

**FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH SWINDON
THE PARISH OFFICE
COMMUNITY CENTRE AT CHRIST CHURCH
SWINDON
WILTSHIRE**

**REGISTERED NUMBER
1088767**

**REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024**

FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH SWINDON

REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

ESTABLISHED	1st April 2001
CHARITY NUMBER	1088767
OBJECTIVES	The objects of the charity are to support the religious and other charitable work of the Church of England in the parish of Christ Church with St Mary's in Old Town, Swindon.
TRUSTEES	<p>Reverend Canon Simon Stevenette (Clergy Member) Simon Giles (Joint Warden Member) Sheila Wright (Joint Warden Member)</p> <p>Chris Smith (Chair) Daniel Pitt (Vice-Chair) Juliya Kablak (Hon. Treasurer) Christine Senior (Hon. Secretary and Membership Secretary) Stephen Austin Lyn Eggers Janet French Caroline Pitt Margaret Williams, MBE (until March 2025) All elected, reappointed, or re-elected in April 2024</p> <p>The Community Centre @ Christ Church Swindon SN1 3HB</p>
BANKERS	<p>Lloyds Bank PLC 5 High Street Swindon SN1 3EN</p>
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER	<p>K Liston Bowbrook Broadbush Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7DH</p>

FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH SWINDON

REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

Recruitment and Appointment of Management Committee

Up to 10 trustees are elected from the membership of the charity at the AGM, and the officers are drawn from the trustees. A member of the Christ Church clergy and two churchwardens are automatically appointed as trustees; however, the two wardens have only one vote between them on the committee. Up to 6 additional trustees can be appointed from the community, usually through the church or by recommendation. The trustees held four meetings during 2024, on 10 January, 13 March, 24 June and 9 September, and an AGM on 17 April.

We are sorry to report that former trustee Pamela Bridgeman died in January 2024. Pamela had been involved since the launch of the Friends in 2001. As churchwarden from 2006-12 and 2017-21 she was an appointed trustee and afterwards she was an elected trustee. She was always very involved in Friends business, and we will miss her very much.

The trustees were also sad that Angela Ruck decided to stand down as a trustee at the AGM in 2024 and we thank her for many years of service.

General Fund

Income amounted to £7964 (2023 £3320): this included a legacy of £5000 (see below). The expenditure was £2445 (2023 £2361) producing a surplus of £5519 during 2024 (2023 £959 surplus). General reserves now stand at £8568 (2023 £3049).

Reserves Policy

Former trustee Pamela Bridgeman bequeathed a generous legacy of £5000 to the Friends. This bequest has required a rethink of the charity's reserves policy. This sum has been placed in a savings account, together with the £396 from donations at Pamela's funeral. We will retain these sums in anticipation of a major project in memory of Pamela (see paragraph on Future below).

Apart from the legacy account, the trustees have decided to retain only a level of reserve necessary to cover the costs of running the charity, which includes the costs of running the AGM. To include some margin, this figure is currently set to a minimum of £1000.

Public and Community Benefit

By promoting the use of Christ Church facilities for community use, which can include disadvantaged individuals within the local area, the charity provides a benefit to that community by relieving pressure on other services as well as providing facilities for followers of the Christian faith to meet together for worship and general fellowship. In particular the changes made during 2017 have made the building available for fuller use by the community. The church space is much more flexible for concerts and other events. The access for disabled people is greatly improved. The charity Christmas market (see below) enabled participating charities to raise over £4000 again this year.

The Friends regularly provide refreshment to choir members before Choral Evensong (see below) and sometimes to the bell ringers also. This provision makes a significant contribution to the beauty of the subsequent music, which is much appreciated by the listeners.

Review of Activities

Income and Events

The trustees are grateful to all who have supported us, both financially and with assistance. We have received generous support from membership subscriptions for which the trustees are very grateful. A further welcome £113 was received from HMRC in the form of gift aid repayment on eligible subscriptions and donations. Lyn Eggers, a Friends trustee,

FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH SWINDON

REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

kindly donated several amounts which she had earned by creating beautiful flower arrangements for the church and Community Centre.

We served tea and coffee at the Swindon Music Festival Christ Church evening on 15 March 2024, featuring organ and choir classes and at the Passiontide organ recital on 27 March (profit £9). Profits of £37.50 were made from refreshment sales at the organ recital in Christ Church on 5 June which was part of the Old Town Festival

The Friends Annual Lecture followed the AGM on 17 April. Entitled “Resurrection Art Around the World”, the Revd Robert Jordan, Minister at Immanuel United Reformed Church, spoke about his tour of art galleries featuring scenes of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

People are increasingly paying by card rather than cash for events in church. The Friends trustees have agreed that small amounts (less than £15) paid on the community centre card machine can remain in the church accounts rather than being transferred to the Friends accounts. This policy does not apply to sales of books paid for by card; these amounts are transferred to the Friends.

Charity Christmas Market

The most important event of 2024 was the Charity Christmas Market held on 30 November. I opened it, together with the Mayor, Councillor Imtiaz Shaikh, the Revd Canon Simon Stevenette, Vicar of Christ Church, and Father Christmas from Swindon Lions. It was a great success with lots of positive feedback.

This is an important outreach event for the Friends. It is a good opportunity for charities to network, as there is a great atmosphere in the church and community centre with lots of footfall. The 32 charities and community organisations who attended in 2024 retained all their proceeds, in total over £4200, consistent with previous years. The raffle for the Friends funds raised £436 and we thank everyone who donated prizes especially Barnes Coaches, Cliff and Maureen Puffett, Angela and Nigel Ruck, Caroline Pitt and Arline Stovell. Mulled wine was provided by Helping Hands, a local charity. Outside caterers, Food for Thought, provided food and made a generous donation to the Friends. Other generous donations were made by participating charities.

The trustees would like to thank the community centre team for providing refreshments, the bell ringers for opening the tower for the very popular tours, and all those who helped. We also thank the church choir for performing during the event in both the church and the community centre.

Funerals

We were able to offer refreshments in church after the funerals of Pamela Bridgeman on 12 February and Rosemary Williams on 6 November. Although these are sad occasions, the Friends trustees welcome the opportunity to celebrate the lives of our supporters. The involvement of the Friends removes one source of anxiety for the family at a difficult time. The refreshments are always appreciated by the families and friends of the departed. It is a worthwhile and appreciated piece of outreach work, but it is very labour intensive. The trustees charge a minimum of £50 for tea/coffee and biscuits and £250 for sandwiches and cakes.

The sandwiches are usually provided by the Salvation Army Sandwich People. This is a Social Enterprise, run by people who have experienced homelessness and are now supported by The Salvation Army. Based at Booth House, Swindon, they are a one stop shop for buffet requirements. They provide opportunities and training in a supportive but genuine working environment, in order to support people to develop a new social network based on respect, understanding and a shared hope for the future. The Enterprise holds a 5-star score from Swindon Borough Council’s Environmental Health Department. Supporting and advertising this service is another way in which Friends activities are contributing to the public good.

FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH SWINDON

REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

The Beacon on the Hill

The book “The Beacon on the Hill” written by Mark Bridgeman was launched in December 2020 and sales continued during 2024. The book is a rewrite and update of the original history of Christ Church, “The Old Lady on the Hill”, written by Brian Bridgeman (Mark’s father) and Teresa Squires. It also contains some original material researched by Mark, and contributions from members of the congregation of Christ Church with St Mary’s. The book is available from the trustees, the Christ Church Parish Office, the Central Library and Bert’s Books in Old Town.

Greetings cards

The cards of three stained glass windows, using lovely pictures from Janet French, a Friends trustee, have sold well. Those showing the train in the south porch, the angel in the south side west window and the nativity window in the north transept have sold out. More cards featuring the Mother and Child window in the Lady Chapel were printed during 2024. These, together with the postcards of the train and the green parrot in the Goddard window in the north transept, have been sold successfully after church services and other events.

Expenditure

The Friends of Christ Church, Swindon have continued to spend funds to support the maintenance of the buildings and churchyard associated with Christ Church with St Mary’s. Much of this expenditure has been organised by the Buildings Committee of the PCC, on which the Friends are represented by our Vice Chair, Daniel Pitt.

New moveable kitchen

The church is being used more and more for concerts and similar events where refreshments are served to listeners. The Friends contributed half of the cost of new moveable kitchen units in the north west corner of the church to facilitate this. There are two units, each with a countertop covering tidy storage cupboards which store cups and plates etc, suitable for the level of service provided. A secure place for an urn helps to provide hot water for teas and coffees. One unit includes a sink for washing up, with a pump and receptacle for grey water. Both units are made of solid hardwood and are on lockable castors so that they are secure in use but can be moved as required. The provision has been much used and much appreciated by all those who use the church for events. This is another example of the Friends contribution to the good of the community.

Other Expenditure

During 2024 the Friends contributed to the cost of the geraniums in the west flower beds. And we purchased a new Diocesan flag which is frequently flown on the flagpole at the west end of the church.

The Friends were able to offer tea and sandwiches to choir singers before Choral Evensong services on Sunday evenings in 2024 on 19 May, 21 July, and 22 September, and the Advent Carol service on 1 December. (Choral evensongs were also held at 4pm on 18 February and 17 November.) We also provided tea to an enhanced choir before the Lessons and Carols service on Sunday 22 December, and paid for the services of a professional conductor, Katrine Reimers. The special music was much enjoyed by listeners.

FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH SWINDON

REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

Membership

Friends' membership was reduced during 2024 by the deaths of Pamela Bridgeman, Shirley Charity and Rosemary Williams. (Roger Morcumb, Barbara Dewick, Mike Bowden and trustee Margaret Williams also died in early 2025.) Several new members were recruited in 2024, including Heidi Alexander, MP for South Swindon.

There are currently 98 members of the Friends made up of 12 Honorary, 53 Life and 33 Annual Members. Over half the membership receive documents by email rather than by post. All have been informed of the Friends privacy policy under the General Data Protection Regulations.

Future

Stained glass

The church was recently visited by Mike Snow, an expert on stained glass. Mike and Janet French (Friends trustee) carried out a survey on each window with binoculars. The condition of all the windows is presented in the new book now being published "Christ Church Stained Glass - History and Condition", written by Mike and Janet. Mike noticed that the "Render unto Caesar" window at the east end of the south aisle was very badly damaged and recommended that it be mended urgently. The Friends are liaising with the Buildings Committee on this. We also intend to use Pamela Bridgeman's legacy to contribute to the funding of this repair in due course.

Organ scholarship

Another exciting and innovative new project for the Friends was the initiation of an organ scholarship at Christ Church. A local individual sought, via his company's payroll giving, to sponsor organ lessons for a young person. Tim Eyles, Director of Music at Christ Church, undertook to provide the lessons. The Friends were invited to administer the scholarship, which involves no financial commitment. The final arrangements are set out in a Memorandum of Understanding agreed between the Friends, the sponsor, Tim Eyles, and the beneficiary.

These lessons would make good use of all the money the Friends have spent on the organ in the last few years (our 2019 newsletter mentions a figure of £50,000). A similar scheme is just starting at Christ Church, Oxford. And the Royal School of Church Music has designated 2025 as "Play the Organ Year".

Conclusion

We have received generous support from the members through subscriptions and donations, and the trustees express their heartfelt thanks to everyone. I am pleased that 2024 has been another successful year for the Friends. The Friends is a worthwhile and popular charity doing good work for the church and the community. The trustees are friendly and helpful, and I thank them for their ongoing loyal support.

CHRIS SMITH
Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Date 25 March 2025

FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH SWINDON

REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER
2024

Balance Sheet as at 31/12/2024

	Total this Year	Previous Year
	£	£
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in hand	8568	3049
Creditors		
Net Assets	<u>8568</u>	<u>3049</u>
Capital and Reserves		
Unrestricted Funds	8568	3049
Total Funds	<u>8568</u>	<u>3049</u>

These accounts have been prepared on the basis of historic cost in accordance with

1. The Statement of Recommended Practices for Charities, and
2. The Charities Act

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with Charity law in respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by

Chris Smith

Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Date 25 March 2025

FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH SWINDON

REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER
2024

Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 December 2024

	Notes	Total this year £	Previous Year £
Income			
Donations	1	1487	1903
Subscriptions		370	334
Sales	2	95	233
Fundraising	3	1012	850
Legacy	4	5000	
Total Income		7964	3320
Expenses			
Charitable activities	5	1956	2117
Fundraising Costs	6	485	175
Administration/AGM		4	69
Total Expenses		2445	2361
Surplus/deficit		5519	959
Fund balances brought forward as at 31 December 2023		3049	2090
Fund balances carried forward as at 31 December 2024		<u>8568</u>	<u>3049</u>

FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH SWINDON

REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

Notes to the Accounts

Income

1	Donations	£		2	Sales	£
	Membership donation	100			'The Beacon on the Hill' book	37
	Gift aid	113			Cards	58
	Box money	59				
	Donations in memory of Pam	396				
	Other	819				
		<u>1487</u>				<u>95</u>

3	Fundraising	£		4	Legacy	£
	Xmas Market	565			Legacy re Pam	5000
	Recital	52				
	Funeral income	385				
	Other	10				
		<u>1012</u>				<u>5000</u>

Expenses

5	Charitable Activities	£		6	Fundraising costs	£
	Moveable kitchen	1500			Funeral teas	267
	Conductor at carol service	270			Choir teas	140
	Flags	96			Printing cards	78
	Geraniums	90				
		<u>1956</u>				<u>485</u>

FRIENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH SWINDON

REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

To the Trustees of Friends of Christ Church Swindon.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The trustees' responsibilities for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) are set out in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities.

You consider that the audit requirement of Section 144 Charities Act 2011 (the Act) does not apply.

It is my responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under Section 145 (5) (b) of the Act, whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, and the seeking of 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 no opinion is given as to whether the financial statements present a true and fair view, and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

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 130 of the Act; and
 - to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 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 financial statements to be reached.

K LISTON
BOWBROOK
BROADBUSH
BLUNSDON
SWINDON
SN26 7DH

DATE 13 February 2025