

Thousands raised to save village hall

by AMY HETHERINGTON amy.hetherington@okehampton-today.co.uk

SAMPFORD Courtenay residents have raised thousands of pounds to go towards repairing the village hall roof and windows in order to keep the building watertight.

Since the launch of the Roof-us appeal two years ago, the village hall committee has raised £45,000 through a range of fundraising activities.

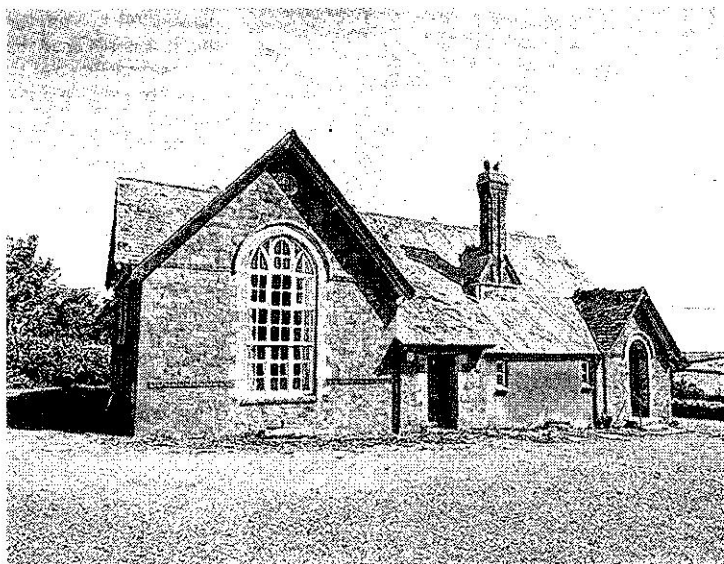
Most recently the committee organised a curry night for the end of last month (January 28) which raised over £700 for the appeal.

It is now working towards the Big Breakfast and barn dance session which will take place in March.

Roger Thompson, chairman of the village hall committee, said: 'We have not only been able raise funds because of the generosity of local people but we have been able to put on a series of really fun community events with people.

'During lockdown we kept stuff going. We have been trying to keep the hall open throughout.'

The committee has also launched its 'Buy a Slate Appeal' through which people can buy a roof slate to gift to the village



● Sampford Courtenay Village Hall — villagers have already raised £45,000 towards its repair.

hall.

'It's so they can look up and say "that slate's got my name on it," said Mr Thompson.

Overall, £150,000 is needed to repair the roof and one of the windows but this amount also includes vital work needed to weather-proof the chimney stack and add insulation to the main roof.

So far, the committee has spent £18,000 to fix two of the large windows

which were in great need of repair.

Originally the village school, the hall was purchased by a group of locals to act as the community's centre when the school closed in the 1950s.

The building has been refurbished before when an extension was added to the old school hall to create a kitchen, meeting room and foyer and allow for more space, better catering facilities

and improved disabled access.

Now covid restrictions have been relaxed the village hall can start to host more face-to-face activities for residents and those in surrounding villages.

Mr Thompson said: 'We've already had the curry night and now we've got the big breakfast coming up and many other things going on like yoga, the craft and chat sessions and tap dancing.

'It's a really important place for those who don't have family members nearby and live alone. They can socialise here.'

However, the committee is aware that many people may still be nervous about socialising with large groups of people and have altered plans to ensure that even vulnerable people can join in.

Nicky Courage, publicity officer for the hall, said that this year's curry night was the first time in two years that attendees were allowed to eat in.

'But we thought we better give people a take-away option too as we know some people still don't want to be around large groups of people. It worked quite well,' she added.

There is now a long list of activities lined up for the coming months including dog training classes, visiting speakers, the Big Breakfast and even barn dancing and the committee even hope to be licenced to perform weddings at the hall in the future

To donate to the Roof-us appeal visit go to the JustGiving page at www.justgiving.com/Sampford-CourtenayVillageHall.