

*The Parish Church of  
St James, Swimbridge*

**ANNUAL REPORT**



**ANNUAL PARISH CHURCH MEETING**

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2013  
7.30pm St James Church

## *Introduction*

St James, Swimbridge forms part of the Fourways Mission Community with the Church of the Holy Name, Gunn, St Peter, West Buckland and St Paul, Landkey. It is organized within Shirwell Deanery in the Diocese of Exeter.

The Parochial Church Council of St James, Swimbridge is a Charity, excepted from registration with the Charity Commissioners. It is required by the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure 1966 to co-operate with the incumbent, Revd. Shaun O'Rourke, in the promotion in the Parish of the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

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**NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING OF ST JAMES' PCC, SWIMBRIDGE  
MONDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2013 AT 7.30PM**

**AGENDA**

1. Election of Churchwardens
2. Election of Deputy Churchwardens

**NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING, ST JAMES' PCC, SWIMBRIDGE  
MONDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2013 AT 7.45PM IN CHURCH**

**AGENDA**

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the Annual Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012
3. Matters Arising
4. Annual Report and Financial Statement
5. Additional Comments by the Rector
6. Election of PCC Members
7. Election of Sides Persons **(Ask for volunteers, then elect en-bloc)**
8. Election of Examiner
9. Election of Members for the Deanery Synod
10. Review of Service Times
11. Policy for Readers as regards membership of the PCC.
12. Any Other Business
13. Meeting Closes with a Prayer

**NOTICE OF A MEETING OF ST JAMES' PCC, SWIMBRIDGE  
FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL MEETING**

**AGENDA**

1. Minutes of the Previous Annual Meeting for the Election of Officers
2. Election of PCC Officers:
  - a) Vice-Chairman
  - b) Secretary
  - c) Treasurer
  - d) Electoral Roll Officer
  - e) Appointment of Standing Committee
3. Arrangement of dates for meetings for the following year.
4. Any Other Business.

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING FOR ST JAMES' CHURCH, SWIMBRIDGE

### Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held in the Church Monday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012 at 7.30pm

D. Netherway in the chair.

C. James led the opening prayers.

#### 1. Election of Churchwardens

V. Knight was proposed by KM Dixon, seconded by M. Hayward.

M. Haworth-Booth was proposed by D. Netherway and seconded by E. Patt.

There being no other nomination, Mrs Knight and Mr Haworth-Booth were re-elected.

#### 2. Election of Deputy Churchwardens

A. Bradbury was proposed by N. Arthur and seconded by Matt Bluge.

Brian Hawkins was proposed by M. Sumner and seconded by A. Bradbury.

There being no other nominations, Mr Bradbury was re-elected and Mr Hawkins elected.

### Minutes of the Annual Meeting of St James' PCC, Swimbridge Monday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012 at 7.45pm

1. **Apologies for Absence:** N. Ashelford, Mike Clift, B. Dixon, R. Ellis, M. Sargent, J. Searle.

2. Minutes of 2011 meeting approved for signature by DN.

2. Matters arising – none.

#### 4. **Annual Reports and Financial Statement.**

D. Netherway thanked Andy Comerford for putting the Annual Report together and the School for printing it. He pointed out that the 2012 Annual Report inadvertently reprinted the Pre-School report from 2011. DN drew attention to the following points from the Pre-School's report for 2012. The Pre-School who are based in our Old School Room continues to run well under Leader Sarah Smith, they are now enjoying the Streamside Garden for some outdoor play and their recent Ofsted report was excellent. Some items of building maintenance had been drawn to our attention.

Those who had written reports were asked if they had anything to add to them. MH-B noted that since the churchwardens' report was printed, we had been informed by the diocese that our bid for funding for church improvements had not been successful. The churchwardens proposed that the new incumbent, the Rev. Shaun O'Rourke, should take part in discussions before any future bids for grants are made: this was agreed. DN recorded the gratitude of the PCC for the work very kindly contributed by Bruce and Kathy Dixon on editing the benefice magazine: he is to write a letter expressing our gratitude. Liz Patt was also warmly thanked for managing parish subscriptions. AB noted that although Gunn only holds monthly services, they are very well supported. J. Patton noted that when the organ tuner comes in the autumn the heat needs to be on in the church for tuning to be effective: she will prompt MH-B when the time comes. DN reported that the Streamside Garden will be formally opened by Lady Arran on Saturday 16 June, with the new incumbent playing a leading role in the proceedings. The stone-

mason Gabriel Hummerstone has been working with children at the School on a Poem they have written to be carved into 'steppingstone' in the garden. NA gave his financial report as Treasurer. His accounts for the year are with the auditor Geoff Floyd. He has received an income tax rebate of £2000 and is awaiting a rebate from the diocese for fees paid to officiating clergy during the past year. Thanks to new additions to the electoral roll, our Share has risen to above £19k. However, our financial position is stable and with just ten more members of the congregation, paying regular contributions, we would be close to breaking even. All agreed that it is good to have payment envelopes in the pews as these encourage donations especially at funerals. A Bradbury moved and D. Spencer seconded a motion that the accounts be accepted subject to audit: agreed. NA was thanked for his excellent work, which is greatly appreciated.

#### **5. Election of PCC Members**

Andy Comerford is standing down due to his many other commitments.

The following re-elections were made:

E. Patt was proposed by Matt Bluge and seconded by M. Hayward.

Mo Clift was proposed by A. Hayes and seconded by J. Hayes

M. Meade was proposed by D. Spencer and seconded by A. Hayes.

N. Arthur was proposed by E. Patt and seconded by M. Sumner.

#### **6. Election of Sidespersons**

Jean Grant and Andy & Victoria Comerford are to retire. The following were re-elected en bloc:

D. Netherway, A. Hayes, M. Sargent, S. Hopton, J. Searle, Mr & Mrs Clift, E. Patt and D. Spencer.

#### **7. Election of Examiner**

G. Floyd was proposed by N. Arthur and seconded by A. Hayes: agreed

#### **8. Election of Deanery Synod representatives**

J. Hayes and D. Spencer offered to continue: approved with thanks.

#### **9. Any Other Business**

MH-B raised Floodlighting: now that the village has been consulted, the floodlighting will be turned on again after the clocks go forward on Saturday 24 March. D. Netherway offered to set the floodlights to come on at dusk and go off at 11pm daily.

V. Knight raised the Porch light: this needs to be on a timer to discourage young people messing around in the evenings. MH-B to get quote from M&E Alarms who will be inspecting the electrical system in April.

D. Spencer raised continuing to seek grants for church improvements: this will be done after consultation with Rev. O'Rourke.

Mo Clift raised church clock not striking the hour: C. James kindly offered to Investigate.

J. Patton raised churchyard grass-cutting and stressed importance of maintaining neat appearance of churchyard, also taking care of top part (where the Rev. Russell is buried) which may become a fire risk. D. Netherway reported that tenders had not yet been returned. He is liaising with the parish council. Matt Bluge and MH-B offered to help with strimming top part. Scouts and other volunteers may help too. Matt Bluge proposed vote of thanks to church wardens, seconded by A. Bradbury and approved.

The Annual Meeting closed with prayers. Those not on the PCC left at 8.20pm.

## Minutes of the PCC Meeting following the Annual Meeting

1. **Present:** D. Netherway (in the chair), N. Arthur, A. Bradbury, Mo Clift, G. Gill, M. Haworth-Booth, A. Hayes, M. Meade, E. Patt, J. Patton, D. Spencer, M. Sumner.
2. **Minutes of last year's meeting** for election of officers were accepted and signed by the chair as a true record of the proceedings.
3. **Election of PCC Officers:**
  - a) Chair: D. Netherway – re-elected until the licensing of the Rev. O'Rourke .
  - b) Secretary: Still vacant. Notes taken by members in rotation. These notes by J. Patton and MH-B.
  - c) Treasurer: N. Arthur – re-elected.
  - d) Electoral Roll: M. Sargent to continue.
  - e) Standing Committee: Churchwardens, D. Netherway, N. Arthur and N. Ashelford to continue, plus Rev. O'Rourke when licensed.
4. **N. Arthur** proposed to pay off £4k of Share now – approved.
5. **Dates for Meetings** in 2012-13: to be decided at next meeting (14<sup>th</sup> May).

### Chairman's Notes

After arriving in June to the mission community of Swimbridge, Landkey, West Buckland and Gunn, I feel that we have grown steadily together.

There has been a time of getting to know each other - a time to settle down, as it were. I have brought small changes to the mission community not by changing anything but by just being myself.

I know that Peter was a well loved priest, and it's hard when a new priest comes and perhaps fails to do things the same. As a matter of fact, the priest in my old parish rang and told me of his frustration on hearing that Shaun did it this way. The whole point of being a new priest in a new parish is to be different to the last: we take up the banner and do things differently. Many of you will have felt that difference.

My focus has been to observe you, test you, find your weaknesses and your strengths. To find a common ground in which the mission community can grow together, as some of you take on roles and responsibilities for the future. To find ways of uniting churches in a common bond of Christian faith. I think we have started on that journey, and - as we know - the beginning of every journey starts with a tentative first step.

So, what of the future, what is to come? My mission here has always been to grow the church, to find new people, to fill the church and let God's mission be firmly at the fore of our churches. I wish that I could do that on my own. I cannot. To make God's churches grow we need to have all of you praying and supporting that vision. And that vision will only become fulfilled with your prayer and attendance at church and inviting people we know back to church, by supporting building new things for new people, not on a Sunday but during the week. We can have Bible Study House Groups courses: we need to do what we do as part of our mission our faith.

We have a rich and excellent ministry team with three retired priests and two readers, on which we can draw. Their experience and dedication is a gift from God. But we must still

look to the future and commit ourselves to finding readers and self-funding ministers for the future.

I hope that you will find in your hearts the faith that inspired you to come to the Lord, to recognise that we have a duty to provide and build the congregations of the future here in this mission community, this place where four churches work to the Glory of God. I look forward to your continued support, to your commitment to serve God, and to make here today a church for the future.

Fr Shaun O'Rourke.

### **Letter of Recommendation**

Revd. Shaun O'Rourke.  
The Rectory  
Barnstaple Hill  
Swimbridge.  
Barnstaple.

To the congregations of  
The Mission Community

Dear All.

Please find my recommendation of the reports and accounts for our Parish Church. I hope that you will read and digest the information contained, and find it to your satisfaction.

I welcome you to our A.G.M where you may voice your views.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all who have served in their various roles over the past 12 months and I pray that their continued service will be blessed in the year ahead.

With every Blessing.

## **Shaun O'Rourke**

Fr. Shaun O'Rourke

**ST JAMES CHURCH SWIMBRIDGE ( WITH THE HOLY CHAPEL AT GUNN)  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2012  
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2012 £
<b>Receipts</b>			
<i>Voluntary Receipts</i>			
Regular Giving - Planned giving	9637.58		
Collections	<u>3284.53</u>		
	12922.11		12922.11
Other – Donations and events	1674.70	2438.47	4113.17
Legacy	-		
Tax Refund	5929.59		5929.59
Grants (Streamside Project)	-	9523.20	9523.20
Miscellaneous	1297.90	750.00	2047.90
Wall safe	197.10		197.10
<i>Activities for generating funds</i>			
Magazine sales and adverts	596.45		596.45
<i>Receipts from Church activities</i>			
Fees	1958.22		1958.22
<i>Investment Income</i>			
CBF Deposit account interest	1990.04		1990.04
CBF capital withdrawal	5000.00		5000.00
Halifax Deposit Account Interest		8.00	8.00
<i>Other income</i>	-	-	
	<b>31566.11</b>	<b>12719.67</b>	<b>44285.78</b>
<b>Payments - Church activities</b>			
Donation	253.75		253.75
Diocesan parish share	18916.00		18916.00
Church running expenses	1955.33		1955.33
Clergy Expenses	1262.55		1262.55
Cost of Services	1296.90		1296.90
Building maintenance	2244.44		2244.44
Magazine printing	459.01		459.01
Cleaning Church and Church Yard	1014.20		1014.20
Insurance	3394.22		3394.22
Miscellaneous	246.33		246.33
Fees	1688.22		1688.22
Web Site expenses	160.00		160.00
Church Wall repair	3230.00		3230.00
Streamside Garden Project		7923.71	7923.71
	<b>33814.99</b>	<b>7923.71</b>	<b>44114.67</b>
<b>Surplus of Receipts over Payments (Excess of payments over receipts)</b>	<b>-2248.99</b>	<b>4795.96</b>	<b>171.11</b>
<b>Bank Accounts</b>			
As at 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2012	9920.85		
As at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2012	10528.48		



**ST JAMES CHURCH SWIMBRIDGE ( WITH THE HOLY CHAPEL AT GUNN)  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2012**

**Independent Examiner's report to the Parochial Church Council of St James Church Swimbridge**

This report on the accounts of the PCC for the year end 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012 which are set out in pages 1-3 is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 (the Regulations) and section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act)

**Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts you consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations and s.144(2) of the Act does not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

**Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commission under s145(5)(b) of the Act and to be found in the Church guidance, 2006 Edition. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

**Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:  
-to keep accounting records in accordance with section 31 of the Act; and  
-to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act; have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Geoffrey Floyd  
Chartered Tax Advisor  
12 Newlands  
Landkey  
Barnstaple  
Devon

4<sup>th</sup> February 2013

**TREASURER'S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 2012**

The accounts are in a different format than in previous years at the request of our examiner Geoff Floyd

I reported last year that we would have to call upon reserve capital funds to pay the bills if income did not increase. This year we withdraw £5000 and still made a loss of around £2000.

I managed to get a good tax refund but this was for previous years as well so will not be repeated as good again

There are only a few areas which could reduce expenditure but this will mean these jobs being undertaken by the congregation

There are no easy answers to increasing people coming to our services.

My thanks go to the fantastic efforts of those who seek to raise money and put in their time to our fund raising events.

I predict that we are **LOSING** at least **£100 per week** and possibly double this.

If we have approximately 30 church goers :

**each member needs to increase their weekly giving by at least £ 3 per week**

### **DEANERY SYNOD REPORT 2012-2013**

March 6 2012 meeting at West Buckland Village Hall.

The AGM re-elected Mrs Eileen McCaig as Lay Chair.

It was reported by the Deanery Synod Treasurer that St James was up to date with its share. Kathy Kingdon, visiting speaker, recalled her work in promoting Christianity in the developing world with her work in "Seedlings for Christ".

July 16 2012 meeting at Parracombe Church.

The visiting speaker was the Diocesan Training Officer who informed the Deanery Synod of training courses available in the Diocese for individuals, groups or whole PCCs.

8 October 2012 meeting at Bratton Fleming Church.

The Diocesan Finance Officer reported on the dire straits of Diocesan finances and amongst other things gave ideas to Deanery Synod of how to get more people to give in collections, freewill offering envelopes, etc.; and for the regular congregation to give more. One came away quite disillusioned!!

### **ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT**

Every six years each parish of St James Church and the Holy Name, Gunn is required to prepare a new electoral roll. It is expected that all who wish to support the churches will have completed the available form.

The Roll has sadly lost some members who have died - Mrs Agnes Bartlett supported St. James and also Mrs Ivy Snell. The PCC appreciates the help and support of members by their prayers, offerings and assisting with church decisions at meetings. The Roll now stands at 53.

### **CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT**

LICENSING OF OUR NEW INCUMBENT. We were delighted by the arrival in June of the Rev. Shaun O'Rourke as our new rector, priest-in-charge and rural dean. It was a great pleasure to welcome the Rev. and Mrs O'Rourke and their three young children. The Licensing Service was a marvellous occasion, presided over by the Bishop of Exeter with the Archdeacon of

Barnstaple and many other clergy in attendance. Fr Shaun works tirelessly and has already made a great impact on all the congregations in the benefice and in the wider community. He has received valuable support from Fr Bruce Dixon, Fr Geoffrey Squire, Fr John Ewington and our Lay Readers Christopher James and Peter Rozzell. We also thank the other priests who have kindly come to officiate, and John Hayes of our own congregation for taking services for us and preaching so interestingly. Fr Shaun also led the benefice on its journey towards becoming a Mission Community. We shall be continuing on this path in 2013.

SERVICE TIMES. From Sunday, 4 November, Holy Communion started at 9.15am instead of 9.30am for an experimental period until March: this was to allow our vicar, the Rev. Shaun O'Rourke, to spend more time with the congregation here and also with the congregation of St Paul, Landkey, who started their service at 10.45. Thanks to everyone for kindly fitting in with this new arrangement.

ORGANIST JANET PATTON has continued to play with distinction. The Choir blossoms under her leadership. Both Janet and the choir continue to play and sing in other churches of the benefice and this is a great boon to them. We are very fortunate: thanks to Janet and the choir, hymn singing is a very satisfying part of our services. On 16 December Fr Shaun and Janet devised a wonderful Service of Nine Lessons and Carols: we warmly thank them, the choir and those who read the lessons. The church was packed again on the afternoon of Christmas Eve for a Christingle service Paula Swanson prepared the children very well for the Nativity Play. There were enough Christingles for every child to have one. After the Christingle candles were lit we all sang Silent Night by their light. Thank you to everyone who helped to make the service so memorable and for donating £150 to the charity Clic Sargent. There was a very well attended Midnight Mass later that evening. The Golden Stars placed on the Christmas tree in memory of loved ones raised over £500 this year: this money is dedicated to the upkeep of the churchyard and will be spent on repairs to the churchyard wall.

THE BENEFICE MAGAZINE thrives under the able editorship of the Rev. Bruce and Kathy Dixon. Many thanks to them and all the contributors.

THE HARVEST FESTIVAL SERVICE was well-attended and followed by a Harvest Supper at the Jubilee Hall. Our entertainment was splendidly provided by Matt Bluge on vocals and banjo.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS proved enjoyable and successful. In addition to the Harvest Supper, the Spring and Autumn coffee mornings at church, and the Gold Stars on the Christmas tree – which was generously given by Bert Bartlett – Vera organised two marvellous carol concerts: The Exmoor Carollers on 7 December, followed by Voice Accord (acapella) on 18 December. In between we had our own Carol Service with Nine Lessons on 16 December. All these occasions were very memorable and we are most grateful to all who helped make them so successful. Mark also continued to arrange the 'Swimbridge Q&As'. In the Spring we focused on the fabric of our church with lectures by our architect Jonathan Rhind and the historian Todd Gray. In the autumn we heard from the historian Peter Christie (on Swimbridge in old photographs) and the archaeologist Terry Green (North Devon place-names and their archaeology). We thank everyone involved in making the Q&As such a success.

THE FRIENDS OF ST JAMES CHURCH, SWIMBRIDGE was discussed at meetings in the autumn and at an open meeting on 20 February 2013 when a constitution was adopted and the first officers and committee appointed. We warmly thank the Countess of Arran for graciously consenting to serve as Patron. The Friends are up and running!

THE CHURCH WEBSITE - [www.swimbridgeparishchurch.org](http://www.swimbridgeparishchurch.org) - launched in the Spring 2011 continue to help give out information and provide a channel for those who want to contact us. Warm thanks to our webmaster, Colin Jones, who updates the site at lightning speed. Photos of the church and of many events can be seen on the site as well as sections on our history, service times and our sister churches.

THE CHURCH FABRIC was maintained during the year. Mark and David Netherway cleared the gutters in the autumn. Part of the church wall fell down and plans have been made for its restoration by Terry Shilvock.

THE STREAMSIDE GARDEN PROJECT came to fruition and is described elsewhere in this report by David Netherway. We offer our very hearty congratulations to David for his years of hard work in leading the team which created this imaginative garden for the village.

WORKING PARTIES. Vera led working parties which kept the rectory garden tidy over the year. We especially thank tireless helpers like Brian Meade, Anne and John Hayes, Mavis and Matt Bluge, Hazel Dallyn, and Geoff and Janet Patton.

OTHER KEY PEOPLE are Nick Arthur as Treasurer and Perce Saunders as bell ringer, assisted with the chimes by young Jake Gibbs. Shirley and Nigel Ashelford look after the church devotedly. Janet Patton played a leading role in keeping the churchyard in good trim, for which everyone is most grateful, with excellent support from Matt Bluge. Mike and Mo Clift helped Vera to keep the church open seven days a week. This is to help the visitors who come our way thanks to our inclusion in Dr Todd Gray's book *The 50 Best Devon Churches*. Christopher James kindly looks after the clock. We are as always especially grateful to the congregation members who serve at Holy Communion, or as readers of lessons and as Sidepersons, arrange the flowers so elegantly and provide the delightful refreshments after service. All members of the congregation play their part in countless ways. We thank them very warmly.

2012 was Vera's eleventh year as churchwarden and the third year for Mark.

Mark would like to add a personal note: I shall not be standing for re-election as a churchwarden in March. This is because I will be starting an MA at the University of Exeter in September and also because I expect to be heavily involved in setting up and running the new Friends of St James. The Friends will, I hope, play an important role in attracting more members of the community to church events and financially supporting the church we love. It has been a great privilege to work alongside Vera and I thank everyone who has helped me so generously over the past three years. I hope to be able to continue to help on working parties, the website and in other ways.

### **Bell Captain's Report**

The bells are in a sound condition but unfortunately Swimbridge no longer has a team and the bells are only rung when teams from other churches attend weddings and funerals. We would welcome anyone who is interested in bell ringing to join us and help raise a team in order to ensure the tradition is kept alive and the presence of our church is heard as well as seen in the village.

## **PCC REPORT**

The PCC welcomed our new Rector, The Revd. Shaun O'Rourke to his first meeting in July. Prior to this we were grateful to the help and advice of Revd. Bruce Dixon during the interregnum.

The PCC met six times between the March 2012 Annual PC Meeting and the Annual PC Meeting held in March 2013 with an 82% attendance. The council had fifteen members (including the Gunn representative) but in October Chris James (Reader) was co-opted with a majority vote until the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2013.

Matters for consideration this year included Churchyard Maintenance (Wall Repairs & Grass Cutting), Streamside Garden and Fundraising – all of these are dealt with in more detail throughout this report.

The Treasurer's (Nick Arthur) report highlights the serious difficulties we are experiencing in maintaining our Church. We thank Vera Knight and her helpers for all their work organising fundraising events this year. They have included the 'Wedding Event', Coffee Mornings and the Exmoor Carollers' Concert. We are also grateful to Mark Haworth-Booth for organising the interesting 'Question & Answer' sessions – these have brought new faces into Church. It is hoped that the 'Friends of St James' will be able to inject some interest for the future.

As a Church we are so lucky to have Janet Patton and the Choir providing music at our services, many churches are no longer blessed with such expertise.

Finally the PCC would like to thank all those who quietly carry out various tasks to ensure the smooth running of St. James.

### **Mission Community Magazine Report**

The Magazine is well received by the community and has a print run of 220 to cater for all the regular recipients and those ad hoc purchases by visitors to the churches within the Mission Community.

We are very grateful to the advertisers who by their payments largely cover the cost of printing the magazine and to West Buckland School for printing it. We hope the readers will support the advertisers. The subscription price has been increased to £4 each year and represents good value and returns a good income to the Mission Community. The editors are very grateful for the payment of their expenses in the production of the magazine.

Since the arrival of the Reverend Shaun O'Rourke there have been changes in the way some things are presented, particularly the calendar which Hazel Price manages. It is up to individual parts of the Mission Community to let Hazel have details of events that are to take place.

The Editors always welcome contributions to the magazine of local and general interest. Each village has its own pages, and the forward reporting of things to come is most helpful to readers.

## Church of the Holy Name, Gunn



Originally when built in 1873, founded by the Reverend John (Jack) Russell, the chapel was named The Chapel of Ease, but is now known as The Church of the Holy Name, Gunn and is a daughter Church to St. Peter's Church Swimbridge.

The chapel consists of a slated roof building with gable ends and traditional church pews to accommodate approximately fifty people with an additional extension which can accommodate a further thirty people when opened up to the main body of the church.

Apart from the fifty or so buildings in the village the Chapel attracts a congregation from neighbouring farms, villages and other homes within a five mile radius. As in previous years the congregation meet every second Sunday in the month for a Communion Service. Each Sunday attracts about 25 to 30 people who stay on after the service to meet socially to discuss current church issues. Much effort is made to ensure that parishioners unable to attend are regularly visited and kept informed of any developments, such as the future plans to introduce the occasional Evening Service. As well as the monthly service, special occasions such as Easter, Harvest and Christmas are especially well attended. In addition the congregation meet for social events, such as in 2012 to celebrate H M The Queen's Diamond Jubilee. One thing is for certain we could not have done it if John and Barbara had not got married 60 years previously and put up a marquee to celebrate their Diamond Anniversary. Indeed Gunn Chapel has continued to function because of the very special efforts of John and Barbara Squire over many years.

Live music is always an enjoyable feature of each service much appreciated by the entire congregation. Gunn is particularly fortunate in that Brian Kettle generously gives up his time to travel in from Ashford to provide organ music and from time to time a congregation member who plays guitar provides music to traditional hymns.

The team spirit within the congregation has always been an important feature of the fellowship. Even though people move away they remain key members of the team so that when required willingly dedicate time and effort to see that everything runs smoothly. This is borne out each service and seen in the presentation of the church interior, flowers and outside in the churchyard. During the interregnum Gunn was fortunate to have support from clergy and lay readers from within and outside the benefice. We were very pleased to welcome the Rev. Shaun O'Rourke into the benefice and Gunn congregation offers him full support and good wishes for every success in the future.

Maintenance costs remain reasonable and although 2012 difficulties with weather caused the cancellation of the annual fundraising event planned for Tanglewood, it is

still hoped in the near future to re-decorate and re-carpet the church interior. The congregation continue to support The David Rundle Trust, an organisation which provides care and education in Rwanda, Africa.

As the only meeting place in the village the Chapel has bred a group of people who promote Christian values through their excellent esprit-de-corps, encouraging a congregation from outside the village to maintain their links and meet socially as well as worshipping together. This has provided a network of pastoral care for those in need which is high on the agenda of the monthly meetings.

## **Organ & Choir Report**

The pipe organ was attended to and tuned by the Midland Organ Co. in April and September. No major problems were identified; although mention has been made of the asbestos lining in the bellows

For the Choir it has been a busy year. We attended the various churches for the fifth Sunday services and sang at wedding services in Swimbridge. Our repertoire of anthems/ hymns to mark the different seasons of the liturgical year is gradually expanding. New or unfamiliar hymns have been gradually introduced for the congregation. The pilot project inviting members of the congregation to nominate their favourite hymns was successful, and is to be repeated again during this current year probably after Easter.

In this Diamond Jubilee year, a benefice service was held on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> June at 6.30pm. Eleanor played trumpet with organ accompaniment to add to the festive atmosphere.

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> June was the licensing of the new vicar, Revd. Shaun O'Rourke, at Swimbridge by the Bishop of Exeter. On 25<sup>th</sup> July a festival evensong was held to mark St. James' day, followed by light refreshments in Church and an opportunity to meet the new vicar.

A break from practices in August was followed by Harvest Festival services in early October. A temporary change in Sunday service time to 9.15am started in early November in order to allow the Vicar opportunity to speak to members of the congregation after the service before dashing to the next service.

Remembrance Sunday was marked by a Service in Church and at the War Memorial. The Last Post and Reveille played on the trumpet by Eleanor added a sombre yet uplifting sound around the valley.

Advent and Christmas Services were a busy time for choir members, who learned some new carol arrangements and seasonal music.

A special thank-you to all choir members. They have worked hard and given freely of their time and talents to ensure a high standard of singing within the services each Sunday. We also express our thanks to Eleanor for her trumpet playing, to Mike Clift for his bass singing and to Revd. Bruce Dixon for his tenor singing in the anthems and enthusiastic approach to the introduction of new or unfamiliar hymns for congregation participation.

Choir practice is on Friday evenings starting at 7.00pm and ending approximately 8.00pm. If you would like to come along and give singing a try, you will be made very welcome.

## **Streamside Garden**

A church project to create a new space for everyone in our community and for our visitors to enjoy was completed on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2012. The vision was to transform a part of the churchyard fenced off for over 100 years and gift it for everyone's use as evidence of our Church in the heart of the community.

Started under Rev. Peter Bowers back in 2006, the official opening was delayed so that it could be one of the first duties of our newly inducted Rev. Shaun O'Rourke. Despite the rain, an unforgettable feature of 2012, the event was a great success. The ribbon was cut by Lady Arran, the children's stone-carved poem stepping stones unveiled and entertainment (in church) by the school and our talented local people and Darren the garden builder made it a special day.

The garden is being well used especially by the younger children in the village and the pre-school children. Volunteers have looked after it but there is always work to do and it is hoped it can be a project in which the new Friends of St James can participate.

The project was only possible because of the grants we were given and the time and generosity and enthusiasm of the volunteers. The major funder for the work was the National Lottery, from their Community Spaces programme, managed by Groundwork UK, with other grants from Devon County Council, North Devon District Council, The Barnstaple Bridge Trust and South Molton Rotary Club.

The project was undertaken in several stages each of which was subject to specific funding allocations, overseen by the Lottery and our other funders to whom we reported. In summary this is shown below. More detailed accounts are available in church and on our church website or from our Treasurer.

### **Development Stage 2006-2010**

Before we could start work all consultation, planning, and other consents had to be in place to satisfy the Lottery for our Stage 2 application. There were fees and some expenses for essential professional reports, design and Diocese, District Council, and Environment Agency approvals.

This cost of about £1300 covered by Lottery and Devon County Council (Cll Edgell) grants and donations and volunteer time.

### **Delivery Stage 2010-2011**

A National Lottery Grant award of nearly £50,000 through Groundwork UK from its Community Spaces fund allowed it to go ahead. Lottery grants can only be spent on the approved work and claimed for actual expenditure after the work has been completed. All work is subject to strict Lottery procurement rules overseen by our appointed professional landscape architect.

The grant was supplemented by individual donations and many hours of volunteer work by church members and supporters in the community.

The overall cost of the construction and landscaping work was £50,352. Of this some £23,000 was for the new metal railings and public footpath surfacing.

### **Dedication and Official Opening    December 2011 and June 2012**

It was a Lottery condition that there should be a project launch event to celebrate the achievement with our community for which they gave a £240 grant. This covered expenses, printing and the accommodation expenses for the garden builder, who provided entertainment, and his family.

### **Sustainability stage    2012 onwards**

To ensure the project continues to serve the community the Lottery awarded up to £3500 (of which £3486.34 has been claimed) towards specific expenditure. Further grants were given by local funders who wished to support the garden in the community. These were South Molton Rotary Club £250, Barnstaple Bridge Trust £ 1200, North Devon District Council (Cll Lane) £100 and Devon County Council (Cll Edgell) £750 .

This funding has provided garden maintenance equipment and training, a shed alarm, a gazebo, the Swimbridge school children's carved stepping stones poetry project, the leaflets, scientific/environmental equipment for use by Swimbridge School, and will provide school and pre school environmental teacher training and continuing garden community project work led by the Pre School.

It was a condition of the Lottery grant that we employed an independent lead professional for the project delivery. This was provided by David Wilson Partnership landscape architect Peter Leaver. His fees throughout were paid by the Lottery. No payments were made to the project leader, project members or volunteers for their services.

There is likely to be a small balance which will be retained in the PCC Streamside Garden account for use for future development, maintenance etc. Full details of the accounts are available from the Treasurer if required.



## Swimbridge C of E Primary School Report

The school has maintained its high achievement levels in national league tables – currently 153rd out of nearly 17,000. Since 2001 the school has consistently been within the top 20% - on 9 occasions within the top 5%; three times (including the current and last years) in the top 1%.

The school has continued to operate, and expand, its childcare provision maintaining healthy pre- school breakfast club and after school “Cool Kids Club” – the only school to do so within the South Molton group of schools. We are also one of the very few schools that have successfully taken on the in house provision of lunches. School continues to provide instrumental musical tuition for all children from Year 3 onwards & swimming sessions from Year 1 to Year 6.

The school has had increased accommodation with the construction of our upstairs break out and storage room. From spring 2012 the school has had its own school field opposite the school with access to the entire new Parish Recreation Ground and should see a huge benefit from that this year.

In the main Staff are long serving at the school. This continuity is a real asset. A recently appointed and effective SENCO is currently involved in the Devon Inclusion Award for Dyslexia and, with all staff, further developing dyslexia friendly classrooms.

The school has run a series of three Science Courses for Devon Schools under the auspices as an outreach for the Bristol based ‘Science Learning Centre South-West’ (creative cross curricula science; developing thinking and social skills through science & science investigative skills); additional science skills are currently being planned. Negotiations are underway for similar courses arranged by the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics.

Our head teacher, Garry Reed was invited as a speaker at the National Association of Small Schools national conference autumn 2012.

The number on roll has continued to increase, currently 107, so that we are at our capacity, with a small waiting list. Approximately 75% of our roll live outside of our school designated area. The school has maintained its record of high attendance; apparently the highest in Devon over the last three years.

Continuing to blow the schools trumpet, The Diocese of Exeter has recognised our consistent level of achievement by awarding us the first Outstanding Church School certificate in the Diocese, awarded by the Bishop in person. In December 2011: Diocesan advisor wrote: “The quality of education provision provided in the school is outstanding. As a visitor walking around the school, the visual environment, care and respect for the school and the quality of work displayed clearly reflects the Christian values which are embedded in the school. Pupils and staff all respect each other and the happy well-structured learning environment allows for all pupils to reach their full potential. This must be regarded by everyone as an outstanding school.”

In a nutshell, the school continues to thrive when many are struggling. It is a pleasure to work with Garry and his staff and they must be congratulated and thanked for all that they do and achieve for our children.

I'll finish with one of the few items of good news to come from Westminster recently:

We received a letter from Nick Gibb, Minister of State for Schools dated March 6<sup>th</sup> 2012 congratulating the school on our "*excellent academic results*" and thanking the head teacher and staff for "*...your leadership in continuing the drive towards the highest standards of educational achievement*".

*Andy Comerford*  
*Chair of Governors*

### **Swimbridge Pre-School Report**

Swimbridge Pre-school has continued to flourish in the Old School Room during the past year. Numbers have been consistently good with many of the sessions full. At present we have places available and have 14 children on our register. The majority of children leave us to join Swimbridge C.E. Primary School.

Members of staff have attended training throughout the year to continue their professional development. We are fortunate that we have had no changes to our staff. The committee have worked hard in the organising of fund raising events, for example quiz nights, as well as ensuring that all policies and procedures required by Ofsted are in place.

Pre-school have enjoyed using the Streamside Garden. Outdoor learning has become a priority in Early Years education and we try to use the garden whatever the weather! In the spring and summer we plan to use the garden even more and are hoping to involve the wider community by inviting the reception class at Swimbridge Primary School to join us for some activities and other members of the village.

Pre-school is grateful to the church for its continued support in providing us with our home and use of the garden!

Sarah Smith