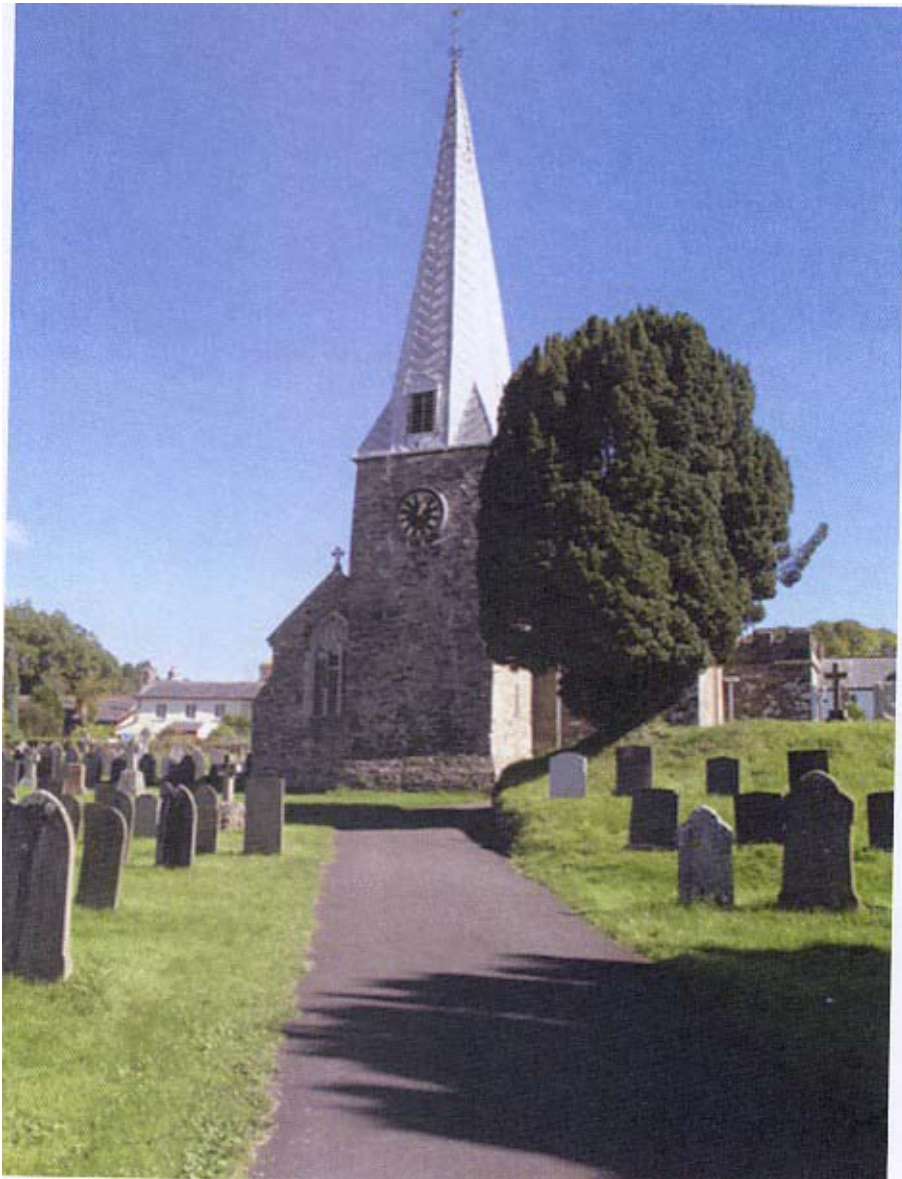


# The Parish Church of St James, Swimbridge

## ANNUAL REPORT



## ANNUAL PARISH CHURCH MEETING

SUNDAY 12 April 2015  
10.30am 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. Pauls, 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  
12<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at 10.30 am**

**AGENDA**

Election of Churchwardens  
Election of Deputy Churchwardens

**NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING, ST. JAMES' PCC, SWIMBRIDGE  
12<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at 10.30 am IN CHURCH**

**AGENDA**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Annual Meeting 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014
3. Matters Arising
4. Annual Report and Financial Statement
5. Election of PCC Members
6. Election of Sides Persons (Ask for volunteers, then propose and elect en-bloc)
7. Election of Examiner
8. Election of Members for the Deanery Synod
9. Policy of Readers as regards membership of the PCC
10. Any Other Business
11. Meeting closes with a Prayer

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

1. Minutes of the Previous Annual Meeting for the Election of Officers
2. Election of PCC Officers:  
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 31st March 2014 at 7.30pm**

The Meeting opened with a prayer  
26 people present

D Netherway in the chair  
Rev Bruce Dixon led the prayers

**1. Election of Churchwardens**

V Knight confirmed her intention to retire. There were no nominations for Churchwarden. Thanks were expressed by D Netherway for all the hard work carried out by V Knight during her 12 years of office. A meeting will be held on Monday 28 April at 7.30 to consider action with this vacancy.

**2. Election of Deputy Churchwardens at Gunn**

There were two nominations. A Bradbury was proposed by J Squires and seconded by B Squires. B Hawkins was proposed by J Squires and seconded by B Squires.

The PCC ratified these positions and the meeting closed.

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of St James' PCC Swimbridge**  
**Monday 31st March 2014 at 7.45**

**1. Apologies for Absence:** Rev S O'Rourke, A Bradbury, N Ashelford, M Hayward, M Meade, M Clift and G Gill. 26 in attendance

2. The Minutes of the last Annual Meeting were accepted as a true record and signed by D Netherway

**3. Matters Arising from last Annual Meeting**

Review of Sunday Service time: As from Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April the time of Sunday services will change to 9.30am.

M Haworth-Booth confirmed that " M Bulge" would be corrected to read as " M Bluge" in the Annual Report online, and apologised for this typing error.

**4. Annual Reports and Financial Statement**

Financial Statement: The overall position showed a loss of some £4,500 per year as congregation numbers continue to decrease. The generous donations received from Friends have helped to pay some bills and some legacies (restricted) are ring fenced for projects such as lighting. A discussion then followed regarding restricted and unrestricted legacies. Monies/grants that are restricted can only be used for the purpose intended. D Netherway noted that there was £626 remaining in the restricted Streamside Garden account which he proposed should be spent on some further garden equipment and machinery with the balance used for maintenance expenses, plants etc during the coming few years until fully spent. Areas where possible cut backs could be made to help balance to finances were discussed including church cleaning costs. It was agreed this should be to be discussed at a future PCC meeting. The Pre School Old Schoolroom rent was mentioned as a possible matter for future discussion.

D Netherway thanked N Arthur for all his hard work as Treasurer which was greatly appreciated.

Authors of the remaining reports were asked if they had anything to add:

Churchyard - J Patton and her team were thanked for all their hard work. The rebuilding of the stone wall has now been completed. D Netherway reported that with 2014 being the anniversary of the start of the World War 1, the Parish Council has been awarded a grant from the Community Council for Devon for the refurbishing of the War memorial which stands in the church yard. J Hayes (Parish Council Chairman) said that on 4 August 2014 an event will be held to commemorate this anniversary and that information will be announced in due course.

Streamside Garden – This is the Streamside Garden's third year and it is proving a well loved community asset.

School Governor - D Spencer is retiring – The need for replacement governors to be a future PCC Agenda item

#### 4. Friends

M Haworth-Booth expressed his thanks to all those who have helped the Friends activities during the year. He reported that the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting was well attended. Forthcoming Friends Events are as follows:

Wednesday 23 April Dr John Marsden - Recital of baroque music  
Saturday 26 April David Squire – Cottage Garden master class, Streamside Garden  
Wednesday 30 April James Clarke – Introduction of Bell Ringing  
D Spencer thanked M Haworth-Booth for all his hard work with The Friends of St James Church.

#### Website

Please contact M Haworth-Booth should anyone wish to put anything on the church website. It is good to keep it up to date and active to inform everyone of church activities. It was hoped to collect a full address book of e-mail contacts to ease communication.

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

G Gill is to stand down due to ill health. D Netherway thanked G Gill for his attendance and contribution.

M Haworth-Booth was duly proposed by D Netherway and seconded by M Sumner – all in favour.

Arnold Bradbury was proposed by J Squires and seconded by B Squires – all in favour.

J Patton was proposed by N Arthur and seconded by M Bluge – all in favour

N Ashelford was proposed by T Bateman and seconded by R Ellis – all in favour.

V Knight was proposed by E Jennings and seconded by J Grant – all in favour.

#### **6. Election of Side Persons**

The following were re-elected en-bloc. Mr and Mrs Fardon, Mr and Mrs Clift, Mr and Mrs Haworth-Booth, M Sumner, M Hayworth, H Dallyn, A Hayes and V Knight

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

G Floyd was agreed as Examiner. N Arthur will ask him if he is available. A letter of thanks to be sent to G Floyd – PCC Agenda item

#### **8. Election of Members for the Deanery Synod**

J Hayes agreed to continue. All in favour.

#### **10. Any Other Business**

J Hayes advised that B Hawkins has been elected as a Ffofeee Trustee. They now have a full complement of elected Trustees.

It was suggested that visiting clergy be introduced and thanked at services. PCC Agenda.

J Grant is retiring after 20 years of providing teas after Church services and at events. She was thanked for all her hard work.

It was suggested that Family services on some Sundays are held and families invited to attend. PCC Agenda.

Easter Garden volunteers required.

11. Closing Prayers were said by Rev Bruce Dixon. The Meeting closed at 8.45pm

### **Minutes of the PCC Meeting following the Annual Meeting**

1. **Present:**), N Arthur D Netherway Chair, A Bradbury, Mo Clift, M Haworth-Booth, A Hayes, J Patton, D Spencer, V Knight

Minutes of last year's Meeting. These were not signed due to an oversight but to be signed at the next PCC meeting.

2. Vice Chairman - D Netherway

Secretary - T Bateman, R Ellis

Treasurer - N Arthur

Electoral Roll Officer - M Fardon

Standing Committee - Rev. Shaun O'Rourke, N Arthur, V Knight, A Bradbury (representing Gunn)

3. **Articles of Enquiry** – A letter to be sent to the Archdeacon explaining we are unable to complete the questionnaire forms until Rev S O'Rourke returns.

#### **4. Date of Next Meetings**

Monday 28 April at 7.30

Monday 30 June at 7.30

Monday 29 September at 7.30

The Meeting ended at 9.10

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

### The Rector's Report to the Whole Mission Community by The Rev'd Shaun O'Rourke

I believe that the last year has been a very successful one for our mission community as a whole. The majority of our churches have grown with new people and new services, and this is something that we must continue to do over the coming years to ensure our survival for the future.

None of our churches would be in this position without the dedication of all those who hold individual ministries in our parish churches. Of course I am talking about the wonderful work that our wardens do, along with our parish secretaries, our treasurers, our PCC members, those who clean, salespersons, choir members, organists and most important, the ones who make teas and coffee and who bake our wonderful cakes.

Without our welcoming congregations, we would not be reflecting Christ in the world. So you too are important to the work of the church and I thank each and every one of you.

We are working together better and better and this must continue to strengthen the mission community for the future. This year we expect to be blessed with welcoming East Buckland to our mission community. We have a wonderful opportunity to work with that community to build a church of Christ's love; an opportunity to be part of a hoped for renewal. Please keep them in your prayers.

### **Prayer and service**

This is an area in which we must build for the future, for nothing can be done in our own right, it must be Christ led, and, as such, must come from prayer and thoughtful service to God and his people. We need to build on this through bible study course work. The diocese has the resources to help us and we must move forward in this direction.

As a mission community our wardens and I meet regularly to discuss issues that may help us or hinder us. We have the opportunity to sort things out before they become a problem and I would like to thank them once again for the hard work that manifests itself in doing this.

I should also like to take the opportunity to thank our retired clergy and our readers who do so much to keep this mission community alive and fresh. Their experience and guidance I call upon to guide me. I thank them for their continuing support for the mission community, in taking services, in being a presence in there. Please know that you are all in my prayers. I thank God for all you do, knowing how much a part of our mission community you are, and how much you are loved by the communities you support and serve.

### **The coming year**

Building work throughout the whole Mission Community has been completed and more is being started. So I thank you, our fund raisers, for without you we would not have buildings fit for purpose.

Building new service patterns, trying new liturgy, we have been slowly changing this over the past 3 years and we will continue to do so.



Building on growth for the future, we must attract new people to our churches to be sustainable. Landkey have developed a wonderful children's service and we must explore with them new ways of meeting the needs of the people around us.

We must look to grow our spiritual life, and our commitment to God in new ways and explore through study, putting on courses, having guest preachers, and try to grow from our congregations people who want to grow their ministry and to become more.

On a personal note, I look forward with great joy and in anticipation for things to come in the year ahead.

May God bless us with his Holy Spirit, inspire us, unite us, and make us grow for his good. And may the good news be welcomed in every home in this mission community.

With thanks for your ministry to me, your support in the past and your support to come.

**Fr. Shaun O'Rourke**

**ST JAMES CHURCH SWIMBRIDGE ( WITH THE HOLY CHAPEL AT GUNN)  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014  
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2014 £
<b>Receipts</b>			
<i>Voluntary Receipts</i>			
Regular Giving - Planned giving	8952.03		
Collections	<u>1882.22*</u>		
*Gunn £1094.47			10834.25
Other – Donations and events	8039.41	1115.25	8039.41
Legacy	1,000.00		
Miscellaneous	432.88		432.88
Wall safe	187.79		187.79
<i>Activities for generating funds</i>			
Magazine sales and adverts	159.00		159.00
<i>Receipts from Church activities</i>			
Fees	2198.50		2198.50
<i>Investment Income</i>			
CBF Deposit account interest	2058.98		2058.98
<i>Other income</i>	-		-
	<b>22,795.56</b>	<b>1115.25</b>	<b>23,910.81</b>
<b>Payments - Church activities</b>			
Donation	321.81		321.81
Diocesan parish share	19735.40		19735.40
Church running expenses	2839.16		2839.16
Clergy Expenses	753.37		753.37
Cost of Services	1263.16		1263.16
Building maintenance	1813.60		1813.60
Magazine printing	284.30		284.30
Cleaning Church and Church yard maintenance and Church wall repair	800.00		800.00
Insurance	3358.22		3358.22
Miscellaneous	608.96		608.96
Web Site expenses	82.50		82.50
Streamside expense		164.20	
	<b>31860.50</b>	<b>164.20</b>	<b>32024.70</b>
<b>Surplus of Receipts over Payments (Excess of receipts over payments)</b>	<b>-9064.94</b>	<b>951.05</b>	<b>-8113.89</b>
<b>Bank Accounts</b>			
As at 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2014	25728.90		
As at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2014	20933.51		

**ST JAMES CHURCH SWIMBRIDGE ( WITH THE HOLY CHAPEL AT GUNN)  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014**

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2014 £
<b>Cash Funds</b>			
Lloyds TSB Bank current account	20,769.31	164.20	20,933.51
<b>Investment Assets</b>			
CBF Church of England Funds			
2579.22 investment fund – income shares	34,440.07		
5171.76 Fixed interest securities fund	<u>8610.46</u>		43,050.53
Income shares			

The attached notes form part of these financial statements

**Approved by the PCC on**

**2015 and signed on their behalf by :**

.....**Revered S O'Rouke (PCC Chairman)**

.....**Mr N J Arthur ( PCC treasurer)**

**ST JAMES CHURCH SWIMBRIDGE ( WITH THE HOLY CHAPEL AT GUNN)  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

1. The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the receipts & payments basis.
2. The following are recognised but not valued in the statement of assets and liabilities :

Fixed Assets

Movable church furnishings held by the Church wardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal

Investments

Robert's Capsule Stopper Company – 547 Ordinary Shares – value unknown

3. The movements in designated and restricted funds during the year were:

	Bal b/fwd	Receipts	Payments	Bal c/fwd
Star Appeal (wall)	-192.64	667.00	-	474.36
Lighting Fund*	<u>10000.00</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	
	<b>9807.36</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10474.36</b>

The wall fund represents donations received principally from the annual gold star scheme each Christmas

\*The legacy was not restricted but the PCC would like to put it towards the lighting fund

# **ST JAMES CHURCH SWIMBRIDGE ( WITH THE HOLY CHAPEL AT GUNN) FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014**

## **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 2014 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

### Treasurer's report by Nick Arthur

Our accounts continue to show a decline in income against expenditure and this appears to be on the increase.

As I reported last year our weekly giving is simply not enough.

The direct-debit giving scheme promoted by the Diocese has had little take up which is very disappointing.

The reality is that with a congregation of approximately 30 each member should ideally contribute £20 per week. At this level we would be able to start to redress the balance and put money back into capital reserves.

### Electoral Roll Report by Mary Fardon

The Roll of St James Church, Swimbridge with Gunn has changed only slightly from last year. We welcome 2 new members at Gunn - Geoffrey and Anne Heald. The Roll has now 59 members. The PCC thanks the members for their support of the churches.

### PCC Report by Tess Bateman and Ruth Ellis

This term the PCC has gathered for six meetings between the April Annual PCC Meeting 2014 and the Annual PCC Meeting held in April 2015. An extra meeting in November was held to deal with the division of the Churchwarden responsibilities brought about by the retirement of Vera Knight. There has been an average attendance of 76%.

The council currently has 15 members including the Gunn Representative. Sadly after only a couple of months of taking on the role of Churchwardens, John Hayes and Anne Hayes were forced to stand down from their roles. Thank you, John, very much indeed for accepting the role of Churchwarden, albeit only for a short time and thank you Anne for being such a stalwart member of the PCC over so many years. George Gill, too has had to resign from the PCC due to ill health after many years of serving on the PCC. Finances remain a key issue and the PCC would like to thank Nick for doing such an excellent job in managing the funds and reporting the accounts at each meeting.

In April we welcomed Rev'd Shaun back after his long illness.

Matters for the PCC's consideration this year have included church maintenance, clock and weather vane repairs, church heating, churchyard maintenance finances and fundraising,. The PCC is currently considering a new and exciting plan to install an accessible disabled toilet in the Old Schoolroom. David Netherway is kindly working on this project and reporting to the PCC.



**Steeplejacks from Dawsons reattaching the weathercock to the spire of St James after repair and re-gilding**

There have been increased efforts in fundraising and every third Saturday of the month a coffee morning is being held in the church or at someone's home. Ruth Ellis kicked the first coffee morning into operation in March by opening up her garden and home. It was a great success and we look forward to the next coffee morning in Swimbridge church on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April being organised by Mo Hayward.

The Church Choir although low in numbers is still strong in voice. Thank you Janet for continuing to lead us.

The PCC must also extend its thanks to Mark Haworth-Booth and his committee for all the time, effort and commitment to the Friends Q and A sessions and also to the Friends themselves for all their very generous donations.

The PCC would like to thank everyone who has contributed to ensure the smooth running St James' and Gunn.

#### Shirley by David Netherway

After over 50 years of service at St James, Shirley Ashelford retired as Verger at the end of the year.

Shirley took over the role from her so well loved and respected husband John following his death in 1991. Helped always by her son Nigel, it was evident – and the topic of many visitor comments – that the church was well and lovingly cared for. As Verger, her welcome at the door and attention at weddings and funerals and everyday services really made a difference.

As well as the obvious evidence of care seen by all, Shirley and Nigel were always busy behind the scenes, addressing those vital tasks that few knew about but which were taken for granted as they just seemed to happen: care of the vestments and altar linen, the candles, wine and much more. Nigel, also, thought about so many small improvements and carried them out with no fuss, so that they became just another of the things that were part of St James.

Shirley with Nigel are continuing to support St James, but now volunteers will be needed to step forward to do as many of those important jobs that they can. We will then know just how much their contribution over 50 years meant.

To mark her retirement, a collection, card and presentation of a watercolour of St James at Christmas time, by Swimbridge artist Annette Shilling, was made to Shirley by the Rev. Shaun with great applause from the congregation.

### **The Church of the Holy Name, Gunn by Peter Cain**

The Church of the Holy Name at Gunn is the daughter church of St. James the Apostle Swimbridge and was founded by the famous Reverend John (Jack) Russell in 1873. The small rural hamlet of Gunn is at the very north of our large parish. Our church is the only meeting place in Gunn and attracts a varied congregation from within the community and neighbouring area.

We continue to meet on the second Sunday of each month (except November) and on Festival Sundays for a Holy Communion Service, joining with the other Churches within the Four Ways Mission Community when there is a fifth Sunday in the month. Most services attract a regular congregation of around 25 to 30 and on occasions, particularly festivals, 40 to 50.

Throughout the year we have received tremendous support from Clergy and Readers: our vicar The Reverend Shaun O'Rourke, the retired Venerable Archdeacon of Barnstaple, David Gunn-Johnson, the acting Archdeacon, Mike Edson, Reverend Bruce Dixon, Reverend Chris Willis, Reverend John Ewington, Reverend Prebendary Roger Reeves, Reverend Geoffrey Squire and Readers Chris James and Peter Rozzell, to whom the whole congregation is most grateful.

It is many years since the church was last redecorated so early in the year a small working party was formed under the guidance of Chris Hatt, Bryan Hawkins, Nick Cheshire and Arnold Bradbury to consider the way ahead. It was decided by the congregation that the work should proceed. Work in the vestry commenced in early Autumn. The ongoing project continues and is to be completed, we hope, by the end of 2015.

To raise finance for the Fabric Fund several events were held during the year, including a very successful coffee morning in May at Geoffrey and Anne Heal's home and a June weekend event at Tanglewood. In addition grants were successfully obtained from Barnstaple Bridge Trust and Barnstaple Rotary Shop.





Bearing in mind that Gunn is only a small hamlet we are indeed fortunate that the church continues to be extremely well supported both financially and by volunteers from within the local community. A look at the Gunn Rota list indicates some twenty four members of the congregation who are involved on a regular basis to ensure the church and services run smoothly. The major difficulty is in finding a member of the clergy to take each service, particularly at festival time, but I have little doubt the church will continue to survive and flourish because of the spirited and selfless contributions of the congregation. Typical of this is the contribution made to each service by our organist Brian Kettle, who travels from Ashford to provide live music for the congregation singing, which is much enjoyed.



Harvest Festival

We were very saddened in November to hear of the death of Christine Joslin, the oldest member of our congregation. She has attended services at Gunn for over sixty years helping with church flowers and refreshments.. Her friendly and charming personality will be missed by all.

In summary, the church had a very successful year with well-attended services. During the year we have had many compliments from visitors saying how welcome they were made to feel. This same point was made recently by the Bishop of Crediton in a letter to our vicar Shaun, following his memorable visit to our church on the second Sunday in December.

The Church remains the main meeting place in Gunn and long may it remain so.



### Choir and Organ Report by Janet Patton

It has been a busy year for choir members. They have attended regularly at practices and services. During the year we were sorry to see John Hayes leave the singing group; he also carried the cross for processions. We miss his bass voice. We wish John and Anne well for the future.

In February, we went to a dinner at the Chichester – no singing was involved!

There were the usual number of extra services during the year. In March the Ash Wednesday service took place at Swimbridge. We went to Landkey for the benefice Confirmation service. In April, the Good Friday evening service of readings, hymns and prayers was well attended. Readers came from the different benefice churches. Easter Day was celebrated with the usual joyous hymns and anthems. In June we attended the benefice service at West Buckland which was also their patronal festival. The organ is much improved after the extensive work done during the previous twelve months. On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> August an extra short service at the War Memorial followed the morning service in church. Eleanor played trumpet for us outside and we extend our thanks to her.

A break from practices during August was followed by the Harvest Festival supper and services at the end of September into early October. On Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November the annual British Legion Remembrance service took place and continued at the War Memorial, with the two minute silence and a trumpeter playing the Last Post and Reveille.

In December a group of church members and choir members went to the Nursing Home for carol singing with the residents – an enjoyable occasion followed by light refreshments for everyone. On Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December the annual nine lessons and carols was well supported and seasonal light refreshments afterwards were much appreciated. Christmas Eve saw both the Christingle service and Midnight mass well supported.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to the choir members for their unwavering support and loyalty at both practices and services.

There has been no work to the organ during the year.

### Various parish and community reports by David Netherway

#### **The Food Bank at St James**

Our church has continued to act as the collection point for donated food items. The church is open every day and there is a collection box at the back of the nave. This is emptied daily and every few weeks the collection is taken to the Barnstaple or South Molton Food Bank. This is run by the Trussell Trust; their volunteers distribute the food to families and individuals identified by health and social work professionals as in need. Food items are constantly being given and they do make a real difference.

#### **The Green Team**

The Swimbridge Parish Green Team has not been going long but is already making a difference. As well as work on the highways, village hall and other public areas, families have been helping in the Streamside Garden and churchyard. A big task, enjoyed by the volunteers as a challenge, was the removal of huge amounts of brambles from the yew trees and rhododendrons. The team meets on the third Saturday morning each month. Everyone is welcome, with free refreshments kindly sponsored by the Jack Russell Inn.



Clearing brambles from the churchyard



## The War Memorial

A grant from the Community Council of Devon and the Parish Council enabled the village war memorial in our churchyard to be restored in time for the commemoration of the centenary of the start of WW1. In November a large number joined the Service of Remembrance and viewed again the historical research work by the late Mervyn Dalling, including his poignant biographies of the fallen soldiers. These were joined by wartime memorabilia and pictures from the Jubilee Hall.



**Service of Commemoration of the Centenary of the Outbreak of WW1**



**Memorabilia from WW1 in display at church**

## **A village partnership**

With the new Jubilee Hall there are lots of opportunities to work together for mutual benefit and for our community. The hall is now a great wedding venue and several are already booked. It is also excellent as a meeting place following baptisms and funerals, with good catering facilities. The Book Swap has relocated from the hall to church, encouraging people to drop in. A large amount of crockery has been given to the church by the hall – replacements have been funded by grants. The Lunch Club is to be re-formed as the hall has secured start-up funding. Volunteers will be needed to make this the success it was when run by Vera and her team. The Craft Fair, which moved to church during work on the hall last year, was a great success. It is set to happen again as stallholders were delighted to have such a lovely venue.

## **A disabled toilet for the church and Old Schoolroom use**

It is early days yet but work is in hand to develop, and find funding for, a project to create an accessible toilet with baby-change facilities in the Old Schoolroom. This will be in conjunction with the Pre-school. The new facilities will be for church-users and the Pre-school. They will help make both buildings better able to serve the congregation and other users and help secure their future. A new kitchen area would also be included in the Old Schoolroom.

## **Swimbridge Pre-school by Sarah Smith. Pre-school Supervisor**

Swimbridge Pre-school continues using the Old School Room on week day mornings during the school term. The past year has been a challenge as our numbers have fallen due to many reasons including less young children living within the area or parents requiring more child care hours than we can offer. At present we have 10 children on our register with places available on every day. Fortunately we have a team of supportive parents who have worked hard to ensure that we can still operate. We have to satisfy the requirements of Ofsted and raise funds to meet the shortfall in our costs. We receive Early Years funding for three and four year olds, but this has not increased recently when wages, heating, etc. have risen. We are very lucky that we have had no changes to staff. We have all been on training to update and further our professional qualifications.

We are very lucky to have a good relationship with Swimbridge Church of England Primary School. We visit the school regularly and the reception class has visited us. We work closely with the reception class at the school to ensure a smooth transition for the children who are moving on.

We continue to use the Streamside Garden as often as we can. We use both the indoor and outdoor environment to deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. The children look forward to time spent in the garden and make observations on how the garden changes throughout the year. We all appreciate the hard work that goes into maintaining the garden.

It is exciting to have the prospect of an improved toilet, with baby-change space and separate kitchen facilities in the Old Schoolroom. This will be a real improvement and help in catering for younger children and ensuring a safe environment for children, staff and any other users of the room. We are keen to work with the church in making this happen.

For further information contact the Pre-school on 01271 830357. We appreciate the continued support of St James Church. [www.swimbridgepreschool.com](http://www.swimbridgepreschool.com) or [swimbridgepreschool@gmail.com](mailto:swimbridgepreschool@gmail.com)

### Friends of St James, Swimbridge:

#### Annual report and finances for 2014 by Mark Haworth-Booth

Warm thanks to the Friends' patron Lady Arran and the committee: Rev. Shaun O'Rourke (chair), David Netherway, and Richard Fardon and to all those who helped on events during the year, including publicity in the North Devon Journal by Dr Richard Westcott; Radio Devon announcements courtesy of John Hayes.

Membership: we now have 39 members. Three members lapsed in 2014 (Chris and June James and Annette Shilling). The membership donations for 2014 totalled: £1752.

The Spring season of Swimbridge Q&As: two musical events

23 April: Dr John Marston on the church organ. 30 came. Refreshments and entrance donations raised £115.10.

30 April: James Clarke and bellringers. 23 attended. The evening raised £60.00.

Special summer event: 13 July 2014 - Kerscott House Garden

Thanks to Jessica and Peter Duncan, who kindly opened their superb garden, £537 was raised for the church clock repair fund. First of all, the warmest thanks to Jessica and Peter Duncan, plus Anne and John Hayes who organized the car parking, David Netherway and David Spencer who received the donations for entry, Rosie Haworth-Booth who provided the teas with help from the Duncan's daughter Rebecca and Vera Knight, plus Margaret Meade who baked delicious scones. Warm thanks to the ND Gazette, the Swimbridge Post Office, the Swimbridge Newsletter and website, plus Radio Devon, for publicizing the event.

£379 was received from HMRC as Gift Aid from membership subscriptions where Gift Aid has been stipulated. We should be able to gain a sum of this kind each year.

The Autumn season of Q&As: three events

8 October: Jonathan Edmunds: New light on the Rev. John Russell.

40 attended. Receipts £138.80. Mr Edmunds allowed us to circulate the text of his fascinating lecture by email to Friends and supporters.

15 October: Ald. Ray Liverton continued his much-appreciated reminiscences of life in the village during and after WWII. 25 attended. Receipts £91.00.

22 October: Bill Hedge spoke on his life as a monk and a potter with musical interludes by Janet Patton and a sale of pots for which Mr Hedge very generously donated half the proceeds. Receipts for the evening: £195.50.

Provision of wine and other refreshments and screen hire: donated by members of Friends.

Total for the year from HMRC Gift Aid, subs. and events: £3,268.40. A cheque for £3,000 was handed by Richard Fardon to Nick Arthur at church on 14 December.



**Richard Fardon of the Friends of St James committee presenting Nick Arthur, Treasurer, with a cheque for £3000 in December 2014**

This annual report presented at the Friends' AGM on 21 January 2015 by Mark Haworth-Booth, Secretary & Treasurer, Friends of St James.

#### **Friends of St James, Swimbridge**

#### **Minutes of AGM held on 21 January 2015 in the Old School Room**

Chair: Rev. Shaun O'Rourke    Minutes: Mark Haworth-Booth

#### Apologies

The Rev. Bruce and Mrs Kathy Dixon, Ruth Moore

Present: Mo and Mike Clift, Jessica Duncan, Dave and Ros Jordan, Mary and Richard Fardon, David Netherway

Items 1 and 2 – Annual report and annual accounts – were rolled into one document presented by the Secretary and Treasurer (document attached). They were proposed for acceptance by Ald. Liverton and seconded by Mrs Clift. Approved unanimously.

#### 3. Forward programme

Tabled by the Secretary (emailed to members, 22.1.15)

#### 4. Honorary Friends

The Secretary reported that the Friends' committee had appointed as Hon. Friends five individuals who had given exceptional service to the congregation of St James over many years: Vera Knight, the Rev. Bruce and Kathy Dixon, Anne and John Hayes. The appointments were enthusiastically endorsed by the meeting.

#### 5. Brochure.

The secretary thanked David Netherway for sharing with him a number of brochures issued by other Friends' organizations. He will have one designed and printed to attract new members.

## 6. Extra item

The secretary apologised for inadvertently omitting from the agenda the constitutional requirement that the committee must formally resign at the end of each year. The committee resigned and the members then offered themselves for re-election en bloc: proposed by Dave Jordan, seconded by Mary Fardon. The Rev. Shaun O'Rourke and Messrs Fardon, Haworth-Booth and Netherway were unanimously re-elected. The secretary hereby draws the attention of members of the Friends not present to the lack of prior notification of this agenda item: should any member insist that an Extraordinary General Meeting be held to address this item, the secretary will arrange same.

## 7. AOB

David Netherway told the meeting of exciting plans for a new disabled toilet proposed for the ground floor of the Old School Rooms. This would serve both the Pre-School and the church. He also outlined plans to repair the church clock and update its mechanism. He also discussed Annette Shilling's pictures of the church sold as Christmas cards in 2014, with plans to sell them to raise funds for the Friends in 2015. Mary Fardon raised the question of a village calendar illustrated with images of the village at different seasons of the year. The meeting hopes that image-makers around the village will get to work so that a calendar illustrating each month can be produced at some future time.

Mark Haworth-Booth, Secretary and Treasurer, Friends of St James, Swimbridge 25.1.15

### Church website by Mark Haworth-Booth

A healthy number of visitors appear to be using the site, the statistics showing an average of 1000 visits per month, although a proportion of these would undoubtedly be from automated search systems. Apart from the home page, other pages visited are the news, history, friends, services and contact pages.

### Mission Community Magazine Report by Paul Ellis

The Parish Magazine is distributed throughout the Mission Community. The total Mission Community print run has been reduced during 2014 to 205. This number enables all regular readers to receive a copy and for ad hoc purchases by visitors to the churches and villages.

We are very grateful to Maureen Hawkins and Lesley Hartley who edit and produce the magazine month after month without fail. Their dedication has resulted in a magazine that is very much admired and appreciated throughout the mission community and beyond. Each village in the mission community has its own pages and contributions of local and general interest are always welcome.

We are grateful to the advertisers who, through their payments, cover much of the printing costs. We also much appreciate the endeavours of staff at West Buckland School for printing. The subscription price is 40p a month or £4 a year.

Fifty copies (reduced by ten during the year) are distributed throughout Swimbridge.