

The Friends of St Mary's Church

Cerne Abbas



Inaugurated 2012

Charity No; 1148416

TRUSTEES' REPORT and ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 December 2025

and

THE AGENDA

For the AGM on Thursday 21st May 2026

FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S CHURCH, CERNE ABBAS 2025

Registered Charity no; 1148416

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chair : Martin Reed
8 Duck Street
Cerne Abbas
Dorset DT2 7LA

Honorary Treasurer (Acting) &
Membership Secretary:
John Champion
29 Long Street
Cerne Abbas
Dorset DT2 7JG

Honorary Secretary
Jennie Paterson
36 Duck Street
Cerne Abbas
Dorset DT2 7LA

Representative of the PCC
Caroline Sykes*

ELECTED MEMBERS

Piers Adamson
Tim Mills
Richard Wilkin

Ex officio member*

As Head of the PCC's Property Group Duncan Fergusson attends meetings to inform the Trustees of pertinent matters.

**FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S CHURCH, CERNE ABBAS
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Annual General meeting of the Friends of St Mary's will take
place on Thursday 21st May 2026
In St Mary's Church starting promptly at 18.00.

PROGRAMME AGENDA

1. Chair's welcoming remarks and report
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of last year's AGM
4. Approval of 2025 Report and Accounts
5. Election of Officers and Board Members
 - a. All Trustees are required to stand down under the constitution and they have all indicated their willingness to continue to serve on the Board of Trustees.
 - b. The Secretary should be informed in advance of the AGM of any proposals for new Trustees.
6. Any other business: this will be at the Chairs discretion unless previously raised through the Secretary.
7. Address by Professor Michael Dooley LVO, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Dorset.

At the conclusion of business, wine, soft drinks and nibbles will be available.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome everybody to our 2026 AGM.

A relatively quiet year for the Friends. However, as mentioned in the PCC Property Report, the South Porch Path Project is moving forward and we understand that the Diocesan Advisory Committee, and the Church Consistory Court have indeed recommended that a governing faculty should be granted, and the PCC will be pursuing tenders for the confirmed plans. The wheels grind slowly!

Through the good office of Duncan Fergusson we have been kept in touch with the various problems in the Church fabric as delineated in his detailed report. We have noted in particular the water ingress through the roof and in the ringing chamber and we have agreed in principle that our involvement in the remediation would be considered.

You will see from the accounts that the Friends remain in good financial position, and here I would like to commend our Treasurer, John Champion, for his hard work and dedication in setting our funds in a good position and retrieving past Gift Aid contributions. All this while he has had significant health problems.

I would also like to thank Richard Wilkin, on behalf of the Friends, for his production of last year's Christmas Card which I hope you will have enjoyed.

We look forward to working hand in hand with the PCC as we move ahead into another year.

There is a plaque in the Chancel dedicated to Cyril Vincent Taylor, MA, 1902 - 1991, Vicar of this benefice 1858 - 1968

"Priest, musician, hymn writer, and benefactor. Under his inspired leadership this church was re-roofed, re-ordered, and re-invigorated."

I hope that the work done by the Friends and the PCC would have his approval!

Martin Reed
Chair of Trustees

ST MARY'S PCC PROPERTY GROUP - 2026 ANNUAL REPORT

GENERAL It has been a busy year for the PCC property group.

THE CLOCK. There have been several problems associated with the clock's chiming mechanism and all have now been resolved.

WALL PAINTINGS. Following the 2024 inspection of the wall paintings, and associated concern regarding the condition of the Annunciation depiction, the church architect has inspected the chancel roof and walls. He concluded that whilst there was no single source of damp penetration, there are a number of points of weakness in sections of the adjacent lead roofing and south wall/parapet stonemasonry. Accordingly, he has issued technical repair specifications to address these flaws and they are currently with O'Brien Ltd, Bridport, for quotation action.

QUINQUENNIAL REPAIRS. Elsewhere on the roof area, particularly where the south aisle section joins the tower, there continues to be wind-driven leaks that migrate into the SW corner of the nave and stain the white lime wash. O'Brien Ltd are also quoting to investigate and repair the causes of these points of water penetration.

INTERIOR DECORATION Redecorating the interior of the church is long-overdue and remains an ambition of the PCC. Until the damp issues described above are resolved, this work will be kept 'on hold'.

RINGING CHAMBER CEILING In late Jan/early Feb it became apparent that some of the long-established areas of damp in the ringing chamber tongue & groove ceiling, in particular where the margins of the pine boards touched the south and west tower walls, had deteriorated into rot. After rapid investigation by the church architect and consideration by a structural engineer, it was determined that the ceiling structure had dropped slightly in one corner and immediate remedial action would be required before the bells could be rung again. This effort is now underway and involves re-fixing the ceiling structure in its new position through the use of modern materials and techniques. The re-pinning measure will enable the ringing chamber to be brought back into use and in the longer term, to address the persistence of damp, the architect is looking to establish a vertical airflow across the interior of the tower south wall. This aspiration is currently the subject of further professional thought and consideration.

SOUTH PORCH PATH PROJECT (SPPP) This project has gathered significant pace in the past 12 months, and in addition to local authority planning permission having been secured, it is anticipated that on 8th May the Diocesan Advisory Committee will recommend to the Diocesan Chancellor that a governing faculty should be granted. When this process is completed, tendering work will be initiated and it is hoped that the ramp will be finished no later than the end of the summer.

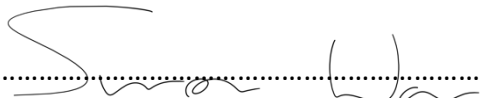
Duncan Fergusson
Chair, St Mary's Property Group, 6 March 26

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2025

Income	£	£	Expenditure	£	£
Subscriptions	4,359.30	4,359.30	AGM Expenses	272.57	
Bank interest			Printing	341.45	
Lloyds 1 year	1,314.15		Christmas tree 2024	120.00	
Shawbrook CAF 4 mths	1,285.65		Stationery	4.50	
CCLA 3 mths	455.62	3,055.42	Postage	30.67	
Gift Aid Reimbursement			Gift Aid admin	180.00	
2021	603.38		Christmas tree 2025	135.00	1084.19
2022	761.78				
2023	775.40		PCC gifts		
2024	899.34	3,039.90	Flag pole repair	2,188.80	
Bequest 2025	50,000.00	50,000.00	Wall paintings survey	1,104.00	
			Church tower clock	1,305.60	4,598.40
TOTAL	60,454.62	60,454.62		5,682.59	5,682.59
Opening Bank Balances			Closing Bank Balances		
			Shawbrook	100,000.00	
			CCLA	110,000.00	
Current Account	16,070.73		Lloyds Current Acc.	411.04	
Deposit Account	164,646.26		Lloyds Deposit Acc.	25,077.98	
TOTAL	180,716.99	180,716.99		235,489.02	235,489.02
TOTAL		241,171.61	TOTAL		241,171.61

We have examined the accounts of the period ended 31st December 2025 and in my opinion all matters have been properly disclosed and the accounts for the period indicate the current position.

No material facts have been revealed which cause concern and, in my opinion, proper books of accounts have been maintained.

Signed  Simon Wall. Dated: 1st April 2026

Our bankers are: Lloyds Bank plc, 92 St Mary's Street, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 8PA

THE TRUST'S CUMULATIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE PCC to end 2025.

Since the Trust's inception £170,190 has now been contributed to help the PCC maintain the fabric as outlined below:

2025	Flagpole repair	£2189
	Wall paintings survey	£1104
	Clock repair	£1306
2023	Electrical & Re-wiring Project	£122,415.00
2020	Fabric Insurance Contribution	£1,992
	Weather vane restoration (C Tisdall sponsored)	£3,856
	Squibb Garden maintenance	£81
	Overhaul of Bells	£13,947
2019	Fabric Insurance Contribution	£2,043
	Squibb Garden maintenance	£79
2018	Fabric Insurance Contribution	£2,006
2017	Tower Clock Refurbishment	£950
	Fabric Insurance Contribution	£1,933
2016	Fabric Insurance Contribution	£1,962
	Squibb Garden maintenance	£52
	Contribution to new heating system	£2,000
2015	Fabric Insurance Contribution	£1,892
2014	Fabric Insurance Contribution	£1,847
2013	Fabric Insurance Contribution	£1,636

Grants obtained for the preservation of wall paintings £6,900

FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S CHURCH, CERNE ABBAS

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held at 1800 on Thursday 15th May 2025

1. The meeting began on time with the Chair welcoming a good turnout of 30 Members, and also welcoming one of our new Members, John Smythe.

The Chair noted that since our Secretary, Jennie Paterson, was presently recuperating, he had asked Dee Reed to take notes during the meeting for the Minutes.

He also noted with sadness the passing of our Friends, Michael Fulford-Dobson, Alan Morrell, Clover Hartley-Sharpe, Shirley Francis, Pat Lee, and Ann Robson.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Priscilla Tappenden, Peter and Suzanne Smith, Jennifer Beecham, John and Wendy Charman, Richard Spooner, Jennie and John Paterson, William and Rachel Blackwell, John and Marion Lee, Michael and Anne Lindley, Roy Burnham, Angela Lowe, and Mathilde Edwards.
3. Minutes of the AGM held on the 4th September 2024 were referred to; with no questions or matters arising, the Chair asked for approval. This was proposed by Richard Wilkin and seconded by Lindsay Pedder.
4. As per the Constitution all Trustees are required to step down at the AGM and seek re-election. Peter Smith and Angela Lowe have retired as Trustees. The remaining Trustees are willing to stand for re-election and approval from the floor was sought. Their re-election was proposed by Helen Smith, seconded by Liz Mackenzie and agreed by those present.
5. Due to an administrative error last year, the 2023 Accounts had not been approved at the last AGM. Having been approved by the auditor, these accounts were accepted by the meeting, proposed by George Mortimer and seconded by Nigel de Candole..

6. The 2024 Financial Report and Accounts were tabled and discussed. It was queried why such a large amount of money was deposited in a bank account with such a poor rate of return when it could be placed in investments with much higher interest rates. It was explained that due to illness and other problems this had not been done, but that the acting Treasurer was actively pursuing this. He did remark that it was difficult to find Banks who would accept new Charity business accounts. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Lindsay Pedder and seconded by Jill Warren.
7. The Chair then asked for any nominations for new Trustees, but none were forthcoming.
8. The Chair then referred the meeting to his report contained in the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts. He also noted that the new Friends Leaflet had been agreed and printed and he hoped that the assembled members would approve.

Additionally since the report was written, the Trustees had received four applications from the PCC for financial assistance. He was pleased to say that the first three, repairing the flagpole, financing the wall painting report, and repairing the church clock, have all been passed by the Trustees for a total contribution of £4597.80. The fourth application is an outline request for assistance to the capital project for constructing an access ramp to the South Porch. As yet there is no cost estimate for this application, so the Trustees are hanging fire until full details are available.

The Chair also noted the lay and religious use of their lovely church during the four recent weeks of the Giant Festival culminating in the previous Sunday's remarkable concert by the Anglo-Chilean band Quimantu and the Cloud 9 Choir. An outstanding example on the widespread use of the historic building.

9. Under any other business, the Membership Secretary reported 4 new members had joined in 2025 adding to the 9 new members from 2024. He also reported having received an anonymous gift of £30.00 He went on to thank his fellow Trustees for their help and confidence in his assumption of the role as acting Treasurer.
10. There being no other business from the floor, the Chair introduced the Bishop of Sherborne, the Right Reverend Karen Gorham and invited her to address the assembled Friends.

Right Rev Karen began with a history of churches since the 1960's with slides of uninviting buildings which left little to the imagination; they were built with pews and car parks and no space to welcome the community indoors for anything other than services. At first there was much controversy over changing pews to chairs and using the church space for anything else.

The aim of the church in the 21st Century must take the good news out into the community and bring the community inside. Churches now have to keep up with changes and be multipurpose to meet the needs of the community; this may mean coffee after church, accessibility, toilets and many other facilities which the church provides in exceptional ways. Sadly opportunities for funding were missed to provide water supply, and installing toilets in the millennium and they now have to apply to all the charities for funding.

If you don't agree the church can make these changes, it will never happen! We need to be progressive i.e. architects have learnt to move with the times, designers are designing light weight furniture, changing wooden doors into glass ones. Small editions such as cafes are being set up in churches and the Church is moving to an Eco environment.

Over the last thirty years there has been a congregational vision which makes change possible, we have become more welcoming, so that the buildings can bring care and love to the community. The formation of Friends groups also sustains a lasting legacy in the building allowing the community in and the church out. And here in Cerne Abbas the Bishop said the Friends are doing a wonderful job of just that. She thanked all those who are committed to using their gifts of time, talents, and money, here where we have a vibrant church, committed to the service and worship of God; which always means having open doors to the community, as all are welcome! She then quoted the hymn, All are Welcome, one verse being:

"Let us build a house where love is found
In water, wine, and wheat:
A banquet hall on holy ground,
Where peace and justice meet.
All are welcome, all are welcome!"

She concluded by saying: "Thank you for all you do as the Friends of St Mary's Church, it has been good to be here today; and keep up the good work!"

Refreshments were then served and the meeting closed at 1930.

CODICIL

I (full name of Testator/Testatrix*) _____

Of (Address) _____

DECLARE THIS to

be a (First) Codicil to my Will dated

The _____ day of _____ 20_____

I GIVE to the Association known as FRIENDS OF St MARY'S CHURCH, CERNE ABBAS of Cerne Abbas, Dorset (Registered Charity Number 1148416) for its general purposes the sum of POUNDS (£) and I declare that the Treasurer or other proper Officer for the time being of the said Charity shall be a full and sufficient discharge to my Executors and Trustees for the same in all respects:-

IN ALL other respects I CONFIRM my said will :-

IN WITNESS I have hereto set my hand this day of 20

SIGNED by the above named _____)

Testator/Testatrix* in our presence)

And attested by us in the presence _____)

Of the above named Testator/Testatrix*)

And of each other:-)

WITNESS

WITNESS

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

OCCUPATION

OCCUPATION

FRIENDS' MEMBERSHIP LIST as at December 2025

Piers ADAMSON	Anthony GARVEY	Jennie PATERSON
Adam ANDERSON	Jeanette GUETERBOCK	John PATERSON
Eugene BALBINSKI	Richard HARTLEY-SHARPE	Lindsay PEDDER
Janet BARTLET	Helen HEWITT	Rosalyn RAWSON
Gordon BARTLET	Marcus HUNT	Martin REED
Jennifer BEECHAM	Pamela HUNT	Denise REED
Gordon BISHOP	Caroline JONES	Peter SMITH
Elizabeth BISHOP	Diana KIMBER	Suzanne SMITH
Rachael BLACKWELL	David KIRKPATRICK	John SMYTHE
William BLACKWELL	Jan KIRKPATRICK	Richard SPOONER
Roy BURNHAM	Marion LEE	Philip SPRAY
Nigel de CANDOLE	John LEE	Cheryl SPRAY
John CHALKER	Elisabeth LINDLEY	Judith STEVEN
Prue CHALKER	Michael LINDLEY	Jane STILL
John CHAMPION	Angela LOWE	Lucy SUTHERLAND
Valerie CHAMPION	Richard MAISEY	Caroline SYKES
Jane CLARK	Doreen MAISEY	Priscilla TAPPENDEN
Mike CLARK	Elizabeth MACKENZIE	Caroline TISDALL
Isabelle COGHILL	Aphra MACLAREN	Deborah WHITE
Val CONSTABLE	Michael MCCARTHY	Jill WARREN
Noreen DARBOURNE	Dr R MILES	Richard WILKIN
David DILLISTONE	Tim MILLS	Sally WILKIN
Roger DOOR	Jenny MORTIMER	Willy WILLIAMSON
Mathilde EDWARD	George MORTIMER	Arabella WILLIAMSON
Mary EVANS	Jane O'RIORDAN	James WILSON
Ghislaine GARVEY	Paddy O'RIORDAN	Myra WILSON

5 members wish to remain anonymous

COMMERCIAL:
Annette BEARDSMORE, Julian DOVE, THE NEW INN
Simon HUDSON, THE GIANT INN

We would also like to thank those who have kindly donated memorial gifts to the Trust:

K Griffin (2022 bequest)	James & Priscilla Robinson (2017 legacy)
George Trim (2021, 2022 legacy)	Gordon Proud (2016 Memorial collection)
Clive Fox (2021, 2022 legacy)	June Proud (2015 Memorial collection)
Margaret Mann (2020 legacy)	Joan Holmes (2015 Memorial Collection)
Peter Powell (2018 Memorial collection)	Shirley Francis (2025 legacy)