

FRIENDS OF ST JAMES CHURCH SWIMBRIDGE

Trustees' Report for 2023

The Friends held lots of valuable social events for our community – notably the popular Parson Jack's Studio Café coffee mornings, which give so much pleasure and fellowship: warmest thanks to all involved, especially Brenda Dyer and Philip Dalling, Mary and Richard Fardon, David Netherway, Caroline Gatehouse and Susie Hind, plus the musicians including Matt Blüge and Peter Caine. These special occasions also raise good revenue for the Friends. The same goes for the Swimbridge Q&As. The Spring series featured members of our village with interesting life stories to share – Ruth Bateman, Matt Blüge, Mike Clift and Ted Picken – while Philip Dalling explored the foundation and history of the Exmoor Society. The Autumn series was 'Four talks on Lives in Faith', in which we heard about the spiritual journeys of Dr David Chance, Andrea Chance, the Rev Preb Cathy Scoffield and the Venerable Verena Breed – one of our most illuminating and memorable sets of talks. Our works included an improved and reprinted Friends' leaflet and a Xmas card showing the church and village under snow (in January 2010), which has sold well, leaving us with more cards to sell in future years. David Netherway oversaw new signage in the churchyard including the contact details of our new incumbent, the Rev Preb Cathy Scoffield. Rev Cathy now takes the chair at our Friends' Trustees' meetings – many thanks to Richard Fardon for ably chairing for us on many occasions. David Netherway has been working on refurbishing the Old School Room and on the restoration of the pulpit – many thanks to him for leading on these and also dealing with electrical and plumbing problems in the church and the Old School Room, as well as the annual maintenance of the church clock. On 7 October we held our second 'Open Day', when we welcomed the community into the church and churchyard to hear about its history, including new discoveries about servants of the Rev John Russell made by Janet Patton and an appreciation of the role of the Smyth family (owners of the tannery) as benefactors to our church. This time we introduced paddleboards with information on 'Ten Top Things to See' in our church, written and photographed by MH-B and kindly fabricated by Janet Patton. These will, we hope, help visitors enjoy the church and its outstanding furnishings. The occasion raised £110 for the Devon Historic Churches Trust and also helped to bring us several new members of the Friends from Landkey – Cynthia Shaddick and Nicola and Peter Soper. Sadly, we lost Friends in 2023 too – the much-missed Maureen Hawkins and Mary Sumner. Membership is currently 56 members. We thank all of our Friends, whether they live locally or far away, for their continuing support of St James Church: their support is invaluable and greatly appreciated, as is that of our Trustees. Looking ahead, the Friends have commissioned two new booklets: a new church guide by Fr David Chance and a new introduction to the Rev John Russell by Philip Dalling. Fr David's beautifully written and illustrated guide was published at Easter 2024. Our Spring Q&As featured Alison Mills, director of the Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon, who gave us a tour of North Devon in 100 Objects, Josh Horswill who explained the Large Hadron Collider and why we should be interested in it, and Paul Henderson, our county councillor focused on media manipulation and technique of persuasion plus his own life story from the media to mayoral duties. These well-attended talks are a valuable part of our community outreach and we are greatly indebted to all who generously give their time and expertise.

FRIENDS OF ST JAMES CHURCH, SWIMBRIDGE
ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 1 January to 31 December 2023

Opening balance £3,124.17

Incomings

HMRC Gift Aid £197.76
Parson Jack's Studio Café £238.60
Friends' subscriptions £1050.50
Sundry donations £5
Swimbridge Q&As £468.60
Payments from PCC's Ecclesiastical Fabric Fund £5000 (for pulpit restoration)
Donations from Coronation tea £60
Xmas card sales £276.20
Donations from refreshments at Crafts Fair £15.22

Grand total £7311.72

Outgoings

Jubilee payment for Crafts Fair repaid (to go to PCC) £487.50
BT rental charges for wifi in church £423.26
Website renewal of domain name and hosting by Colin Jones £142
North Devon Council, raffle license renewal £20
Faculties from diocese for pulpit repair and OSR works £118
Friends' membership leaflet redesign / reprint £240
Signage for churchyard including Rev Cathy details £132
Electrical work (PAT testing, motion sensor lighting, removing pulpit socket) £262.06
Xmas card printing £362.40
Cumbria Clock Co maintenance of church clock £228
Matt Cullen plumbing of new water heater in OSR £350*

*This invoice was paid by the Friends but we have now (22.1.24) been reimbursed by the PCC Treasurer

Grand total £2774.22

Closing balance 31 December 2023 £7,660.83