

Clare Castle Country Park (CCCP) - March 2014

Who is doing what?

I have a concern that as these newsletters go out with my name at the bottom people will not appreciate how much the other Trustees-elect do. While all my colleagues are making great contributions two people in particular have put in, and continue to put in, a huge amount of time - Keith Haisman and Derek Blake. While my main role is to make sure we are in a position to run the Park, their main task is to ensure we are quite clear what we will be taking on: both Keith and Derek are doing a great job. They have been involved with the potential transfer from Suffolk County Council for the best part of four years and their stamina and commitment should be applauded by all of us.

Transfer of the Park from Suffolk County Council (SCC).

Bidwells have reviewed all the reports and documentation with which we were provided. Their brief was to advise us whether we had been given a comprehensive picture of current and future work, as well as the costs that are likely to be involved. Their report was received in February and has given us the confidence that we know pretty well what needs to be done, both in the short and longer term. As I mentioned in the February newsletter we also needed some assurance on the stability of the motte (which was not included in the above) and a civil engineer has been appointed to advise us on that matter.

We had a preliminary meeting with SCC in the latter part of February and identified the areas which need to be resolved before any transfer can take place. Needless to say the biggest 'sticking point' is likely to be the financial terms of the transfer. These are being further considered by both parties before we meet again in the last week of March.

The Town Council are inviting Richard Smith (**not** the Clare Richard Smith) to the Annual Meeting on 6th May. He is the Cabinet Member for Suffolk County Council with responsibility for economic development, environment and planning. As such he is the elected councillor with whom we are discussing the transfer of the Park. Consequently this could be an opportunity to hear the Suffolk CC views on the Park.

Logo

As at the time of writing a good number of people have told us which of the two logos they prefer. (They were displayed in the February newsletter and circulated to all households with Chevron). If you have not yet let us know your choice please do so by 31st March by selecting 'Tree version' or 'Chevron version'. You can put your choice in an envelope, together with your name and address (with 'CCCP logo' on the envelope), and deliver it to the Town Council office in the Old School Community Centre building, or email your choice to countryparklogo@hotmail.com. Every resident of Clare on the latest published electoral register is eligible to make one choice.

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) project.

We have made visits to three sites that have features that are similar to those of Clare Castle Country Park – Eye Castle, Dunwich Greyfriars and Bungay Castle; compared with CCCP they are all considerably smaller in terms of their size and the number of attractions they have. However we learned some really interesting things from what they have done, and their experiences. If anyone is planning to go to any sort of attraction that is open to the public, and would be willing to give us a short summary of their experience, it would all add

to our knowledge. If, before you go, you contacted me I could provide you with a simple questionnaire which will highlight some of the things which are of particular interest to us but any additional thoughts/ideas would also be very welcome.

On 11th March we held our second workshop that was a key part of this project. With the aid of Oakmere Solutions, we gained a better understanding of what was involved in a major Heritage Lottery Fund bid, and identified a limited number of priorities that would make the Park significantly more attractive, but without changing its basic nature.

New Cut.

Progress continues to be made. The application to the Environment Agency to get their formal approval is proceeding and quotes have been received from two contractors for carrying out the work.

Geoffrey Bray – March 2014.

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