

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FRIENDS OF PENCARROW

HELD ON WEDS. 26th. FEBRUARY 2025

PRESENT: 40

- 1. WELCOME:** Shirley Kent (Chair) opened the meeting.
- 2. APOLOGIES:** 68 including Sir William Molesworth & Jenny Brandreth.
- 3. MINUTES OF LAST AGM 6th. MARCH 2024:** Accepted.
- 4. MATTERS ARISING:**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (Financial Year 2024) – given by Shirley Kent.

I cannot believe it is almost a year ago I was standing here to give you a short report of our year's events.

So off I go again with 2024 events which began with our Snowdrop Weekend. The charities that we helped were Bodmin Hospital League of Friends and Concern Wadebridge. A very tiring weekend for all, but a very successful one.

We continue to have a stand at the annual Cornwall Flower Show Wadebridge in April to promote Pencarrow and hopefully sign-up new members.

Our annual Bluebell & Garlic Sunday in May was another fundraiser on a much smaller scale but does help towards the promoting of the Friends and again sign up more members.

Our 2nd. Teddy Bears Picnic in the new location again proved to be a huge success and plenty of fun. A teddy bear hunt, various stalls including a rehoming stall and advice on old teddies. Everyone was encouraged to bring their own teddies for the day out. I'm sure you all have one somewhere at home - I know I do.

The Christmas Fair became 3 days, but unfortunately the weather was not kind to us, so the decision was made to cancel the Saturday on safety grounds. Although this is a House event, I would like to thank all the Friends of Pencarrow volunteers for helping which is greatly appreciated and I would like to say thank you to the committee and especially to Pam Mulley for the endless phone calls that are made.

The Bookshed continues to be a very successful addition towards the fundraising that we do. We are in the process of sprucing it up and giving it a spring clean ready for re-opening on 7th. April so we would welcome any donations of good quality books and jigsaws, which sell extremely well. You can drop off your donations in the black box which will be outside from the 1st. March when the gardens open.

It is now time to say some THANK YOUS.

Firstly, to my fellow Trustees and Volunteers for all the hard work they do throughout the year on behalf of The Friends of Pencarrow – too many tasks to name.

Thank you to Gavin (Head gardener) who is getting the gardens ready to open on March 1st. and who often comes to my rescue by lifting heavy boxes of books in & out of my car boot.

Thank you to Ali (Housekeeper) who is always on hand if we need anything and is also very busy getting the House ready to open on 7th. April, and thank you again to Tracy (House Administrator) for her work in the background in helping to support and guide the committee. My final thanks is to James who often gets a phone call from some of us because we have forgotten to do something or left something behind.

Thank you for listening to my report.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Given by Peter Brandreth.

On your seat you will find an Income & Expenditure Account for 2024.

You can see we are in a healthy financial position, but the figures do not tell the full story of how FOP satisfies its constitutional objectives to support Pencarrow.

So, I would like to focus on one expenditure item – Donations (5th. down under Expenditure - £16,665.30)

That figure comprises: £3,000 Snowdrop Charities & £13,665 Pencarrow.

That is still low relative to 2023 which is explained by (2024) Allocated Projects not yet activated. More on that in Sir William's report but there is an allocation of £30,000 set aside within 2024 finances. We have no way of showing that in these accounts. That means in 2024 we set aside £43,665 for Pencarrow support.

POSSIBLE SUBJECTS:

INCOME:	2024	2023
SUBSCRIPTIONS:	£17,657	£18,082

Holding steady and based on your membership – thank you for your loyalty.

DONATIONS:	£4,716	£844
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Several significant bequests this year.

FRIENDS' FUNDRAISING:	£15,220	£23,496
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Lower this year, not due to lack of activity by any means but a change of fundraising structure surrounding the Christmas Fair.

For the first time in 2024 it was decided that all “door money” would go direct to House rather than FOP (as in the past), then paid back to cover operating expense. Much simpler.

BOOKSHED:	£2,390	£3,329
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We raised an additional £483 in 2024 making total of £2,873 – closer to 2023 total.

EXPENDITURE:	2024	2023
MEMBERSHIP:	£1,625	£8,476

Saved over £1,000 – principally postage & printing due to willingness of members to switch to e-mail. Thank you – it does make a difference.

EVENT COSTS:	£3,340	£8,476
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Relates again to the change in Christmas Fair funding model. We do not have the income, so do not have related expenditure. Thank you.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Given by Peter Brandreth (Apology from Jenny Brandreth).

It is so nice to see so many of you here today and looking forward to the gardens re-opening, although it may be a while before I am able to enjoy it, I'm afraid.

I am delighted to say that membership is holding steady at 740 members as at Jan. 1st. 2025. 175 people decided not to renew last year but 168 joined in 2024 with another 15 since Christmas. Just goes to show that a lot of people are still discovering and realising that Pencarrow has a lot to offer.

If I may, I would like to read a letter from a member and her husband who are not able to attend today – I have their permission to share it with you.

“On our behalf I wonder if it would be possible for you to input into the meeting our great sadness to hear of the death of Lady Molesworth which we have just read in the Minutes of the last AGM.

We first visited Pencarrow in 2022 when so many places had restricted access due to Covid. We were in the area and searched for places to visit which we did not need to book in advance. We were extremely happy to find we could visit Pencarrow and even more pleased to discover what a wonderful place it was. We were so entranced that we realised we had better hurry up with our visit to the gardens as we realised that all other visitors had left and closing time was approaching. Then we saw a delightful lady on her mobility scooter. She engaged us in conversation and gave us no sense that that we needed to leave quickly. We had a lovely talk

with her and in the end left much after closing time. She wanted to know our thoughts and told us a lot about the gardens. As a result we joined the Friends of Pencarrow and have returned with family on several occasions since. We met Lady M again at the Teddy Bear event in 2023 when we overheard her saying the event would take place again in 2024. We attended it again in 2024 but did not see Lady M. Now we know why. We were very sorry indeed to hear that this lovely lady had died. Please pass on our condolences to everyone at the AGM whom we are sure were extremely fond of her.”

As you all well know, Membership gives you the opportunity to visit Pencarrow often throughout the season at a very reasonable cost. As Peter has mentioned, we have a very healthy amount of money now, thanks to your subscriptions and our various funding events, but a lot of that money is allocated for specific refurbishment and purchases for the House & Gardens.

Standard entry to Pencarrow for non-members is increasing this year to keep pace with ever increasing costs, and to that end we have, after much discussion, decided to increase the Membership subscription from March this year. A single membership will rise from £30 to £40 and a joint from £50 to £60. This still means that for a joint membership, you can visit Pencarrow for as many times as you are able, for as little as £1.87 per week, based on the 8-month open season, which I hope you will agree is really good value. If you pay your subscription by Standing Order, I would be grateful if you could arrange to amend the amount well before your renewal date. I will be e-mailing everyone before their renewal date to remind you of the change.

Finally, a big Thank You to you all for making my duties as Membership secretary run smoothly by your consideration in advising me of change of circumstances, e-mail or address. It is quite a challenge throughout the season keeping on top of 700 odd memberships, but you are all so supportive and appreciative, which makes all the difference. Thank you.

SIR WILLIAM MOLESWORTH-ST. AUBYN’S REPORT: Given by Peter Brandreth (Apology- Sir William)

Apologies for not being there as I have managed to go down with a bit of a lurgy and I thought it would be a bit short sighted to infect those very people who help us at Pencarrow, and I’m sure that Peter will do a better job than I anyway.

I wanted to do 3 things today. Thank, Explain and Tell.

THANK:

On behalf of the family and management team at Pencarrow I really wanted to thank every single one of you for the support both morally and financially that you give Pencarrow. The Trustees bear the brunt of the effort that goes into the organisation of the various events, and it is huge, but every person who fund raises, donates and volunteers is important. We can’t do it without you. Last year amongst other things the Friends funded:

- A) The rebuilding of the metalwork on top of the Fountain. It is beautiful and it works and is the centrepiece of the Italian Gardens.
- B) New track in the camping field. It makes the Xmas Fair doable and other big events manageable.
- C) Tarmac on the Drive. Boring, expensive and so necessary.
- D) Battery powered pole saw for Gavin. Whilst expensive, it allows us to keep the drive open for coaches without the cost of having to bring in a cherry picker and is the start of our move from petrol power garden tools to a new more sustainable future.

EXPLAIN:

I know a few have been asking why various projects have not been done. It's an excellent question and should be asked. What is the point of all the hard work that you all do raising money if we don't then use the money to good effect.

And that is the main point. The money that you raise needs to be spent wisely. That means that the projects need to be researched properly, the right suppliers found and then managed. I have found over the last couple of years that the right person to do that is Jake. Unfortunately, he has lots of other calls on his time at Pencarrow and they are not usually predictable. A roof blown off, a tenant leaves a cottage, and he only works for us 3 ½ days per week. However, it is still better to get it right first time even if we have to wait a bit, rather than waste the money.

TELL:

This year the key projects that we are aiming to do that will be funded by the Friends of Pencarrow are:

HANDRAILS In the Italian Gardens on every set of steps. These must be specially made, galvanised then fitted and will cost £5,864.

PARKLAND FENCING. Unfortunately, the company that made and installed the Parkland Fencing were the only organisation we could find who could copy the original posts. They were fantastic blacksmiths, but not competent fencers and the posts were too short and not up to the attention of the cows. The remedy is to dig up the existing posts, remove the concrete, attach a longer supporting strut that must be fabricated, galvanised and painted and reposition with double the amount of postcrete. If we were to redo every post that needs doing, the cost would be £26,000. We have done the research, we have the supplier that can make and install the additional support, and I have asked Jake to concentrate on only those posts that are visible to the visitors. I expect it to be more like £15,000. In years to come we may be able to revisit the remainder.

TRACK IN THE WALLED GARDEN: We would like to put in another track in the Walled Garden to increase the amount parking that we can utilise even if the weather is bad. This will cost £5,500.

NEXT YEAR:

The big project I hope for next year is the **TURNING CIRCLE**. It is one of the first things that everyone sees when they come to Pencarrow and is looking tired.

The plan would be to remove all the plants (if we don't, they will be crushed during the work). Remove and redo all the loose mortar and pointing. Re-render all the walls with lime mortar. Repair or recreate all the damaged mouldings alongside the steps and on the entrance walls that have deteriorated or disappeared over the years. Redo the levels and drainage which have degraded over the years and restock with new plants. This is a very sizeable project and due to the nature of the materials will have to be undertaken when the House is open and will cost in the region of £32,000.

I hope that Peter wasn't too boring, and you are not all asleep because of him reading this, but in all seriousness, we are extremely grateful for your ongoing support.

William.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS / TRUSTEES:

Our Chair, Shirley Kent, stated that this was to be her last year as Chair. Peter Brandreth is stepping down from his position of Treasurer (but he will continue as a committee member) – Jo Milner has agreed to take over. The remaining members of the Trustees / Committee have agreed to stand again. Gilly Welch and Colin Kidd, who have been Co-opted members of the committee will become full members. All voted in "en-bloc" and proposed by 1. Pat Lamper and seconded by Sue Montgomery.

6. **DATE & TIME OF NEXT AGM 2026:** Weds. 25th. February 2026.
7. **END OF BUSINESS:** Meeting closed by Shirley Kent who thanked everyone for all their help and support and to the Molesworth-St. Aubyn family for allowing us to enjoy Pencarrow and to help to keep it as the place we all know and love.
She then presented our departing Treasurer Peter with a large blue garden pot complete with a Charity rose called "FRIENDS" as a Thank you for all his past work with the Friends of Pencarrow.

CLOSE OF MEETING.

Refreshments were then served in Hall.

THE FRIENDS OF PENCARROW - CHARITY NO 1111885

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the Year Ended 31st December 2024

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Subscriptions	17657.00	18082.50
Donations	4716.00	844.44
Friends Fundraising	15220.68	23496.26
Bookshed	2390.00	3329.49
Gift Aid	2281.79	2137.97
Interest	558.85	420.87
Misc		
	<u>42824.32</u>	<u>48311.53</u>
 <u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Bookshed	0.00	521.15
Membership Expenses	1625.49	2693.85
Event costs	3340.81	8476.15
Plants	1398.00	
Donations	16665.30	39179.45
Charges	217.82	257.22
Misc	2884.32	5660.32
	<u>26131.74</u>	<u>56788.14</u>
 Surplus/Deficit for year	16692.58	-8476.61
 Bank balances 1st January	<u>52976.20</u>	<u>61452.81</u>
 Bank balances 31st December	<u>69668.78</u>	<u>52976.20</u>
 Made up of		
Current Account	46480.72	30137.08
Deposit Accounts	23188.06	22839.12
	<u>69668.78</u>	<u>52976.20</u>

Prepared by P J Brandreth

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