



Friends' Newsletter

Friends of St. James'
Church, Wigmore

Spring 2026

Friends News Round-Up

Welcome to the Spring issue of the newsletter.

Firstly some sad news...

Early in January, Fran Rhodes stepped down from her roles with St. James' Church Wigmore, both in terms of acting as an unofficial warden, which she fulfilled for many years, and as a trustee of the Friends. Fran was the driving force looking after St. James's Church in its hour of need. Her efforts to keep it open for the village, community and those from all over the world who visit is a testimony to her determination. Then just a couple of weeks later we heard that Fran's husband, Peter, had passed away. I'm sure all the Friends will join the trustees in wishing her well in this difficult time.

What the future holds for St. James' church we still do not know but there is clear movement to report this quarter on the process underway to close the church as a place of worship... more on that topic on page 3.

In the short term the Friends are going ahead with another season of events this year. We have two talks and two musical concerts confirmed. These kick off as usual in May by which time we hope the temperature in the church will be not quite so Arctic! More on these events on the next page and please take note of the date change for the first event.

You can tell spring is on the way as the first flowers appear in the churchyard. The snowdrops have been particularly beautiful this year, spreading far and wide behind the old building.



Inside this issue:

Our events for 2026 2 - 3

Church Closure Update 3 - 4

Help Needed 4

Find out more about The Friends Group:

On our Website:

 friendsofstjameswigmore.org.uk

or scan the code below



On our Facebook Group:

 Friends of St. James' Church, Wigmore

Our 2026 Season of Events

The Trustees of the Friends will be hosting a season of events in St. James' Church this year and we have two talks and two music concerts planned. For each event the doors will open at 6.30pm and the event will begin at 7pm. Refreshments will be included in the ticket price for each event.



Date Change: Now on Saturday 25th April - The Birds of North-West Herefordshire

Tickets: £5 on the door (No concessions for this event)

At our AGM last autumn it was suggested that we have a wildlife talk this year.

So we are pleased to host an illustrated wildlife talk by Mike Wheeler, founder of the Leintwardine Wildlife Group, Committee Member for Herefordshire Ornithological Club and the County Bird Recorder for Herefordshire.

Saturday 13th June - The Battle of Mortimer's Cross - 1461 - What we know and what we think we know

Tickets: £10 on the door (£8 for Friends Members)

It's always good to learn more about our local history so we are looking forward to this illustrated talk by Ian Maddox, Regional Chairman of the Marches and West Midlands Region of the Battlefields Trust.

The presentation will cover the main protagonists at the battle and the findings, or lack of them, from the research project that was carried out between 2016 and 2022.



In addition, we are hoping to have on view the Battlefields Trust's scale model of the battlefield.

Saturday 18th July - An Evening with the Ludlow Concert Band

Tickets: £10 on the door (£8 for Friends Members)

The Ludlow Concert Band has been entertaining audiences in the Marches for years. They play a variety of genres, from stirring marches, through classical favourites and old-time swing numbers to pop anthems.

The LCB performed at the very first of our Friends' events two years ago and they sounded awesome in the old church, so we are delighted to welcome them back.



Friday 14th August - Ludlow Male Voice Choir

Tickets: £10 on the door (£8 for Friends Members)



For the last 20 years Ludlow Male Voice Choir has grown to become a vibrant part of our local area's musical landscape.

The LMVC is a traditional male voice choir, led by musical director Darren Clarke, a professional tenor.

Their repertoire ranges from hymns through opera classics, and songs from popular musicals to pop. We are sure with the wonderful acoustics of the old church they will sound great.

Church Closure News

The process around closing St. James' as a place of worship has accelerated since the beginning of this year. At the beginning of January the Friends were contacted by a law firm representing the Commissioners of the Church of England with questions relating to the boundary of the churchyard, there being no title deeds in existence for a 1000-year-old building.

At the beginning of February, we received formal notice from the Commissioners of the scheme (church parlance for plan) to close St. James' as a regular place of worship and to redefine parish boundaries. The part of the parish which includes Wigmore will move into the parish of Aymestrey and Leinthall Earles. That will then merge with Kingsland and Eardisland to become the Benefice of Mortimer's Cross.

A deadline for representations for or against the scheme was set at midnight on 9th March. If no representations against the scheme are submitted then it will be passed with the date for its implementation to be determined by the Commissioners and the Bishop of Hereford.

Church Closure News Contd....

At the public meetings regarding plans for closure it was stated by church representatives who attended that the preferred outcome for the church building was for it to be taken on by a charitable trust.

To that end, in mid-February, the Friends were contacted by Sarah Girling from the Diocese of Hereford, who is involved in this process, to provide electronic copies of the interpretation boards in the church to be included as "*part of our pitch on the historical importance of the place, and [to] show the level of local support for the building*".

At this stage we can but hope that this case is made strongly and effectively.

Help Still Needed...

We are still looking for volunteers to go on the rota for unlocking/locking the church each day and for assisting at our events (setting up and clearing down). If you can offer some time, do let us know via any of the contact methods below.

Membership Update

We are currently updating our records with regards to membership of the Friends of St. James' Church. We realise we do not have contact details for everyone and we are endeavouring to ensure our records are as complete as possible with due regard to data protection.

Please contact Steve Pollacco at **steve.pollacco@hotmail.com** if you wish to renew your membership once your current one expires.

You'll be pleased to know we are keeping the cost the same at £10 for individuals and £17 for couples. Thank you for continuing as a Friend of St James' Church Wigmore.

Contact Us

Message via our Facebook Group page:

 Friends of St. James' Church, Wigmore

Message via the Contact page on our website:

 friendsofstjameswigmore.org.uk

Email to the address below:

 admin@friendsofstjameswigmore.org.uk

Please contact us via any of these methods with feedback or suggestions and ideas for going forward.

