

CLEE ST MARGARET PARISH COUNCIL

From: The Clerk, Clee St Margaret P.C., The Old Post Office, Clee St Margaret, Craven Arms SY7 9DT.

Chair's Report 2019 (for Annual Parish Meeting on 13 May)

The Parish Council

During 2018/19 the members of the Parish Council were

Mr. Mike Hardingham (Chair)	Mrs. Tamsin Osler (Vice Chair)	
Mr. John Heighway	Mr. David Palmer	Mr. Bob Day
Mrs. Vicky Matthews	Mrs. Shalynn Pearson	

Mrs. Joan Palmer is Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. Many thanks to Jon Kail who is our internal auditor. Official communications to the Council, or request for items to be discussed by the Council, should be made to the Clerk by e-mail or post. Members of the Parish are always welcome to contact councillors if they wish to have matters raised in the Council on their behalf.

The Parish Council meets at least six times a year, and all members of the Parish are legally entitled (and welcome) to attend to observe our proceedings. Minutes are posted on the main notice board in the centre of the village, and are published on the Community Website (www.clee.org.uk). If you are one of the few people for whom we do not have e-mail contact details, please email us at clee.org.uk@gmail.com, so that we can keep you updated.

Finance

Details of the 2018/19 accounts will be available at the Annual Parish Meeting. Our income was £16,218 and our expenditure was £18,461, which includes a long term investment of £10,000 into our Hargreaves Lansdown account (this is classed as expenditure by local authority accounting rules). The major components of our income are the NATS mast rental (£6,661) and investment income (£6,306). Cash at the bank at the year-end was £21,545 and our Long Term Assets have a year-end value of £250,010, including our £140,000 investment portfolio in Hargreaves Lansdown, which fluctuates in value (£138,760 at the year-end). During the year the portfolio yielded around 4.7% income.

Our budget for next year has expenditure of £19,800, including £2,000 on gorse control, £1,000 on renewal of notice boards, and £7,550 on the Clee Liberty Environmental survey (see below). Predicted income is £20,700, including £4,000 in grants towards the environmental survey.

We are unlikely to ask for a Parish Precept (the local component of council tax) in the foreseeable future. Suggestions will be invited at the meeting for local charities which should receive support from the Council this year.

Other Parish Council Business – main points

Village Roads: We pressed Shropshire Council Roads Department to fill potholes and clear blocked road drains, and finally received some attention. The renewal of the tarmac through some of the village is welcome, but we continue to ask for more.

Broadband: Superfast BT Fibre has become available to the centre of the village and onwards towards Marshgate and Heath. We are lobbying for others to be included.

**Clerk: Mrs. Joan Palmer, The Old Post Office, Clee St Margaret, Craven Arms, SY7 9DT.
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Clee Liberty Common Cause Project:

Cath Landles, our local co-ordinator, has been instrumental in organising various events and facilitating our contacts with local interested parties such as AONB, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Historic England and Natural England.

Clee Liberty Bracken Control and EIA:

Natural England have made a determination that our bracken control has been more effective than a simple maintenance programme and therefore comes under the Environmental Impact Assessment rules. This is on the basis that we are replacing "Semi-Natural" bracken-covered areas with grassland and the 2006 EIA legislation decrees that Natural England have to check the impact on the environment. We were able to negotiate an agreement to complete our planned crushing and spraying programme for 2018, but in order to carry out any bracken control at all in 2019, we had to apply to Natural England for an "EIA Screening Decision". This involved a detailed application with maps, data on flora and fauna, management plans for the common, observations from interested parties, and a reptile survey (in progress) to ensure that we are not destroying adder habitats. We await a determination

Feasibility Study for Clee Liberty Environmental Scheme:

The Parish Council, with the support of the Commoners Association, has commissioned an Environmental / Feasibility Study (PA2) which identifies potential management options and grants and subsidies which might allow the major graziers to reduce their flock sizes on Clee Liberty. It includes a reptile survey (necessary for the EIA process described above), and detailed mapping of various habitats on the common, to form the basis of future bracken and gorse control. The study will cost £6,290, of which around 55% is being funded by Natural England and 8% by the Common Cause Project.

Clee Liberty Gorse Control:

The success of the bracken control programme has led (as expected) to increased spread of gorse. We are planning a spray programme to control this.

Defibrillators: Shalynn Pearson is organising further training for volunteers.

Planning: There have been several applications in the last year. Details can be found on the "Planning Tracker" section of the Council Website (www.clee.org.uk).

Website: Thanks are due to Karen Slater, our volunteer website manager, for maintaining the Council website (www.clee.org.uk). Thanks also to Ruby Reseigh for the Clee Pigeon Parish Newsletter (from the website or rubyreseigh@gmail.com).

NATS: A 15-year renewal of the NATS mast lease has been signed.

Rights of Way: For the record: we last renewed our Statutory Declaration regarding Public Rights of Way across the Common in late 2015; we will need to do it again before 2026.

Mike Hardingham, Chairman, April 2019

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