

PARISH NEWS



Clare
Parish Council

ISSUE EIGHT - FEBRUARY 2010

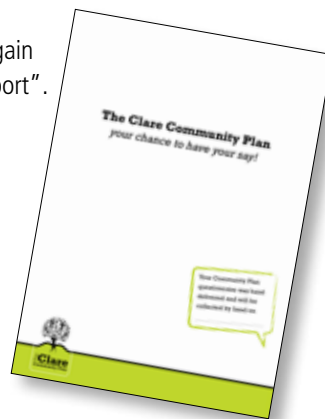
Parishioners Enthusiastic Response - Community Plan

A big thank you to everyone who completed the questionnaire. 80% of households returned the questionnaire - an excellent result. Sincere thanks also go to the Steering Group and the small army of volunteers who delivered and collected the questionnaires.

Steering Group Chairman Nigel Partridge said "There will be a great deal of work over the next couple of months to analyse the responses and to draw up an action plan. We propose to present the results of the survey at the **Annual Parish Meeting which will be held on 20th April at 7pm in the Old School Community Centre.** Do come along and hear the results first hand.

Once the full report has been written and delivered to the Parish Council every household will receive a summary of the report so you can see the plans for Clare over the coming years.

Thank you again for your support".



Christmas Lights 2009

The switching-on of the Clare Christmas Lights took place on Friday 27th November and we were delighted to see so many people come out to join in the fun. The Mayor of St Edmundsbury, Cllr Patricia Warby, switched on the lights and children's entertainment was provided by Magic Olly.

This year for the first time some of the town's retailers displayed donation pots to enable residents and visitors to contribute to the cost of the Christmas Lights. We received a total of £337 from these pots and we would like to thank all those who gave so generously.

The Christmas window competition which was run by some of the retailers was won by Market Hill Antiques, which received the most votes. Everyone who voted in the competition was entered into a prize draw; the hamper was won by David Perry.

There was also an art competition for the children of Clare Primary School. The year group winners were Harriet Shaw (Oak), Sonny Smith (Ash) and Abbey Humphrey (Cedar). The overall winner was Annecy Webb.



Combined Halls Improvements.

Combined Halls of Clare Committee are striving to make the facilities more attractive to potential hirers of both the Community and Town Halls.

In addition to the installation of Wi-Fi in the Community Halls CHOC has just had approval to assume the responsibility of licensed bar facilities in both halls. In the future there will no requirement for hirers to apply for occasional licences etc as CHOC will be the responsible licensee.

Plans are currently being considered for the adaptation of part of the front of the Town Hall into a dedicated bar area available for hire in addition to the present snack bar.

Storage manufacturers are being consulted to assess the feasibility of replacing the present mishmash of storage cupboards with purpose built storage facilities suitable to the needs of regular hirers. The idea is to streamline storage facilities in the areas where they are required and maximise the space available.

Help and fresh ideas to increase the usage of the Combined Halls are much needed and there are vacancies on the committee for anyone who would be interested in helping the committee to meet future challenges.

Les Warmington, CHOC would warmly welcome any enquires from those interested on Clare 277933.

Car Parking

Parish Councillors have been working hard to alleviate the parking problems in Clare town centre and now have achieved a break through in negotiations with the County Council regarding parking charges and conditions in the Country Park car park.

From the 1st April 2010 a new scale of charges will come into force which will provide free parking from 09:00 to 11:00 each day and new low cost annual parking permits will be available to business owners, their staff and residents alike for long term parking.

Parish Councillor June Smith said 'A number of people have worked very hard to gain this new pricing structure in The Clare Country Park Car Park. It represents significant advantages that will support businesses in the town and for those who have a need to park in the town centre. We would like to give it a positive welcome and give it every chance to succeed'.

Country Park staff will be responsible for managing the sale of annual permits. However park staff have welcomed support from the Clare Business Association some of whose members have offered to be outlets for the permits.

A publicity scheme encouraging the use of the car park will be launched shortly and watch out for posters in shop windows where the 'annual permit' can be purchased.

A major issue that posed difficulties in encouraging greater use of the car park has been security concerns. To reassure users the County Council will install security lighting mounted on the Visitors Centre building which will operate in winter months from dusk to 19:00hrs.

Meanwhile the Parish Council continues to work with both St Edmundsbury Borough Council and the County Council to find solutions to the parking availability, control and accessibility issues that remain in the town centre.



Country Park Scale of Charges.

Effective 1st April 2010.

Daily

09:00 - 11:00	Free parking
11:00 - 18:00	Up to 2 hours £1.00
	Over 2 hours £1.50

Annual Permits

£20 per annum - No restrictions.

Clare Tourism Forum

Following an enthusiastic inaugural meeting on 2nd February the Clare Tourism Forum is now up and running. The first meeting was attended by representatives of the Business Association, hospitality businesses, galleries, the Ancient House Museum, the Churches, Clare in Bloom and the Parish Council, and support has been offered by many other groups.



The main aim of the Forum is to pull together all that Clare has to offer visitors as a "Clare Package". It will then look at what leaflets, web links, signposts etc are needed to attract visitors to Clare for the overall good of the town.

Membership is open to all comers, so if you have experience in tourism or your business depends on visitors to Clare then your views are welcomed.

To express your interest please contact Alaric Pugh - 01787 277599 or alaric@alaricpugh.co.uk or call in at Sea Pictures Gallery.

Christmas Tree Festival

In December the Clare Women's Institute held a Christmas Tree Festival in the Town Hall. Local businesses and organisations were encouraged to enter a decorated tree to display.

The result was a truly magnificent sight and received many favourable comments from visitors. John Laws with his entry from the Country Park was voted the overall winner.

Along with an evening of Christmas music the two events raised a total of £1100 for the St Nicolas Hospice.



First links between Clare and Châtillon

Many readers will recall the visit of firemen from Châtillon to Clare in 2008 and the visit of their Mayor Michel Hétroy to Clare for the Annual Parish Meeting in April 2009. At that time the ambition was to create lasting and meaningful links between our communities by concentrating on developing cultural, educational and commercial exchanges. It is very pleasing to report that good progress is being made.

The first achievement was to receive some 60 letters from students at the Collège Joliot Curie which have been shared between Clare Middle School and Stoke College. There are now letters heading back to Châtillon from our own students. Stoke College is also working towards a school exchange between pupils in July this year. Hopefully this will be the first of many school contacts. In September a school in St Cyran, near Châtillon, was linked to Samuel Ward where the Head of Languages is very enthusiastic about the opportunities for the children.

Over the summer a selection of teas were shipped to France by Café Clare much to the delight of visitors to the local market.



In August Ron Longland and his wife Carole visited Châtillon and enjoyed the "Vendredi Gourmand" - an evening of the best of local food, wine and entertainment. Ron now also writes a regular Newsletter on events of mutual interest.

In order to coordinate local involvement a group has been formed in Châtillon called "Les Amis de Châtillon et Clare" (LACC) - the Friends of Châtillon and Clare. In addition to coming up with ideas for future events, they are also checking out the availability of EU funding to help with the costs of any larger visits.



A number of events have already been planned for 2010 including a visit to Clare by a French football team from 12-15th April. A return visit by the Clare Town Lions later in the year is being planned to coincide with the 14th July National Holiday. These celebrations will include music, sport, a football tournament, sightseeing and plenty of fun for children and families..... and of course the Grand Firework Display on 14 July itself. All residents of Clare, not just the footballers, are invited to Châtillon to join in the festivities.

The first links between Clare and Châtillon are very promising and the programme for 2010 is full of possibilities. If you would like to give your ideas and share in building the links between Clare and Châtillon please contact Keith Haisman on 279182 or Ron Longland on 277769.

An invitation to visit Châtillon from 11-15 July...

An invitation from the town of Châtillon has been extended to all residents of Clare to join in the 14 July National Holiday celebrations. If you are interested in joining in the fun, then please contact either Keith Haisman on 279182 or Ron Longland on 277769 for further details on travel and accommodation.

Châtillon-sur-Indre lies south of Amboise, just below the Loire Valley and is only 6 hours drive from Calais. Poitiers and Tours airports are 1 hour away and can be reached from Stansted. The town has a population of 2,900, a castle dungeon in the centre of town and a history dating back to the 12th century. With the castle having been built by Henry II Plantagenet there are family links to the historical families of Clare: Joan of Acre (who married Gilbert de Clare) is Henry II's great-great-granddaughter!

Cold Weather advice from



With this winter predicted to be one of the coldest for several years, Age Concern Suffolk is urging frail or less mobile older people, who may be more susceptible to the cold, to take extra precautions to stay warm.

Daphne Savage, Chief Executive of Age Concern Suffolk said, "Anyone who is cutting back on basics such as food and heating because they're concerned about high electricity and gas bills should call one of our Help Centres for advice. Our friendly staff will be happy to chat about their concerns and help resolve problems. Our Bury

St Edmunds Help Centre is on 01284 757750 (Mon-Fri, 9.30 am - 1 pm). What older people absolutely must not do - is to turn their heating down or off when they most need to keep warm."

Mrs Savage continued "There is some help available with heating your home. Most people aged 60 or over are entitled to the Winter Fuel Payment, paid by the Government to assist with heating costs.

It is also possible to reduce your fuel bills by improving your energy efficiency at home. Age Concern has a useful booklet entitled "Save more, pay less" which is available, free of charge, from the offices mentioned above. This includes a range of energy saving suggestions.

AGE Concern Helpline
Bury St Edmunds - 01284 757750.

Did you know that on the Clare website you can ...

Find out what's happening in Clare - check out the News page

- **Find upcoming events** - click on Local Events
- **Attract people to your own club or society events** - just register at Local Events
- **Find a Clare business or service and get their telephone number** - look under Clare Directory
- **Look for a job** - just click on Employment
- **Trace your ancestors** - try the Genealogy link
- **Start a discussion** - go to the Message Board
- **Check out photos old and new of Clare** - go to Photo Library ..



Visit the Clare website now at
WWW.CLARE-UK.COM

Annual Parish Meeting on 20th April ...

Last year's Annual Parish Meeting was attended by a record number of residents. There were really interesting and valuable contributions not just from our elected Borough and County Councillors but also from the Clare Business Association, the Clare Community Plan Group, Clare Combined Charities and of course from the Mayor of Châtillon.

This year's meeting is to be held on Tuesday 20 April at 7pm in the Old School Community Centre when, in addition to our traditional speakers, the keynote presentation will be on the results of the Clare Community Plan which so many of you completed. We hope for another record turnout!



CLARE COFFEE STOP and Information Service ...

An initiative has been set up to help people of all ages who are residents of Clare become better informed about services, grants, entitlements and voluntary support which may be available both locally and nationally.

For a three month trial period the Old School Community Centre will be open to all residents of Clare, on the second Monday of each month between 10.30am and 12 noon - therefore the current dates will be - Monday 8th March, Monday 12th April & Monday 10th May. These sessions run alongside the current Citizens Advice Bureau Outreach program - see right for details.

The aim of the COFFEE STOP is to provide a comprehensive information service for local people of all ages. At the same time, there will

be refreshments available, a friendly welcome and the opportunity to meet with other people in your community who you might not see on a regular basis. It may be you have concerns about a relative or neighbour and need a bit of advice or support - hopefully we can put you in touch with someone who can help.

As well as having literature available, representatives from local and national organisations will be invited to be present to give information about the services they offer.

This is a Churches in Clare initiative supported by Clare Parish Council and CLASP. More information is available from Rev Canon John Rankin (01787 278501) or Pauline Broad (01440 785840)

Snow, Ice and Temperatures Plummet ...

Since the last edition of the Parish News Clare has endured some of the coldest weather conditions for many years. One night last December temperatures fell to almost -10 degrees Celsius for a period. Whilst we nearly had a white Christmas and the snow produced some fun and fantastic picture opportunities it also brought considerable hardship.

Compacted ice quickly built up under snow falls creating very difficult conditions in which to try and move around. For periods some roads became impassable and footpaths treacherous.

A number of parishioners were injured in falls and on two occasions ice caused ambulances to have difficulties reaching and conveying parishioners to hospital.



Grit and salt supplies quickly ran low and pressed Borough & County Council staff worked round the clock to keep the main routes passable and re-stocked grit bins as soon as possible.

The Parish Council has purchased five additional grit bins and they have been positioned in areas of apparent risk and replaced some of the boxes removed over the years.

The PC Environment Committee will be reviewing the area's plans for coping with such conditions and will be working with the Borough and County Authorities to see what can be improved in response to future hazardous weather conditions.

Here's looking forward to Spring!

CAB Outreach Sessions



The Haverhill Citizen Advice Bureau will be on hand to give help and advice to any member of the community. No booking required, simply turn up at the Committee Room in The Old School Community Centre between 10am and 12pm. The next session will take place on Monday 8th March 2010.

Clare Parish Council is recruiting a Parish Clerk and Finance Officer. Up to 60 hours per month with flexible working times. Please contact Sharon Benson on 277559 for details. Closing date Friday 12th March.

CHOC and the Clare Combined Charities are looking for new trustees so if you would like to support these key community organisations please contact Sharon Benson on 277559.



Clare
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Email parishclerk@clare-uk.com

Don't forget to visit the Clare website at www.clare-uk.com