

## Friends AGM report by Secretary 17.2.25

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. Our new members are Sue Briars, Peter and Nicole Morrish, Adrian and Sarah Russell and the Rev. John Ewington. In 2024 the Friends published two booklets: a new church guide by Fr David Chance and a new introduction to the Rev John Russell by Philip Dalling. These are a fine addition to our offer to church members and visitors and we heartily thank the authors.

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.

The Autumn Q&As featured our Patron, Lady Arran on her 'Life, work and public duties'. This talk marked the completion of Lady Arran's long period of office as Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of Devon, and the beginning of her new role as a Lady of the Royal Household, was most informative but also highly entertaining. Katie Drew, Executive Officer of the Melanesian Mission, spoke on the remarkable work of the mission, especially in a time of climate change from which island peoples in the Pacific are suffering severe consequences. Susannah Baker MBE was unable to join us to speak on her work at the Pickwell Foundation, one of the UK's leading charities for refugees and asylum seekers. However, her husband Steve was able to deputise most effectively on a memorable evening. 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.

Parson Jack's Studio Café has been greatly enjoyed by many during the year, thanks to a devoted team including Brenda Dyer, Philip Dalling, Jinny Dallyn, Iris Hawkins, Susie Hind, Mary and Richard Fardon, David Netherway and Rev. Cathy. This is a much-valued part of our outreach to the community as a church.

With the help of Ted Picken, we have moved the church WiFi, paid for by the Friends, to a lower tariff (though this is about to rise by £3 to £32.99 per month. The Wifi serves the Contactless Donation Point installed in the church with Ted's kind help. This enables easy donations by visitors and congregations and also payments for our new booklets and, in the run-up to Christmas, our cards.

The Friends maintain the church website and opened an account with Ticket Tailor to sell tickets online for the Medieval Music Concert on 1 March. Two other evening events have been organised to celebrate the restoration of the Gothic pulpit, expertly managed by David Netherway.



## **Friends of St James Church, Swimbridge: *Draft* Annual accounts, 1.1.24 – 31.12.24**

Balance on 1 January £7,660.83

### **Incomings**

Subscriptions: £942

Donations: £104.45

Donations via SumUp: £178.32

Christmas Fair fee: £425.50

Reimbursement from PCC: £350

(Friends paid for water heater repair in December 2023)

Parson Jack's Studio Café: £373.06

Swimbridge Q&As: £205.10

Booklets and cards: £132

Donation for bicycle rack from P&N Morrish: £58

HMRC Gift Aid: £219.34

Devon Historic Churches Trust (for pulpit): £1500

Archbishop's Fund (for pulpit): £2000

PCC: £360 (reimbursement for £360 paid to McNeilage for work on paint analysis – invoice paid while PCC Treasurer was abroad to avoid delay).

Income grand total: £6847.77

### **Outgoings**

BT / EE (wifi): £477.10

Colin Jones (website services): £262

Planning application for OSR: £353

M&E Alarms (annual maintenance invoices for 2023 and 2024, both £72): £144

Orbis Ecology (OSR): £1350

PCA Consulting (pulpit structural engineer report): £1,077.98

David Wilson Partnership (OSR designs): £1,170

NDC licence for raffles: £20

Printing Parson Jack booklet: £692.60

Jubilee Hall – Trustee training: £36

Cumbria Clock Co (annual maintenance fee): £228

S&G Creative Solutions (donations station): £381.44

Ted Picken (sundries for above): £19.99

McNeilage Conservation: £360 (this was reimbursed by PCC)

PCC (reimbursement for transfer to pay for pulpit, which was paid by PCC): £6,500

Outgoings grand total: £13072.11

Balance at 31 December 2024: £980.49