

# FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATION SURVEY and MEETING – October 2025

## OVERALL STEER FROM THE CONSULTATION

Proceeding with a Parish Centre has majority support, but parishioners want evidence, prudence, and a plan that strengthens unity without over-stretching resources. On closures, people want this to be a **last resort**, reached only after transparent analysis and wide listening, and matched by careful pastoral measures so that **no one is left behind**.

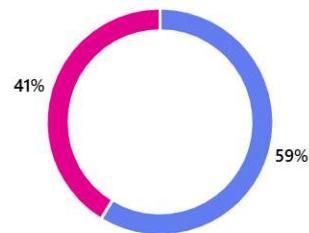
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## NEW PARISH CENTRE

Over half of respondents supported the idea of a new Parish Centre in Eastleigh: **59%** said “Yes,” while **41%** said “No.” Support was strongest among younger respondents (for example, most 18–30s supported it), while older groups were more evenly split. By church community, support was high in St Edward the Confessor and Holy Cross; it was much lower among those who usually attend St Swithun Wells.

5. Do you support the development of a new Parish Centre in Eastleigh?

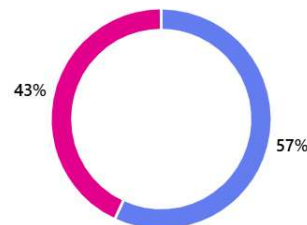
● Yes 199  
● No 140



People were also asked if they would use the new Centre for activities beyond Mass: **57%** said “Yes,” **43%** said “No.”

7. Would you use the Parish Centre for activities beyond Mass?

● Yes 193  
● No 146



## Themes in favour

Supporters see the Parish Centre as a practical home for parish life - somewhere to host prayer groups, youth activities, formation, cultural and social events, and outreach. They believe a well-designed, accessible base in Eastleigh could help gather people, especially families and younger parishioners, and make it easier to collaborate across communities.

Sample quotes:

- **“We need it. Our parish is so full of life... having a home place for all this would be ideal.”** (St Edward, 31–50)
- **“It will be good if it can house whole community events... aim for... financially self-sufficient.”** (St Edward, 31–50)
- **“For the future younger people to use.”** (Holy Cross, Over 70)
- **“I suggest we create a fund-raising charitable ministry with strong strategic leaders.”** (St Edward, 31–50)

Supporters also emphasised good planning: clear governance, strong fundraising, sustainable design, and careful attention to transport and parking.

## Themes against or concerned

Those against the project are mainly worried about cost, duplication of space, and risk. Several said existing halls could be better used or improved. Others fear that a large capital project could end up forcing a church closure or put long-term pressure on parish finances. Transport and parking around Eastleigh were raised repeatedly.

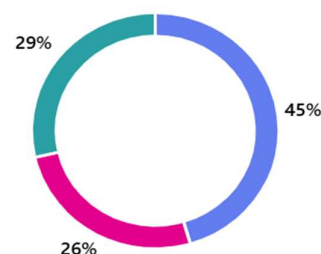
Sample quotes:

- **“I am unconvinced that there is a need for this and it would stretch resources...”** (St Edward, 51–70)
- **“We have church buildings we could utilise for the same purpose as the proposed new build.”** (St Swithun Wells, 51–70)
- **“I do not think it would be viable—the cost—plus public buses do not run often.”** (St Andrew, Over 70)

On whether a Centre would help bring the parish communities closer, **45%** said “Yes,” **29%** were “Unsure,” and **26%** said “No.”

9. Do you think the Parish Centre will help foster greater unity across our parish communities?

|          |     |
|----------|-----|
| ● Yes    | 154 |
| ● No     | 88  |
| ● Unsure | 97  |



Many who answered “Yes” believe a visible, central space could make joint events easier, improve communication, and give the parish a shared ‘home base’. Others were unsure or negative, mostly due to distance and parking, or because whole-parish events already happen.

Sample quotes:

- “I’d like to hope it would foster greater unity, if advertising is done correctly.” (Holy Cross, 51–70)
- “Available space in churches could be re-configured... schools could also offer their halls when necessary.” (St Edward, 51–70)
- “Whole parish events already take place... with large outdoor space and park for summer gatherings.” (St Edward, 51–70)

## NEW PARISH CENTRE - SUMMARY

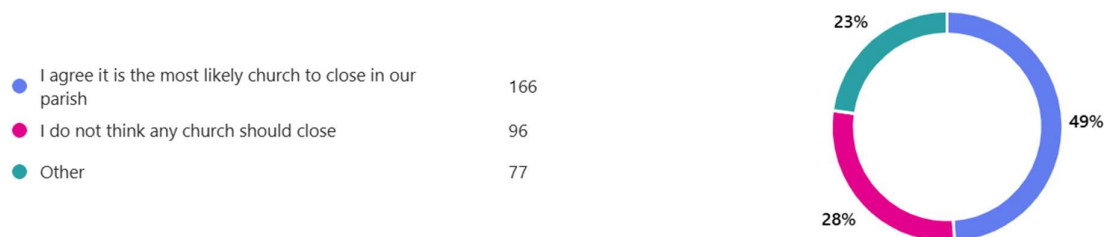
There is a **clear but not universal majority** for a new Parish Centre. Many see real benefits for ministry, community life, and young people, provided the plan is well-managed and financially sound. Those opposed or unsure want stronger evidence of need, clear costings, better use of current spaces, and assurance that the project won’t harm parish finances or access.

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## POTENTIAL CHURCH CLOSURE

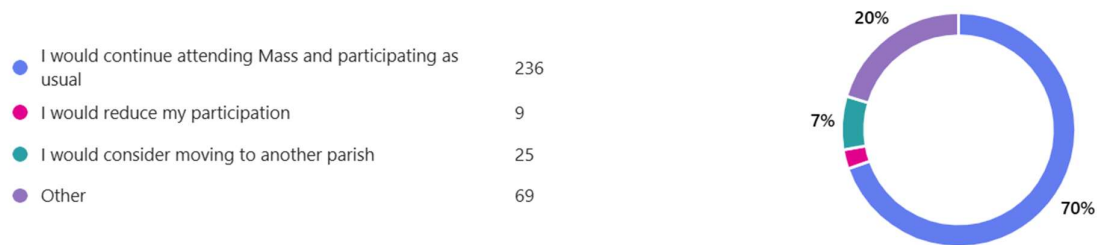
On the prompt that, *if a church had to close, St Swithun Wells has the smallest congregation and several alternatives nearby*, **49%** agreed it is the most likely church to close in our parish. **28%** said no church should close, and the remainder offered other views or were undecided.

11. If a church needed to close to secure the parish’s long-term sustainability, St Swithun Wells church has the smallest congregation and several alternative churches within a short distance. What is your view on closing this church? (This question is intended to understand the perspectives of parishioners and is not a final decision.)



When asked how a closure would affect involvement, **70%** said they would continue attending Mass and participating as usual; **7%** would consider moving to another parish; **3%** would reduce their participation; and some wrote personal comments indicating sadness or uncertainty.

12. If this church closed, how would it affect your involvement in parish life?



### Themes accepting closure (if closure is required)

Respondents who accepted the possibility tended to focus on stewardship, concentrating limited resources, the smaller congregation at St Swithun Wells, and the presence of other Catholic churches within a short drive. Some added that if closure ever happened, it should be carefully planned, with support for those most affected (for example, lifts, a suitable Mass time nearby, or temporary transport options).

Sample quotes:

- **“I agree it is the most likely church to close in our parish.”** (St Edward, 31–50)
- **“Sad but possibly necessary.”** (Unattributed short comment)
- **“I feel it would be important to put a Saturday evening Mass at a nearby church to enable the community to stay together.”** (Holy Cross, Over 70)

### Themes against closure

A significant number strongly opposed any church closure. Their reasons include the spiritual loss to a local community, the risk of people drifting away, and the belief that all communities can grow with support. Some asked for clearer financial comparisons and more evidence before any decision.

Sample quotes:

- **“I do not think any church should close.”** (St Edward, 51–70)
- **“Closing a church and building a hall makes little sense.”** (St Swithun Wells, Over 70)
- **“Is there a chance that population of that area would increase with new housing estates?”** (St Joseph, Over 70)
- **“I understand the reasoning behind the closure but to lose St Swithun Wells... a number of parishioners will no longer attend Mass as a result.”** (Unattributed)

Most people said they would keep participating even if a church closed, but a noticeable minority would move parish or take part less. A few wrote moving personal comments about family milestones at St Swithun Wells and the sadness of losing that connection. Several asked that, if closure is ever unavoidable, concrete steps are taken to welcome and include those affected - through transport help, careful Mass scheduling, and pastoral support.

## ST SWITHUN WELLS CHURCH - SUMMARY

If a closure were ever required, many think St Swithun Wells would be the most likely candidate, given current attendance and proximity to other churches. However, **a substantial minority do not want any church to close**, and their concerns focus on community loss and the long-term health of parish life. People asked for transparent data (costs, attendance, giving per head) and for strong pastoral planning to protect belonging and participation.

## CONCLUSION

1. **On the new Parish Centre:** The parish is **more in favour than against**. Many see the Centre as a much-needed base for ministry, formation, and community across all ages, especially the young. To carry wider confidence, people want:
  - Clear evidence of need versus improving existing halls
  - Transparent costs, funding plan, and governance
  - Practical solutions for parking and public transport
  - A design that is sustainable and affordable to run
2. **On a potential church closure:** If closure became unavoidable, many accept that **St Swithun Wells appears the most likely** on current numbers and geography. Yet **a strong, heartfelt group opposes any closure**, warning of community harm and possible loss of parishioners. Whatever happens, respondents ask for:
  - Full and open data on finances, costs to run each site, attendance, and giving
  - Pastoral care and practical support (e.g., transport, Mass times) for those most affected
  - A plan that keeps people together, welcomes newcomers, and invites growth

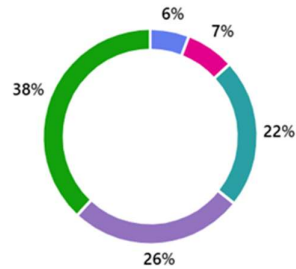
## ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 344 submissions were received. Of these, 5 paper surveys did not have responses to every question. The comments from these surveys have been captured, but they are not included in the data below.

### 1. ABOUT YOU

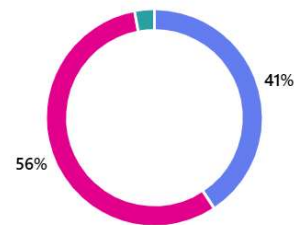
Your age:

|          |     |
|----------|-----|
| Under 18 | 20  |
| 18-30    | 25  |
| 31-50    | 76  |
| 51-70    | 89  |
| Over 70  | 129 |



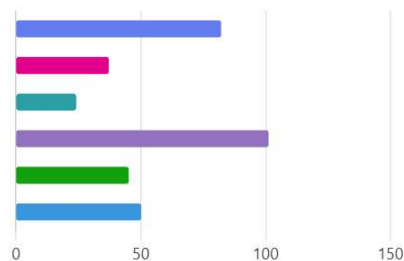
### 2. Your gender:

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| Male              | 138 |
| Female            | 191 |
| Prefer not to say | 10  |



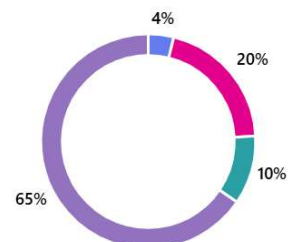
### 3. Which church community do you usually attend?

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Holy Cross                 | 82  |
| Our Lady Queen of Apostles | 37  |
| St Andrew                  | 24  |
| St Edward the Confessor    | 101 |
| St Joseph                  | 45  |
| St Swithun Wells           | 50  |



### 4. How long have you been a parishioner?

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| Less than 1 year   | 13  |
| 1-5 years          | 69  |
| 6-10 years         | 35  |
| More than 10 years | 222 |



## MEETING AT ST SWITHUN WELLS CHURCH – 12<sup>th</sup> October 2025

A meeting was held at St Swithun Wells Church on Sunday, which over 70 people attended from across the parish and the key themes from the meeting were largely reflected in the survey.

However, the discussion and feedback centred on the following key areas:

- More detail was requested on the overall financial position of the parish, including the business case for the proposed parish centre.
- In the absence of that detail, a request was made for more time for consultation.
- Concern that the impact and potential of a new housing development had not been fully considered in proposing the closure of St Swithun Wells Fair Oak.
- Concern that the financial benefit of a closure would be minimal because of the restricted covenant which is in place.
- Concern that a proposed new parish centre would not be fully utilised. This would be included within the business case.
- There was a suggestion that the parish finances needed to be stabilised before any further decisions were made.
- Has sufficient consideration been given to using other facilities for large gatherings, such as St Swithun Wells School?
- Why could St Swithun Wells, Fair Oak, not be used for large occasional parish gatherings?

The **Council of Priests** will consider the proposal for the closure of St Swithun Wells Church, taking into account the feedback from the consultation, and a recommendation will be given.

The proposals for a new parish centre will be developed, again taking account of the consultation and a detailed business case, for decision by the **Diocesan Trustees**.