

A scenic view of a village. In the foreground, there are houses with grey tiled roofs and light-colored walls. A large green tree is on the left. In the middle ground, there is a green field. In the background, a church with a tall stone tower is visible, surrounded by more trees. The sky is overcast.

A Vision for our Village

Clawton Parish Plan

February 2013

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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, F G Stacey (Steel Fabricators), Moore’s Removals and Storage, Holsworthy Ales micro-brewery, Clawton 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

Following the publication of the Clawton Village Plan in March 2010, a survey of the village was carried out between February and March 2012. 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 updating the Village Plan.



Questionnaires were distributed to the 126 households in the village. There were 49 completed questionnaires received, a response rate of 39%. Not all completed questionnaires had every question answered.

A summary of the findings of the survey was published and distributed to every household in December 2012, (Annex A).

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 in the village centre. This should not compete with the village hall which can cater for larger social functions, parties, skittles, dancing etc).
2. Continue to work with Torridge District Council to eliminate the negative effect on the village centre caused by the two derelict buildings (old Sunday School and East Cottage)
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 has suggested that the first three objectives might be achieved as part of an integrated plan.

The Housing Needs Survey identified a need for 4 affordable homes within the next 5 years in Clawton. A public meeting was held on 10th December 2012 to ask resident's views on the proposal put forward by Homes for Holsworthy. It was agreed that residents are in favour of the development of the proposed site in principal for housing and a village green.

Ideally this might provide an opportunity to resolve the drainage issues that prevent the two derelict buildings (East Cottage and the old Sunday School) being refurbished. The old Sunday School would make a small scale social centre.

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 could 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	Only 1 respondent reported that they did not get a copy. Delivered to most households by hand. Others are posted and an email option is offered. A waterproof perspex leaflet holder sited in the Bus Shelter at the crossroads contains spare copies and copies are available from Southcott Garage. The most recent edition is uploaded to the new Parish Website www.clawtonvillage.co.uk
Clawton Clarion:	Content – Parish Council information	It has not proved practical to summarise council meetings within the Clarion, for reasons of space and therefore cost. However the Parish Clerk's contact details will be added to the Clarion inviting anyone who wishes to have copies of the minutes to make contact by phone or email, (they are also available online www.clawtonvillage.co.uk and on 2 notice boards).
Derelict Buildings:	East Cottage	The owner has not come forward and cannot be found. Torridge District Council continue to try and move this forward to a satisfactory conclusion. The Parish Council is in touch with TDC and providing any assistance they can, and is open to possible options provided by the proposed development of the site opposite.
Derelict Buildings:	Old Sunday School	Both Torridge District Council and Clawton Parish Council are in touch with the owner and continue to try and work with them to find a solution. As above the Parish Council is open to possible options provided by the proposed development of the site opposite.
Housing:	Affordable	The latest Housing Needs Survey identified a need for 4 affordable homes within the next 5 years in Clawton. A public meeting was held on 10th December 2012 to ask resident's views on the proposal put forward by Homes for Holsworthy. It was agreed that residents are in favour of the development of the proposed site in principal for housing and a village green. Homes for Holsworthy are taking the proposal forward and the Parish Council together with Clawton residents who are members of the Homes for Holsworthy Trust have asked to be closely involved in any plans to be put forward. Homes for Holsworthy are holding discussions with Torridge DC and the Community Council of Devon (CCD), and a set of proposals or options will be put forward for discussion once formulated.
Housing:	Elderly	4 people out of the 49 responding households said they have a member who would require Sheltered Housing in the near future, for a total of 5 persons. This compares to 9 in the previous survey.
Housing:	For local families	The proposed development by Homes for Holsworthy includes 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. Community Speedwatch has been introduced and is proving effective, as is School Speedwatch. Local Police are putting together a presentation on Speeding for residents and details will be made available in the Clarion when known.

Quality of Life:	Smell	The greatest disturbance reported was smell, by 14 respondents, and comments suggest a connection to the use of Biogas product. The Parish Council will write to Biogas to ask for their response to the comments made.
Social Life:	General	The very successful series of whist evenings is still running. A new Bowls Club meets in the Parish Hall weekly and these and any other events are diarised in the Clarion and online www.clawtonvillage.co.uk .
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. Superfast Broadband for Devon and Somerset is set for 2020 with BT as the preferred bidder.
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. (Since the last survey enquiries have been made about a mobile post office but Royal Mail have ruled this out). Three respondents felt that not having a shop was a serious problem and six respondents felt the same way about the lack of a post office. There was interest in having some form of shop and post office arrangement in the village but also an awareness that it would not be a good idea to compete with Southcott Garage.
Village Amenities:	Community centre	The possibility of a small-scale community room for socialising in the village centre is being looked at in conjunction with the proposed housing development and possibly also the derelict buildings. 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 could be linked by footpaths to both new houses and the School/Claw Park area).
Village Amenities:	Mobile butcher	For action - need to publicise contact details and delivery days again.
Village Hall:	Refurbishment	Recent improvements include frost heaters in the wc's, a new emergency exit door and new outside light. There are currently plans to improve the car park.
Voluntary Service:	Transport	14 respondents said they would be prepared to help provide a voluntary transport service for hospitals, doctors, dental appointments etc. However it would need someone to organise it and a request for any volunteers will go in the next Clarion.
Voluntary Service:	Gardening	12 respondents would be prepared to volunteer with home visits, gardening or shopping for residents that would like such help and do not already receive it from friends and neighbours. An appeal for someone to set this up will also be put into the Clarion.
Voluntary Service:	Shopping	As above. (One respondent commented that Holsworthy Ring & Ride provide an excellent service and do regular supermarket trips free for seniors and the door to door service is excellent).
Planning Information:	Access to Plans	Just over half the respondents did not feel sufficient publicity is given to planning applications which affect the parish. Their comments suggest that an explanation of how the Parish Council is involved with planning applications, and how to access plans and associated documents is needed and this will go into the next Clarion.

'Closed' items are:

Subject	Issue	Current situation
Derelict Buildings:	Methodist Chapel	Owners have been able to obtain the permissions they needed to start development and work is progressing.
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:	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:	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	The worst of the congestion now seems to have been resolved. The Parish Council expects the school governors and parents to notify them if they can help further.
Quality of Life:	Dog fouling	Two red dog waste bins have been purchased and erected in the village - TDC is responsible for emptying them. One has been damaged by hedge cutting and this has been reported.
Utilities:	Water (pressure)	Not an issue which can easily be dealt with except by individual complaint - the published minimum standard is actually quite low.

Summary of Parish Appraisal December 2012

Fewer respondents said that they hire other locations because **the village hall** is not suitable (14% compared with 22% in 2008). There were a number of suggestions for improvements especially the kitchen and parking.

The **Clawton Clarion** is now regularly received by all except one respondent, an enormous improvement compared with the last survey. Suggestions included the addition of parish meeting minutes or information about parish issues, as well as a greater emphasis on village news.

Approximately one in five of the respondents were not satisfied with the availability of **parish council information**. In particular, respondents would like to see more publicity given to **planning applications**. Possibly in recognition of the practical difficulties of including planning application information in the Clarion, one respondent pointed out that a village website would be ideal for this purpose.

Three out of four respondents who gave an opinion were in favour of action to take control of the **derelict buildings** for community use.

There was generally a low awareness and even lower usage of the **mobile shop** and the **milkman**. Three respondents felt that not having a **village shop** was a serious problem and a further 25 (52%) said it would be nice to have one. Six respondents felt the lack of a **Post Office** was a serious problem and a further 24 (49%) felt it would be nice. There appears to be sufficient interest in having some form of shop and Post Office arrangement in the village and probably sufficient willingness to look at some form of imaginative arrangement whereby this could happen. There was also an awareness that it would not be a good idea to compete with Shirley at Southcott Garage.

Four respondents reported a **sheltered housing** need, for a total of five persons.

The greatest **disturbance** reported was smell (by 14 respondents) followed by traffic noise (five respondents). Other disturbances included barking dogs (3), aircraft noise (2), shooting noise (1) and 'Other' (4) which included neighbours lighting bonfires on sunny days and using noisy power tools on Sundays.

Many respondents identified the use of biogas by-product as being the key issue, and that this is now derived from food and abattoir waste rather than farm waste and as a result the smell is significantly worse than muck. Also, muck spreading appears now to take place much more frequently than has historically been the case, possibly because there seems to be an unlimited supply. One respondent commented that it's not fault of the farmers but of the biogas plant which at the planning stage made firm promises in response to fears about increased smell.

The **quality of life** in the village was rated Good or Very Good by 34 respondents (72%), Okay by 25% and Not Very Good by just one (2%).

Key issues which affect the quality of life include provision of a Post Office and shop, some licensed premises in village centre, use of biogas by-product and the need to tackle the issue of the derelict properties. The provision of more housing for local needs is balanced by the concern that providing housing beyond that would have a negative effect. Speed of traffic, lack of public transport, the condition of roads and Internet speed were also important issues. Things which are most likely to spoil the quality of village life included use of biogas by-product, housing allocated to people from outside the local community, solar panel farms and wind turbines in prominent places.

Water and **electricity** were given similar ratings – around 54% 'Good', 19% 'Adequate' and 3% 'Poor'. The **telephone** service was rated somewhat lower. But **Broadband** was clearly a major issue – 2 respondents (6%) rated it 'Good', 10 (29%) 'Adequate' and 22 (65%) 'Poor'. 4 respondents measured their download speed at below 1mbps, 10 at between 1 and 2 mbps and 1 at more than 2mbps (only 15 respondents gave their broadband speed). For uploads 12 reported less than 1mbps and 3 between 1 and 2mbps.

Only 2 respondents reported often having difficulty with **transport**, 9 occasionally and 32 (74%) never.

48% of respondents reported knowing where local **footpaths and bridleways** are, but nonetheless 66% would like maps to be made available. Currently 38% of respondents never use a footpath, 23% about once a year, 8% twice a year, 21% monthly, 4% weekly and 6% daily.

14 respondents said they would be prepared to help provide a **voluntary transport service** (for hospitals, doctors, dental appointments etc.). One respondent commented that the Holsworthy ring & ride (259001) do regular supermarket shopping runs - free for seniors. Door to door service is excellent.

12 respondents would be prepared to volunteer to help with **home visits**, gardening or shopping for residents who would like such help but there were no volunteers to co-ordinate such a service.

About one-third of respondents said they never attend **church or chapel** and 19% said they attend regularly (once a month or more). Most go to Clawton Church. More than half the respondents said they attend church or chapel. It seems as if services offered do largely meet local needs and apart from a couple of individual issues which might be able to be addressed no changes would seem to have potential to increase attendance.