

## Annual Report November 2025.

I begin with a little history. In 2014, I gave my first annual report and I spoke of how we set up our organisation. In 2015 I recorded my enthusiasm for The Friends being the perfect fit to run a Christmas Tree Festival in St Thomas Church. It was no longer taking place at the United Reform Church. That year saw major repairs being carried out on the Cupola. I report getting up very early one June morning to watch the massive crane that blocked the road, lifting the old weathervane down. I can report that the then relatively new Friends organisation made a contribution of £27,000 towards the repair of the Cupola and replacement weathervane. . The entire repair costs were over £100,000.

Fast forward to last year and the Christmas Tree Festival- our major fundraiser and perhaps the most successful to date. We purchased total of 76 trees with 60 sponsored trees in the church and others placed in the Courtyard garden. For the first time we use the entire footprint of the church and hall. This greatly improved the visitor experience. The tree festival is timed to coincide with the Town lights switch-on and street closure. The church was buzzing with visitors and the café and sales tables did a roaring trade over five days!

The success of this event is due to the incredible number of volunteers who plan for weeks, who give their time and their skill. I cannot emphasize this point strongly enough! I have crazy ideas- for example beautifying the Narthex and stairs up to the

hall- the ideas are the easy bit and before I could say Rudolf, we had a reindeer standing on a decorated archway totally transforming a very gloomy space! Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of this event.

Your committee did not rest for a long as we had decided to hold a Mid-summer fair on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June.

The church and hall looked very jolly with bunting and flags. The Fayre included old traditions - Morris Dancers performing outside the West door and fourteen Artisans selling their wares in the Hall. Local commercial growers donated spectacular flowering lily and hydrangea plants, these were added to a massive stock of other plants and resulted in a stall that generated over £500.

Other attractions in the church included a hugely popular Bottle Tombola, Children's activities, a sales table of miscellaneous gifts and original cards from a local artist. Joan and her team provided delicious refreshments in the hall and The West Gallery Choir performed from the gallery to the delight of visitors. A Bouncy Castle in the courtyard garden and beer sales in the churchyard completed the picture.

Andy Dibb kindly arranged for the Bell tower to be open and Kate Hanks from Sway Hand Bell Ringers gave a demonstration and mini-tutorial to children and adult visitors who were delighted to discover they could perform a simple tune.

Again an event such as this requires months of planning and I particularly must thank Joan Horton Fawkes who has a massive vision to promote what we

do here. She is in touch with local coach companies to include our events in their publicity.

I am so grateful to everyone who helped towards the success of this event. I am delighted to report that it raised in the region of £4,000.

In conclusion this was a joyous happy occasion and needless to say, has now become a fixture on our calendar!

2025 marked an important birthday at St Thomas Church. We celebrated 775 years of worship on this site. The birthday provided a significant opportunity for The Friends to play their part.

Lee Thompson suggested commissioning a Christus Figure from the renowned sculptor Peter Eugene Ball. Peter's work can be seen in Winchester Cathedral, Romsey Abbey and other significant religious buildings. We were delighted, that although retired, he accepted the commission. The beautiful figure was delivered to us in the summer. It will eventually be placed in the Courtenay Chapel. The chapel is often visited for moments of quiet reflection. It is my hope that the beautiful wooden Figure, with its gentle expression and outstretched arms will suggest peace and love in our troubled world.

I briefly digress to a story connecting the old with the new --- I recently visited Notre Dame Cathedral to see for myself the amazing the restoration following the catastrophic fire. You will recall that the roof is constructed using a veritable forest of oak beams arranged to support the iconic lead roof. You cannot actually see these beams.

When planning the rebuild nobody knew the exact arrangements for these beams. However, apparently, there is a successful video game that involves jumping from roof to roof to escape. This video company were able to provide an exact plan and, what is more, also provided much needed funds to help pay for the repairs.

Back to Lymington and The Friends -- other small projects this year include replacing the unsightly tin shed in the courtyard with a more pleasing wooden one, contributing to the cost of carpentry in the choir Vestry, also known as The Bethune room and a permanent profile selling occasional cards within the church.

I owe an enormous Thank You to the Committee who work with me to ensure the success of The Friends. We have a very happy team who are so generous with their time and their skills. This year in particular I have felt hugely supported by them all.

One member, Lynne Bennett, is no longer able to commit to regular meetings and will stand down as Membership Secretary. Lynne will remain our co-ordinator for Artisans and I am delighted that this means we continue to have her involved. Thank you Lynne for the support you have given me and for the many hours you have given to The Friends, your wisdom and your organisational skills have been invaluable.

We welcome two new members to our team; Sarah Bunce and Mary Hill. Thank you so much for joining us.

We will soon be voting to adopt the committee for a further year in office when I will expand on the various roles.

Lastly, I have to thank you, our membership.

The custodianship of this building is ours for a blink in time, 775yrs is a long history and we have something precious in our care. Your generosity and your interest is beyond priceless. Please continue to support our fundraising but also please continue to share your time and skills with us.

Thank you,

Daphne Johnston

Chair of The Friends. Nov 2025.

From: Daphne Johnston daphne.johnston@icloud.com  
Subject: Picture  
Date: 20 November 2025 at 16:45  
To: DAPHNE Daphne.johnston@icloud.com

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**THE FRIENDS OF ST THOMAS CHURCH LYMINGTON**  
**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT**  
**FOR THE YEAR TO 31ST MARCH 2025**

**RECEIPTS**

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Membership Subscriptions	4,890	1,250
Donations	3,634	2,975
Piano Donations	30,122	-
Gift Aid	2,427	949
Sponsorship	3,000	4,800
Christmas Tree Festival	13,846	13,508
Musical Events	790	1,192
Summer Festival	938	-
Sale of Christmas Cards	458	525
Sundry Receipts	135	-
Bank Interest	103	-
	<u>60,343</u>	<u>25,199</u>

**PAYMENTS**

Insurance	308	308
Donation to St Thomas Church	-	10,000
Steinway Piano		
- donated to St Thomas Church	54,950	-
Deposit for Christus	3,000	-
Christmas Tree Festival	6,409	5,052
Musical Events	2,327	87
Christmas Cards	722	382
Advertising	1,148	1,381
Sundry Expenses	967	75
Bank Charges	274	112
	<u>70,105</u>	<u>17,397</u>
	(9,762)	7,802

**(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR**

Cash at bank at 1st April 2024

**CASH AT BANK AT 31ST MARCH 2025**

34,730	26,928
<u>£24,968</u>	<u>£34,730</u>

**STATEMENTS OF ASSETS AT 31ST MARCH 2025**

Cash at Bank		
Current Account	14,865	34,730
Business Manager Account	10,103	-
	<u>£24,968</u>	<u>£34,730</u>

Approved on behalf of the Trustees on 30th October 2025

*Dusan Behr*

*Daphne Johnston*

Sent from mv iPhone



From: Daphne Johnston daphne.johnston@icloud.com  
Subject: Picture  
Date: 20 November 2025 at 17:06  
To: Daphne Johnston daphne.chantry@gmail.com

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# CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

## Independent examiner's report on the accounts

### Section A

### Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

Charity Name  
The Friends of St Thomas Church Lymington

On accounts for the year  
ended

31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Charity no  
(if any)

1166743

Set out on pages

3

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2025.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent  
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date:

30<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Name:

John Nivison

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

Address:

27 Beresford Road Lymington SO41 9JT

### Section B

### Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).





Sent from mv iPhone