

The Parish Church of St James,
Swimbridge

ANNUAL REPORT



ANNUAL PARISH CHURCH MEETING

Wednesday 26th April 2017

7.00pm ST JAMES CHURCH

Introduction

St James, Swimbridge forms part of the Four Ways Mission Community with the Church of the Holy Name, Gunn, St Peter, West Buckland and St. Pauls, Landkey and St Michael East Buckland It is organised 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

26th APRIL 2017 AT 7.00pm

AGENDA

Election of Churchwardens
Election of Deputy Churchwardens

NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING, ST. JAMES' PCC, SWIMBRIDGE 26th April 2017 at 7.00pm IN CHURCH

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Annual Meeting 3rd April 2016
3. Matters Arising
4. Annual Report and Financial Statement including a statement as to whether the council has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding & Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.
5. Election of PCC Members
6. Election of Sides Persons (Any additional volunteers, then propose and elect en-bloc)
7. Election of Examiner
8. Election of Members for the Deanery Synod
9. Any Other Business
10. 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:
Election of Treasurer
Election of Secretary
Appointment of Standing Committee
3. Arrangement of dates for meetings for the following year
4. Any other Business

Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held in the Church Sunday 3 April 2016 at 11.00am

Attended by 19 members on the Electoral Roll
The Meeting opened with a prayer

1. Election of Churchwardens

Matt Thomlinson was proposed by Janet Patton and seconded by Vera Knight
Peter Miller did not wish to stand for re-election

There being no other nomination Matt Thomlinson was re-elected.

2. Election of Deputy Churchwardens at Gunn

Arnold Bradbury was proposed by Maureen Cliff and seconded by Maureen
Hayward

Bryan Hawkins was proposed by Mary Fardon and seconded by Richard Fardon

There being no other nominations Arnold Bradbury was re-elected and Bryan Hawkins elected.

Arnold was thanked for all his hard work at Gunn. The Committee were very grateful to both Arnold and Bryan for standing.

The PCC ratified these positions and the meeting closed.

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of St James' PCC Swimbridge Sunday 3 April 2016 at 11.15am

1. **Apologies for Absence:** A Bradbury, R Fardon, B Hawkins, P Miller, P Sanders, D Spencer, M Meade
2. The Minutes of the last Annual Meeting were accepted as a true record and signed by Rev Shaun O'Rourke
3. Matters Arising from last Meeting – See item 9 - Policy of Readers

PCC Attendance: The Rector explained that there had been issues with long term non-attendance at PCC Meetings and it was proposed that a policy be implemented whereby a member's 'non-attendance' at three consecutive PCC meetings would result in a letter to remind the member they could be dismissed.

Matt Thomlinson agreed that this needed to be ratified – seconded by Matt Bluge.

Church Keys: Rev Shaun O'Rourke asked that the Body of the Church adopt a policy on Church Keys. It was suggested that all keys be handed in at the beginning of every AGM meeting then the keys be reallocated and signed for at the end of the Meeting. Church keys are not to be copied and any losses are to be paid for by the key holder. It was also suggested that a spare set be kept available and signed out when required.

4. Annual Reports and Financial Statement - Revd Shaun O'Rourke thanked Tess Bateman for putting the Annual Report together and Matt Thomlinson for printing it.

Financial statement – no breakdown.

In Nick Arthur's absence Revd S O'Rourke stated that the accounts continued to show a decline in income against expenditure and that there was great need to increase income and how we give. Rev Shaun O'Rourke thanked everyone for all they have given and continue to give.

Revd Shaun O'Rourke then talked about the Share. He said that Swimbridge pay the highest Share in the whole of the Deanery and that Swimbridge has always, in the past, paid the full amount. As the Church continues to lose approximately £5,000 per year, we can only pay by drawing on reserves for 5 or 6 years more.

At a recent PCC meeting 14th March 2016, Matt Thomlinson recommended that we hold back £5,000 of our share payment of £20,000. This was agreed at the meeting.

Matt Thomlinson then took time to explain how the Share was arrived at and how the figures taken to arrive at the Share figure for our Paris were not representative and he believed to be unfair. He stated that financial pressures had affected our moral and how proud he was that Swimbridge has given so much and continues to give so much under these circumstances. He suggested that the motion be put forward that the PCC be given the discretion to hold back part of the payment of the Share if it deemed it was necessary. Proposed by Mark Haworth-Booth and seconded by Mo Cliff.

Electoral Roll – The Roll now stood at 60 members. The electoral roll form was duly completed and signed.

As time was running short Revd Shaun O'Rourke and Matt Thomlinson thanked all the authors of the remaining reports for their hard work. A special word of thanks was given to both Mark Haworth-Booth and David Netherway for all their hard work.

5 Election of PCC Members – Ruth Ellis and Tess Bateman are to stand down as Secretaries.

6 Election of side persons – The following were re-elected en-block. Richard and Mary Fardon, Mike and Mo Cliff, Mark and Rosie Haworth-Booth, Mary Sumner, Mo Hayward, Hazel Dallyn, Vera Knight and David Netherway.

7 Election of examiner – Mr G Floyd

8 Election of members of the Deanery Synod – Mike and Mo Cliff

9 Policy of readers – Brought forward from last AGM. Revd Shaun O'Rourke explained at some length what important work Readers do and that they hold the Bishop's License, ie charged by the Bishop to serve the Church. They are entitled to become members of the PCC of the Church they represent. Readers are expected to attend a minimum of three PCC meetings per year.

10 Any Other Business – David Netherway suggested that a community email address be produced so that when necessary members of the Church can be contacted to inform them of any forthcoming meetings they may wish to attend.

Revd Shaun O'Rourke suggested that enquiries be made in to the presentation of an Emeritus Award to Vera Knight for all the work she has done and continues to do. Proposed by Sarah Muirhead and seconded by Mark Haworth-Booth.

Matt Thomlinson made it known that anyone interested in any aspect of the PCC should approach him and he would be very happy to talk to them. Mary Fardon asked that a list of current members of the PCC be placed on the Notice Board.

Swimbridge needs to be more flexible about Service times.

Heating – must be put on prior to events held during the winter. It was suggested that a calendar be placed in the church.

Tea Rota – There is a shortage of volunteers. Please let Mike Cliff know if anyone is available to help.

The Meeting closed at 12.15

Minutes of the PCC Meeting following the Annual Meeting

1. **Present:** David Netherway, Revd Shaun O' Rourke (Chair), Matt Thomlinson, Mo Cliff, Mark Haworth-Booth, Ruth Ellis, Tess Bateman, Mo Hayward, Matt Bluge

2. Vice Chairman - David Netherway
Secretary - Vacant
Treasurer - Vacant - Nick Arthur - for the interim
Electoral Roll Officer - Mary Fardon
4. **Date of Next Meetings** – Monday 25 April at 7.30pm The Meeting ended at 12.2
- 5.

Fourways Mission Community Report– Fr Shaun

Dear Mission Community,

May I warmly invite you to accept the annual reports from our churches,

May I begin by thanking all our wardens and PCCs our sides people and all who help to keep our churches open and ready for services, the work that you all do is a tribute to your faith and determination to take our churches forward.

I would also like to thank our treasurers for the difficult work they do to keep our finances in order.

This last year has given many of our churches an opportunity to look at what we do and how we do it, we have tried to keep our own individual traditions and customs. Moreover, we have created new services also to help us build for the future, and these have been greatly successful and our churches have been beacons to new people and families, and I hope this continues in to the future.

We have all had our share of fundraising for our historic buildings unfortunately this is a necessary part of having historic buildings and this is a issue that will continue to be present with us as we move into this year too.

We have had bible studies and training courses throughout the year and its uplifting to see people building their ministry's ever stronger, this is something that we must build on in the future to sustain a lively ministry in our mission community, we have sadly lost valued members of our congregations. And their contribution and love of God will always be remembered with fondness.

It is vital to the longevity of our churches that we have people come forward to take on responsible posts, and may I urge you to think this year of perhaps filling vacant positions that may occur this year, without the support of people to help in the church we would surely not be able to function properly, please consider this as and when vacancies appear. Overall, we are still doing well and once again I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you do, your support in the congregation helps your PCC and wardens plan for the future with hope in their hearts. As this new year OF 2017 unfolds before us we need to try and make our congregations grow in size, expressing serving our parishes with joy. And I look forward to a bright future for us. I pray for you and with you for Gods kingdom to come.

Treasurers Report

Nick Arthur has acted as our treasurer for many years. He indicated he wished to give up this responsibility due to personal commitments some time ago, but we were very grateful that he agreed to continue to manage the accounts until a replacement was found or until this Annual Meeting. Finding a replacement has not proved easy and we still need a volunteer for this role. However, the accounts for 2016 have been examined by an accountant and are attached with a note as an appendix. We do now need to find a way forward in this critical area of finance.

The PCC have expressed their thanks for Nick's work over many years looking after our finances.

Electoral Roll Report – by Mary Fardon

The current Electoral Roll of St James, the Apostle, Swimbridge together with The Holy Name, Gunn was brought in on February 28th 2017.

Our Electoral Roll has 60 members this year. One sad loss has been the passing of John Squire of Gunn. His long and loyal service at his church has been very much appreciated and he is greatly missed.

Two members of St James Church have joined the Electoral Roll - Rita Woodhead and Bernie Langmead. We welcome them on to the Roll as they participate in supporting the church. It is expected of the members on the Electoral Roll to make meaningful contributions and support in order to maintain our two churches and their fellowships.

The PCC appreciate all care and support given to St James and Gunn Churches.



Christingle Service December

Churchwarden Report - by Matt Thomlinson

We have had several issues with the building to resolve in the last year. A section of the churchyard wall collapsed and had to be rebuilt, thankfully, with help and funding from the Star Appeal, and the Friends of St James Church, we were able to quickly repair the wall using a specialist lime mortar craftsman.

The guttering has suffered from the ravages of the weather, and as a result, a small section on the north side of the church has fallen down. Hopefully, again with the help of the Friends, this will be repaired very soon.

It is with sadness that this will be my last report as a Churchwarden. As some of you know, my life is currently split between here and Wiltshire, and a health scare just before Christmas forced me to re-evaluate my priorities. As a result of that, I came to the conclusion that I had to spend more time in Wiltshire with my wife, and make more effort to maintain our house there and look after Pam. Following consultation with Shaun, I've decided that I will not stand as your Churchwarden at this years Vestry meeting.

Blessings and best wishes to you all,

Post Script to Matt Thomlinson's Report – Maciej (Matt) Bluge

I volunteered to become the second Church Warden not long before Christmas to ease the burden of Matt Thomlinson and fulfil our lawful requirement for two wardens, but by my own admission I am a square peg in a round hole, none the

less I will do my best I can. I shall none the less remain heavily reliant upon the continued goodwill and support you gave to both Vera Knight and Matt Thomlinson as I gain experience.

We all have our tasks and missions as Shaun would call it, most holding several and they weld together into a formidable team. Unfortunately, we are an ageing team and our numbers small, so every bit of help offered and executed really counts.

I am probably overstepping my remit, but, at this point I wish to thank everyone for their help and support for our church over the last year with your generosity and individual Skills, no matter how humble the task.

If there are any ideas or worries you might have on church matters, please let me know and I will make sure that they get heard at the next PCC meeting or reach the right safe hands. Thank you all.

PCC Report –David Netherway (Temporary Minute Secretary)

At the 2016 Annual Meeting our joint PCC secretaries Tess Bateman and Ruth Moore both retired from several years in post. They were thanked for their work which had been much appreciated. Unfortunately, we were unable to find a replacement and this important role remains unfilled. The other key role for which a new appointment is needed is that of Treasurer. Nick Arthur continued to provide this service but had made it known he wished to stand down and has been unable to attend meetings. This has left a gap in our understanding and management of the finances which needs to be addressed.

It was with many thanks that the PCC warmly welcomed Matt Bluge agreeing during the year to stand as churchwarden to work with Matt Thomlinson. The PCC is very grateful for the support of all the members who have taken on specific Church Warden roles during the vacancy and trust that they will support our wardens in their busy role.

The PCC met four times during the past year. The council has 14 members including Chris James and the Gunn Representative, Mr Arnold Bradbury.

Matters for consideration this year included churchyard maintenance, the clock, finances and the Share, fundraising and service times. The need for key offices to be filled was a continuing worry. The PCC were agreeable to the Friends of St James Church taking on the management of the delivery of various fabric projects especially since the successful management of the clock restoration. The Friends of St James Church have been thanked for their time, work and effort and in reporting back to the PCC on ongoing projects such as the Lighting improvement, Old School Room and Streamside Garden.

Our monthly coffee mornings and they have been very successful and well attended. After a break for Christmas they recommenced in March. The PCC thanks all those who have held, helped and attended these events.

The PCC wishes to thank the following: Janet Patton and her team for all their hard work keeping the churchyard in tip top condition, Nick Arthur for continuing to manage the accounts and all those who quietly carry out various tasks to ensure the smooth running of St James.

Parish Magazine – by Paul Ellis

This has been another good year. I have heard from every Church that the work which Maureen Hawkins and Lesley Hartley do is greatly appreciated. Under their steady hand and active control the Mission Community magazine has thrived. Thus, a huge debt of thanks is due to Lesley and Maureen. They may sometimes cajole and push for material to be in on time, and they have even been known to question the suitability of some material for a church magazine, but their surety of touch has ensured a well-produced magazine each month. This has been reflected in the number of

organisations and people who wish to advertise in the Magazine. We are very grateful to them. Through their payments much of the cost of printing is defrayed, and the price to parishioners has remained unchanged.

West Buckland School has very kindly provided a very good service in printing and collating the 210 copies that are needed each month. Finally, the growing numbers of people who submit material each month are greatly appreciated – they are the life blood of this successful Parish Magazine.

Some 46 copies are distributed in Swimbridge. (down by 4 on the previous year)

Bell Captain's Report – by Perce Saunders

With the help of ringers from around the nearby parishes Swimbridge bells were rung for many weddings and special events last year. The bells are chimed most Sundays for the morning service.

The bells, ropes and tower appear to be in good condition with it is believed no work needed at present. However, it would be prudent to commission a detailed inspection. A fund for work to maintain the bells was set up many years ago and stands at £1127.60. This sum has recently been transferred to the Friends of St James Church account where it is held in a restricted fund for bell and tower related expenditure and will be added to from ringing fees and donations.

Church of the Holy Name, Gunn – by Arnold Bradbury/Brian Hawkins

Founded by the Reverend John ('Jack') Russell in 1873 the Chapel was originally named The Chapel of Ease but is now known as the Church of the Holy Name Gunn and is the daughter Church of St James, Swimbridge. The Chapel consists of a slated roof building with gable ends and traditional Church pews which accommodate approximately 50 people. An additional extension can accommodate a further 30 people when opened into to the main body of the Church.



Gunn Chapel February 2016

The chapel had its quinquennial inspection and subsequent detailed report from architect Jonathan Rind last year. The general fabric of the building is sound, but as with any structure of its age, 1873, it requires regular attention. The main item to be addressed is the roof where slates have slipped or broken due to exposure to the easterly winds coming off Hutcherton Down. The small roof covering the bell is in need of replacement as the cedar wood tiles have deteriorated

beyond repair. The tiles will be replaced with Delabole slate to match the rest of the roof. The work has been planned for the summer of 2017.

Gunn is a small community with no school or public house and so the church is the only meeting place. It attracts its congregation from the hamlet itself, neighbouring farms and other neighbouring villages within a radius of some five miles. Holy Communion services are held every second Sunday in the month apart from November, with additional services at Easter, Harvest Time and Christmas. Most services attract congregations of some 20/30. They are followed by a meeting with refreshments to discuss current church matters and plan fundraising events.

We continue to receive good support from our Priest in Charge Rev. Shaun O'Rourke supported by Rev John Ewington and Rev. Geoffrey Squire and Rev Chris Willis until his unexpected death earlier this year. Our two readers, Chris James and Peter Rozzell have also been most supportive.

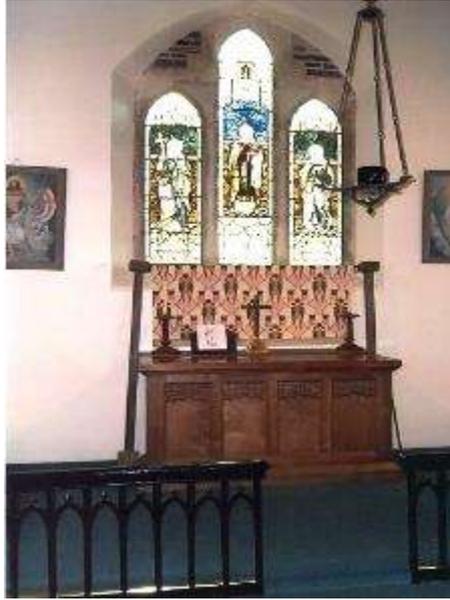
In May it was a very special occasion when the Archdeacon of Barnstaple The Venerable Dr Mark Butchers joined us for our, monthly service. He thoroughly enjoyed our enthusiastic hymn singing and the lively atmosphere that was very apparent through the service and afterwards.

Although 20 or more of the congregation help with the running of the monthly services and keeping the chapel and churchyard tidy, we still need one or two more volunteers to help with intersessions and at the altar. More support at the Mission Community services would be welcome. We would like to thank Brian Kettle and Peter Cain for providing us with lively music at all our services throughout the year.

In August, we held a summer garden party with wine and canapes at Tanglewood to raise funds for the Chapel Fabric Fund. Unfortunately, it rained most of the day and although it was far too wet to enjoy the garden people still came and supported the event. Amazingly we raised more than £700 for the funds. We already have some new venues and novel ideas for creating more funds for the chapel in 2017.

During the year, we lost a staunch supporter, the late John Squire. There was a time, many years back when he more or less saved the chapel from being closed. He will be sadly missed. We also lost Derrie Rundle of the David Rundle Trust an organisation we have supported in recent year which provided care and education in Rwanda. The Trust was closed following Derrie's death, so we are considering which overseas charity to support in the future.

It is our view over the years that the chapel has bred a group of people who promote Christian values though their esprit-de-corps encouraging the congregation from outside the village to maintain their links and meet socially as well as worshiping together. This has provided a network of pastoral care for those in need which is always high on the agenda of our monthly meetings.



Gunn Chapel altar

Organ and Choir Report - by Janet Patton

The pipe organ was attended to and tuned by James Matheson of T.W. Fearn in the spring and autumn. We are due another visit in March. James has now taken over the organ building and tuning business. No major problems have been found. However, it would be advisable to ascertain if the flat lead roof above the organ is leakproof as there has been water seepage into the altar frontal storage case and there are clear signs of damp on the choir vestry walls. Water ingress into the organ could be a seriously expensive problem for the future.

For choir members, it has been a busy year. Singing at weddings and memorial services as well as Sunday services. Practices are now on Wednesday evenings 7.00pm to 8.00pm. A break in August for members and organist. Harvest Festival services were well supported in October. Remembrance Sunday in November we were pleased to see Eleanor and hear the Last Post and Reveille at the War Memorial. She also played trumpet at the Nine Lessons and carols in December. Our Thanks to Eleanor. The choir members and members of the congregation also sang carols and Christmas music at the Nursing Home ; an enjoyable afternoon with the residents with refreshments afterwards.



At the War Memorial November 2016

The introduction of an evening service on the first Sunday of each month is giving a broader dimension to services available and has been well supported. Refreshments afterwards has given the opportunity to meet and chat without the pressure of racing off for another service. This service can take the form of traditional evensong or Songs of Praise depending on the church season. In February, the Plough Service was held on the first Sunday evening and it was good have the bells ringing and several farmers and gardeners sharing the ploughman's snacks and cake afterwards.



Plough Sunday

We are now preparing for lent, the Good Friday service at 6.30pm and Easter day.

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 at the services each Sunday. A thank you also for their help with the church coffee mornings, Church cleaning parties and grass cutting in the churchyard.

Our thanks also to Mike Clift, Dr Peter Miller and Sarah Muirhead for their help at festival services. We would welcome anyone to come along on Wednesday evenings and give singing a try.

Various parish and community reports

The Streamside Garden – By David Netherway

This special part of the churchyard continues to be a well-used and loved space. It is much enjoyed by mums and their children after school and by the Pre-school children. This spring the hundreds of snowdrops donated by Jessica Duncan before she left Kerscott House have brightened up many a dull day. Last year a commemorative stone was set in place to record the royal visit. The cottage garden area was enlarged to add more colour. A bug hotel project was funded from the Prince of Wales Award. A fun, creative and educational event. It was led by John Hickson from the RHS with a wire sculpture workshop with local artist Ruth Bateman.

A new event was a pet service led by Rev Shaun and supported by Chris James and his homing pigeons... who following a blessing set off for Gunn.



Setting the pigeons free to fly home

The Food Bank at St James by David Netherway

Our food bank collection point at the back of the church in St James has been a continuing feature this year.

Every week anonymous donors leave non-perishable food items to provide help to those in North Devon who struggle to feed their families. Last year the food was taken to the Barnstaple distribution centre near Tesco, where there is also an advice centre. In 2016 enough food was donated by Swimbridge to provide the equivalent of 315 meals for people in crisis.

Northern Devon Foodbank trustee Duncan Withall in thanking Swimbridge for our support said:

"The support of our local church communities is very important to us; not only in the provision of food but in continued prayer and financial support. From very small beginnings in a Bideford changing room back in 2012 we now have four branches, a sizeable warehouse and a small admin department. We cover the entire areas of North Devon and Torridge Districts (over 800 square miles), supplementing the branch activities with strategically placed emergency food boxes and rural deliveries. We have an army of active volunteers and praying partners.



The Green Team – by David Netherway

St James churchyard and Streamside Garden provide an ideal and safe space for young people with their families to work together to learn to care for their community spaces and the environment. Each month a range of tasks around the village have been tackled. In the church spaces, weeding, bulb planting, removing brambles from the rhododendrons and other projects have been tackled. The Swimbridge Parish Green Team meets monthly – every second Saturday at 10.00am. Do come along and join in. We are also fortunate in having the kind sponsorship of the Jack Russell Inn!



A grant to the Green Team through the parish council from our District Councillor Glyn Lane has been used partly to buy materials to improve the Streamside Garden and ease maintenance.



Swimbridge Pre-school Report – by Sarah Smith

Swimbridge Pre-school uses the lower Old School Room on week day mornings during the school term. We are able to offer 15 hours child care per week. We usually admit children in the term in which they have their third birthday. The past year has been a very successful one with numbers being high. We now have 16 children on our register. However, our numbers will fall again in September when 14 of our children move to 'big school'. These changes in numbers obviously affect our financial situation but we usually are able to weather the storm! We have to satisfy the requirements of Ofsted and had our last inspection in May 2015 when we were rated as good. We elected a new committee in October 2016 who are responsible for employing the staff, ensuring we fulfil all legal requirements and fund raise. Our staff has had no changes and we feel that this is one of our group's strength, as we work well as a team.

We continue to use the Streamside garden as often as we can. We have wellies and waterproof trousers for the children to wear when it's wet! 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.

Our stay and play group continues on Friday afternoon 2-3pm (term time) for families with children under school age. It is quite an informal get together with different play activities available. We have babies from only a few weeks old up to 4 year olds, mums, dads and grandparents. Sometimes the room is really busy! This has helped little ones get used to using the room before they are able to start at pre-school and to meet some of the staff.

We are grateful for the church's support. We are excited to think that the project to improve the Old School Rooms is moving forward and it will be a great facility for pre-school, the church and the wider community.

For further information contact pre-school - 01271 830357, www.swimbridgepreschool.com or swimbridgepreschool@gmail.com.

Swimbridge Church of England School- by Sandra Tibbles

On behalf of the children, staff and governors of Swimbridge CE Primary School, I would like to thank you for including us in your Annual Report.

Swimbridge CE Primary is a small village school, which has served its close-knit community for over 150 years. We have around 110 pupils, arranged in four classes, supported by an experienced, highly skilled team of teachers and enthusiastic support staff. Our dedicated team strive to raise standards and promote a calm, purposeful but stimulating atmosphere which makes learning exciting and enjoyable through high quality lessons within a creative curriculum.

We offer a historical building with various outdoor areas to learn and play. We have three small playgrounds and have recently developed a wonderful forest school garden area on site. We also enjoy making the most of our school field and the nature area just across the road. We make good use of the Jubilee Hall and Streamside Gardens, and enjoy celebratory events at St James Church, just a five minute walk away. Indoors, there are classrooms filled with happy, enthusiastic learners surrounded by working walls full of colourful displays of children's art and writing.

Swimbridge CE Primary has an outstanding academic reputation, as highlighted in the most recent Ofsted Inspection report and our results are excellent, preparing our children well for the next stage in their education. Central to our provision, is the recognition of all aspects of each child's development. Through the Thrive approach, we seek to enable the core of the child, ensuring that social and emotional barriers to learning are reduced and children develop resilience that will support them through life.

We incorporate outdoor learning, visits and visitors, together with hands on experience as much as possible. Examples of recent trips are a class rockpooling trip to Croyde Bay, a trips to Rosemoor Gardens and a whole school adventure day at Skern Lodge. Recent projects have included whole school Street Dance workshops, working with local artist Ruth Bateman on a beautiful mural and sculpture to celebrate our 150th birthday and numerous sporting events and fixtures with other local schools.

We have recently set up a school council who are actively involved in activities and projects that continue to develop our school and we are currently fundraising to develop our school library. Our children are proud to have been able to raise money for many charities, including supporting three children through Action Aid for a number of years. The children have also enjoyed being involved in a number of recent projects that have taught them about values and put our ethos into action, including investigating how water first came to Swimbridge and learning about the Water Aid charity, exploring what it means to be Fairtrade and raising funds for Comic Relief.

As the School's new Headteacher, I am working with the staff to ensure that our long tradition of achievement is both maintained and enriched. We have a brand new website, that I hope helps to convey what is so special about our small school with a big heart. I am proud that, as a small school, we are able to provide a thoughtful, personalised learning journey for each child.

The Friends of St James, Swimbridge - by Mark Haworth-Booth, Secretary / Treasurer

Warm thanks to the committee: the Rev Shaun O'Rourke (chair), Matt Bluge, Mary and Richard Fardon, Dr Pete Miller, David Netherway, Matt Thomlinson.

A. Events

1. Spring 2016 programme
 - a) Garry Reed MBE talk on 13 April: 'It shouldn't happen to a headmaster'. 35 came. Door and drinks: £85.46
 - b) Tom Hynes talk on 20 April: 'Everyday wildlife'. 17 came. Door and drinks (plus £10 from new member Dr Catherine Smith): £67.01
 - c) 'Springtime in Swimbridge', nature walk with Devon Wildlife Trust on 12 May. 17 came. Monies to DWT.
 - d) Clock repair celebration on 14 May, very well attended.
2. Summer / Autumn 2016
 - a) 'Creatures of the night' (bats and moths), evening at Middle Hearson on 16 August, led by John Breeds of DWT. 21 came. Monies to DWT.
 - b) Talk at 7.30pm on 21 September at St Paul Landkey by Dr Sue Andrew on 'Curious Carvings: Medieval Roof Bosses in the Churches of North Devon'. 22 came, £93 from door and refreshments.

- c) John Bartlett on 'Changes in North Devon farming over 50 years'. 34 came. Raised £96 from door, refreshments and raffle.
- d) Hugh Harrison, master craftsman on 'The Magnificent Medieval and Renaissance Wood Carvers of North Devon'. 20 came. Raised £41.

3. Winter 2016-17

18 February 11-3: Lichen Survey in Churchyard with Maxine Putnam – Friends / Devon Wildlife Trust event.

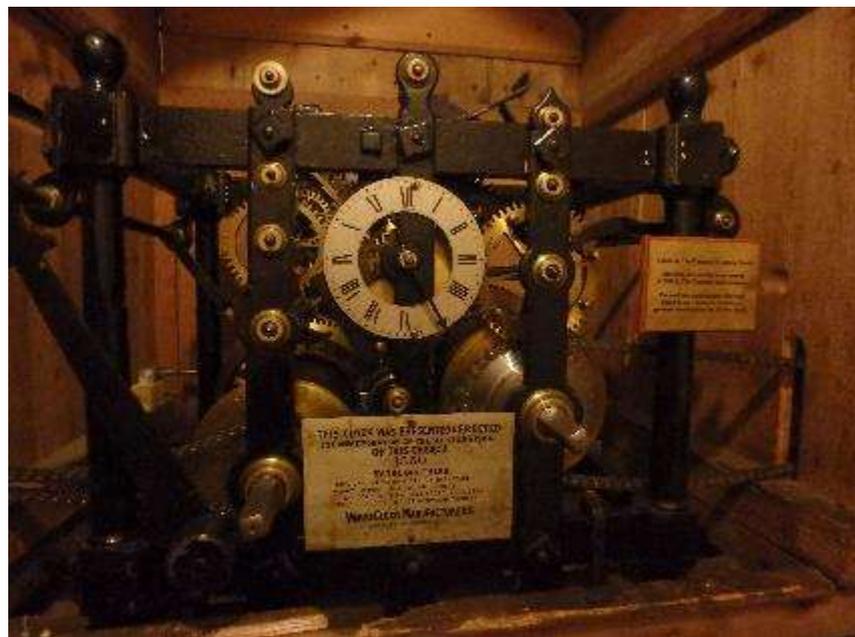
Note all survey / nature walk findings are placed on the Friends page of the church website.

B. Membership

Member 54 enrolled in May. Member no. 4, John Squire, died but his membership has been taken up in her own right by Barbara Squire to whom we are most grateful.

C. Projects

The Friends, led the fundraising appeal for the repair and modernization of the church clock, and the management of the work by the Cumbria Clock Company. This involved a bat survey prior to the work, which included repainting the clock face to its original blue colour, the re-gilding of the clock hands and numerals, the installation of an auto-regulator which will adjust the clock to and from British Summertime, and putting in place a maintenance contract with the Cumbria Clock Co. (£150 p.a. to be paid by the Friends. Warmest thanks to David Netherway for superb management of the project



The restored clock with original and recent commemorative plaques

- 1. The maintenance and care of the Streamside Garden is one of the aims of the Friends. This has continued with the residue of the project grant funds of £142 being transferred from the PCC to Friends account during the year to ease the financial management. Community involvement has seen the Parish Green Team help with

maintenance and improvements and grant help. An outstanding project is the Anne Hayes memorial which we hope may be helped if a Tesco grant application is successful.

2. The Old School Room refurbishment project is our major project. This has now been enlarged to include the incorporation of the Mervyn Dalling archive in the upper room to add to the original and key objective to improve the toilet facility for the church and pre-school users. There is much work to do and significant funds to be raised. The latest details are included in the February project newsletter. Details can be found on the website or from David Netherway.

The Friends are now managing a project to improve the lighting in the church and outside paths including the Old School Room. This is to be funded from a legacy left to the PCC some years ago, A bonus of our procrastination on this matter has been that technology has improved during recent years so that we are now able to consider the use of more efficient and long lasting LED units not available when we first looked at what might best be done.

D. Financial position

In addition to subscriptions and revenue from events, MHB has claimed Gift Aid from HMRC for Friends' subscriptions (£ 819.42) and donations to Clock Repair Fund (£1,054.50). Latest bank statement, dated 31 January, totals £3,820.61, of which £773.83 is from the Hayes family and is reserved for the memorial to Anne Hayes in the Streamside Garden. A further £700 from the Secret Gardens weekend has been paid to us (though £50 of this will be a float for next year's Open Gardens, earmarked for this project, giving a total of £1,473.83 reserved. Expenses to pay this year include a reprint of the leaflet.



A conversation with Arnold Bradbury .Friends event March 2017 in the Upper Room

Website- Mark Haworth-Booth

Working with our webmaster Colin Jones, I have continued to provide up to date details of services held in the five churches of our mission community. I also announce and sometimes report on church events. Photos are regularly added of any special events that have taken place, like the recent Plough Service, for example. The most recent statistics, from January 2016, show 1413 visits to the site, 1126 of these being unique. Apart from the Homepage, the most visited pages are News, History, Friends, Services and Gallery. The PCC's annual report for 2015 has been downloaded 103 times. If any member of the congregation would like to add something to the site – an announcement, some news or photographs – please do email me on markhaworthbooth@gmail.com

