

Friends of St James Church, Swimbridge

Annual Report by Secretary and Treasurer for 2022

We welcomed new members this year – Teresa Turner (no. 74) and Ted and Kate Picken (nos. 75-76). Members of the Friends have continued to make generous financial contributions this year, including through Gift Aid, which have been greatly appreciated. Warmest thanks to the Trustees: Philip Dalling, Brenda Dyer, Mary and Richard Fardon, John Hayes, with myself as Secretary and Treasurer. .

We continued with our programme of works to maintain and improve the church and its curtilage, which David Netherway has overseen and will describe in a separate report. Many thanks to David for all his good works.

We held two Q&As in the Spring: ‘The life of the louthier by Rebecca Houghton’. Rebecca lives in Landkey but has now become widely known thanks to appearances on the Repair Shop. She is an expert maker and restorer of violins and spoke fascinatingly on the craft. The audience was limited (13) because of Covid fears. An audience of 25 – including our Patron Lady Arran – heard a new member of the congregation, Peter Morrish, give us an eye-opening guided tour of ‘Hi-tech businesses in North Devon’. The Autumn Q&As featured no less than eight speakers in a new format of half hour talks. These described interesting careers, vocations and projects: Andy Hind on *Working for the UK Defence Industry* and Teresa Turner on *The Power of Listening and Supporting*, about the work of the Samaritans; Nick Turner spoke on life as a chartered surveyor and Nicola Brewer about her role as project manager for new buildings at the North Devon Hospital; Tim Watts on his role as a genomist and Philip Dalling on his life in journalism; Ruth Bateman on *Adventure cycle touring and the John Muir award: the art of the possible!* And Nicky Margieson on *Freediving* – Freediving is breath-hold diving without the aid of any diving equipment. This provided a dramatic conclusion to our extended season of Q&As. We are most grateful to all our speakers and our appreciative and generous audiences.

Parson Jack’s Studio Café attracted grateful patrons throughout the year. The refurbished Old School Room provides a delightful venue for these regular gatherings which really benefit our community. The delicious cakes and fine coffee are augmented by displays from the Mervyn Dalling Archive, plus works by local artists. The events also raise substantial amounts for the Friends. Warmest thanks to Philip Dalling, Brenda Dyer, Mary Fardon and Caroline Gatehouse.

Our first Open Day, on Saturday 24 September, was held in support of the Devon Historic Churches Trust. We invited the community in to hear about the church and its furnishings, about the Rev John Russell (for and against), to hear organ music by local composers and poetry by some of the greats, plus a tour of the churchyard and Streamside Garden – recently awarded a £100 prize as Best Community Wildflower Meadow. We shall repeat the Open Day next September. Finally, we helped host the Xmas Crafts Fair in November which used the WiFi system installed in church during lockdown and brought good revenue.

Mark Haworth-Booth 27.2.23

FRIENDS OF ST JAMES CHURCH, SWIMBRIDGE

Financial year 01/02/2022 – 31/01/2-23

Income

Donations including gift aid £1139.76

Charitable activities £555.49

Trading £590.60

Prize for community wildflower meadow £100

Total £2385.85

Expenditure

BT connection, fees for architect, webmaster, security cameras, clock maintenance, raffle licence, maintenance, advertisement for hiring Old School Room.

Total £1275.32