

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Clare held in the Old School Community Centre,
Clare on 1 May 2012 at 7pm**

Present: Cllr. Keith Haisman (Chair), Claire Ebeling (Parish Clerk) and approximately 40
parishioners

1.	Apologies - Rosemary Warmington (CHOC) Cllr. Haisman welcomed all and thanked the WI for their assistance with the refreshments. A presentation was made by Ellie Lovejoy and Ashley Sheppard to John and Sue Laws to mark the end of the 35 years service keeping the park immaculate for Suffolk County Council and everyone in Clare.
2.	Minutes of previous Annual Parish Meeting held on 3 May 2011 There were no questions. Peter Phillips proposed them as correct, this was seconded by Derek Blake and agreed unanimously.
3.	Matters arising from the previous minutes None.
4.	Town Council Chairman's report Cllr. Keith Haisman presented the report which gave a summary of Town Council activities over the past year: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4-Year Development Plan - has been created, building on the Community Plan to run until 2016.• Planning matters - the Town Council has contributed strongly to the Rural Vision 2031 consultation to ensure appropriate housing development for Clare and continues to insist that due regard be taken to ensure appropriate housing development for Clare and continues to insist that due regard be given infrastructure shortcomings.• Community matters - Clare Town Council engaged with Suffolk County Council to find a sustainable basis on which the ownership of the buildings can transfer to Clare Town Council.• Links with Châtillon were further strengthened with visits by over 50 Clare parishioners and students as well as visitors from Châtillon for the re-dedication of the war memorial on Remembrance Day.• Communications - the new style newsletter Chevron had been received well and will be delivered monthly to all homes in Clare.• Name change - the Parish Council has resolved to change its status to Clare Town Council in order to underpin Clare's aspirations as a thriving and dynamic community.• Clare Library – the Parish Conference was attended by Councillors last week, where they heard that no libraries will now be closed and no redundancies made. Also that there is a tenancy arrangement in place to ensure that Clare library does not lose its premises.

5.	<p>Annual presentation of Clare Town Council accounts</p> <p>A written income and expenditure statement for year ending 31 March 2012 and a balance sheet were circulated. (Copies are available from the Clerk). These were presented by Cllr. Derek Blake in detail. Expenditure for 2011/12 totalled £105,901 with a total income of £115,955. Reserves remain healthy and within recommended limits at £127,763. The precept for 2012/13 is £102,896, an increase of 4.0% on last year. The increase is considered necessary in order to sustain important ‘whole town’ community initiatives. For further details see the full Annual Report.</p> <p>The final accounts were proposed, seconded and approved.</p>
6	<p>Borough Councillor's report</p> <p>Cllr. Alaric Pugh gave a verbal report as follows:</p> <p>As a newly elected Councillor I have undergone a very thorough induction to enable me to properly understand the workings of a Borough Council and its responsibilities. I have also been selected for further training in the Next Generation Leadership programme. I sit on the Planning Committee; the Rural Area Working Party; the Sustainable Development Working Party; the Housing Strategy Working Party; the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Stour Valley Project committee; in each case I represent the interests of Clare and also the wider area of West Suffolk.</p> <p>In this last year there have been some fundamental changes in the operation of the Borough Council. Most notable is the ongoing process of sharing service delivery with our neighbouring Council, Forest Heath. This is a major cost saving initiative and one of the reasons there has been no increase in the Council Tax this year. This process is not yet complete and will cover all areas of work for the Council when finished.</p> <p>One of the major preoccupations of this year has been the proposal by Suffolk County Council to dispose of many of its responsibilities including our own Country Park. Throughout the year I have been very actively involved in the discussions at all levels and was happy to secure St Eds as interim rangers and maintainers of the green spaces.</p> <p>There are a number of properties in Clare belonging to the Havebury Housing Association and I regularly accompany the area manager on a walk around the town to look at any issues that may have arisen.</p> <p>I am pleased to announce that in addition to my attendance at monthly Parish Council meetings, I will be running an experimental Surgery on the first Saturday of the month between 9.30am-10am in Clare Library where any resident is welcome to come and talk through areas of concern that I may be in a position to help with.</p> <p>I stood for election to represent the people of Clare and to take forward any concerns that residents may have that relate to the Borough Council. Nothing is too small - in fact managing to get something sorted out is the most satisfying thing. I have dealt with overhanging hedges; broken street lights; given planning advice; addressed housing queries, and many other important items - whatever may be of concern I would encourage you to bring it to my attention. If it is something I can help with then I will be delighted to do so. If it is not within my remit I will try to find out who you should be talking to.</p>

7.	<p>County Councillor's report</p> <p>Cllr. Midwood confirmed that after 15 years as County Councillor, this would be her last year as she would not be standing for re-election next year.</p> <p>Cllr. Midwood congratulated Clare Town Council on officially becoming a 'Town' and on a very good Annual Report. Cllr Midwood also congratulated Clare on the refurbishment of the War Memorial and reported that she had assigned some of her locality budget to contribute to the funding of the refurbishment of the kitchen in the Town Hall.</p>
8	<p>CHOC</p> <p>Cllr. Phillips reported that a new sound system with hearing loop is being installed in the Town Hall and there will be an open day in the Town Hall on 26th May.</p> <p>Cllr. Phillips appealed for volunteers as Trustees and reported that the CHOC AGM would take place on Thursday 3rd May.</p>
9	<p>Clare Combined Charities</p> <p>Ron Longland, Secretary presented a report which summarised the remit of Clare Combined Charities as Clare Common and allotments, Goosecroft and the Alms Houses as well as providing an educational fund for non-adults.</p>
10.	<p>An update on the future of Clare Country Park</p> <p>Cllr. Haisman summarized developments over the last 18 months and thanked Damien Parker and his team for ensuring the green spaces in the park are well kept.</p> <p>A parishioner raised a concern that if the park is not maintained, its attraction to visitors would be lost and this could have serious implications for Clare businesses.</p> <p>Cllr. Haisman responded that the park could risk being a financial burden on the Town Council and we need to ensure that does not happen. The County and Borough Councils have refused to accept ownership due to their own budgetary restrictions. Bryn Griffiths, an officer at SCC added that Cllr. Terry is very keen to continue discussions and that County Council officers are committed to a successful handover of the park in the future.</p> <p>Mr Griffiths stated that Suffolk County Council are considering the proposal from the Friends group separately and their wish is for Clare Town Council to collaborate with the Friends group. Cllr. Haisman confirmed that Clare Town Council will write to Suffolk County Council to confirm the intention to make a proposal as Clare Town Council.</p> <p>A question was raised regarding security issues. Cllr. Pugh responded that the police have arranged operational cover to ensure much more regular patrols in the park.</p>
11.	<p>An update on the future of Clare Library</p> <p>Cllr. Haisman referred the audience to the Chairman's Report presented earlier.</p>

Mr Geoffrey Bray thanked the Councillors of Clare Town Council on behalf of the parishioners. There were no further questions and the meeting closed at 8.40pm and was followed by refreshments served by Clare Women's Institute.