



## DRAFT MINUTES OF SAMPFORD COURTENAY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday January 21 2026

**Present** – Cllrs M Wilson ( Chair ) M. Carpenter , P Collins ,A Green, J McIlwraith , J Moesel , T Squire ,V Smedley , Malcolm Harris ( Interim Clerk )

1. **Chairs Welcome** – Cllr Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the sponsors and the carol singers for their support in making the Christmas Tree Lighting event a success. The upgrade work to the Waterpath is nearing completion and the contractor Mark Hedges was thanked for his work during some severe weather conditions. The Chair talked about the possibility of change and reorganisation to local government in 2026 and reiterated that parishioners would be kept fully informed of any decisions that affected the parish.
2. **Apologies** - Received by Cllr S Davies ( DCC )
3. **Declarations of interest** – none
4. **Approval of the minutes of meeting held on the 05 November 2025**  
It was resolved that the minutes of the Council meeting held on November 5 2025 be signed as an accurate record . Proposed Cllr Wilson                      Seconded Cllr Moesel                      All in favour
5. **Public Participation** – there were no members of the public present. An online item had been received by Cllr Wilson with regard to potholes in Wellspring Lane and this had subsequently been raised with the Neighbourhood Highways Officer and a response was awaited. The report from the DCC Cllr Davies was taken at this point of the meeting in her absence. One action from this report was in regard with the current DCC Library consultation survey. The Chair asked the Clerk to forward the information to the Sampford Courtenay Web Administrator and the Editor of the Parish newsletter in order to attract a wider audience.
6. **Planning**
  - 6.1 **The following WDBC decisions were noted**  
2850/25/VAR– East Rowden Farm EX20 2SE – Approved  
3124/25/FUL - Summers Barn – Approved  
3445/25/AGR -Mr Taylor – more details on land S615033 requested
  - 6.2 **The following SCPC responses submitted to WDBC in January 2026 were noted**  
3423/25/LBC – Sunnyside – Rectory Hill – *No objection* made to an extension to the listed building  
3508/25/FUL – Incott Barn EX20 2SW – *No comments* made on the part retrospective change of use
  - 6.3 **Update on the WDBC enforcement process.**  
At the November 2025 meeting it was resolved that the Parish Council request an information report from WDBC Planning outlining the scrutiny and overview of Planning decisions, and seek reassurance that the WDBC planning enforcement policy is adhered to. The Chair followed up all these actions via requests to the Head of Planning at WDBC but to date there has been no response, nor acknowledgment. The next stage is to approach the WDBC Governance and Accountability Committee.
7. **Parish Priorities**
  - 7.1 **Village Green Development** – Cllr Carpenter – gave an overview of the work undertaken to date. The work to the Waterpath is near completion with the outstanding works due in the next two weeks.
  - 7.2 **Sampford Courtenay Station** – Cllr McIlwraith – provided an update following a recent station meeting . A loop at Bow should be completed once the Okehampton Interchange / Hub is opened– this is due in May 2026. A 5 year development plan for the Okehampton Interchange / Hub will be published in 2027. It is hoped that the future use of the Sampford Courtenay station will be included within this Plan . There is still no funding identified for a public bus provision at the Okehampton Interchange / Hub.



## 8. Councillor and Clerk Reports

**8.1 St Andrews Church Yard** – Cllr Moesel provided an update on the maintenance of the church yard. There are concerns about the lack of space in the future with all possibilities currently being explored. The Parochial Church Council holds primary responsibility for the maintenance and the Parish Council assists with an annual grant. The Council will continue to consult with the PCC and seek advice and guidance from DALC and report back to a future meeting .

**8.2 DCC Locality Fund Application for Village Green Benches** – the need for replacement benches for the Village green was discussed. It was agreed to remove the old benches for safety reasons and apply for DCC funding from their Locality budget. The Chair and Clerk to take the application forward and finalise estimates for the provision and the installation. The Parish Council has some funds within their Parish Enhancement budget. **It was resolved that a Locality Budget grant application be made to DCC for an estimated £2036 to provide replacement benches for the Village Green .**

Proposed Cllr Wilson                      Seconded Cllr Green                      All in favour

**8.3 Assertion 10** – Cllr Wilson led on this series of reports , all of which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Items 8.3b and 8.3c relating to contracts and quotations were withdrawn, and 8.5 heard prior to 8.4.

**8.3a)** The item regarding compliance timescales set within the New Practitioners Guide was heard and resolved first : **It was resolved that Cllrs acknowledge the requirements for compliance to the timescales set within the New Practitioners Guide and to be in agreement with key spend to achieve that result .**

Proposed Cllr Wilson                      Seconded Cllr Mcllwraith                      All in favour

**8.5) Sampford Courtenay Website** . Discussion took place regarding proposals to upgrade the current website. The key issues must support the needs of the current community based website structure and evolve a simplified system that assists the current administration. In addition , the upgrade needs to support the Parish Council in its requirements to support the Accessibility criteria under WCAG2.2AA . It was proposed to set up a sub committee to assist with this responsibility and devolve delegated responsibility for the contractual and tendering process in order to purchase a website package that would also include .GOV emails within the current set budget. Terms of Reference and minutes of the Sub Committee would be sent to all Councillors to ensure full accountability.

**It was resolved to create a Website Sub Committee -Cllrs Mcllwraith ,Cllr Carpenter ,Cllr Collins and Cllr Wilson**

Proposed Cllr Mcllwraith                      Seconded Cllr Wilson                      All in favour

**8.4) IT Policy** – Cllr Wilson. The draft Policy had previously been circulated to Councillors and is one recommended by the National Association of Local Councils . It will support the Parish Council's annual audit.

**It was proposed that the IT Policy for the Parish Council be approved and adopted with a review in May 2027.**

Proposed Cllr Wilson                      Seconded Cllr Carpenter                      All in favour

**8.6 Wider OKE Cluster Group** – Cllr Wilson gave a verbal update. The minutes of the last meeting will be circulated. The group set out its Terms of Reference and agreed to apply for grant funding from DALC to allow for an annual networking event. A key area for joint working in the future will be the outcome of Local Government re-organisation and its effect on smaller councils. Topical areas such as the closure of the LLOYDS Banking service in Okehampton were discussed and how best Councils and Parishioners awareness of the need for alternative facilities. Writing directly to [support@cashaccess.co.uk](mailto:support@cashaccess.co.uk) is one way.

**8.7 Document Retention Policy** – Cllr Wilson led a discussion on the storage of old Parish records and the conversion to digital copies for storage. The Document Retention Policy had previously been circulated.

**It was proposed that the Document Retention Policy for the Parish Council be approved and adopted ,with a review in May 2027**

Proposed Cllr Wilson                      Seconded Cllr Green                      All in favour

**8.8 Vacancy for Parish Clerk – Update** – **It was resolved to move this item into Part 2 of the Agenda .**

Proposed Cllr Collins                      Seconded Cllr Wilson                      All In favour

**8.9 Village Green Grass Cutting Contract** – the Clerk told the meeting that the current contractor had held his price from the previous year for the 2026 season.

**It was proposed that the existing contract terms and contract fee with the current contractor, Trevor Davey , be renewed for a further 12 months from April 2026**

Proposed Cllr Collins                      Seconded Cllr Green                      All in favour



## 9. Finance

**9.1 Monthly Accounts** – the accounts had previously been circulated for Councillor information and were duly noted.

**9.2 Payments, Receipts and Transfers** –The list of payments, receipts and transfers made since the last meeting was presented to the meeting for approval and ratification. There was one additional payment of £62.95 – South West Water - presented at the meeting - for approval.

It was resolved that the payments, receipts and transfers be approved.

Proposed Cllr Wilson                      Seconded Cllr J Moesel                      All agreed

### 9.3 Appointment of Auditor for 2026/2027

It was proposed that Rachel Avery be reappointed as the Parish Council's internal auditor for 2026/ 2027

Proposed Cllr Wilson                      Seconded Cllr Smedley                      All agreed

**9. Grants** – the information had previously been circulated to Councillors .

#### 9.4.1 Grant Requests

9.4.1a) Tor Support

It was proposed that a grant of £50 be approved subject to receiving copies of current accounts and supporting local information

Proposed Cllr Carpenter                      Seconded Cllr Wilson                      All Agreed

9.4.1b) CAB Torridge , North, Mid and West Devon

It was proposed that a grant of £100 for 2026/27 be approved to support the work of the CAB

Proposed Cllr Wilson                      Seconded Cllr Carpenter                      All Agreed

#### 9.4.2 Annual Grants for approval

9.4.2a) St Andrews Churchyard – annual grant to assist with Churchyard maintenance

It was proposed that a grant of £350 be approved to St Andrews Church for the maintenance of the Churchyard

Proposed Cllr Wilson                      Seconded Cllr Mcllwraith                      All agreed

9.4.2b) Okehampton Community Transport Group – annual grant to assist with on going costs

It was proposed that a grant of £200 be approved to the Okehampton Community Transport Group for the provision of services

Proposed Cllr Wilson                      Seconded Cllr Smedley                      All agreed

**9.5 Precept 2026/2027** – to consider the draft proposals and report , previously circulated , for the setting of the 2026/2027 precept and the budget 2026/2027 – the precept, compared with last year represents a less than 1% increase.

It was resolved that the 2026/2027 Precept be set at £13,258

Proposed Cllr Wilson                      Seconded Cllr Green                      All agreed

**10. Village Hall Update** – Cllr Green gave an update. The Village Hall AGM took place in January .There will be no price increases for hire of hall in the next financial year 2026/27. There was discussion regarding whether the cost of hiring the Hall for a community meeting held by the Parish Council should be a cost covered by the Precept ? It was considered a donation to the support of the venue. It was requested that a full set of accounts be made available to the Cllrs. Two new Trustees have recently been appointed. A new website has been launched . The Village Hall Committee asked the Parish Council who had responsibility for the Village Hall Brown Signs sited in the village as they were in poor condition. They were advised to contact DCC Highways . They also asked about the responsibility for the access road to the Village Hall –Cllr Carpenter . Lead Cllr, had previously reported this issue to DCC Highways through the P3 Funding request process but no grant funds had been received in 2025/26. This would remain a priority in the application for 2026/27 . P3 funding in securing any grant funds.

**11. Date and Times of the next meeting and Items for Agenda** – the next Parish Council meeting will take place on Wednesday March 21<sup>st</sup> 2026 at Sampford Courtenay Village hall and will commence at 7.30pm Agenda items will include Defib training information on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2026 ; Parish Council 2025/26 Year End accounts for approval

There being no further business the public meeting closed at 9.10 pm and all members of the public left the meeting , including the interim Parish Clerk and a PART 2 meeting discussed the recruitment process for a new Parish Clerk with all Councillors present.



Malcolm Harris – Interim Clerk to Sampford Courtenay Parish Council [clerk.scpc@gmail.com](mailto:clerk.scpc@gmail.com)