



Sopley Parish Newsletter 2026

Dear Parishioners,

It has been another busy and eventful year for Sopley Parish Council, full of both challenges and positive change. I would like to begin by thanking all of my fellow councillors for their continued hard work across numerous areas, helping to improve and support our village of Sopley.

This winter has brought significant challenges with flooding across parts of the parish. It has been a difficult period for many, however we have been working closely with the relevant agencies to help minimise the impact and to ensure improvements are made for the coming year.

Despite these challenges, it has been a strong year for our community, with a variety of events taking place and the Council continuing to work closely with the Parish Hall. This year has also seen a change in the Hall Committee, and it is important to recognise and thank the previous committee –Caroline, John, Rosemary Imogen, Cynthia and Norman for their many years of dedication and commitment in running such a vital part of village life.

We now look forward to working with the new committee, led by Nick Hill, and there are already some exciting events planned for the coming year, including a summer BBO and a Village Fete. These events are always a great way to bring people together and celebrate everything that makes Sopley such a special place to live.

Last May, we held very successful VE80 celebrations, where FONFA played a key role in bringing the village together in remembrance. It was fascinating to see old photographs and memorabilia, and a real reminder of our shared history.

At Christmas, it was wonderful to see The Woolpack host Father Christmas once again. It was fantastic to see so many families come out to support the event, and to see the joy it brought to the children, especially with the reindeer visiting the village.

The temporary closure of the pub has certainly been felt, as it is such an important village asset. We very much look forward to it reopening and encourage everyone to support it when it is back up and running.

Looking ahead, 2026 is shaping up to be another busy year. The Parish Council and the new Parish Hall Committee will continue to work together to host events that bring the community together and help keep Sopley a great place to live.

As always, the Parish Council is able to provide grants for local projects that benefit the village. Over the past year we have supported a range of initiatives including Sopley Church, Stepping Stones, projects at Heatherstone Grange and many others. If you have an idea for a project, please do get in touch.

Finally, I would encourage you to attend our monthly council meetings. We would very much welcome your input and ideas on how we can continue to improve and support the village.

Thank you all for your continued support.

Chair Gavin Vines

A Year of Community, Celebration and Steady Progress



What a year it has been for Sopley. Thanks to careful budgeting and a proactive approach from your Parish Council, we are delighted to report another successful year with *no increase* in the precept, all while continuing to support events, facilities and village improvements.

We were delighted to congratulate our Chair, Gavin, and his wife, Pauline, on the safe arrival of their daughter, Penelope, just before Christmas 2025. A truly joyful milestone for their family, and wonderful news for our whole community. *Warmest congratulations to Gavin, Pauline, and all the Vines family on their beautiful new addition.*

Our councillors and volunteers have been exceptionally proactive this year, pushing forward key projects across the parish. From tackling ongoing flooding issues to supporting the early stages—and inevitable teething problems—of the Wilberforce Green development, their commitment has been unwavering. They continue to support community events and keep parish operations running smoothly behind the scenes.

Woolpack Flooding—We were saddened by the recent flooding at the Woolpack and continue to offer our full support to the team as they recover and rebuild. We were also delighted to welcome a new landlady to the village. When the Woolpack is ready to reopen its doors, please do pop in and show your support—it will mean a great deal as they get back on their feet.

Our 2025 litter pick was a success, with a good turnout and lots of positive feedback.

The next parish litter pick will take place on 18th April 2026—everyone is welcome and the Parish Hall will be open for refreshments after the event.

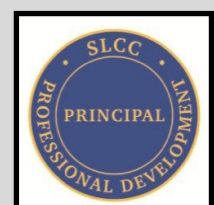
Sopley Parish Hall—The new committee has brought fresh energy and ideas to the Hall, delivering a fantastic programme of well supported community events. Highlights have included a bustling car boot sale, lively bingo and quiz nights, a festive Christmas party, a spirited St Patrick's themed celebration, and an energetic race night.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the dedicated former Hall Committee members who have now moved on to pastures new: Imogen, Caroline, John, Cynthia, Norman, and Rosie. Their hard work laid the foundations for the Hall's continued success. As a Parish, We Also Enjoyed VE80 Celebrations in May 2025, a truly memorable commemoration—beautifully attended and full of community spirit. The Friends of Sopley Church BBQ held at BBQ in the beautiful Smugglers grounds even in the rain and then a Father Christmas visit in December spreading festive cheer to families across the parish and then a wonderful Burns Night held in January 2026 an evening filled with tradition, laughter, live band and good company held in the Woolpack. There's plenty more to come—lots of new activities and events are already in the planning stages.

All upcoming events and parish updates can be found on our website:

Katie Hughes—Parish Clerk

Tel: 01425 674833– 07935 448405—www.sopley.gov.uk





Annual Sopley/Ripley Litter Pick 2026

Many thanks to all of the Parishioners who helped with the Annual Litter Pick on Saturday 12th April 2025 last year.

It was a good turnout again and a lovely dry sunny day for it, thanks also to the lovely people who helped in the background and ensured the rubbish collections were appropriately placed and then collected by NFDC.

Thanks also to the Woolpack for letting us congregate in their lovely pub after the litter pick.

This year's Litter Pick date is Saturday, 18th April 2026

please make a note in your Diary.

Refreshments will be available in the Parish Hall afterwards...

**Any queries please call: 07935 448405 or email
parish.clerk@sopley.gov.uk**



**All Council/Parish information regarding meetings and events
can be found on the Parish Boards and website - www.sopley.gov.uk.**

Any queries please email: parish.clerk@sopley.gov.uk.

**You can now complete the "Contact us" form on the website or join our
Sopley Village Facebook page for regular updates.**



SOPLEY PARISH HALL - 2026 COMMUNITY EVENTS



SOPLEY PARISH HALL
PRIEST LANE
SOPLEY
HANTS BH23 7BA

 **Friday, 20 March – St Patrick’s Celebration Quiz & Stew Night, 7.30pm**
Irish-themed night with quiz, Irish stew and community spirit.

 **Friday, 24 April – Race Night, 7.30pm**
Place your fun bets and cheer on your favourites.

 **Friday, 22 May – Quiz & Chips, 7.30pm**
A lively quiz evening with delicious chips included.

 **Friday, 26 June – Elvis Night, 7.30pm**
A tribute evening celebrating the King of Rock 'n' Roll.

 **Saturday, 25 July – Summer Family BBQ - 1pm – 4pm**
Family-friendly afternoon with food, sunshine, and activities.

 **Sunday, 23 August – Sopley Festival – 1.00pm – 4.00pm**
A full fun afternoon of stalls, entertainment, and village celebration.

 **Saturday, 26 September – Car Boot Sale (Moorlands), 8.00am to midday**
Grab a bargain or book a pitch to sell your own items.

 **Friday, 30 October – Halloween Party, 7.30pm**
Spooky fun for all ages — costumes encouraged.

 **Sunday, 8 November – Remembrance Gathering – midday**
A moment of reflection and community remembrance.

 **Friday, 11 December – Christmas Party, 7.30pm**
Festive fun to end the year together.

Bookings and enquiries to sopleyparishhall@gmail.com or telephone 01425 674285

FRIENDS OF SOPLEY CHURCH

The Friends of Sopley Church is a charity which was set up in 1977 for the purpose of raising funds to help maintain our beautiful church. We have a small committee and about 60 members. We hold social events throughout the year and everyone is welcome at these; you don't have to be a member. All the events are displayed on the Parish notice boards as well as on social media. We are always keen to welcome new members so if you



would like to become a member it costs just £5 a year. Please contact our Treasurer Rosi Tel: 01425 614560 or [e-mail rosemarymoynihan6@talktalk.com](mailto:rosemarymoynihan6@talktalk.com) who will be pleased to give you details.

We have arranged the following events for the coming year and, would love to see as many people as possible to help us in our efforts to keep the church in good repair.

Saturday 6th June 2pm – 5pm Skittles & Cream Tea Thorney Hill Community Centre.

Friday 18th September 7pm Harvest Supper Sopley Village Hall

Saturday 12th December 10.30am – 12.30pm Sherry & Mince Pies – Venue to be announced later.

Jackie Gibson (Secretary)

Sopley Church PCC would like to thank Sopley Parish Council, Hampshire County Council and the Friends Of Sopley Church for their grants which enabled work on the trees to protect the churchyard wall. The glorious view across the Avon Valley can once again be seen.



Avon Tyrrell Estate,

This autumn we hosted the annual ploughing match put on by the South Avon and Stour Agricultural Society on Sopley Field by Derritt Lane. There was an excellent number of entries including many vintage tractors. The Society generously donated £1000 to a local charity, the Fortune College.

The 2025 summer was largely dry and sunny. For the first time in several years farmers were able to harvest a grass crop from the water meadows. Less happily the lack of rain means that arable yields were down and hay is in short supply. Readers may be interested to know that the Estate's water meadows are home to a healthy breeding population of redshank and lapwings. Over the winter over 3000 black tailed godwits were counted on the water meadows.

The dry summer resulted in an increase in wildfires. The old sawmill by Martins Wood was destroyed by arson and an area of gorse and heather burned behind the Burnt House Lane Scout Hut. On a happier note the Scouts celebrated 60 years of scouting in Braggers Wood.

The New Queen continues to thrive and by the time that this newsletter appears the wooden decking should have been renewed.

At Court Farm Corner Barn has been rebuilt as offices. It has spectacular views over the watermeadows, and terms have been agreed with a local company specialising in low carbon construction to take the space. The redundant farm buildings adjoining Court Lane have also been rebuilt as industrial space generating plenty of interest. At the time of writing we are waiting for SSE to install a new 3 phase electricity supply and there are some highway improvements to a short section of Court Lane to be made.

The conversion of the red brick Sabines Barn into a 2 bed cottage is nearly complete. Next on our list of renovations is the conversion of a barn at Shirley Farm into a dwelling for the use of the Butler family.

The saga of Vernon Dene continues. Last year the High Court upheld the decision of the New Forest National Park Authority to revoke the certificate of lawful use for the entire site as a caravan park. However, the US based developers have obtained permission to appeal that decision and the matter will be heard in the Court of Appeal in March 2026. Proceeding alongside the litigation is the developer's appeal against the Enforcement Notice served by the NFNPA requiring the removal of the roads and concrete pads. This appeal is currently proceeding by way of written representations.

2025 was the year of the National Nightjar Survey. Vernon Dene and the surrounding areas have been a stronghold for many years for these rare and elusive birds and the 2025 Survey recorded the presence of a significant population of nightjars. The surveys were carried out over a number of evenings by local residents without whose efforts the surveys of the area could not have taken place and my thanks go to them. Separately the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust have carried out some work in the adjoining Sites of Special Scientific Interest to improve the habitat for another rare species, sand lizards.

The footpath network continues to be widely used and enjoyed. Sadly, the amount of litter, drink cans, sweet wrappers and dog 'poop' both on the paths themselves and the parking areas used to access them is ever increasing. Thank you to all those who take part in the annual Parish litter pick.

Willie Manners

Sopley Parish Council

Meeting schedule 2026-2027



7.30pm	Thursday, 19 th March 2026	SPC Meeting
7.30pm	Thursday, 16 th April 2026	SPC Meeting
7.30pm	Thursday, 21 st May 2026	SPC ACM/Parish Assembly
7.30pm	Thursday, 18 th June 2026	SPC MEETING
7.30pm	Thursday, 23 rd July 2026	SPC MEETING
7.30pm	NO MEETING AUGUST	-
7.30pm	Thursday, 24 th Sept 2026	SPC MEETING
7.30pm	Thursday, 22 nd October 2026	SPC MEETING
7.30pm	Thursday, 19 th November 2026	SPC Meeting/Budget approval
7.30pm	Thursday, 17 th December 2026	SPC MEETING (if required)
7.30pm	Thursday, 21 st January 2027	SPC MEETING
7.30pm	Thursday, 18 th February 2027	SPC MEETING
7.30pm	Thursday, 18 th March 2027	SPC MEETING
7.30pm	Thursday, 15 th April 2027	SPC MEETING
7.30pm	Thursday, 20 th May 2027	SPC ACM/Parish Assembly

Agendas are published a minimum of 3 days prior to the scheduled meeting date. Parishioners are welcome to attend all meetings which are held in the Parish Hall, Priest's Lane, Sopley (unless notified otherwise).

Agendas and Minutes are available at www.sopley.gov.uk

Please note if you wish to contact Sopley Parish Council then please use the “Contact Us” tab now available on the website.

Chairman's Report 2026 —

Sopley Parish Hall

- A year of strengthening community connections: the Parish Hall has become an even warmer, more welcoming space for families, clubs, and visitors.
- People at the heart: thanks to volunteers, trustees, and hirers, we've improved safety, cleanliness, and affordability.
- A busy events programme: new groups joined us and we've planned activities that bring neighbours together.

Looking ahead: focus on sustaining financial health, finishing maintenance, and deepening engagement with our community.

Introduction Through this report I outline the progress, activities, and financial standing of the Parish Hall over the past year. It highlights our key achievements, addresses the challenges we've faced, and outlines our goals for the future in terms of what matters most to our community.

Governance and Management

- Trustees have actively participated in all meetings, demonstrating unwavering commitment to the charity and to our community.
- A proactive maintenance plan has been developed in partnership with hirers, suppliers, and contractors to keep the Hall in great shape without placing undue burden on local residents. Policies and procedures have been refined to ensure ongoing financial transparency and governance, with a view to clear and open communication with the community.

Operational Highlights

- Policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated; the Parish Hall is now fully compliant and easier for the community to understand.
- Operational systems have been strengthened to improve safety, cleanliness, and cost efficiency, with a continuing improvement programme planned for the year ahead.

Urgent maintenance addressed: installed glass washers, cleared gutters, and repaired the porch roof to address water ingress and protect our shared space.

Financial Overview

- Income has increased significantly, enabling ongoing works to improve the structure and appearance of the Hall—investing in our community space.
- Further substantial investment is planned for 2026/7, funded by grants and fundraising so we can keep the Hall welcoming and affordable for all.

Our thanks go to all committee members and volunteers who work hard to ensure the Hall runs smoothly for everyone.

Community Engagement and Usage

- Welcomed several new groups this year; some departures occurred due to relocation or financial reasons, but the Hall continues to be a vibrant hub.
- An extensive events programme is planned for the year, including race nights, bingo evenings, and Christmas parties, designed to bring families and neighbours together.

We remain committed to promoting the Parish Hall and the activities held within it, ensuring everyone knows there is a place for them here.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

- The primary challenge remains financial sustainability while delivering planned maintenance and improvements.
- We will continue to deepen engagement with hirers and the wider community, listening to needs and ideas from residents.

Our aim is to balance safety, ongoing improvements, and prudent investment of funds so the Hall remains fit for purpose in the modern world.

Conclusion I would like to thank the hirers who use the Hall and the Trustees, Committee, and Volunteers who run and promote the facility. The Trustees reaffirm our commitment to improving the Parish Hall and ensuring a positive outlook for its future, for the benefit of our whole community. If you'd like to get involved or share ideas, please reach out—we'd love to hear from you.

Nick Hill, Chair



Grassby Funeral Service opens in Bransgore

Grassby & Sons are privileged to announce the opening of a new branch, Grassby Funeral Service, in Bransgore.

Following in the footsteps of Trevor, Michael and Roger Smith who, together with the late Charles E Leat, have faithfully served the community for many years, Grassby & Sons are honoured to continue providing a trusted and compassionate local funeral service.

Established in 1861, Grassby & Sons has a long-standing heritage of supporting families, and operates several funeral homes across Devon and Dorset, along with a memorial masonry just outside of Dorchester.

The Bransgore branch, located on Runnymede Parade, will be led by Nick Grassby, working alongside Steven Wilton who brings over 30 years of local experience in the funeral profession. Nick Grassby is the sixth generation of his family to be involved in the running of the business. Nick said, 'We are very proud and excited to be in Bransgore and look forward to being able to provide our service and support for local families'.

Refurbishment has been carried out to create a homely environment where you will be welcomed by Funeral Director, Sharon Middleton.

Please contact Grassby Funeral Service on 01425 539200
email: info@grassbybransgore-funeral.co.uk
or visit www.grassbybransgore-funeral.co.uk

The Bransgore branch has a relaxed seating area for making funeral arrangements, and a Chapel of Rest where families can spend time with their loved one. We can also offer our families the option of using our Casterbridge Chapel at our Blandford branch to hold a service. The Casterbridge Chapel can accommodate 10-12 people seated, with additional space for standing.

Grassby Funeral Service offers a wide range of funeral choices including traditional ceremonies, relaxed celebrations of life, eco-friendly burials and direct cremations. Grassby Funeral Service is also a representative for Golden Charter Funeral Plans and have trained staff who can guide you through the funeral plan process.

Whether it's a traditional gathering, an outdoor tribute, or a quiet, private moment, we believe every goodbye deserves the dignity and attention that makes it feel right for the family.

We are here to ensure that when life's hardest moments arrive, you have the space, clarity, and peace of mind to focus solely on what matters most: honouring a life with love and dignity. It is a profound responsibility, and one we accept with the deepest respect.





Bransgore Community First Responders—Spring 2026



Who we are

Bransgore Community First Responders are local unpaid volunteers trained and despatched by the ambulance service to attend serious medical emergencies, where life is at risk.

We attend calls in the local area, usually within an 8/10 minute drive from the village centre. (But we have been known to go much further when requested by the ambulance service). That's an area of about 20-25 square miles.



The Charity to which we belong no longer fund the provision of vehicles so Walkers Garage, Bransgore Rotary, Signs and Logos of Aivley and a local First Aid Association, got together to provide and support a vehicle for use of the responders, to save wear and tear on their own cars and encourage on-call hours.

Our black Mondeo estate can be seen about and we can also use our own cars, no blue lights, no sirens. Being local we can still be “on scene” very quickly and provide basic life support care in the time before the arrival of the emergency ambulance.

What we do

We provide basic life support care until the arrival of the ambulance.

We carry oxygen and a defibrillator as well as other medical equipment.

We can be with a patient very quickly – providing emergency care in the crucial time before the ambulance arrives.

Contact us

We can only be despatched to a call by the ambulance service, you cannot call us out directly. For life threatening emergencies always call 999. For other medical matters or medical advice call 111.

For general questions about our work and media enquiries – or to arrange talks, volunteer, make donations etc contact:

Mike Jukes

Group Co-ordinator

07976 465 890

Our E-mail address for all enquiries is: bransgorecfr@sca-charity.org.uk

Our postal address is:
c/o 32 Pear Tree Close
Bransgore
Hampshire
BH23 8NH

CPR and Defibrillator Awareness Sessions

Our Community First Responders know that some simple skills can help keep someone alive until the arrival of the ambulance professionals. For that reason some of us have got together and formed our own First Aid Association.

We provide CPR and defibrillator awareness sessions two or three times a year and we publicise the dates via our Facebook page. Some of the CFR team are present to assist and explain what we do etc. If interested, please look out for the dates which are usually in February and October.

If someone is unconscious or has stopped breathing, is in cardiac arrest or having a heart attack, or is choking or has severe bleeding, we can show you what to do to keep them alive for those precious few minutes until help arrives.

You do **NOT** have to be an expert and it could be someone in your family that you save



Simple skills that save lives.



The 'New Forest Edge Churches' benefice, of which Sopley church is part, is currently in vacancy. Although we are blessed to have our curate, Reverend Mo Pimenta, to care for our congregation, we have yet to find a new priest-in-charge for the benefice to replace Dr. Reverend Ben Sargent who has left us to become Dean of the Chapel at Winchester College.

We are very grateful for the financial help received from Sopley Parish Council to clear the trees and shrubs from beside the church path. This action has revealed again the lost magnificent views over the Avon Valley and made the church more visible and less inviting to potential theft.

We would love you to join us as we praise God on Sunday mornings at 11.00 a.m. and perhaps have a cup of tea or coffee. The church is open every day during most daylight hours for private prayer, contemplation or just as a quiet place to relax and think.

Unfortunately, the church's last 'quinquennial' (architectural inspection) has highlighted problems with the tower and chancel roofs and we are gearing up some serious fund raising.

St. Michael and All Angels has stood for over 800 years as a beacon of God's word in Sopley and we are determined that it will stay for a further 800 years.

Contact details for Reverend Mo and churchwardens Dave Lay and Elizabeth Bishop can be found in the church porch.

Alternatively, you can email the benefice administrator, Tristan, at admin@newforestedgechurches.org



Bransgore and District French Twinning Association

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Bransgore French Twinning Association has had a busy year to date. By the time of publication we will have held our third Craft Fayre at Bransgore Village Hall - this year with a Christmas theme. It has become a popular event with sellers and buyers and is a major fundraiser for the Association. We are already looking to sell tables to sellers for 2026.

In October we held another wine tasting event which featured delicious food and an interesting variety of wines to sample. It was a super opportunity to welcome our newest "twinners" and attracted many non-members as well. These events are open to all so look out for future events on our website <https://bransgoretwinning.org.uk/>.

In January we held a skittles evening at East Christchurch Sports and Social Club and during 2026 we will be having a summer barbecue as well as other social events; again all are welcome so follow our website.

For those who want to practice their spoken French we hold fortnightly conversation sessions, currently held at Robin's Nest in McPennys. No need to be a member of the Association - just buy a drink and join us. Our sessions have attracted some strange looks from other patrons!

Our twin village in Normandy is St Georges Montcocq and they have a shortlist of families looking to be twinned with a family in Bransgore or surrounding villages. We spend one weekend a year with our twin families, either in France or Bransgore - in May our French friends will be visiting us. The weekends are always hectic as we try to squeeze as much in as possible to make the most of our short time together. Twinning is a fabulous way of dipping a toe into French culture and many long friendships have been forged through our exchanges. If you would like to know more about Twinning or would like to join in any of our social activities email us on bransgoretwinning@gmail.com.

All Saints Church, Thorney Hill

All Saints Church has held fewer open days in 2025 but these have attracted much interest and those who visited us were deeply impressed with the church's beautiful interior and mural.

In October we ended the season with a History Day aimed at encouraging contributions from the public on any aspect of Thorney Hill's history. The turnout was amazing and the small group who coordinated the day is considering a follow-up event to share the information received.

Three music events are planned for 2026 and we can announce two in time for release of the Newsletter. The first is a performance by the New Forest Chamber Orchestra on 25 April and the second is the return of local choir the Diamond Divas on 1 May at 2pm. The church has superb acoustics and with the beautiful interior as a backdrop these are very special events so look out for tickets on our Facebook page "All Saints Thorney Hill Raise The Roof".

The church always welcomes folk to our Sunday services which are held at 9.00am and Communion on the first Sunday in the month and morning prayers on the others.

PRECEPT / COUNCIL TAX 2026–2027

You will by now have received your Council Tax notification for 2026/2027. We are pleased to confirm that the Parish Precept has **not** been increased this year. The overall rise shown on your bill equates to **£3.19 per household** for the 2026/2027 period.

Over the past year, the Parish Council has focused on completing essential works while ensuring we secured the best *value for money* contractors, and in some cases achieved zero cost solutions through alternative means. This careful approach allowed us to end the 2025/2026 financial year with sufficient reserves to keep this year's increase to a minimum.

We will continue to prioritise cost effective options for necessary works and will also look to raise additional funds through local social events to support any exceptional projects — and we hope you will enjoy these community activities.

www.sopley.gov.uk

**Leaving items
around donation
banks **IS** fly
tipping**

**If the bank is full,
take them to a
charity shop instead**

hants.gov.uk/flytipping



Hampshire
County Council



Environment
Agency

Charity Retail Association
The voice of charity retail



**SOPLEY PARISH
COUNCIL
ANNUAL
MEETING AND
PARISH
ASSEMBLY**



21st May, 2025 at 7.30pm in Sopley Parish Hall

After the conclusion of a brief session of formal business, the Annual Assembly provides an opportunity for Parishioners to raise for general discussion, any matters or suggestions that may be of concern or interest to the wider community.

To be followed by Cheese and wine.



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Bransgore Rotary CIO – Annual Newsletter

Bransgore
Rotary
CIO



This year has been full of energy, generosity

and connection—stretching from our home in Bransgore to communities far beyond. From vibrant village events to meaningful international projects, we’ve continued to live Rotary’s values of service, fellowship and making a difference together. It’s a year that truly reflects our belief that “Together, we are always doing something good.”

Our Impact: If you have ever attended one of our events, you might wonder where all the money we raise goes...

This year we have been able to support 27 charitable causes who support local, national and international needs. The organisations that we support show our values and commitment to community wellbeing, education, emergency response, international development and humanitarian relief.

This includes support for: Heartstart Bransgore; Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance; The Colourworks Foundation; Stepping Stones Nursery; The Rotary Foundation; Wessex Rotary Shoebox Scheme; Aquabox; The Fortune Centre; local war graves maintenance; Cancer Research UK; Cancer Research Christchurch; Bransgore Community Church; HoneyPot; ShelterBox; Purple Community Fund; Dictionary 4 Life; Julia’s House; Mercy Ships; Minstead Trust; Tree Aid; Christchurch Foodbank; Global Giving; DEC Middle East Appeal; Lend With Care; CARE International; and Christmas trees and lights for Bransgore Shopping Parade.



The Greatest Hat in Bransgore: The May Bank Holiday Fun Day was a celebration of colour, creativity and community spirit—made even more memorable by the launch of our very first Greatest Hat in Bransgore Competition. Dreamed up by one of our long-standing members, Jeff, the idea brought a fresh twist to the day and quickly became a crowd favourite. Visitors arrived wearing an incredible array of headgear, from tiny, quirky creations to towering masterpieces. The atmosphere was full of fun and imagination as everyone proudly showcased their unique style. Our “make your own hat” stall was a particular hit with younger guests, who threw themselves into decorating with pens, glitter, ribbons and even googly eyes to craft their own wearable works of art.

No Fun Day would be complete without a bustling selection of stalls and delicious food, and this year did not disappoint. From homemade cakes to beautifully crafted gifts, there truly was something for everyone to enjoy. The combination of creativity, community and sunshine made it a standout event in the village calendar. **Join us for the next Fun Day 4th May 26.**

Barn Dance Success: The Barn Dance at Harrow Wood Farm felt like the beginning of a wonderful new Bransgore tradition, filled with energy, music and community spirit. By splitting the event into two parts, we created a lively, family-friendly afternoon followed by an evening full of dancing, laughter and grown-up fun. From the moment the band struck up, the atmosphere was electric, with guests of all ages eager to join in as the dance caller led the way.

With hearty food and plenty of local cider on offer, no one went hungry or thirsty, and the dance floor stayed busy from start to finish. The mix of great music, great company and great refreshments made it an unforgettable celebration one that left everyone buzzing and already excited for the next Barn Dance. **Join us for the next Barn Dance 13th June 26.**

From Vintage Beauties to Modern Classics: We had a fantastic day hosting our car show on the Bransgore Recreation Ground, transforming the field into a paradise for motoring enthusiasts. The event gave proud owners the chance to showcase their classics whether beautifully restored vintage models or striking modern favourites and visitors loved exploring the full range on display.

There was plenty of room for a bustling autojumble too, where treasure-hunters browsed everything from rare parts to quirky memorabilia, with many walking away delighted by a bargain find. After launching our inaugural Classic Car Show in 2025, we were thrilled to expand the event in 2026 to welcome modern classics and an even larger autojumble, making it one of our most vibrant community gatherings yet. **Join us for the next Car Show 5th July 26.**

Bransgore BeerFest 25: The Three Tuns was buzzing with music, award-winning beers and a fantastic community atmosphere as our annual Beer Festival took over the village once again. With an impressive range of local ales, ciders on tap, visitors enjoyed a weekend full of flavour, fun and live entertainment that kept the crowds dancing from afternoon to evening.



None of it would have been possible without our incredible volunteers, whose hard work turned the festival into one of Bransgore's most anticipated events. Their enthusiasm kept the bars flowing, the music rolling and the smiles constant making this year's celebration one of our most memorable yet.

Join us at the next Beer Fest on the 25th, 26th or 27th September 26.

Shoebox Appeal: Our shoebox appeal once again brought joy to children in Ukraine, Romania and Moldova. Each year, local schoolchildren and their families fill the boxes with small gifts, treats and handwritten messages, creating a moment of kindness that travels across borders. These simple parcels mean the world to the children who receive them, many of whom would otherwise go without a present during the festive season.

Looking Ahead

Bransgore Rotary has a lively year ahead, with a full programme of community events, fundraising favourites and social activities that bring people together. The calendar includes the ever-popular Fun Day in May, the Barn Dance in June, the New Forest Car Show in July and the Beer Festival in September, each offering something unique for families, visitors and supporters. These events continue to grow in scale and spirit, strengthening the club's role at the heart of village life.

Alongside these flagship events, we will continue to support community projects, environmental initiatives and fellowship activities for members and friends. With more than 30 active members and a warm, welcoming atmosphere, Bransgore Rotary is looking forward to another year of service, connection and making a positive difference locally and beyond.

Thank You To everyone who attended events, volunteered, donated or simply stopped for a chat or to say hello thank you. "Your generosity, enthusiasm, and community spirit make all the difference."

If reading this has inspired you to get involved whether to give back, meet new people, or be part of a community that makes a real difference, why not join us?

Bransgore Rotary is a friendly, active club that welcomes new members from all walks of life, and we're always excited to meet people who want to get involved. You can get in touch with us through **www.bransgorerotary.com**, where you'll find details about our meetings, events and how to reach the team. We'd love to hear from you and work together to keep doing something good in our community and beyond.



Flooding update from Cllr McDonnell, Sopley Parish Council Flood Warden...



(March 2026)

This has been another year of **exceptionally heavy rainfall**, leaving large areas of the South under prolonged surface water and river flooding. Our priority continues to be **prevention and protection**, particularly for households known to be most at risk.

- We are working closely with the **Environment Agency** to supply flood-resistant door covers and airvent covers to properties with a history of flooding. If you have previously requested these but have not yet received them, please contact us again so we can follow up.
- Many of our **local roads remain affected**, with some closures lasting weeks. In several locations, Hampshire Highways has identified works required from private landowners. These responsibilities sit outside parish council powers, but we are assured that landowners have been formally notified and that **Hampshire Highways is leading on enforcement and rectification**.
- A **full survey of road gullies across Sopley** is now underway. This will help identify further blockages or structural issues that need attention and will support longer term resilience planning.

In the meantime, please continue to monitor our **Facebook page**, where we publish predicted flooding alerts and updates. It's sensible to keep **sandbags and rubber sheeting** ready should you need to protect your property at short notice.

We provide a full flooding and highways update at every **Parish Council meeting**, so if this is an area of interest, you are very welcome to attend for the latest information.

***Parish.clerk@sopley.co.uk or
www.sopley.co.uk and complete the contact form.***



Thank you for all the wonderful support we've received while we've been closed following the recent flooding.

Please keep an eye out for further updates as we move closer to reopening following our essential refurbishment works.

Come and join us at **The Woolpack in Sopley** – in the heart of our wonderful local community when we are able to reopen.

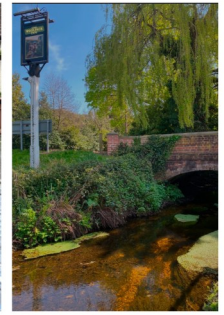
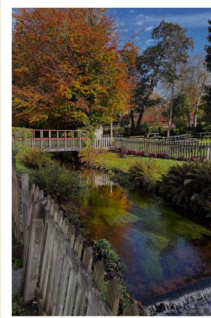
Whether you're stopping by for a relaxed drink with friends, a delicious home-cooked meal, or simply a cosy spot to unwind, The Woolpack has something for everyone. Enjoy freshly prepared dishes, a fantastic selection of drinks, and the friendly faces that make our pub feel like home.

Step outside and discover one of our best-kept treasures – **our beautiful garden**, the perfect place to relax on sunny days with a drink in hand. With the gentle **brook running alongside the garden**, it creates a peaceful countryside setting that makes every visit feel a little special.

With its charming setting, roaring fires, and beautiful surroundings, The Woolpack is the perfect place to gather, celebrate, and make memories with family, friends, and neighbours.

What to look forward to:

- Delicious home-cooked food
- A great range of local ales, wines & spirits
- A stunning garden beside the brook
- A welcoming atmosphere for all ages
- Community events and good times all year round



So why not pop in, say hello, and support your local? We can't wait to see you at
The Woolpack, Sopley.

Your village pub. Your community. Your Woolpack.

Best Wishes from Barbara and The Team

We are incredibly grateful for all the kind wishes from the local community and are really look forward to welcoming everyone back to our beautiful historic pub

The Woolpack Inn, Tel: 01425 672252—info@woolpacksopley.co.uk

Message from Cllr Dee Dunn:-

Rain? What rain! The St Michael & All Angels “summer” BBQ at Smugglers went ahead in true British style, with locals refusing to let the weather win. The bar operated from the greenhouse, and our Parish Council Chairman heroically flipped burgers in shorts and flipflops—proof that optimism is alive and well in Sopley! More than 60 hardy souls joined us, raising over £800 for church funds. Huge thanks to everyone who helped make the event happen and to all who turned out. Your support keeps our church going.



Cllr Dunn wishes to express her sincere thanks to all the local residents, parishioners, and volunteers who helped plant the beautiful daffodil bulbs purchased by Sopley Parish Council for distribution throughout the parish.

Your time and effort have brought a wonderful burst of colour to our community, and your contribution is truly appreciated.



Thank you is also due to Cllr Dunn for the time and care she put into arranging and leading this project. Her efforts have helped bring a wonderful display of spring colour to the parish, and the council is grateful for her commitment.

HARVEST FESTIVAL 2025

As a child I always looked forward to harvest festival at our village church and Sopley church evokes that very same feeling .



The church was filled with love and spiritual joy and was beautiful decorated Mo our inspirational vicar decided to have a theme of bees! So I decided to take that literally and started to paint little stones to look like bees and make up a poem.



Here are a few pictures of this special event .
(Dibley springs to mind)

Cllr Dee Dunn





Community Evening at Sopley Parish Hall

**Friday 17 April 2026 -
7.30pm**

Join us for a relaxed village get-together with:

- . Table tennis/darts**
- . Tuck shop**



- . Licensed bar**
- . Friendly social time**



Open to all — come along, meet neighbours, and enjoy an easy, welcoming evening together.

Enquiries: 01425 674285 – sopleyparishhall@gmail.com

Sopley & Ripley

Litter Pick 2026



As in previous years, the Parish Council will be organising volunteers to undertake a comprehensive sweep of our area to try to clear all the verges, hedges and footpaths of the past year's accumulated litter.

We are planning to meet at the following locations: -

Saturday 18th April 2026

10.30 am - Sopley Parish Hall or

9.30 am - Sopley Primary School

If you can assist with the Sopley Village area clean-up, please meet at Sopley Parish Hall or Sopley Primary School (whichever is more convenient to your home).

From there, we are planning to organise into small groups, these are to cover the following areas:

- *Sopley – North to the Cemetery, East to the humpback bridge via Derritt Lane and South to the Hampshire border.*
- *Avon- South to the Avon Causeway and North to Bisterne Village.*
- *Ripley – spanning out to the more major roads.*
- *Shirley – West to the humpback bridge and North.*

The Parish Council and District Council will arrange disposal of all the resulting rubbish during the following week. We will provide volunteer collectors with gloves, long-handled pickers, safety tabards, and disposal bags, and will have a vehicle and trailer on hand to deal with any larger items left by fly-tippers. In the event of heavy rain on the day, the event will be postponed.

Thank you in advance for any assistance that you can offer during the clean-up.

For further information please email or call -

Parish.clerk@sopley.gov.uk or 07935 448405

Or use the contact form available at www.sopley.gov.uk





Stepping Stones

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Little steps to happy learning.

committed to offering a nurturing, high-quality learning environment with a particular focus on outdoor learning

We have spaces available from 9 months to 4 years

**PLUS SOME
EXCITING NEWS**

**OUR NEW BABY ROOM OPENED
IN FEBRUARY! WE ARE NOW
TAKING BABIES FROM 9-18
MONTHS**

PLEASE DROP US AN EMAIL
SSTONESFINANCE@GMAIL.COM

**REGISTERED CHARITY 1077865
BURNT HOUSE LANE, BRANSGORE,
HAMPSHIRE BH23 8DD**

Sopley Village WI, 2026

Sopley Village WI has had a very busy and successful year.

We all get together on the first Saturday of every month for a coffee morning at The Lamb Inn at Winkton. It is a great chance to catch up and during the dark winter days, we make sure that members who do not drive are chauffeured to the pub and home again.

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

We have held a couple of fund-raising events - the May Plant sale and the Christmas Fayre both of which enable us to subsidise trips to places like Highclere Castle, and several theatre trips which have all been enjoyed by many of our members.

At our monthly meetings - held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at Sopley Parish Hall, we have welcomed a variety of excellent speakers, talking on subjects ranging from the workings of 'County Lines' drugs operations in the countryside, to a talk about birds of prey, including an appearance of 4 birds in the Hall.

During the Summer we had our 'fish & chip' supper at Angela's beach hut at Avon Beach which was wonderful, and Dianne welcomed us to her garden in August for our Summer party. The weather was warm and sunny, and everybody brought a plate for food enabling us to have a fantastic spread of wonderful dishes that everybody enjoyed.

We have had some fabulous workshops, organised and run by our hugely talented members, including an art workshop, wreath-making and sewing workshops where many members had fun on a Saturday learning new skills. We also had a fantastic 'Alcohol Ink' day where 24 members decorated ceramic bowls and made pictures under the guidance of Jo and her business partner who were so patient and helpful.

Along with organised walks around our local villages, and a thriving book club and crochet group, Sopley Village WI brings a lot of pleasure and fun to our growing membership. We now have around 50 members and over 30 normally attend our monthly meetings. Our members are so friendly and generous, making cakes and generally contributing to all we do, including supporting local charities like MacMillan and the Food Bank. It is great news that membership numbers are growing, so we look forward to another year of learning, fun and friendship in Sopley Village WI.

sopleyvillagesec@hampshirewi.org.uk

sopleyvillagewi@yahoo.com



D.SHUTLER

Tel: 01425 673113

M: 07870 404513

AGRICULTURAL & GROUNDWORKS CONTRACTORS

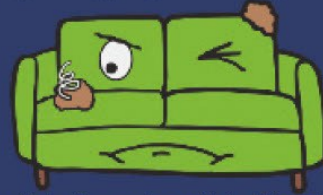
Email: danshutler@aol.com

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- MUCK SPREADING**
- DRILLING**
- CULTIVATION**
- BALING AND WRAPPING**
- HEDGE CUTTING**
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- SWARD LIFTING**
- FENCING**
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**NO EXPERIENCE IS NECESSARY & WE
 CAN PROVIDE BOWLS. IT IS
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 AND JUST FOR FUN.**

THANK YOU JANET

MY DETAILS: 01425 673611 • 07756949151

Hi all, my name is Ian Bigland (28455),

I have been in the Ringwood Neighbourhoods team for approximately 2 years. Before that I was an emergency response officer for approximately 6 years. I am also an ex Royal Marine Sergeant and served with the Royal Marines for 15 years with various operational tours all over the world.

I have been keen to get involved in dealing with the criminality in Ringwood and the surrounding areas and have recently had success prosecuting shop lifters that travel from as far as Portsmouth to target our lovely area.



The details to contact me are on the www.police.uk page.



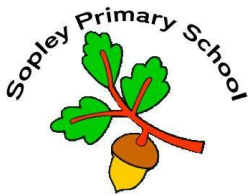
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Sopley Primary School Marks 130 Years of Learning and Community

On 16 March 1896, Ripley School—now known as Sopley Primary School—opened its doors to pupils for the very first time. Sixty-nine children, led by their headteacher Charles Mason, stepped into a

brand-new school built on land generously donated by Lady Constance Manners.

To honour this remarkable 130-year milestone, today's pupils immersed themselves in a full Victorian Day. Children and staff arrived dressed in traditional Victorian attire and spent the day exploring the era through hands-on learning. They discovered the achievements of notable figures such as Florence Nightingale and Isambard Kingdom Brunel, played Victorian playground games, and reflected on how the school has evolved over more than a century.



The celebrations concluded with a lively “knees-up”, and—because no birthday is complete without it—a spirited rendition of “Happy Birthday” sung proudly to the school by its pupils.



THE GROUNDS MANAGEMENT COMPANY.

We've had a busy year working within the Parish and it's been great to meet some of the locals who take an interest in what we have been doing, so thank you for taking the time to stop and have a chat.

You may have seen us at the Sopley Heatherstone Grange Allotments, where we did a substantial hedge height reduction on the perimeter. This has allowed a lot more light into the allotments, which made for some very happy green fingered enthusiasts! The hedge is now at a more manageable height for the future annual trims.



We have also spent some time at Sopley Cemetery in the past year, cutting and clearing brambles and scrub that have encroached into the Graveyard. The area is due to be re-fenced, to reinstate the boundary. There was also a lot of spoil that had piled up over time by the main gates, we arranged and undertook the removal of this which has created a more pleasant area.

We work for many Parish Councils and are particularly impressed with how Sopley Parish Council strive to continually make improvements and we are always happy to assist where we can. They are a credit to the community and we look forward to furthering our working relationship over the coming years.

If you require any assistance on your property, we cater for domestic and commercial clients. We undertake grounds maintenance, sports field grass cutting, groundworks, ditching and drainage, concreting, fencing, machinery hire with operator and so much more.

Our small, dedicated team would be happy to help.

Matthew 07514 623 945

Darren 07900 522 372

info@thegroundsmanagementcompany.com

www.thegroundsmanagementcompany.com





The Friends of the New Forest Airfields (FONFA) is a charity run entirely by volunteers. The FONFA Heritage Centre is located in Mosquito Way, Bransgore and the charity also maintains the New Forest Airfields Memorial in Black Lane, Bransgore. It also has displays at Dan Tanners PYO in Derriott Lane (once Winkton Airfield) and Holmsley Campsite (once part of Holmsley South airfield).

fonfa.co.uk

2025 was another busy year for FONFA. For the first time in our history, we had sufficient volunteers to be able to increase our open days from alternate Sundays to every Sunday between April and October.

We were sad to lose some stalwart supporters during the year, including John Brooks, who was the last surviving member of the original trustees of FONFA. As a Founder Member, he was a pioneer without whose efforts FONFA could not have flourished to become what it is today, for which we will always be grateful.

As 2025 was the 80th Anniversary of VE and VJ day we attended many events commemorating these dates. In May we were present at events in Christchurch, Everton, Sopley, Sway and Holmsley South Campsite. In June we were at the Fawley Armed Forces Day, and July found us at the New Forest Show and Burley Show. In September FONFA was back in Burley attending a VJ80 event and at Christchurch Priory for the annual Battle of Britain Ceremony.



September also saw our own annual Commemoration Service at the New Forest Airfields Memorial. We were pleased to welcome the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, local MPs, Councillors and veterans associations along with representatives from the RAF and the air forces of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Slovak Republic, Norway, The Netherlands and Poland. This service is becoming bigger with more people attending each year.



Also well attended was our Remembrance Sunday commemoration. Along with our regular motorcycle club visitors we had two tractors and a jeep join us. Thank you to all who attended this and the other memorial events during the year your support, as always, is really appreciated.



The year was also a busy time at the Centre. We had visit from the Christchurch Rotary Club in both April and May and by the Bransgore and Christchurch ATC. We also had visits from both the Solent and Wessex MX5 car clubs, both of whom enjoyed lunch at the Centre. support the national Heritage Open Days and we were delighted when our tearoom received a 5 star rating when inspected by the local council.

We also introduced a number of new display items and boards to the Centre including the largest display item we have, the propeller blade from a Stoney Cross based B-26 of the 387th Bomb group "Lady Irene", recovered from a plane crash site near Ringwood.

Outside of the Centre we have been working with a number of local businesses, including Holmsley Campsite, to install displays relating to airfields local to them.

We have also been busy giving talks to local schools and various adult groups. We make no charge for visits or talks for youth groups or schools.

Finally, we were pleased to obtain membership of the Association of Independent Museums and to form a relationship with the Memorial Association for Free Czechoslovak Veterans (MAFCSV), with their Treasurer becoming a FONFA life member.

2026 looks to be even busier, with more requests for talks and visits, attendance at a number of events and our usual services at the Memorial. The Heritage Centre open every Sunday from the beginning of April to the end of October. We hope that many of you will take the opportunity to visit the Centre and to join us at the Annual Commemoration Service at the Memorial on 5th September at 14:00 to help pay our respects not only to the service personnel who flew from the airfields, but also the thousands of local civilians who supported them.



SOPLEY PARISH HALL
PRIEST LANE
SOPLEY
HANTS BH23 7BA

HALL BOOKINGS
sopleyparishhall@gmail.com
Tel: 01425 674285

SOPLEY PARISH HALL -- TARIFF

Hire of Hall (lower rates available for midweek hire and regular user groups)	OAK HALL (main) approx 5 x 16 metres £16 (£14) * /hour	FESTIVAL HALL (smaller) approx 5 x 10.5 metres £13.50 (£11.50) * /hour
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Additional items and facilities available to hire with either hall

Staffed Licensed Bar (OAK Hall only)	£10 per hour
Table Tennis & Accessories	£35 (£25)*
Projector (OAK Hall only)	£30 (£20)
Seat Covers (white)	£1 each or £45 (£35)* for full set of 60

Items and facilities for use free of charge with hire of either hall

Car Park (approx 20 vehicles max)
Chairs & Tables (large: 2.5 x 6 feet / small: 2.5 x 3 feet)
WiFi
Kitchen Equipment & Appliances, Crockery

OAK Hall is perfect for larger gatherings, such as children's birthday parties with bouncy castle (up to 12 x 15 feet, x 8 feet high), or evening events with bar and DJ.

FESTIVAL Hall is suitable for smaller parties, workshops, classes and meetings. Its flooring also makes it ideal for all types of dance activities and martial arts.

The lighting and decor make either hall a good choice for photography or filming.

For big celebrations, such as wedding receptions, both halls can be used, with the main event held in one and food served in the other.

* [Reduced rate for residents of Sopley Parish]

Sopley Parish Hall Committee

Charity No. 1130934

SOPLEY PARISH HALL COMMITTEE INVITE YOU TO A

RACE NIGHT



Friday, 24th April 2026

7:30 pm

**£5.00 per head,
racecards available during the event!**

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USEFUL NUMBERS, CONTACTS AND INFORMATION

Sopley Parish Council

Composition 2026

Chairman - Gavin Vines

Cllr B McDonnell Vice Chair

Cllr D Dunn

Cllr J Allen

Cllr J Partridge

Cllr B McDonnell

Cllr M Adaway

Cllr D Shutler

The Offices of Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Parish Council for the coming year, together with the composition of the various Council Committees, are decided by Council vote at the Annual General Meeting of the Council—which will be held on 21st May 2026 immediately preceding the Annual Parish Assembly.

•

Any correspondence for Sopley Parish Council should be sent to the Clerk parish.clerk@sopley.gov.uk or by using the “Contact us” tab available on the website.

Tel: 01425 674833

M: 07935 448405

Website: www.sopley.gov.uk

Parish Clerk - Mrs Katie Hughes, PSLCC

Parish.clerk@sopley.gov.uk

01425 674833/ 07935 448405

Sopley Parish Hall (Bookings)

01425 674285 –Sopleyparishhall@gmail.com

Sopley School

01425 672343

St Michaels & All

Angels Parish Church

Liz Bishop 01425 672628

Where can you find out more about the Parish Council?

The Parish Noticeboards are located in Sopley Village at the Parish Hall and in the layby opposite The Old Post Office, in Ripley next to the phone box/post box, in Avon by the entrance to London Lane and at Heatherstone Grange.

Parish Council Meetings are held every month - usually on the third Thursday of the month - and are open to all Parishioners and interested parties. Meeting dates, venues and agenda details are posted on the notice boards and the parish website

(www.sopley.gov.uk).