

The Friends of Stoke Gabriel Church is a vibrant village fundraising group with approximately 220 members and a committee of 10. Our president is the Rev'd Dr Simon Bloxham-Rose.

The aim of the 'Friends of Stoke Gabriel Church' is to raise funds to help ensure that the fabric of the Church, the Old School Room and associated areas are maintained in a good state of repair for the benefit of the villagers and visitors who come to enjoy the tranquillity the church inspires.

The Church of St Mary and St Gabriel plays an important role in the daily life of the village. It brings people together, celebrating events both local and national, and marking the passing of the seasons with religious ceremonies and celebrations. It also bears witness to our significant rites of passage, (baptism, marriage, and burial) that provide the framework of our lives, both personal and as a community.

The committee work closely with, and are guided by, the Parochial Church Council, which manages the care, finances and administration associated with the Church buildings, graveyard and other properties.

In the year ending 2023, we distributed a total of £17,476.59 to the PCC. This was for repairs to the organ, repairs to the churchyard walls, repairs to the tower roof, repairs to the bell chamber and repairs to the clock tower. This was a particularly 'expensive' year. In 2022 we spent £2699.23.

In the year ending 2023, we raised a total of £12,631.43. This sum derives from members subscriptions and GA refunds, interest and dividends from our investments, our fundraising activities, and some legacies.

The Friends' organisation is about raising funds; however we hope, and believe, that at the same time our contribution to the social agenda of the parish provides entertainment and opportunities for getting together. In 2023, the Friends organised talks on various topics such as the 'Mary Rose – underwater surveying operations 1975-2005' and 'From Running A School to Writing a Novel', a coffee morning to celebrate the coronation, a summer's evening drinks party, a wine and wisdom evening, and our annual Carol Concert.

We were very saddened to recently hear of the passing of one our past presidents, Lady Phillipa Williams. Lady Williams is the reason why I become a committee member of the Friends. Who could refuse Lady Williams?

Rebecca Gillmore

Treasurer and Membership Secretary