, on the basis of a detailed proposal by Clare Town Council, SCC decided to negotiate with the Town Council as the preferred future owner.



*Clare Castle motte*

Starting in June 2013 regular newsletters have been circulated so the following is a short summary of what has been done since 1st April 2013:

**April** Clare Town Council agreed a team of ‘Trustees-elect’. When the ownership of the Park was transferred to the Council the Trustees would be responsible for the management of the Park.

SCC agreed in principle to meet the legal and other professional costs that would otherwise have been borne by the Town Council.

**August** The Trustees agreed to take an active part in helping to arrive at a satisfactory solution regarding the water levels in the New Cut. Although the work will not be completed until later this year, an agreed solution was ‘signed off’ in January.



**October** Concertus, design and property consultants, were appointed, to deal with all the detailed preliminary work and project manage the renovation of the buildings in the Park.

**November** A £10,000 Heritage Lottery Flung (HLF) grant was obtained. This enabled the Trustees to draw upon the experience and knowledge of a range of consultants who were experts in various fields. (Ancient Monuments, environmental heritage projects, parks, museums, ‘visitor experiences and leaning, outreach and activity planning). This work will have been completed by the end of March and will be reported on at the Annual Meeting in May

**December** The detailed maintenance schedules, and estimated future costs of all elements of the Park (excluding the buildings and the motte), prepared in considerable detail by Damien Parker of St Edmundsbury District Council, were received.

**February** Bidwell reported on their independent ‘audit’ of all the maintenance and other schedules (including those relating to the buildings, but not the castle and the motte). Their report, and all the other documentation, gives us reasonable confidence that we know pretty well what needs to be done and what it may cost, in both the short and longer term.

**March** A civil engineer, who specialises in Ancient Monuments, was retained to advise on the stability of the motte and his report will have been received by the time you read this report.

**What next?** At the time of writing (Early March), the legal ‘due diligence’ (the checking of legal titles and all the other things one needs to know) has still some way to go. We need to be satisfied on those matters but the other critical step is to try to reach some broad agreement with SCC on the financial terms on which the Park would be transferred. If these two matters can be resolved by May the renovation of the buildings should start within a few weeks.

**Geoffrey Bray Chair of the Provisional Trustees**

# Combined Halls of Clare

Reg. charity 280136

The charity objective is to manage and maintain Clare Town Hall and the Old School Community Centre. Both halls are well used and the hire fees cover day to day expenses, salaries, utility bills, repairs and some improvements. Grant aid from the Town Council pay for gas and fire safety checks, and insurance. Finance for bigger projects has to be obtained by fundraising and seeking grant aid.

Our main project in 2013 was building repair works and exterior decoration of the Old School Community Centre, achieved with a grant from the Town Council. During 2013 the Town Hall ventilation system was upgraded, and the heating system serviced. The front doors were re-hung, and finger guards are now in place. These and other smaller improvements were funded by CHOC. The old Town Hall chairs have been replaced with others which were donated by Tottenham Hotspur.

There are several projects we are currently investigating. In the Old School a priority is refurbishment of the toilets. Others include replacing the old curtains in Halls 1 and 2 with blackout blinds, a hearing loop, new chairs, and improvements to the kitchen. In the Town Hall we want to improve the lighting, and a connection for Broadband will be installed.

CHOC Trustees fundraising events in 2013 included a traditional Burns Night, two Quiz Evenings, and an Open Morning which included a plant sale. We are grateful for help given at these events by volunteers, and for support from the people of Clare.



*The Old School Community Centre*

CHOC now has a website - [choc.org.uk](http://choc.org.uk) - and public events held at the halls can be listed in the diary, email details to – [events@choc.org.uk](mailto:events@choc.org.uk).

Recognition must be given to Rosemary Warmington who stood down as a Trustee at the end of 2013, after spending many years with CHOC, several as Chairman.

**Olive Smith, Chairman**

# Clare Christmas Lights Report

## Review of 2013

This year the switch-on night was a hugely successful event and we had an amazing turnout from local families once again. We would like to thank all the volunteers who helped us on the night to make it a success. The format was the same as previous years but for the first time we held a competition at Clare Primary School for one child to switch on the lights. The competition was won by 5-year old Isla Smith who was assisted by the Mayor of St Edmundsbury. Magic Olly provided the children's entertainment and there were refreshments donated by businesses in Clare which raised a large amount of money on the night.

The severe weather over the festive period brought some challenges when it came to keeping the lights lit as they took a battering from the rain and high winds

This was the last year for the current lights committee who have decided to stand down due to numerous other work and personal commitments. Pippa, Marie, Claire and Barb would like to thank everyone in the town for all their generous support over the last 7 years, the local businesses of Clare who have helped us by donating goods, time and premises, the Town Council, and not forgetting Carl Folley and his team who work so hard to keep the lights looking good each year.

## 2014

The new committee, chaired by Vicki Stone from Market Hill Antiques, have now taken over the running of the Christmas Lights. They have already organised their first fundraising event, a Music Quiz in the Town Hall on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April.



**Pippa Smith, Retiring Chair**

*The Music Quiz in the Town Hall*

# Clare in Bloom

In 2013 Clare in Bloom organised Open Gardens. Although it was a chilly day it was very enjoyable with lots of visitors both from Clare and further afield. We raised just over £2,000 for Clare in Bloom funds.

The summer planting got off to a slow start due to the cold spring but the plants soon caught up and gave a very good display. Jackson Garden Services was contracted to water the containers.

In October we planted 3,500 croci on the greensward at Westfields.

This spring the church border and containers are spectacular and Clare in Bloom has received many compliments and thanks.



*A decorated cart on Nethergate Street*

In 2014 we will be changing the Clare in Bloom logo. The cart in Nethergate Street will be dismantled and we are searching for an appropriate replacement. In addition to the annual seasonal planting to raise funds we will have a plant sale in May, we will plant croci on the greensward at the junction of Snow Hill and Hertford Road, and clean, paint and replace the planters as necessary.

A group of about 10 people care for the plants in Clare, we meet on the first Tuesday of the month, the dates are on the Clare UK events page and on the notice board in Pashlers Alley.

Thank you to Town Council for the continuing financial support

**Jane Haisman, Chair**

# Clare Swimming Club

In the summer of 2013 Clare Swimming Club were able to organise the opening of the swimming pool at Stour Valley Community School. It was open to the whole community every day for four weeks during the school summer holiday. The two school site managers opened and closed the pool and ensured the temperature and chemical balances were correct. We employed fully trained lifeguards and had a volunteer on duty at all times. We charged an entry fee of £2 per swimmer for a three hour session.



## *Summer Swimming at the Stour Valley Community School*

The weather was warm and sunny for most of the period the pool was open and we had 1,250 swimming visits and many more people who accompanied the swimmers.

The Town Council gave the Club a grant and enabled the necessary Public Liability Insurance to be added to the Council's insurance. The County Councillor also helped us with a grant from her Locality Budget.

The school have agreed to us organising the opening of the pool again this summer and plans are now underway.

**Jane Haisman, Chair**



# Clare Playing Fields Association

This last year marked the end of an era for Clare Playing Fields, as John Martin stepped down as trustee and Chairman of the organisation. John was one of the original trustees when the playing field was given to the Parish by Iris Johnston in 1970 and the association was set up to manage it. He played a major part in the project to build the Pavilion and in finding the grants and fundraising to cover the cost and, working with other trustees, has carefully looked after this major town asset for over 40 years. We thank him for all of his dedication and wish him well in his well-deserved retirement.

The Playing Fields continue to offer a great location for football. Currently the Saturday adult team play in the Cambridge Kershaw League and the Sunday adult team play in the Treadfirst Sudbury League. Junior football is thriving with four teams in the Sudbury and Ipswich Youth Football League. The under 9's, 10's and 11's train regularly on a Saturday morning and the under 8's train on a Monday evening and all children are encouraged to turn up, not just team members. The highlight of the year for the Clare Town Lions was being chosen to act as mascots



*John Martin receiving the cheque from the Football Foundation  
for the funding of the new Pavilion*

for Ipswich Town Football Club at the home game against Middlesbrough. 30 children went on the day, they trained in the morning on the astroturf pitch, formed a guard of honour as the teams came out and watched the Town win!

The Pavilion continues to provide a great venue for other sport activities such as yoga and pilates. The Clare Art Club use it for their monthly meetings and well-attended pottery workshops are held there during the holiday periods. It is also an excellent venue for family parties, especially during the summer when the patio and field areas can be used.

In this coming year, we need to redecorate all of the external woodwork, we hope to improve the kitchen facilities by providing new cookers and we are investigating the possibility of getting a licence so that more organisations can use the facilities for fund raising. We are very keen to extend the range of sports and leisure activities that can be offered, particularly for youngsters after school hours and plan to survey the parish soon.

Buildings and fields need maintenance and care if they are to be kept in good order and whilst we are able to raise some funds through letting the pavilion and field, we are highly appreciative of the significant support that we receive from the Town Council who help with funding for insurance, grass cutting and pitch marking. We would also like to thank the Clare Priory for their kind donation in support of our work.

**Tony Sheppard, Clare Playing Field Association Trustee**

# Treble C Choir (Clare Community Choir)

Treble C Choir (Clare Community Choir) was set up in March 2012 and is open to people in Clare and surrounding communities. There are no auditions, the emphasis being on singing together in a relaxed environment. We sing a wide range of music from the standards to musicals, rock, pop and soul.

Our membership has now grown to more than 70. In addition to rehearsing regularly in the United Reformed Church we contribute entertainment to the community. This year we sang at the CLASP Senior Centre Christmas lunch and participated in the Clare Community Carol Service in the Baptist Church.



*The Treble C Choir*

Successful concerts were held at the Town hall during May and November where sell-out audiences were entertained at relaxed and informal events. It is the intention to repeat similar events during the year. The concerts give the people of Clare the opportunity to enjoy the choir's singing. In addition they enable the choir to raise much needed funds,. The choir made a financial contribution to the Clare Christmas Lights Fund from the November concert receipts.

The main aim of the choir is for the members to enjoy singing and to improve their musical ability and knowledge. It is also an opportunity for members to socialise and enjoy each other's company. A choir party was held in the Community Centre in January where members enjoyed a "bring and share" supper. We also held a social event in the summer which was well attended by choir members.

Rehearsals are generally held at the United Reformed Church in Nethergate Street in Clare at 7.30 pm on the first and third Mondays of the month during term times, but these dates sometimes change. Anyone interested in finding out more about the choir should contact me on 01787 277747 or the Choir Secretary, Jenny Catton on 01787 277585 .

**Roy Draper, Chair**



# The Society for Music in Clare Church (SMICC)

In 2013 we put on five concerts and ended the year with a surplus of income over expenditure. This enabled us to set aside a sum that would enable the vestry to be redecorated and consequently made more welcoming to those who perform at our concerts.

Our first concert in March was a 'step into the unknown' for us. A choir made up of singers from London and all over East Anglia (totalling over 90) gathered in the morning to rehearse under the conductor, Tom Appleton. In the evening they gave a performance in front of an audience of 150 – the main work being Fauré's Requiem. Thanks to the inspired leadership of Tom the singers had a memorable day and the audience enjoyed an outstanding concert. The Aspistras Drawing Room Orchestra, the Nonsuch Singers, the Dante string quartet and finally the Choir of Clare College Cambridge provided a range of different music for our four other concerts.

For our concerts in 2014 we will continue our aim of providing high quality performances of different types of classical works from different periods. By the time you read this our first concert of the year will have been held. Under Tom Appleton, a choir, similar to the one which performed in March 2013, will have rehearsed and performed Brahms German Requiem. In May we welcome the Goldfield Ensemble (the main work being Brahms clarinet quintet), July sees the return of Pentagon Brass, in September Marie Noel Kendall will give a piano recital, and finally in December the Musicke Company will perform 'A Yuletide Tale'.

Details of dates, times and works to be performed appear on the Clare Town Council website and are publicised in the weeks leading up to each concert. If you would like to be on our mailing list please email [smicc@gmail.com](mailto:smicc@gmail.com) or call Geoffrey Bray on 01787 277731.

**Geoffrey Bray**



*Goldfield Ensemble*

# Clare Ancient House Museum

## Report on 2013-2014 activities

The 2013 exhibition 'The First Lady of Clare, Elizabeth de Burgh: A Celebration of her Contributions to the Town' opened on 28th March, with an official launch in late April, held at the parish church. Artefacts were borrowed from Clare College, the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, Moyses' Hall in Bury St Edmunds, and two Clare residents. A second small exhibition to celebrate the 1813 cast iron bridge on Ashen Road was also showing. Spring and Autumn archaeological digs took place in Clare Castle inner bailey, under the auspices of Managing a Masterpiece. Trustees became involved in the attempt to save the 16th-century kiln unearthed by Suffolk County Council archaeologists on the site of the Stoke Road housing development. Although the kiln will not be open and on show, it will be reburied rather than destroyed, and several bricks have been given to the Museum, for a small exhibition in 2014. In 2013 the Museum added Half-Term openings to its normal season. The February opening had very cold weather and few visitors, but October Half-Term was much more successful, so this will continue in 2014.



Catherine Horwood Barwise has been appointed a Trustee of the Museum. In 2014, the Trustees will apply for re-accreditation under the programme now run by the Arts Council. The Curator Peggy Smith will head the Town Council committee to run the June 2015 Magna Carta celebrations in Clare. The Museum will have exhibition panels on Richard de Clare (d. 1217) and Gilbert de Clare (d. 1230), both of whom were members of the Committee of 25 guarantors of Magna Carta. Tom Shaw will prepare a large exhibition on the history of education in Clare for 2015. Museum Trustees are also involved as Trustees-elect or consultants to developments in Clare Castle Country Park. The Friends of Clare Ancient House Museum continue to grow, but more are welcome; new Helpers to replace those who have retired are being recruited.

The Landmark Trust installed insulation in the attic of the Ancient House and repaired a crumbling wall in Room 2. The roof tiles displaced by October 2013 storms were not replaced until 10 January 2014.

**Richard Smith, Chair**

## **Clare Liaison and Support Project**

We have had another busy and successful year made possible by the unstinting efforts of our 40+ volunteers. The increasing numbers of the Senior Circle, meeting on Wednesday in the Community Centre, have enjoyed their 3 course lunches cooked by Christine Little and her helpers, enlivened in the afternoons by Art Classes, Keep Fit classes and Clothing Sales. There have also been trips to the Seaside, Theatres and coming up in May-- a Mystery Trip ! There is a one hundredth birthday to be celebrated soon!

The CAR AID scheme continues to flourish- thanks to Geoffrey- taking people to Hospital and Doctor and Dentists' appointments.. The demand is ever increasing and we do need new volunteer drivers if we are to keep up. Contact - Geoffrey Bray Tel. 01787 277731

Fund raising events have included the usual Autumn lunch- held this year in Mill House- and our table sale held every 2 months in the Town Hall. Contact - Liz Knight Tel 01787 277810.

We recently had a successful and fund raising evening made possible by the Cardamom Restaurant in Clare.

Our Mini bus and its trained volunteer drivers have been busy taking people to the Senior Circle, the Seekers Club, trips to Supermarkets and in July our drivers ferried people to and from the Priory Craft Fair . The minibus is also available for hire by other charities. We are very grateful to June and Malcolm Smith who organised and ran this section for 9 years, retiring at Xmas, and we welcome Mike Arnold who is taking over from them..

Our befriending team run by Fel Parsley has been active visiting people in their own homes with gradually increasing numbers.

Margaret Taylor is retiring as Chair in May and we are very pleased to welcome Christine Little in her place.

So many people say “ Good old CLASP “ and we are proud to be a well regarded part of the life of Clare with a big thank you to all our volunteer helpers.

**Margaret Taylor, Chair**

# Clare Town Councillors and Staff

Paul Bishop

Derek Blake

Margaret Godwin

Phil Gryce

Keith Haisman (Chair)

Gayle Mallows

Alan Parsley

Peter Phillips (Vice-chair) (Retired March 2014)

Leslie Warmington



Claire Ebeling

Town Clerk

Maureen Smith

Finance Officer

Colin Smith

Street Warden

Brian Watts

Street Warden

Keith Mison

Cemetery Officer

Alaric Pugh

St Edmundsbury Borough Councillor

Mary Evans

Suffolk County Councillor