

PARISH NEWS



Clare
Parish Council

ISSUE FOUR - MARCH 2009



Clare Parking Survey ...

All residents and visitors to Clare know that our town has suffered from a lack of central parking for many years. This has affected the viability of businesses, visitors to our town and residents who live in the central area. To try and improve this situation a parking survey was undertaken at the request of, and with advice from St. Edmundsbury Borough Council.

The survey took place on one day in June, July and August and was organised by a working party led by Clare Parish Council and including

Clare Business Association and Clare Society. The data has been processed and statistics have been produced. The full survey will shortly be available on the Clare-UK website and at the Parish Office.

The statistics confirmed that there is an urgent need for more short term parking close to the centre of Clare. In the 66 regulated parking spaces in Market Hill and High Street there was a combined occupancy during trading hours of 95%.

The Working Party considered many solutions to the parking problems and decided with Clare Parish Council that there should be five proposals taken forward:

1. The Parish Council to monitor the loss of parking spaces due to actions by St. Edmundsbury Borough Council and Suffolk County Council without consultation with the Parish.
2. Clare Parish Council will encourage the enforcement of the limited parking in the centre of town.
3. As the Clare Castle Country Park Car Park is not used to capacity, to encourage the use of this area for parking with lower charges, better signage, lighting and access.
4. The use of the small area of land behind The Swan for long term parking thus relieving the shorter stay areas.
5. The development of the field behind The Swan known as Backside Field (SS91 on the Local Development Plan) as the long term solution to an ongoing problem.

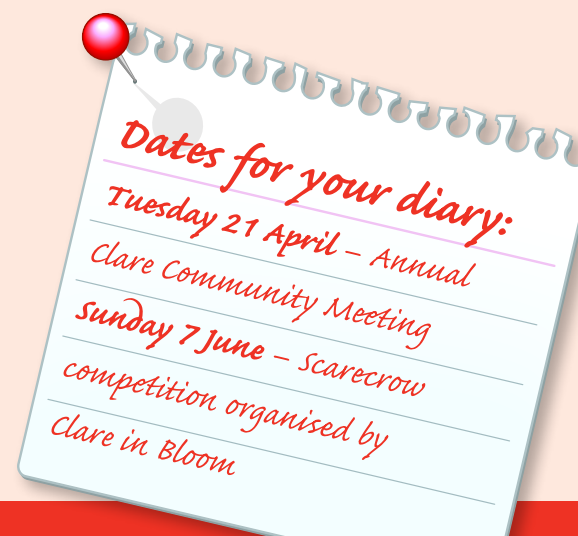
The Parish Council will now engage with the relevant Authorities to achieve improvements in parking for all residents and visitors to Clare.

No Increase to Parish Council Tax ...

Suffolk County Council has increased the Council Tax burden on householders by 2.4% for the next financial year. However the Parish Council has decided not increase its share of the Council Tax used to provide parish services such as street cleaning, the cemetery, etc.

Keith Haisman, Chair of Clare Parish Council said "In these difficult times the Parish Council

has made a conscious decision to try to improve and expand parish services in Clare while maintaining budgets at 2008 levels. An excellent example of how we are succeeding in achieving these improvements is the excellent work of the new Environment Committee."



Dates for your diary:
Tuesday 21 April – Annual

Clare Community Meeting

Sunday 7 June – Scarecrow

competition organised by
Clare in Bloom

New look for the Parish Council ...

During the past few months the Parish Council has been reviewing how it delivers services to the community, communicates and measures its performance against certain benchmarks. As a result, the Council has developed a set of aims which will be made public and sent to all community groups.

These aims are intended to show the Clare community how it can expect the Parish Council to respond to the town's short and longer term needs. They will also establish a set of measures against which the Parish Council can judge its own performance.

Do let us know what you think at parishclerk@clare-uk.com.

The Parish Council aims to:
Work in the best interests of the Parish of Clare and all the members of its community.
It will ensure this by ...



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Taking a lead ...

This means that CPC will:

- Publicise its views, activities and decisions through the widest range of local media.
- Represent the best interests of the parish when working with central and other local government agencies
- Ensure that the community has a working Parish Plan which is consistent with and based upon a mutual sense of pride in Clare and its surrounds.

Being inclusive ...

This means that CPC will:

- Be a welcoming and listening council which acts effectively and promptly for the common good
- Keep a balanced point of view, support the participation of all parties and broker consensus when there are opposing views
- Engage and communicate effectively with business, education, health and all community groups

Delivering value for money ...

This means that CPC will:

- Create and manage the budget of the town so that we deliver value for money for the community
- Keep the town running properly and support civic amenities from the Town Hall and Cemetery to bus shelters and town signs
- Operate services to ensure the town always looks clean and attractive and instils a sense of pride in the wider community and our visitors

Managing our business efficiently ...

This means that CPC will:

- Meet its legal obligations as a Parish Council
- Manage its staff and contractors properly
- Keep its procedures under constant review to ensure they are effective and relevant both for councillors and parishioners

Clare needs to be dog friendly too!

Clare residents have been complaining in numbers to the Parish Council about the increasing amount of dog fouling occurring in the main streets of our town.

One young resident, Eleanor Lovejoy, aged 9 years, was so incensed about having to avoid deposits all the way along her route to school that she wrote to the Parish Council and asked permission to put up notices asking dog owners to clear up after their dogs.

Alan Parsley, Chair of the Environment Committee said 'the problem is increasing in Clare with dog fouling occurring outside the shops, on routes to the schools and in other main thoroughfares of the town. We acknowledge that most dog owners are very responsible but obviously a few are not being so considerate towards their fellow residents. Therefore we are determined to remove this health hazard from our streets'.

Clare Parish Council in the first instance will be launching a campaign to encourage dog owners to clear up after their dog. The Parish Council were so impressed by Eleanor's letter and concern for her environment that they have asked her to design the poster for the campaign.

Dog owners will be able to collect totally hygienic pooper scooper bags from strategic points in the town, initially free of charge, which they can use to keep our streets clean.

Simultaneously Borough Council Dog Warden and Parish Council patrols will be stepped up and,

where irresponsible owners are detected, enforcement action will be taken. Action against dog owners will result in the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices of £50, or could lead to potential fines of £1,000 for a second dog fouling offence or a failure to pay the Penalty Notice.



Annual Parish Meeting ...

Once again it is that time of year when the Annual Parish Meeting must be held in accordance with statute. This year's meeting is scheduled for April 21st.

It is a commonly held view that the Annual Parish Meeting is the annual meeting of the parish council with parishioners. In fact it is good practice to invite societies and clubs to come along and tell the parishioners about their activities and give feedback to the Parish

Council on any important issues in the town. To reflect that fact Clare Parish Council propose to change the name of the meeting to the 'Annual Clare Community Meeting' and then to invite some of the town's groups to come and speak. This will include an update from the Clare Community Plan Steering Group and is a great opportunity to find out more about all the marvellous activities which go on in Clare.

Improved access ...

To improve parishioner access to the council, The Parish Council Office, situated in the Old School Community Centre, will now be open three times a week.

Parish Office Opening Times

Monday	11am - 2.30pm
Wednesday	11am - 2.30pm
Friday	11am - 2.30pm



The Clare Community Plan

Are you aware of the Community Plan?

... if not then visit the website below for further information.

www.Clare-have-your-say.co.uk



New Parish Clerk for Clare ...

The Council is fortunate to have recruited the services of the council's Finance Officer, Sharon Benson, in the new combined role of Parish Clerk and Finance Officer. Sharon, married to Carl, and their two daughters are a well known and highly regarded family in Clare. Both Sharon and Carl have served the community in a number of ways for many years, which enables Sharon to bring an enormous amount of local experience and knowledge to role. The Parish Council welcomes Sharon into her role and wishes her every success.

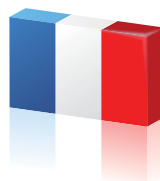
Sharon has taken over the Parish Clerk role from Ailsa Jobson who was our Clerk for over 4 years. Ailsa has taken an exciting full time role in a local Primary Care Trust. Keith Haisman CPC Chair said 'Ailsa made an invaluable contribution to the business of the Parish Council, some of which was during a period of significant review and restructure. While Ailsa will be much missed, we wish her every success in her new role'.

Mayor of Châtillon to visit Clare ...

Many readers may remember the visit of the French fire fighters from Châtillon-sur-Indre, which is near the Loire Valley. They came to Clare last year and wrote a wonderful letter of appreciation to the Clare Business Association. In fact they enjoyed their visit so much that the Mayor, Michel Hétroy would like to come to Clare and thank the town for its hospitality and meet the residents of Clare for himself, so we have invited him to speak at the Annual

Clare Community Meeting on Tuesday 21 April. We look forward to hearing more about Châtillon as well and, in advance, you can look at the Châtillon website at www.chatillon-sur-indre.fr

We hope the town will turn out to meet and greet him.



Age Concern Suffolk Food 'n' Friends Club ...

Gavin Hodge, the Food 'n' Friends Officer at Age Concern Suffolk, is keen to set up a Food & Friends Club - effectively miniature lunch club - in Clare. The aim is to enhance the lives of older members of the community, especially those living alone. The club would be held at least once a month, with each club being run by its own host accompanied by a volunteer, usually in the host's private home. Refreshments are provided on a non-profit-making basis with the clients paying a small sum to the host to cover the cost of food and drink provided.

There is quite a bit of flexibility in how a club is run. The host could provide just coffee and biscuits if that suits people best, or soup and a sandwich, or a light three-course lunch at a modest cost. It is up to the host what type of

refreshments would be offered, and the host effectively takes ownership of the club under Age Concern Suffolk's umbrella. They can provide Public Liability insurance, plus advice and support, and suitable recipes if required.

In addition to the excellent weekly lunch provided at the CLASP Senior Centre, this may provide an additional opportunity to support the older members of our community.

Gavin is seeking potential hosts for Food 'n' Friends clubs around the county, and of course, in Clare.

His contact details at Age Concern Suffolk are: Direct line number 01473 298686 or e-mail: gavin.hodge@ageconcernsuffolk.org.uk



More improvement in line for the cemetery ...

In consultation with conservation specialists the Environment Committee is planning to convert a presently undeveloped area of the cemetery grounds on the eastern boundary of the site into a wild flower garden.

CLlr Keith Mison, who is leading the project, said to the Parish News that he felt this exciting option would enhance a piece of undeveloped grassland on the edge of cemetery and improve the overall environment for visitors, relatives and of course the wildlife in the cemetery.

It is hoped planting can commence in the spring to produce an engaging and pleasant display for the summer months.



Clare
Parish Council

The Old School
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Email parishclerk@clare-uk.com

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