

Friends of St George's Church January Newsletter

Dear friends,

As I write (26 January) it is a year to the day since I was elected churchwarden at St George's after a break of four years. And what a year it has been. With your help and the generosity of grant makers, we have made considerable progress but have also had to face new challenges. In this newsletter, the first of many this year, I want to reflect on what we have achieved so far and also look at our targets as we move forward into 2026.

This time last year, the church building was in a poor state. There had been no heating for over a year. Following the severe storms there was damage to rainwater goods and the roof and water was pouring in to the building and down the walls. Everything was damp. Blocked drains on the roof had caused a major fall of plaster above the font and this area was roped off for safety reasons. And the clock was broken. The state of the building meant that its use had been limited. No fundraising events such as concerts or craft fairs could be held so as a consequence, funds for building repairs were reduced. Where to start?

St George's is a prominent building in the town. The only building open every day. It is valued by our community for many reasons - heritage, worship, family connections such as burials, weddings. I knew that an appeal for help would have a good response so our Friends of St George's Scheme was launched. Thank you for your generosity. Our initial appeal raised over £10,000 and donations have continued to come in. Every penny counts and is used solely for the repair of the building. Thanks to donations specifically for the clock and a grant, we were able to get it repaired quite quickly. A grant from the Hereford Diocese enabled us to buy infra-red heaters and we soon had sufficient funds to repair the fallen plaster.

As the weather improved and we were able to leave the church doors open and encourage visitors with exhibitions. The air circulation helped dry out the walls and we were soon noticing that the building was responding. With further grants, we were able to carry out roof repairs and by the summer things were looking positive.

In June, thanks to the generosity of the Clun Walks Book group we opened a community library with over 2000 donated books on all subjects. Two people volunteered to do the sorting. This has proved most successful and we have plans to extend it.

Our annual fund raising event for the running expenses and maintenance of the church (not the building fund) is our Clun Gardens Open and once again this attracted hundreds of visitors.

A week later, we had a major set back. A roof strut fell, luckily causing no injury and we found we had dry rot. The church had to be closed while the damage was assessed. Once it was deemed safe, scaffolding dominated the main aisle. This work is still to be completed.

Despite the set backs, we feel we have achieved such a lot in 2025 and send our sincere thanks to all who have supported us by cash donations, regular standing orders and attendance at our fund raising events. We still have a long way to go and up to now I have not even mentioned the heating. Before I update you on that I want to share some of the positives of 2025 and some of the challenges.

Some of the highlights of 2025



A New Community Library for Clun (before and after)



Two well attended exhibitions in church

A commemoration of VE Day and the 'Now and Then' Exhibition

Attendance at an Eco/climate change conference



Welcome to St George's Church
Open every day 9.30am to 5pm
See noticeboards for times of services

A collage of images showing various parts of St George's Church. It includes a welcome board, a display of Easter gardens, and other interior shots of the church.

Well attended 'special' services, A display of our school children's Easter gardens, A new 'Welcome Board'

A successful Clun Gardens Open Weekend for our general funds

As well as our major Gardens Open fundraiser, we have held several other events in 2025.

Gardens Open supports our general fund and other events have supported our Building Fund

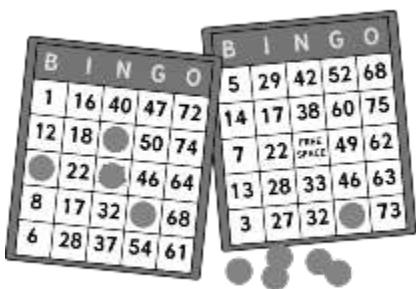


A birthday and anniversary party raised funds for our building fund

Prize Bingo

Held in aid of the Friends of St George's Church. Clun Methodist Church Rooms, entrance at the rear of the building, with eyes down at 7.30pm.

All are welcome; admission is £2.00 which includes teas or coffees and homemade cakes during the interval and complimentary cards for the Early Bird Flier. A ten sheet Bingo book is £8. There are always good prizes. Donations of prizes - wine, chocolates, biscuits or toiletries are more than welcome and may be taken to Bright Flowers by Clun Bridge, please. Anything you are able to give would be much appreciated.



A sale of donated artist's work and afternoon tea raised money for our building fund

Tombola Bottle Stall on our carnival and show day raised funds for our building fund



Shropshire Historic Churches Ride and Stride

Over several years, St George's has been one of the top contributors to SHCT. 50% of money raised is for our building fund

In February 2025 we launched a Friends of St George's Scheme. Monthly newsletters are sent to 83 supporters.

Some of our challenges in 2025

As well as our lack of heating there have been other challenges in 2025



Roof repairs including blocked roof gulley

Clock repair

Fallen internal roof strut due to dry rot



Flooding as a result of blocked roof drainage.
Scaffolding in place because of fallen wall plaster repair

Temporary repair to fallen downpipe after Storm Darragh

Update on our heating situation

As you are well aware, the heating system at St George's broke down completely in December 2023 and there has been no adequate heating since. It has not been a matter of merely replacing a broken boiler. The pipework to radiators are in a poor state and in the past were found to be perished, on one occasion resulting in the floor having to be dug up to repair them. There is also a commitment from the Church of England nationally to move towards Zero Carbon.

In January, we applied for help from the national C of E 'Demonstrator Church Scheme' and were selected by Hereford Diocese to be one of two churches to receive this help. This made funds available for us to carry out a comprehensive technical survey of our heating and energy needs. After much work by a specialist firm and meetings with them to assess how their findings will help us, we have at last agreed on a plan. Energy will be provided by solar panels positioned in the valley between our two roofs, unseen from the road. These will feed two air source pumps which will heat water which will circulate through our existing radiators which will be re-piped. This heating system will be supplemented by direct heaters in cold weather.

The cost will be huge. We will receive approx 40% through the Demonstrator Church Fund and a grant making trust and we will apply to other trust funds for the remainder. The next step is for the plans to be drawn up by our architect. We will need planning permission, listed building consent and a bat survey before permission can be given by the Diocese to continue. We will then need to put the work out to tender. All this is necessary before we can apply for grants. So it is a start but only the first step on yet another long journey for us.

We need your support and encouragement more than ever.

St George's is your church.

What you can do to help

It is a year since the Friends scheme was launched and we hope you will agree that we have used your donations wisely. If you have not yet donated to the Friends Scheme, we ask that you give it some thought. As I said earlier, every penny counts. There are forms at the back of the church or I can send you one if you wish. If you pay tax, your donation will be increased by 25% through us claiming Gift Aid but you will need to fill in a form before we can claim this. If you have already donated in 2025, you may want to continue your support in 2026 with a further donation. Thank you if you do.

As well as donating, there are other ways you can support us.

Organise a fund raising event

You may be able to organise a coffee morning or other social get together with your friends. You may nominate us as your chosen charity if you are doing a sponsored walk etc. You could organise a sponsored dog walk etc. It all helps.

Easy Fund Raising

Do you buy things on line? Hundreds of well known companies participate in the 'easyfundraising' scheme. For everything you buy, they donate a small percentage to your named charity. St George's is registered with them. Join [easyfundraising.com](https://www.easyfundraising.com) and name us as your charity. It costs you nothing, you don't get bombarded by pop-ups and it is a very easy way to help.

Legacy

Are you writing or updating your will? When planning to leave money to charity - think of St George's please.

Wish best wishes and thanks to you all

Joan Kerry

Churchwarden on behalf of St George's PCC

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