

Sampford Courtenay ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 20th April 2021 7.30 pm

Background

The **Annual Parish Meeting** is a legacy from the Middle Ages, when Local Councils did not exist, and all local decision making was carried out by meetings of the whole community, taking place in the church vestry.

The **Annual Parish Meeting** is open to all electors of your Town or Parish, who have the right not only to attend but also to speak on any matter of local interest. It must be held between 1st March and 1st of June.

Present: Clerk – M. Pratt; Cllrs M. Wilson, M. Carpenter, J. Friend, J. Palmer, C. Coleman & B. Tucker. WDBC Cllr B Ratcliffe & DCC Cllr J. McInness.

Guests: - Matthew Thompson – Network Rail, Kevin Miller – Senior Sponsor; Matt Barnes & Ian Mundy – GWR; Cllrs S. Whiteley and C. Lee – North Tawton Town Council.

SCPC Candidates: - P Collins, J. McIlwraith, M. McIlwraith & M. Morrissey.

Public – BR, GTG & ATG, MC, PH, H & BA, JT, S & FS, LR, VM, JB, MS, GE, SM, DBP. (36 participants)

- **Welcome by Chair Cllr M Wilson** – Cllr Wilson reiterated that the Annual Parish Meeting is a meeting for the parishioners and not a Parish Council Meeting. She welcomed all our guests and outlined the format of the meeting.
- **Minutes Silence** – a Minutes Silence was then held in respect of the recent passing of HRH Prince Phillip.
- **Short Presentation by GWR and Network Rail** on re-opening of the Okehampton to Exeter Railway. Matthew Thompson – Network Rail + Kevin Miller, NR Senior sponsor, Matt Barnes and Ian Mundy GWR.

Kevin Miller then gave a very thorough and informative presentation on the background and current situation of the **The Dartmoor Line** (the meeting was recorded and is available on request from the Clerk. Alternatively, you can find more information at Dartmoorline.com)

Matthew Barnes then explained that there are **currently 3 challenges** to overcome before **Sampford Courtenay Station** can be included in the new rail service that is on schedule to open in the Autumn 2021.

- a) **Timing Issue** – there is only one passing place at Crediton and for trains to fulfil schedule as agreed in bid proposal, additional stops have not been included as part of the initial scheme. But they are still a possibility for the future once the train service is established and timings can be measured accurately.
- b) Sampford Courtenay Station itself needs to be brought up to **modern safety standards**. It needs power, lighting, shelter & electronic information & communication boards. All of which has a cost value currently not included in the project.
- c) **Access to the Station** – currently the “car park” and access to the Station is not registered and ownership and right of access needs to be established. This is not impossible, but another hurdle to cover.

DCC Cllr James McInnes thanked Kevin and Matthew for their presentation and added that he was personally “excited” about the re-opening of the line. He and his DCC colleagues have a meeting scheduled with Network Rail and GWR to discuss various issues including the concerns raised by Sampford Courtenay residents.

Matthew Barnes then went on to answer questions from the public:

- Yes, DCC has already purchased the land for a station and carpark at Okehampton Parkway.
- Yes, they are already working with local bus companies & DCC to coordinate bus and train times.
- Additional passing places are not included in current scheme, but there is a possibility of using the twin line at Coleford plus a minor signalling upgrade to allow 2 trains on the same piece of track in the future.
- Yes, there will still be car parking charges in order to “manage” adequate parking for rail users. The exact cost is still up for discussion.
- [The Devon & Cornwall Rail Card](#) which gives discounted travel can be used on this new service.
- Dartmoor National Park and Okehampton Council are working with Network Rail to promote attractions/services currently at Okehampton Station and perhaps a shuttle bus service to give access to other businesses in the town itself.

Cllr Michele Wilson thanked everyone for their input saying that it was really useful to see what is currently planned. It is also very encouraging to see the support of DCC and neighbouring councils to work together for the opening of Okehampton Parkway and Sampford Courtenay Station in the future.

Cllr Colin Lee – NTTC confirmed their support and it was also suggested that this item be added to the next **Eastern Links Agenda**

- **Chance to meet candidates standing for SCPC** – Phillip Collins, James McIlwraith, Matthew McIlwraith & Martin Morrissey.
The four candidates for election to SCPC on May 6th then introduced themselves and gave a brief outline of their reasons for wanting to become a Parish Councillor. As this election was requested by Sampford Courtenay parishioners it is hoped that there will be a good turn out at the polling booth where you will also be voting on your DCC representative and your Police & Crime Commissioner.
- **Results of Poll on suggestions for Village Green**

A big “**Thank you**” to the **35 parishioners** who returned a completed questionnaire expressing their views on the future of the **Communal Village Green Area**.

SUGGESTION	POINTS	COMMENTS
Wild Flower Area	98	Area needs to be agreed and “fenced” so that contractors do not mow by mistake.
Bulb Planting	83	Bulbs offered in memory of Tim Edwards to plant in Autumn with North Tawton friends. 38 points for Native Bulbs.
Bug Hotel	51	Wood off-cuts from SW Fixings.
Performance Area	49	Incorporate storage for croquet, cricket, boule equipment etc & chequered base to use for chess and draughts.

Central Play Area	44	A lot of support for maintaining the central play area with 31 points for additional play equipment for all ages.
Fruit Trees	42	With 26 points for Ornamental trees
Of the 35 who responded		
	22	Said they would help with these projects
	15	Said they would help fund raise for these projects
	20	Said they would not mind a reasonable increase in the precept to help pay for some of these projects.

Additional Comments

- Long term maintenance needs to be considered.
- Consideration needed into how any addition will affect time and cost for Grass Cutting contractor.
- Possibility of organising some outdoor exercise classes eg Tai Chi
- Possibility of “storing” games equipment – Croquet set; boules; chess etc under/within Performance Area.
- Possibility of Free seeds/plants/trees for charities & off cuts of wood for Bug Hotel from SW Fixings – Winkleigh.
- Fix gate by Water path to stop it swinging shut so fiercely.

These results will now be considered by SCEnSus and SCPC to see how best these projects can be funded and actioned.

- **Siting of the Defibrillator in the Square** – prior to Covid 19 fund raising enabled SCPC to purchase a Defibrillator to be sited in the Square. Enquiries to Western Power to supply a “trickle feed” electricity supply resulted in quotes in excess of the cost of the Defibrillator itself. Possible siting options:
 - a) SCPC Adopt Telephone Kiosk in the Square for £1 to house defibrillator. (BT will maintain electricity supply FOC for this purpose)
 - b) SCPC purchase Solar panel to supply electricity (approx. cost £150)
 - c) Use of neighbouring property external electricity supply.

These options will be considered at the next SCPC meeting on 4th May. If you have any comments, please contact the Clerk prior to this meeting.

- **Registering New Inn as a Community Asset** – Cllr Wilson expressed her sadness that Malcolm and Karen and family had today moved out of the New Inn, and wished them good luck for the future. Exactly what Heavitree Brewery plans for the pub are is unknown at the moment.

Councils can register properties/monuments etc with the local authority as a Community Asset – which means that if it ever comes on the market – SCPC would be notified and given 6 months to try and raise enough funds to purchase it. In order to do this SCPC will need to conduct further consultation with parishioners, and Clerk will research exactly what is involved.

- **Sampford Courtenay Open Gardens** – Joy Tucker asked for public opinion re holding an Open Garden's event this year. The general consensus was that it is a lot of hard work for those involved if there are still constraints on numbers at public events. Perhaps postpone it until next year.
- **Up-date from other Parish Groups** – Chair Bob Tucker and Mike Carpenter informed the meeting that the **Village Hall** would be open for business again from May 17th with a "Pre-loved" Goods and Plant Sale on Sat May 22nd. 10am – 12 noon. They are also offering discounted fees to encourage groups to start hiring again. Fund Raising is going well with over £30,000 raised so far and a Lottery Funding Application currently being submitted. Work to replace the 3 windows in the main hall is hoped to start in the next 6 weeks.
- **St Andrew's Church** – Malcolm Craig said that it is still to be decided if the Summer Fete in July will go ahead, but they have got a wedding booked for the end of June (with limited congregation).
- **Any other comments from the parishioners** – there were no other comments from members of the public present, however, all SCPC meetings are open to the public and your comments can be included by prior notification to the Clerk.

Cllr Wilson again thanked everyone for attending and the next meeting will be the AGM on Tues 4th May at 7.15pm followed by the monthly meeting.

Marion Pratt 21.4.21