

Friends of St. James' Church, Wigmore

Minutes of AGM: 31 Oct 2026

Present: Bill Jackson, Steve Pollacco, Lesley Pollacco, David Swatton and 4 members of the public
Apologies: Joy & Brian Ardy, Frank & Min Grimshaw

1. Review of the past year
    a. Bill summarised the events and activities undertaken in the last year including the ticketed events hosted by the Friends and the projects undertaken in the churchyard.
2. Finances
    a. Lesley summarised the income and expenditure over the year
        - We have a reasonably healthy bank balance – approx. £2772. This is after significant expenditure this year in the churchyard (£1700 for relaying the path and £235 for renovating the bench)
        - The events made a small surplus over this season
        - We received approx. £175 in donations and approx. £540 in membership fees.
3. Church Closure Process
    a. David summarised the status of the formal church closure process. While the church is now formally closed as a place of worship little progress has yet been made re the fate of the building. The next step is for the Commissioners of the Church of England to confirm the preferred disposal path for the building, hopefully aiming for it to be taken on by a charitable trust. However, a site visit is required to be convened including the Commissioners, English Heritage and Herefordshire Council Planning. The Friends have requested to be present at that site meeting when it is arranged.
    b. Rev'd Maggie Tate-Druiff also confirmed a small number of religious observances would be undertaken, the next scheduled to be an act of remembrance on 11 Nov and a carol service in December.
4. Events for 2027
    a. As we have dispensation from the Diocese of Hereford to continue the Friends' activities we had a discussion about events for next year. Steve captured suggestions for these which included:
        - A preferred mix of talks and music – he confirmed that the plan next year is for the Ludlow Male Voice Choir to collaborate with Wigmore School for a Christmas event
        - David confirmed that Annie Garthwaite has already been booked to give a talk about events 700 years ago, the overthrow of Edward II by Mortimer and Isabella etc.
        - A suggestion for a kids event involving ringing the bells, climbing the tower etc was approved
5. Building Projects
    a. The potential for a project to install a toilet in the church was discussed. The pros and cons of different options were briefly discussed and it was agreed that the preferred option is for the installation of a composting toilet in the space off the rear of the nave that once housed the Victorian boiler equipment. David confirmed that in a previous meeting with Stephen Challenger, chair of the Diocesan Advisory Committee, he was supportive of such a project. In the AGM Rev'd Maggie Tate-Druiff also stated her support. So, it was agreed we should move forward with this, engaging with Herefordshire Council conservation as a next step.
6. Election of Trustees
    a. The current Trustees were re-elected

Signed On behalf of the Friends of St. James':