

A scenic view of a village. In the foreground, there are green trees and a house with a grey tiled roof. In the middle ground, there is a green field and a church with a tall tower. In the background, there are more trees and a cloudy sky.

A Vision for our Village

Clawton Parish Plan

April 2010

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1. About Clawton

Clawton is a village and parish in Devon on the small river Claw, 4 miles South-East of the market town of Holsworthy. The main local industry is farming, most of which is dairy.

There is a primary school, a church and a village hall. The Post Office and village shop closed in 2006.

Non-farming local businesses include the Court Barn Hotel, Clawford Vineyard, F G Stacey (Steel Fabricators), Moore's Removals and Storage, te pheasant hatchery and a number of Bed and Breakfast and Self-Catering establishments.



Clawton is in the area covered by Torridge District Council and Devon County Council.

2. Background

In November 2007 a Village Survey was carried out. Its aim was to gather the views of Clawton residents on village amenities, communication, housing, transport and other matters which affect the quality of life, to inform the decisions of the Parish Council and with a view to the possibility of creating a Village Plan.



Questionnaires were distributed to the 125 households in the village. There were 53 completed questionnaires received, a response rate of 42%. Not all completed questionnaires had every question answered.

A report setting out the findings of the survey was published in February 2008. A Summary of the report is at Annex A. Copies of the full report were provided to every household in the village and a Public Meeting was held to give residents the opportunity to hear a summary of the findings, to ask questions and to give comments.

At the meeting it was proposed to form action groups of volunteers to address the key areas but there were insufficient volunteers for this to happen. The Parish Council has therefore taken responsibility for creating a Parish Plan and for getting resident's agreement where appropriate for any proposed action.



A number of issues (some of which were already in hand) have since been resolved and research into other issues has been undertaken.

A progress report was given to a second Public Meeting held on 3rd September 2008 and a summary was subsequently published in the *Clawton Clarion*. A copy is attached at Annex B.

3. The Plan

The Village Plan is designed to be a document which expresses the village's vision for its future and outlines the steps by which it intends to achieve that vision. It will be published periodically and whenever significant changes occur. It will be discussed at public meetings and the intention is that all parts of the plan are subject to obtaining broad agreement among residents.

The power of a Village Plan is that elements which have gained broad agreement will carry significant weight among those agencies whose agreement and co-operation, and possibly funding, are needed to make the plan work.

The Village Plan will inevitably change over time, as some objectives are met and others become better defined and plans are made to meet them.



4. The Challenge

The key strategic challenge is how to promote the interests of Clawton as a community, and in particular to:

1. Provide a community centre for small-scale socialising, and possibly a shop, in the village centre. This should not compete with the village hall which can cater for larger social functions, parties, skittles, dancing etc).
2. Find some way of eliminating the negative effect on the village centre caused by the two derelict buildings (old Sunday School and East Cottage) and the former shop.
3. Provide affordable housing to meet the established need.
4. Facilitate small-scale development around the village, subject to village agreement.



5. The Vision

The Parish Council feels that the first three objectives can be achieved as part of an integrated plan. Investigations and discussions with various parties have shown that the most feasible option would be to locate a small development of affordable homes with a few open market homes towards the upper end of the field in the centre of the village.

At the same time the lower part of the field would be converted to a village green, possibly with a pond and some trees, and a few picnic tables, but not intended for ball games or play equipment, both of which are available in the school playing field.

Some alterations would be made to the current village car park opposite the former shop, and this is where a gravel footpath around the pond and linking to the new houses would begin.

Ideally the two derelict buildings (East Cottage and the old Sunday School) would be refurbished, if necessary by taking over the buildings using existing powers. The old Sunday School would make an ideal social centre/shop.

If this is not possible within a reasonable timescale a small new building might be feasible, either next to the car park or as part of the new affordable housing development (in which case it would be linked by footpaths to both new houses and the School/Claw Park area).

6. The Action Plan

Apart from the strategic vision outlined above, the Village Survey raised a number of issues. Some of these have been successfully addressed and are now considered 'closed' and some remain 'open' with further work needed.

'Open' items are as follows:

Subject	Issue	Current situation
Clawton Clarion:	Full distribution	Now delivered to most households by hand. Others (about 20) are posted. Next step is to find waterproof perspex leaflet holders or similar to contain spare copies and be placed by Parish notice boards.
Clawton Clarion:	Content – Parish Council information	A brief summary of each meeting will be given in the Clarion.
Clawton Clarion:	Content – articles and letters	For action - could invite letters and articles
Derelict Buildings:	East Cottage	Owner identified as Mr Matthew Lee, but owner is no longer at Crediton address provided when purchase made (Dowrich House, Sandford, Crediton, Devon, EX17 4EQ). Torridge DC has a dedicated person responsible for such cases who has placed notice on door. Discussions about next steps to be held.
Derelict Buildings:	Old Sunday School	Owner identified as Mr Matthewson of Grimsby, but owner is no longer at address provided when purchase made). Torridge DC has a dedicated person responsible for such cases who has placed notice on door. Discussions about next steps to be held.
Derelict Buildings:	Methodist Chapel	Owners renewed permission to convert the Chapel to residential in 2006 and obtained supplementary planning permission for garage access but no further sign of development.
Housing:	Affordable	Discussions held with Torridge DC and the Community Council of Devon (CCD) - site visit held and discussions with landowners in progress. A set of proposals or options will be put forward for discussion once proposals have been formulated.
Housing:	Elderly	9 people out of the 45 responding households said they have a member who would require Sheltered Housing in the near future.
Housing:	For local families	Once Planning and Highways views on feasible sites are known, resulting proposals may include a mixture of private and affordable housing
Quality of Life:	Speed control	Clawton should have a share of a flashing '30' sign for 4 weeks in every 12. 'Camera' warning signs have now been added to the speed restriction signs at the village boundaries. Volunteers to operate speed cameras have yet to receive training.
Social Life:	General	Mick Penton-Voake has been running a very successful series of whist evenings. Denise Grafton has been researching the legalities and economics of holding film evenings and dates are now agreed for the Autumn. An experimental social evening was held in January 2009 and was reasonably well attended but one held in March 2009 was not, so the concept may need to be reconsidered.

Subject	Issue	Current situation
Transport:	Bus timetables	Published in the Clarion - need to be refreshed for each season
Utilities:	Broadband (speed)	It seems that speeds are acceptable for some of those on the North Tamerton exchange but not for those on Holsworthy Exchange, probably due to the distance. Needs more research.
Village Amenities:	Village shop / Post Office	The survey showed that these are considered by most residents as a 'nice-to-have' rather than an essential service. St Giles have set up their own in a Portacabin. A number of survey respondents indicated they would be prepared to help on a voluntary basis but it is felt a site in the village centre, rather than the village hall, would be best.
Village Amenities:	Community centre	A solution might well be combined with finding a location for a shop and/or Post Office. When the outcome of investigations into housing development and the derelict buildings is known, provision of a small community centre/shop might be included in an overall plan.
Village Amenities:	Mobile butcher	For action - need to publicise contact details and delivery days?
Village Hall:	Refurbishment	The hall has been painted both internally and externally; new windows and curtains have been installed among a number of other repairs/updates.
Voluntary Service:	Transport	For action - needs a volunteer to co-ordinate, having obtained volunteers to be drivers and established a recommended remuneration scheme based on running costs (or just fuel?) Need to establish insurance implications.
Voluntary Service:	Gardening	For action - needs a volunteer to co-ordinate, having obtained volunteers to give assistance and established the type of assistance to be provided (grass cutting, sweeping etc rather than digging, maybe light weeding? Establish whether any remuneration .
Voluntary Service:	Shopping	For action - needs a volunteer to co-ordinate, having obtained volunteers to give assistance and established whether any remuneration is appropriate.



'Closed' items are:

Subject	Issue	Current situation
Church/Chapel:	Service timings	Now consistent each week
Clawton Clarion:	Content – General village information	Representatives of WI, pre-school school, church, hall, skittles etc have been asked to provide a paragraph each month or whenever they have anything of interest.
Clawton Clarion:	Content – events, up-to-date	Actioned as far as possible - relies on organisers
Footpaths and Bridleways:	Maps	On Parish noticeboards
Footpaths and Bridleways:	Condition	DCC did reinstate footbridges and still maintains footpaths
Footpaths and Bridleways:	Signposting	DCC did re-sign but signs do sometimes mysteriously vanish – if so need to be identified and reported to DCC.
Noise or Disturbance:	Traffic noise	Not much can be done except by way of reducing excess speed
Noise or Disturbance:	Aircraft noise	No action feasible
Noise or Disturbance:	Village hall events	Noisy events are relatively rare and the nature of the construction makes further soundproofing not cost-effective
Parish Council Information:	General information	New Parish Council noticeboards erected - both have draft minutes of each meeting displayed shortly after the event. Consideration being given to a short summary in the Clarion.
Parish Council Information:	Planning Applications	Brief summaries are contained within the Minutes published on the noticeboards. Maps /plans are not feasible but are available on TDC's website
Parish Council Information:	List of councillors	A list is shown on both Parish Council noticeboards and periodically in the Clarion, when any changes take place.
Quality of Life:	Claw Park/School parking	Tarka Housing, who own the green area, agreed to take over the Parish Council's plans for a reinforced parking area and the worst of the congestion now seems to have been resolved, as far as the Parish Council is aware.
Quality of Life:	Dog fouling	Two red dog waste bins have been purchased and erected in the village - TDC is responsible for emptying them.
Quality of Life:	Transport	This issue is covered by (a) periodically publishing timetables (b) publicising 'Ring-and-Ride' services and (c) by promoting volunteer services
Utilities:	Water (pressure)	Not an issue which can easily be dealt with except by individual complaint - the published minimum standard is actually quite low.
Village Hall:	External lighting in the car park area	There are now lights all round the hall.

Summary of Parish Appraisal November 2007

The **Village Hall** is used for a variety of activities but about a quarter of respondents have hired other locations because the hall was not felt to be suitable for their purposes. Comments indicated that nearly half of all respondents feel modernisation is needed.

The **Clawton Clarion** is regularly received by 57% of respondents – most of those who do not were not aware of where a copy could be obtained. The great majority (70%) found it to be quite or very useful and a number of suggestions were made for ways of improving it.

With regard to **housing**, the majority (64%) of respondents felt that some small development (maximum 4 houses per site) should be allowed provided it was designed to fit in with local surroundings. A further 11% would agree provided at least 1 in 4 of the new houses were designated as affordable housing available for local families. Some residents are clearly concerned about excessive development and some point out that the derelict buildings should ideally be utilised before new houses are built. About one in five households (9 out of the 43 which responded to the question) said that a member of their household would need low-cost housing in the village.

Many respondents expressed concern that there needs to be a way of helping new young families stay in the village. A number of possible sites were identified provided the housing is in small groups (not estates) and with due regard to the known flooding issues.

When asked specifically about the three unoccupied buildings in the village (the old Methodist chapel, the old Chapel school room and East Cottage) all except one respondent (98%) would support action to take control of the buildings for affordable housing or community use.

Information about the activities of the **Parish Council** are learned about primarily by Word of Mouth and the Clawton Clarion, and to a lesser extent by notice boards and the local press, with a few gaining information from the Parish Magazine. Over half of the respondents felt that insufficient publicity is given to planning applications which affect the village.

The overwhelming majority (86%) said that a **village shop** would be 'nice to have' and 88% say they would be prepared to agree to a scheme which ensured the shop would be viable. There were 4 respondents (6%) who said that not having a shop was a serious problem for them and only 3 (96%) who said they can manage well without a shop. The results were broadly similar when asked about a village Post Office. The vast majority of respondents (91%) felt this is an issue the Parish Council should be involved in.

Just nineteen respondents were aware of the **mobile butcher** and of those just five ever use them. Six respondents were aware of the **mobile greengrocer** and just one has used them.

Over three-quarters of respondents (78%) would like to see some **regular social events** in the village hall. The most popular use of the hall would be for drinks on a Saturday night, with weekday evening drinks also popular.

The **quality of life** in the village was rated as 'Good' or 'Very Good' by 68% of respondents with a further 25% rating it 'OK'. Only 4 respondents (7.5%) rated it as 'Not very good' and none rated it as 'Poor'. Changes respondents would like to see include action on the derelict buildings, housing, transport, village shop, social centre, better communications and traffic calming measures. Most likely to spoil the quality of life is uncontrolled new building.

Regarding **accommodation for the elderly**, one in five responding households (20%) said that a member of their household would need some form of sheltered housing in the near future.

Six out of ten respondents knew where most of the **local public footpaths and bridleways** are. Over three quarters would like maps of footpaths and bridleways to be available. One in ten respondents uses a footpath or bridleway daily, 8% on a weekly basis and 12% monthly. 39% say they never use such a path. About two-thirds reported they can follow the paths without much difficulty. 13 respondents said they would be prepared to help maintain and manage the public right-of-way network in the village.

When asked about **utilities**, three-quarters of respondents felt electricity supply was 'Good' and the remainder that it was 'Adequate'. Water was rated lower with 56% 'Good', 38% 'Adequate' and 6% 'Poor'. Telephone service was weakest with 51% 'Good', 37% 'Adequate' and 12% 'Poor' due to poor Broadband access and slow response to line faults.

The most common cause of **disturbance** for residents was traffic noise (40%), with aircraft noise closely behind (36%). Barking dogs affected 20% of residents and noise from clay pigeon shooting causing disturbance for 8%. Some noise was created by boy racers and noise from the village hall caused a disturbance when certain functions were being held.

Just over a quarter of respondents (11 out of 41) often experienced **transport** difficulties, with 8 people occasionally experiencing difficulties. Just over 53% of residents stated that this was never an issue for them. The lack of public transport was commented on by several residents, with most finding this service to be inadequate.

When asked about **voluntary service** eight respondents said they were willing to help provide a voluntary transport service for journeys such as hospital, doctor and dental appointments. Nine residents said they would benefit from a voluntary car service. Fourteen respondents said they were willing to provide home visits or help c with gardening or shopping but only two respondents said they would like such help, both with gardening.

Of the 52 respondents, a quarter regularly attend **religious gatherings**, with an equal number attending Marriages, Christenings and funerals only. 12 never attended any gatherings, with 11 visiting periodically. The remaining 3 residents attend on a regular basis (about once a month). Clawton church was the place attended by 65% of respondents, chapel by 8% and 'Elsewhere' by 27%. There were indications that while the type and times of services suited respondent's needs in the majority of cases (70%) a few people do find the varying service times are an issue. 4 respondents (14%) said they would attend more frequently if changes were made.

Other **general comments** covered the upkeep and appearance of the village and the Claw Park / School car park issue.

Virtually all respondents said they would attend a public meeting held to present this report and discuss the findings.

Parish Survey Update September 2008

A very well-attended public meeting was held on Wednesday 3rd September 2008 to discuss progress on the issues arising from the Parish Survey.

It was explained that there had not been sufficient volunteers to form working groups on the various topics but progress is being made.

Speeding: The Parish Council had been told that there is one LED 30mph illuminated warning sign shared between three villages, so we should have it approximately one week in three. In fact it appeared once and has not been seen again. Marion Perkin (councillor at Torridge for our area) said that St Giles has now obtained its own illuminated sign. The Parish Council will work to get police support to get the sign much more frequently, or even our own sign.

At the original Parish Survey meeting someone commented that traffic goes slower through St Giles than through Clawton. It has since been noted that St Giles has camera warning signs but Clawton doesn't, so the Parish Council will try to get police support for these as well as the illuminated sign.

Communication: There is a clear need to get the Clawton Clarion to all residents each month so that it becomes a more effective means of communication. The Post Office will be approached to see whether there is a cheap rate for delivering it like an advertising flyer. If this is not possible, it was agreed that where practical they will be delivered by hand (usually where there are groups of houses) and where residents are happy to receive it by email it will be sent electronically. The remainder will be sent by second class post.

Torridge District Council produce a newspaper periodically which should be delivered by the post office, but a show of hands indicated no-one in the village receives them. Marion Perkin will look into what is going wrong.

For those who have internet access a village website is an obvious means of communication, and Elaine and Dick Green kindly offered to look into the various village website organisations which offer this facility. A volunteer who is able to put information onto whichever site is selected and keep it up to date would be very much appreciated.

Footpaths: Irene has purchased a definitive footpath map and it was agreed to put this on display when the second village noticeboard is erected.

Claw Park Parking: Over the summer Taw Valley Housing have been working on the new short-use parking area. This will be covered with a plastic matting which the grass will grow through to keep it looking green when no cars are parked. At the same time the school has created some new hard-surfaced parking.

The village bus shelter has been moved to the parish car park (opposite the former shop) because this is where the few public buses now stop. There is now a wet weather shelter just inside the school gates for use by those waiting for school buses, though there was some debate caused by the fact that the North Devon College bus may not stop if it can't see anyone waiting. The same problem applied to the old bus shelter, however, and it seems that one

person is traditionally sent out to stop the bus so those in the shelter have time to make their way across the road.

There was some adverse comment that the recycling hut has been removed without any notice. The Parish Council understood that it was always the District Council's intention to remove it once a full recycling collection service was introduced. Anyone who does not have a recycling green bin can request one from the council offices, and it was noted that any plastic container such as a dustbin or storage box (but not cardboard boxes) seems to be accepted as a recycling container.

Village Hall: This is in the process of being completely redecorated inside and outside, and a number of improvements are being made such as a new hatch to the kitchen, new kitchen worktops and a new hot water boiler. The water will in future not be turned off at the stopcock so that there is much less likelihood of the hot water boiler running dry and burning out.

The Parish Survey indicated that people would like to see the hall being made more 'cosy' but the redecoration and refurbishment is a significant step forward and any further changes will depend upon what uses residents would like to make of the hall.

Derelict Buildings: Marion Perkin has reported that from 10th November there will be someone at Torrridge District Council with specific responsibility for derelict buildings, and that Clawton's two eyesores have been put at the top of the pile for attention.

Affordable Housing: At the Parish Council meeting on 14th July John Scott (Rural Housing Officer, Devon) offered to carry out a more formal affordable housing needs survey than the one included in the Parish Survey. This seemed an excellent way forward so the survey will be delivered to all households in the Parish by the end of September asking for it to be completed and returned in the post-paid envelope which will be provided.

New Housing: It is likely that any new housing in Clawton will be associated with affordable housing so it was agreed to wait until the new affordable housing needs survey results are known before pursuing this issue.

Social activities: This is the one area where the Parish Council can take only a very limited role and where village volunteers would be very welcome. There were no volunteers for a social activities committee and it seems that the way forward is to look to existing groups or individuals to set up events and publicise them in the Clarion. Phil Allin's well-attended Farm Day showed that people do appreciate the opportunity to get together.

Mick Penton-Voake offered to organise a whist evening and a show of hands showed this to be a very popular suggestion. The Parish Hall Committee is running a Family Fun Day on Saturday 27th September from 4pm. St Leonards Fair is on Saturday 1st November. Other suggestions for activities included a lunch club, a film night, an over 50s club and skittles.

If any group or individual is prepared to organise an activity then please book the hall (if that is where it will be held) then let Irene have the details for the Clarion (deadline 20th of each month). Details can be sent by email (horslett@tiscali.co.uk), by phone (01409 271371) or by dropping a note into Irene's shop in Holsworthy.

Parish Survey Update March 2009

Affordable Housing: Of more than ten possible sites within the village area which were identified as having potential for a modest development, there seems to be only one site where it is feasible to build affordable housing and where the landowner is willing to sell. This is the field owned by Mr & Mrs Bowden in the centre of the village.

As far as it was possible to ascertain only one other site within the village boundaries (rigidly defined but not entirely unchallengeable) had the owner's agreement to develop and that site on its own was too small for more than a single dwelling.

We are now working with Devon & Cornwall Housing Association and Trewins to draw up some alternative plans for the site, based on a new road (straight or curved) off the Ashwater road with all houses on the East (further) side rather than a cul-de-sac with houses on both sides. We are trying to find a way of using such a development to enhance the village – for instance, by forming a village green and maybe a pond. We're also still looking for ways of finding and funding a modest village meeting room/shop/coffee shop which would hopefully become the focus of village life. To fund the affordable housing and possibly the enhancements we'd like to achieve for the village there will need to be a mix of affordable and open-market houses.

The affordable houses may be a mixture of low-rent and shared-ownership, to reflect the current known demand. They will be allocated primarily to people on the housing list who have connections with Clawton and this will be written into the Section 106 Agreement which is a legally binding planning document which will be attached to all the affordable houses built. If initially (or at a later stage when a vacancy occurs) there is no-one in this category then people with connections to surrounding villages will become eligible. Only if there is no-one in these categories will houses be allocated to people with no local connection – and if this happens, when they move on, once again local people will have priority. It is important however for anyone who is looking for affordable housing to ensure they are on the Housing Waiting List. To apply go to the Housing Options – Need to Move? section of the Torridge website or contact the Housing Options Team on housing.options@torridge.gov.uk (telephone 01237 428849).

Bus Shelter: Nigel Stacey has recently repaired the roof of the bus shelter in the village car park.

Derelict Houses: Progress on the derelict houses is very slow but Torridge are now putting various actions into place, and it is possible that compulsory purchase may be feasible.

Speeding: The Parish Council requested speed camera warning signs for the village but has been told that these are no longer funded – and indeed, existing ones will not be replaced. It is understood that some villagers did volunteer to operate speed 'guns' and that training is to take place shortly. It is understood that cars found to be speeding will receive courtesy warning letters on the first offence, then more serious action should they be caught speeding again.

Parish Plan: A draft Parish Plan will be delivered to all households in the Parish during early April. As soon as drawings and plans for the affordable housing are available (hopefully showing several options) they will be circulated for discussion and a public meeting will be held to discuss both the draft Parish Plan and the affordable housing proposals.