

NOTES FROM THE OPEN PARISH MEETING - SAMPFORD COURTENAY

Wednesday 6th May 2026

Welcome

Cllr Mike Carpenter, the Vice Chair of the Parish Council welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone that an Open Parish meeting was an opportunity for the whole community to come together, to share views, raise concerns, and discuss matters that affect all parishioners.

He outlined the format of the evenings meeting , with key speakers from principal local groups within the parish and how they would talk about their past year and highlight some of their future plans. review progress. A Question and Answer session would finish the meeting and it was hoped that people would take the opportunity to question what they felt was important and to engage in discussion.

Cllr Carpenter concluded by thanking parishioners for their ongoing participation, support, and engagement in village life. Whether through attending meetings, volunteering at community events, raising concerns, sharing ideas, or simply helping neighbours, the level of involvement played a vital role in keeping the parish a strong and vibrant community.

The Open Parish Meeting May 2025 Notes

Cllr Carpenter presented the notes from the May 2025 Open Parish Meeting on a powerpoint presentation.

Sampford Courtenay Parish Council – an overview of the Council’s work and priorities during the year 2025 / 2026

Road Safety Issues

Road Safety remained a high priority and the Council will continue to press the Devon Highways Dept to improve traffic signage in the village. The loss of the Parish Speedwatch coordinator had led to a pause in that activity, and to progress , the Parish needs a replacement volunteer (s)

NB: 2 Volunteers did offer their help at the end of the meeting . Parish Council to action.

Potholes continued to be an ongoing issue. The Parish Council are in regular contact with the responsible DCC Officer and dept but it is also vital that residents report potholes via the Devon CC Highways website so they can be properly logged and prioritised. Cllr Carpenter quoted the DCC website page : We (DCC Highways) prioritise repairing potholes, on roads, that have a 40 mm (4 cm) vertical edge and are 300 mm (30 cm) wide as these are the biggest risk to highway users. Others will be done as and when Resources are available.

Development of the Village Green

Cllr Carpenter reported that a new path was now in place as part of the footpath improvement programme funded by the District Council under the P3 funding scheme and that new benches , part funded by Devon County Council now complemented the area. The Parish Clerk Malcolm Harris talked about the refurbishment possibilities for the childrens play area and asked the community if there were any ideas forthcoming from the hall. There was some discussion from parishioners regarding an improvement in both the equipment available for children and adults

alike. An audience member asked about adult exercise facilities - the idea of adult exercise stations was discussed and the possible purchase of one or two pieces of equipment to start the project and to subsequently grow into an activity exercise area over a period of time. There were still concerns about occasional dogs in the area that may need to be addressed. Fencing the childrens play area would be an improvement.

Okehampton Interchange

CLlr J McIlwraith introduced this item with an informative visual presentation that Network Rail had provided regarding the development (The Hub) The Hub interchange would not be staffed, nor would it provide toilet facilities. Drop off points would be on one side only but there would be a decent amount of car parking spaces available. The key talking point was the bus interlink. The 118 service, Tavistock – Okehampton would call through but the Exeter – Okehampton link would not. In respect of the station at Sampford Courtenay – Network Rail may agree to a drop off/pick up point at some point but the logistics around sidings, one way tracks, timetabling and coordination all remain undecided. An audience member asked about the amount of carriages in future as the line got busier – it was thought that there are 3 carriage trains which will be made available on the route.

Village Hall Update

CLlr Andrew Green gave a comprehensive report on the activities over the past year.

- Looking back over the last 12 months or so, there has been an increase in the amount of time spent on more popular activities. There were 8 Film Nights compared to just 4 in 2025; 7 Community Lunches compared to 5 the previous year and a new monthly Skittles Night. As well as this, the Village Hall has again hosted a Big Breakfast – now a Big Brunch – Mike and Julie’s annual Dog Show; Billy and Marion’s Fruit & Vegetable Show and, of course, the Summer Fete last June. The programme also featured four different genres of music
- Private hires dropped in the most recent financial year, mainly due to the withdrawal of a number of regular hirers who couldn’t get sufficient support to continue. Financially, the income overall was due to the events organised and run by Hall trustees and which generated a surplus of just under £3,000. It was estimated that around 2,600 people passed through the doors in the year to October 2025 compared to 2,300 the previous year. The number of children attending doubled. The website presence has been immeasurably improved thanks to Julieann’s hard work. The next big event is the Dog Show on May 23rd, then Open Gardens on June 20th.
- The number one challenge looming on the horizon – and the reason we need to keep generating financial surpluses - is that the village hall face a bill of more than £30,000 to replace part of our aging floor. As each year passes, the need to start work grows but is not yet critical. At the current rate of progress, it will take another three years to generate enough money to pay for a new floor – and that is if prices don’t change much. So grant funding is being sought for part of the cost.
- CLlr Green thanked the 13 trustees, the volunteers that ceaselessly help out with everything from making cakes to moving chairs and to those in the community who support the events.

St Andrews Church

Cllr J Moesel gave the Church update as the Vicar , the Revd Dr David Spence had sent in his apologies due to a commitment to another meeting. It is reproduced below.

- St Andrew's Parish Church continues to provide weekly services and baptisms, weddings, and funerals.
- A service of Holy Communion and healing is being introduced on 5th Sundays of the month.
- Improvements to the fabric of the building are being made where finances will allow, including the installation of the handrail on the path from the lych gate to the church.
- Building work is underway at the church rooms with repairs to the roof being done.
- The parish is creating a new church history booklet aimed at increasing the awareness of the historical importance of St Andrew's Church and the Church House.

Community Events

Cllr Carpenter spoke to this item and presented an informative list of community events with the help from information from other parishioners in the meeting audience.

Dog Show- 23rd May. From 2pm onwards We have some great classes including best sausage catcher and best trick. Refreshments & Raffle. So come along for a fun few hours. This year the funds raised will go towards Village Green Enhancement. Any one who has a raffle prize that they can offer would be gratefully received to Mike Carpenter.

Community Picnic – 14th June to celebrate the opening of the new footpath . This will be held on the 14th of June at 2pm. The audience were told that it would be a great afternoons fun, and that there would be Hot and Cold drinks provided – parishioners and visitors to just bring picnics and a blanket.

Open Gardens- June 20th Cllr Andrew Green had highlighted the day in the previous item but added that there were 12 gardens this year and 3 of these were new to the programme .

Flower & Produce Show – September 5th Marion Pratt talked to this item and showed the meeting a knitted poppy – hundreds of them are required for an installation outside the church – she asked for help in producing these and suggested ideas for promoting the project at the Flower Show.

Question & Answers

There had been questions throughout the meeting ; directed to the relevant speakers but in addition there was a query regarding the Hub interchange drop off and pick up point . As the station is unmanned , it is unlikely that waiting at the drop off point will be an issue.

The traffic issues discussed at the beginning of the meeting , prompted a discussion on speed wardens and pot holes and two members of the community offered their services .

Peter Smedley (Speed awareness) and John Evans as the Community Road Warden role .

Their kind offers will be taken up by the Parish Council in the next few weeks.

A member of the audience told the meeting that the New Inn raised £110 recently at their monthly quiz for a charitable project.

During the meeting, Julie-Anne Evans raised the view that cooperation and communication between the Village Hall Committee and the Parish Council could be improved. Mike Carpenter responded that closer working relationships were both possible and desirable, and the general feeling of those present was that improved collaboration between the two organisations would be beneficial to the wider village community.

Thanks to everyone who came along to the event and supported the parish.

More information on community activities can be found on the website

[www. sampfordcourtenay-pc.gov.uk](http://www.sampfordcourtenay-pc.gov.uk)