

Feedback from Clifford Neighbourhood Plan launch event

Introduction

A launch event for Clifford's Neighbourhood Plan took place at Clifford Community Centre on Sunday 16th July, 2017.

The launch event was widely advertised through The Link, on Facebook (through Clifford Buzz), on the parish council's website and on posters around the parish. All households received an invite to the event through the post.

117 local residents signed in, from a total of 511. This represents just over 20% of the parish.

An information pack was handed out to everyone who attended the event and was made available through the parish council website after the event for those who were unable to attend.

The day was organised on behalf of Clifford Parish Council by a small steering group of local residents volunteering their time, with technical support from local consultancy Data Orchard and grant support from DCLG via Groundwork and Locality. Thanks also to Samantha Banks at Herefordshire Council for providing some background information about the parish.

All of the day's feedback is included in this document, which will be used as the basis for a questionnaire to be sent to every household in Clifford in late 2017.

For further information please contact cliffordnplan@gmail.com

Infrastructure table

Infrastructure - Summary

The main feedback was that people don't feel safe on Clifford's roads. This is due to 1) cars driving too fast 2) poor condition of the roads and 3) increased volume of traffic and HGV movements. As the roads are only narrow and many single lane, it was felt that with future development road capacity and safety should be taken into account more. The road between the school and Priory Wood was mentioned a lot as an example where increased road use and speeding has made it too dangerous to walk or cycle on.

Speed restrictions do not seem to be effective and do not seem to be enforced anymore through speed checks. A number of people suggested putting physical barriers in place to make the roads safer. The cobble strips in the road before Whitney Bridge were mentioned as an example. Some residents told me they used to walk their children to school from Priory Wood and that it was a very pleasant experience. Many people would like safe foot and cycling paths in the parish that can be used by families. It was felt this would improve their health and quality of life, and reduce the number of cars on the road. Not one person felt safe to cycle to Hay. Many mentioned a fatal accident in Clyro where a pedestrian got killed when hit by a car a few years ago and as a result of that accident a large section of hedging was pulled back and a tarmac path put in. Can we make this work in Clifford? The impact of development on the roads and road capacity should be considered in planning applications. W.r.t. broadband there's a split between people with fibre and with traditional internet and the latter group was not happy about that service at all. Plans for fibre installation are not clear for residents. Reception for mobile phones was seen as poor esp going "over the hill" to Priory Wood there are blackspots. Hardwicke residents are pleased there is a bus service, many Priory Wood and Clifford village resident complained that they have to drive to Hay or Hardwicke Junction to catch the bus, and then might as well drive to Hereford or Brecon in the car. Apparently there was a bus service serving Clifford Village in the past.

All comments (not weighted):

- Condition of the roads poor
- Speed of traffic too high
- School run unsafe to walk with children
- Roads unsafe to walk with children
- Narrow roads not suitable for HGV's can they be blocked from using single lane roads?

- Parking and access to school car park too limited
- Clifford Village speed limit should be extended to Port Vaen
- Condition of the roads between Priory Wood and school is poor
- Condition of the roads between Clifford Village and Hay is poor
- Flooding of roads dangerous as too many potholes

- Potholes lead to cars and cyclists swerving
- Clifford Village 30 mph not very visible can it be made more visible?
- More bus coverage in parish required

- Bus from Clifford Village would be great
- Bus from Priory Wood would be great

- Speeding and dangerous driving should be tackled
- Pull out from Clifford Church road onto Clifford Village/ tool bridge road needs a mirror for safe pulling onto road
- Should avoid phone masts in parish as the radiation is toxic (a leaflet was handed over for more info go to: www.es.-uk.info)

- More verges should be cut in summer at junctions for visibility and safety
- Poor mobile phone coverage
- Limited choice of broadband in parish and seen as expensive
- Who is responsible for maintenance of common land??
- Feel unsafe cycling to Hay because of speeding cars and increased traffic

- Priory Wood road potholes especially where building work takes place – developers should repair roads they damage
- Cycling unsafe with HGV's overtaking and pushing cyclists in verge/ hedge
- Broadband speed dropping where you're at the end of the road and when more people go online
- Housing considerations of Eardisley Neighbourhood Plan worthwhile including in Clifford Plan?

- Cllr Price should guard against over development
- Use Priory Wood as an example how things can go wrong planning wise
- Pullovers on single track roads often in bad state
- Not clear if we can get fast broadband/ fibre
- Slow process to get fast broadband, have any targets or timelines been set for roll out?
- Convert old railway line into a cycle path?

- Potholes are unsafe for cycling, leads to swerving
- Pontrilas timber lorries too big for our roads causing road blocks and dangerous overtaking
- Sewerage systems/ septic tanks what are regulations and who enforces? Should be considered in planning applications?
- Lack of foul water drainage systems
- Lot of overhead cables phone/ power/ fibre – vulnerable to damage can some put underground?

- No services in Clifford village
- Need joined up thinking with Council e.g. combining public bus and school bus services
- Can't go for family bike ride because of unsafe driving of cars

- It's frustrating not being able to cycle safely to the shops
- Fibre internet is great if you can get it

- Could hedges be pulled back to create separated path?
- HGV traffic clogging up roads and dangerous situations
- Patch work repairs on roads, Council should do proper surfacing instead
- Transparency required of funding for roads, does parish receive all the funding for roads it should get?

- New housing will make it more busy, can the roads cope?
- Roads unsafe for cycling and walking
- Enforcing of speed limits not happening. Can we do community speed watch ?
- Are speed humps of cobble strips possible?
- Road surface not good enough for cycling

- Do something on roads with Jesse Norman MP as he has new role for infrastructure?
- Speed limit on roads around the school required
- Walking to school is not safe, no alternatives as you have to walk in long grass
- Would be nice to have cycle/ foot path to Hay from Clifford
- Business should be encouraged that does not lead to heavy traffic on the roads

- Increase of delivery drivers on the road because of internet orders
- Running on roads is dangerous
- Does more housing mean Clifford School will be full?
- Would like cycling track and walking tracks as safer
- Too many cars on the roads to cycle safely – cycle tracks and pathways needed

- Move hedges to create more space on roads for paths
- Roads not safe. Cycle path/ foot path from Clifford castle to Hay – as done in Clyro to Hay
- Could we ever see the railway line used as a cycle path to Hay?
- Access to land/ housing is important
- Public transport is very limited

- Car sharing/ car pool possibility in the parish?
- Maintenance of footpaths/ styles/ bridges/ signage
- Footpaths are so important in this rural community. Appreciate the hassle to land owners but improves quality of life no end
- Green Lane Road seriously pot-holed. Needs addressing as one of main access to/from Clifford school
- Lots of potholes

- Too much speeding along stretch from Hardwicke Turn – Clifford School and beyond

- Road from Clifford Village Centre to school: serious potholes cause cars to drive in middle of the road. This leads to serious danger to pedestrians/ cyclists. Particularly kids walking to school. Horrible bends, poor visibility – could we have warnings signs on school route
- When is superfast broadband coming?
- Should be more bus provision for Clifford
- Community transport minibus daily to Hay possible?

- Circular route needed: Hay → Clifford school → Priory Wood → Lower Clifford → Hay (as old “Sky” bus did during Hay Festival some years ago
- More signs needed near the school saying Slow Down !
- Tourism appeal of parish should not be damaged by heavy traffic and dangerous driving

- Road capacity B4348 and B4352 not able to cope with HGV’s and increase in traffic due to new developments
- Through traffic of HGV’s not tenable, road restrictions for HGV’s should be considered
- Condition of roads and additional road users will make roads worse quicker
- 40 mph speed limit at Westbrook not being complied with

- Local drivers seem to have no respect for speed limits
- Signage for speed limits poor, can we install radar operated illuminated sign displaying the approaching driver’s speed
- Can we ask for location signs mounted on white picket ‘boundary fences’ as recently installed on the A438 at Whitney ?
- Awareness for cyclists needs to be raised on Clifford’s road
- Can footpaths be made more dog friendly or should we have special dog friendly footpaths?
- Can the old railway line be turned into a combined foot and cycle path?
- Is there is any provision/budget to improve road safety e.g. better regulation of the speed limits and/or encouragement of safer driving would be great.
- We would like to see the Plan incorporate some provision for improvement of broadband and mobile reception/connection in the area, (especially broadband).
- Road safety is a concern and if there is any provision/budget then better regulation of the speed limits and/or encouragement of safer driving would be great.

Just to say thank you for taking time on 16 July to come out and speak to us about our views (and needs) to be able to live in this lovely village in future. Please find a link below to a topical animation.

<http://stopsmartmeters.org.uk/smartattack>

We care deeply about the environmental issues (it is a real Cinderella in the UK as money interests always seem to take a precedent) and the impact of pollution, including the EMF on

people, animal, including bees, and plants is huge. The damage is cumulative. There is an estimate that there are around 33 million people in Europe with EHS and growing...

Road capacity: B4348 + B4352

Any future planning framework must take serious note of the inability of both these roads to cope with some of the heavier goods traffic they currently take, let alone any future increases due to new developments.

It seems unlikely that the fiscal restrictions from central government under which Herefordshire Council currently operates will change in the foreseeable future. Therefore any developments generating additional traffic will lead to roads which deteriorate more quickly, with no prospect of an enhanced maintenance regime.

There is a compelling case for some restrictions on HGV through traffic to be introduced on both B4348 and B4352. HGV operators are currently using both roads as through routes for trucks when the topography is totally unsuitable. In the long term a SW bypass of Hereford will help some of these issues, but that must be assumed to be some way off in the future. Clearly both farm-based and other local businesses must be able to obtain access for heavy vehicles as required, but the through transit of HGV traffic is barely tenable at current levels, and serious consideration must be given to a restricted zone for through HGV movements.

Speed limit compliance on B4348

There is an ongoing problem with non-compliance with the 40 mph speed limit at Westbrook. Anecdotal observation suggests that this is mostly due to drivers from within a 10 – 20 mile radius who are either careless, seem to think that the limit only really applies from 8am – 6pm, or in some cases have no respect for any limits.

Given resource issues, increased enforcement by the police is likely to be very sporadic and to make almost no difference. However there are useful lessons which can be learned and applied from elsewhere.

Signage in the limit zone is very limited, and relevant road markings non-existent. Over the approx 1km of 40 mph limit, there are only 2 repeater signs, of which one is missing the eastbound sign. Signage could easily be made much more visible and comprehensive, plus there are additional tools used elsewhere in the area which could work well at Westbrook, such as the radar-operated illuminated sign displaying the approaching driver's speed, and location signs mounted on white picket 'boundary fences'. Both have recently been installed on the A438 at Whitney.

Red tarmac bands displaying the limit, and other types of road marking, could also act as a continual reminder to drivers that they are within a limited zone.

Cyclist safety

Another aspect of signage and road marking concerns making both the B4348 and B4352 much more welcoming and safe for cyclists. From Easter to September there is already significant cycling traffic, both for casual touring and more serious club racers, particularly at weekends. But both B roads make no concession whatsoever to cyclists, and make cycling unnecessarily unpleasant and dangerous.

A great deal could be done to encourage awareness of, and consideration for, cyclists amongst other road-users, especially on blind bends and uphill sections.

Encouraging increased participation in cycling both for local residents and visitors to the area should be a parish priority, delivering both health benefits and green ambitions.

Medium/long-term project – railway path

The ideal for encouraging cycling is of course off-road routes, and here there are perhaps some possibilities.

Although the track bed of the Golden Valley line was unfortunately sold off piecemeal to local landowners on closure in the 1950s, much of the route within the parish is still visible – including part of the platform and station building at Westbrook.

It would make for an inspiring medium/long-term parish project to examine the feasibility of re-opening even one or two short sections of the former railway as a footpath and/or cycle route. Most farmers recognise that a well-delineated and carefully-planned walking/cycle path causes minimal disruption to farm operations, at the same time creating goodwill in the wider community.

Dog-friendly footpaths

The reality in rural communities such as Clifford is that dog-walking is an important form of exercise for many. The parish is fortunate in the network of footpaths it contains, but many are inaccessible to dogs due to stiles and other artificial impediments. The interests of farmers and landowners, particularly in relation to the welfare of stock, must of course remain an important consideration, but it would be a welcome upgrade to local amenities if the parish worked towards making more footpaths accessible for dog walking.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

Summary

There was general recognition that a lot of people who live in the area work from home or run small businesses. These people bring value to the community and should be supported (especially if they want to expand their businesses), although they could do more to inspire local young people and they probably exacerbate the lack of affordable housing for traditional local workers.

In terms of industrial development, there was widespread belief that large-scale development would not suit the area at all, mainly because the local infrastructure—particularly roads—would not support it.

The issue of agricultural development was more divisive. The farming community believes that its voice is being diminished as the population grows, and that there is insufficient sympathy for its need to diversify in order to survive. Elements of the non-farming community have strong objections to certain types of diversification, such as intensive farming. The proposed poultry farm in Archenfield (like that proposed in neighbouring Dorstone) is hugely contentious, and there are calls from some to address the desirability of such proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Employment was not generally seen as a big problem in of itself. Schemes to transfer local skills to young people would be welcomed, but there is acceptance that children leaving the area once they grow up is just part of modern rural life. More important to the health of the community is that it appeals to young families.

What ideas do you have to support small businesses in the Parish?

- “The council should recognise people developing their homes as live/work spaces, and encourage it.”
- “We need people working locally who don’t need to travel in order to do their work, as the infrastructure is poor.”
- “Building more homes creates jobs for locals, but development must be controlled. We need local councillor support until the Neighbourhood Plan is in place.”
- “The ‘selling at the gate’ mentality is good, where people put produce for sale at the front of their properties. Maybe this could be encouraged by planning, and expanded.”
- “The planning department should look to encourage the development of local businesses.”
- “There is a heavy reliance on the internet for small businesses and those working from home. Everybody needs good access to this.”
- “Since we know that new houses *must* be built in the area, are there ways to ensure that local businesses and technologies are used in their construction?”
- “A community bank or fund could help local people get small businesses off the ground. There’s a lot of self-employment, a lot of people with good ideas, but some of them might need help.”
- “There’s an interesting group called REconomy that promotes alternative currency/bartering in small communities.”

- “We’ve got to find ways for the local economy to work for local people.”
- “It’s good for people to rely on local help.”
- “Good communication is the key to understanding the needs of local businesses. Perhaps we need an informal forum or space—like a pub!”
- “If we are to have more houses in the area, then we should also think about better local resources, such as shops and services, so that people don’t have to travel so much.”

Are we making enough of our agricultural and tourism opportunities?

- “No. More support is needed. Not only are these the two main ‘industries’ of Clifford (and Herefordshire), but they actually preserve the nature of the landscape, as well as traditional village life, wildlife, and a host of other things.”
- “Farming anything under 300 acres is unsustainable. You have to diversify—some might want to open an intensive chicken farm, while others might want to move into tourism with a B&B. Each of these could damage the other, so the needs of all parties must be considered.”
- “Employment in farming has reduced over the years, but we still need affordable housing for farm workers.”
- “We need more housing for local people—perhaps it could be offered to locals for a limited window of time. Otherwise who works the farms?”
- “There’s not enough sympathy and support for farmers. It is the farmers who make this landscape so desirable—they have to be able to do what they need to do.”
- “As more outsiders and non-farmers come into the area, paying higher and higher house prices, the voices of farmers get weaker in the community. People start complaining about smells, and tractors on roads late at night at certain times of year.”
- “Every agricultural application should be considered on its own merits.”
- “Farms have to be able to develop; there should be a balance between the views of farmers and non-farmers.”

What scale of industrial development is acceptable?

- “Small, not intensive.”
- “Any industrial development needs careful thought in terms of infrastructure—will the roads bear the delivery trucks?”
- “Business growth is good, unless it damages other local businesses.”
- “Heavy industrial development is not appropriate for the area.”
- “Any industrial development should tap local resources, such as timber, the river, and the soil. These resources support artisanal and sustainable businesses more than they do heavy industry. They also encourage *care* of the landscape.”
- “Even if a business doesn’t employ anyone, it still creates and sustains jobs by utilising local contractors and businesses.”
- Local turkey farmer: “A buffer zone around industrial and agricultural areas is a good idea and should be maintained. If new homes are built too close to existing businesses, it will only cause problems.”
- “Bio-security must be considered with new industrial or agricultural developments—for example the problems of putting poultry next to poultry.”
- “The key issues that determine the suitability of a development are: smell, noise and accessibility.”

- “Farms might need to diversify to survive—for example by offering storage units or camping.”
- “If farms or businesses want to expand, they mustn’t be hampered by objections to workers housing, storage units etc.”
- “Industrial development creates jobs and encourages people to stay in the neighbourhood.”
- “The proposed poultry farm in Archenfield would be hugely damaging to the local community. We have to address such developments in the Neighbourhood Plan, just as neighbouring Dorstone did (see page 23 of its NP).”
- “Small businesses run in existing barns and outbuildings should be encouraged, as they are less damaging to the landscape than brand new light industrial units.”

Are we transferring local skills and knowledge effectively to younger people?

- “Apprenticeships do exist in a way, they are just informal. People are taught on a personal level and awareness of skills and competence spreads by word of mouth. Business is generated this way. Formal apprenticeships might not be right for the area.”
- “Priority could be given to those wishing to develop farm buildings or outbuildings into spaces for local skills courses and workshops.”
- “It’s really important to find opportunities for young people—jobs and skills that could encourage them to stay in the area.”
- “The community should look out for people who need help and encouragement.”
- “We need inter-generational learning—could those who are working from home, often doing very interesting things, do more to inspire local young people?”
- Local blacksmith: “It’s hard to take on an employee or an apprentice financially, if you’re a sole trader. Any help in being able to do this would be great.”
- “It’s natural that our children want to leave once they grow up and need to find work—they want to see more of the world. Often they come back to the area when they start families of their own.”
- “The questionnaire should have questions specifically aimed at younger people, 15-18 years old. How do they see the opportunities or lack thereof?”

HOUSING

Executive Summary

There is a recognition that the Parish does need to increase its housing stock. The target of 30 new homes by 2031 was felt to be low if the new builds were to be spread out more evenly across the parish and not clustered in one place such as Priory Wood or Clifford. The phrase “affordable homes for local people” was a prevailing statement making reference for the need for smaller homes wherever they are built in the parish. This was believed to be a critical factor in ensuring the Parish continues to thrive.

There was a general consensus that this is an opportunity to do something bold/creative with what is built, where it is built and who for - but it was recognised for this to be achieved it needs the support of land owners (i.e. those offering land for development), the Parish Council, the County Council and of course the broader support of the community.

Should the Plan take a view of size, type and affordability of housing?

Affordable/social housing and houses for local people with local livelihoods. Concern that local people are being priced and pushed out. Majority view was that Clifford needs these – i.e sufficient houses both to encourage young people/families to move in and to keep local young people here. Perhaps applications for local people to self-build could be looked at preferentially.

Social care: houses with ‘granny flats’/special housing for the elderly and single people. A development of warden controlled homes for the local old – perhaps as a self-supporting project.

Infrastructure (much comment on importance of it): to match housing development. e.g. sewage, gas, school.

- “more smaller, more affordable, sustainable, good quality homes for community people of all ages/back grounds. Important to maintain community cross section”
 - Needs cross section of homes – 2- 4 bedroomed. Needs spreading out across ALL areas – not specifically in one area”.
 - “There needs to be affordability of family homes that are not on an estate”
 - “need more chimney pots in the village”
 - “need smaller houses with clauses that prevent them from being extended into larger houses”
 - “We need properties that attract a younger demographic – of we don’t things like the school will suffer”
 - “Low cost housing for local people”
 - “Got to keep the Parish Alive”
 - “More housing will increase the levels of radiation in the village – we must be aware of this. Radiation is carcinogenic. Fibre optics help keep toxins out of the village”
 - “We should always consider the environment when considering planning applications”
 - “verges are common ground and need to be taken into consideration when building”
 - “Local is for folk who have lived here for 20 years or more”
- Parish Council should have control over some rentable properties in the village to ensure fair allocation”.

- “must prevent the village from becoming a retirement community”

Should 30 be the minimum number of homes built by 2031?

Generally felt that we do need to build more houses in the parish and these houses should be a mix – viz. affordable ones through to ones with four bedrooms. This will ensure there is a balance and social mix in the community. The village needs to grow and then Clifford would become more of a community. Relevant houses to fulfil the needs of those who live here. The Parish could absorb up to the minimum number of houses suggested i.e. 30.

- “depends on housing need. When was the last housing survey done? You need to include the views of those unable to live in the parish due to financial reasons/affordability.
- Affordable starter homes should be the emphasis going forward. Please don’t build all 30 in Priory Wood – we have already got a lot of new houses in a tiny community”
- “This figure feels very low if the houses were to be spread out across the Parish” x 6
- “Gentrification has pushed out people who would like to live here, especially young people”
- “Would make sense to add houses to where houses already exist”
- “The parish could accommodate a lot more houses if they were spread around and not clustered”

Do you have views on specific areas that could be allocated for housing development?

Any houses should be sustainably built and in keeping with the area. Retain the rural feel/character/ambience with no loss of the countryside. Respect and give consideration to existing properties. Currently too many holiday homes.

Clifford isn’t a traditional village with a clear focal point. The pub, church and school are all in different places. Given that we have a housing allocation for Clifford, we should spread the allocation across the whole parish, at the moment it is all concentrated on Priory Wood. The plan should require / incentivise developers to invest a small amount in high quality design, or those with outstanding innovation features, in accordance with [NPPF paragraph 58](#).

Suggestions for where to build (varying views): as much as possible as infill in places already built up or in a single development of all the houses. No estates. One house on its own /lots of isolated ones more acceptable than small developments. More development where infrastructure is already in place. Use of derelict farm-buildings rather than farmland. A guarantee that planning going through at the moment doesn’t allow for any more building on that site.

- “We need to secure some land for community used sheltered housing, affordable housing for families, to be donated to the community by landowner for benefit of the parish and well being of community”
- More focused rather than scattered. Near infrastructure i.e. schools roads with bus access into Hay/Hereford”

How would you feel about group planning applications?

- “I would like to get involved in a co-housing project, affordable eco homes in a rural location on community land”

Should the Neighbourhood Plan redefine settlement boundaries?

- “If well considered – it may well safeguard specific areas from iover development. Perhaps a maximum number allotted to each settlement to ensure not all house are built in one area and new developments are spread out.”
- “I own a Turkey farm in the village and I am concerned that any adjacent future development might cause conflict with the newcomers. I would like to see any settlement boundary to exclude this land so that I can plan for the future”

Community Facilities

Summary

Very good interest in Community Facilities, one immediate clarification needed to be given to many parishioners that "Clifford Parish Plan" included Hardwicke, Middlewood, Archenfield, Pen-y-parc, suggestion that statement needed in Parish link also any communication on N/Plan in link to be published under both Hardwicke & Clifford.

Question 1) How can we best Support Clifford School:-

Mixed responses:- Comments were parishioners felt School receives lots of support from the community, also with a new possibility of visiting "Clifford Castle" once the Castle stabilised. Parishioners have offered help in school but turn away due to lack of funds for DRB checks. Many older residents felt that the school do little to support the community, if community events held school parents do not attend.

Question 2) Do you value the two Community Halls in Clifford:-

Responses were all positive, all valued the halls, some hardly use them but still feel they are an asset, only meeting place other than the churches, the halls have different characters, some parishioners preferring the character in Hardwicke over Clifford's functional space, Parishioners unaware that funding these halls come from the community many thinking the council or government fund running.

Question 3) Do you feel well informed about what is happening in Clifford Parish:-

The Link magazine is the first thought for communication, followed by Parish Noticeboards and Clifford Buzz, suggestion for a social area on Parish website would be useful, generally everyone felt well informed not forgetting the local grapevine. Lots of support for the Link and can the link be used for more communication in Clifford

Question 4) would a mobile community facility (Library, Shop etc be useful or a drop in community place like Dorstone front room.

The overall comments was yes to a multi-functional space or even mobile space that provided, Library, shop, post office, or a weekly event lots of support to bring back the monthly markets everyone missed that social event. One request for a public house in walking distance to parishioners home, one request for an all-weather sports facility for use by community (football/tennis/netball/hockey etc.

Other Comments: Bus service from Clifford to Hay, reason Hay-dial-a-ride, was too expensive and people can only get lift to fit in with Hay-dial-a-ride. Couple of parishioners would like to be part of a working party once a month to clear PROW, prune fruit trees on the common generally felt working group work be good. School children need a bus stop in Clifford.

Actual comments wrote on day from Parishioners

Question 1) How can we best Support Clifford School:-

Offer to help children reading. Last time I did that they could not afford to find out if I was a paedophile!!

Hopefully school visits to Clifford Castle in 2018/19 once stabilised

By contributing to Clifford School events

Turn up to events put on by PTFA to raise funds for school.

Question 2) Do you value the two Community Halls in Clifford:-

Certainly, especially Hardwick, because its near the church

Yes a Clifford Church is the only meeting place

Very Much

The Halls have different characters both are great

Clifford hall lacks character but very functional Hardwicke hall fabulous.

Question 3) *Do you feel well informed about what is happening in Clifford Parish:-*

I rely on the link Magazine

Only on the link magazine a social page would be helpful

Use parish Notice board to find out what's on.

Yes

Clifford Buzz is good on face book

Link useful

Yes agree with above link magazine is brilliant

Question 4) *would a mobile community facility (Library, Shop etc. be useful or a drop in community place like Dorstone front room*

Yes – would love shop/front room

Yes for library No shop

Shop/post office

As Clifford is so large would a weekly pop up shop work,

All weather sports facility for use by school and the community multi sports (football tennis netball hockey etc.

Enjoyed attending monthly market in Clifford community centre could something like this be re-introduced

Try it & see

Yes drop in shop facility would be great.

Monthly Market please.

The Parish website is impossible to find on a Google search – it brings up the one in Yorkshire.

We could do with a plan to encourage teams of people to manage the litter problem.

Also the formation of a team to help clear stiles and footpaths in their local area, co-ordinated by the PFO.

Incidentally there are 54 kilometres of Rights of Way in Clifford plus the access over Common land (and now including the path along Bake Lane.

Removal of the hideous yellow sign at the top of Little Mountain Common.

Cross-border liaison

Clifford is unusual in that the nearest town, and many local facilities and amenities, are not just in another county, but another country! The reality of the structure of local government is that the amount of formal liaison across the border will always be limited, however it's clearly in the interests of all that the closest possible links at grass-roots level should be fostered between the communities on either side of the border, as well as maximum liaison with surrounding parishes and Herefordshire Council.

This would include the parish seeking a voice on issues such as the current campaign to secure a future for Hay Library, a third of whose users live in Herefordshire. The parish should also seek a role in consultations with national businesses such as the banks whose branches slated for closure might be located in Wales, but whose customer base includes many residents of England.

It can only be beneficial for all local residents if the parish actively fosters links at all levels – with Hay Town Council, Powys County Council, and the Welsh Assembly.

Environment

Ecology:

The parish has a rich diversity of flora and fauna, and in recent years residents have seen improvements in populations of some species with reductions in others. Species mentioned in the information gathering stage were diverse. Increases have been observed for: Red kites, buzzards, kingfishers, woodpeckers, hares, hedgehogs. Decreases were noted for: butterflies, bees, badgers, swallows and martins, curlews, lapwings

Generally the water quality in the rivers and streams is considered to be improving, based on anecdote and conversations with officials from various formal bodies. This has meant an increase in sightings of species which rely on good water quality such as eels. Drainage was also mentioned, with there being some concern about increased pressure being put on the ecology by the approved new housing developments in Priory Wood, where the council have apparently failed to do their duty in terms of ecology studies as part of the planning impact assessments – despite sightings in the vicinity of great crested newts which are a protected species.

A popular topic of conversation was grass cutting and mowing of verges and also the commons areas. For the verges, opinions were divided between carrying on with the status quo (fairly heavy trimming of the verges) - reasoning included health and safety and practicality - versus a desire to leave verges intact mainly for biodiversity – but also reducing traffic speeds on narrow lanes.

The commons areas also raised conflicting opinions. The lower commons near the river were frequently described as no longer being pleasant to visit, and more difficult to access – though it was pointed out that now that as they were a designated wildlife reserve that wasn't necessarily a bad thing. The common opposite the chapel also raised many comments. Mostly these revolved around grass cutting and the maintenance and quality of the facilities.

Overwhelmingly people would like to see the area around the equipment mown throughout summer – it was accepted that leaving some areas of the common untouched was acceptable for wildlife reasons, but it was pointless having unused play equipment.

Resoundingly people voiced concerns about climate change, and wanted housing to prioritise using only more environmentally sound technologies: solar PV and thermal plus heat pumps on new developments. Many people in Clifford have invested in Renewable Energy systems, but unsurprisingly buildings are heated mainly by oil or LPG boilers and electric heating – some of the most polluting and carbon intensive forms of heating available. Whilst it is difficult to change this in existing buildings, it was considered essential to ensure new buildings did not use direct electric, oil or LPG boilers. Community energy was to be welcomed where practical, including for wind turbines, solar or other technologies – though there was some opposition noted to wind turbines.

Few comments were made about scheduled monuments or SSSIs. Some respondents were concerned about potential impacts on wildlife from the increased number of canoeists using

the Wye – though it was acknowledged that it was fairly rare for people to actively cause trouble.

Other comments received:

Farm

Smells and noise disturbance late at night from farming operations – poultry farms especially
Ditches (managed by land owner the council) need cleaning out more frequently
Flash flooding being made worse by some farming practices

Commons

Lower commons are more difficult and less pleasant to access now, not so much maintenance work being done.

One strong sentiment that the common should not be owned by the Parish Council

The boggy area next to the play equipment should be filled in with soil.

Comments on the fact that there are many more children in the parish than 10 years ago, so play facilities should be improved.

Possibilities for improving the chapel common included:

- More play equipment
- Goal posts
- A bike track
- Paths mown through the long grass in summer
- The entire area around the play equipment to be mown through summer
- A fire pit or brick barbecue area provided
- Summer community events on the commons

Little Mountain overgrown with bracken

Housing

Herefordshire Council allegedly not fulfilling their obligations re: environmental impact assessments

Concerns about foul water drainage on local ecology and other residents

- A strong desire to see on all new developments:
- Respect for climate change
- Encouragement for renewables
- No fossil fuels where possible (the only thing that would stop the use of heat pumps or renewables would be budget for affordable housing or electrical connection issues so they could be inhibited entirely)

River and waterways

Possibly farmers and other residents are not getting as much warning from the dam in Rhayader as they used to?

Number of ponds is disappearing

Some occasional bad behaviour by canoeists has followed a significant rise in the volume using the river.

Himalayan balsam is getting to be a bigger problem – giant hogweed situation has been improving

Footpaths

The good work of John Neville was noted

Suggestions of volunteer work groups to help assist with the commons and footpaths from many.

It would be nice to be able to walk along the old railway tracks

Other

Afterwards I realised I hadn't mentioned 'Trees' when I was at the Environment table and was discussing changes to our local landscape/environment.

There is a continuing loss over past decades of mature hedgerow trees, particularly Oak. This mainly as a consequence of hedgerow loss. Resulting in changes to landscape both visual and, critically, environmental.

Lost trees are not being replaced and there should be more emphasis on long term native tree planting for the centuries to come.

We live in a beautiful environment. Is there anything to be done to conserve or improve it, e.g. by promoting the planting/care of trees, hedgerows or wild flowers appropriate for the area?

Lastly, climate change and its effects. Encouraging energy and water conservation and/or promoting the use and/or generation of renewable energy with any new developments and in existing properties.

Clifford Local Plan

Miscellaneous comments

Planning priorities

A thriving and sustainable community is one where economic activity is balanced against amenity. Apart from farming, tourism is the major driver of the local economy, and any future permitted development should be careful not to diminish the tourist appeal of this beautiful part of the Wye valley. The promotion of wildlife-friendly and green tourism schemes should be encouraged as part of this. It is also important that any housing development should prioritise affordable housing for local people.

Consultation

All sections of the community need to be involved, consulted and considered in any major planning applications going forward – particularly in relation to any zoning for potential additional housing, or for industrial-style farming developments.

There is a general tendency in such situations for those with the loudest voices, and the residents of the most congenial areas, to push for such developments to take place elsewhere in the parish. All discussion and evaluation of any development must be on the basis that the views and concerns of the less vocal or articulate, and the less privileged, are accorded equal weight to everyone else.