FRIENDS OF
ST.MICHAEL'S
CHURCH

Newsletter 2026

Dear Friends,

It has been a great year for the Friends who have continued to raise both funds and appreciation of the Church of St Michael's as the Tower Stories project came to a close in December 2025.

The round-up of our activities will properly be set out by me at our AGM (a copy of the speech will be posted on the website for those who cannot join us in person this year). However, here are a few highlights from 2025/26;

We supported;

- A service of Nine Lessons and Carols
- Four musical concerts in the Church
- A musical caberet entertainment in the Grove Building
- Tower Tours
- The Recording of 'Windelstan' by our community choir, and
- The Church Fête.

Throughout the year the Committee has been continuing to modernise our operations to comply with current charity law and practice. We have also been working to improve how we communicate with our members, attract new members and generally tell the public about what we do.

Please do follow us on Instagram at "frie.ndsofstmichaels" (the placing of full stop is important as there are many similar organisations). The feed contains photographs of the many beautiful and unexpected corners of our Church. Of course, if you take any photographs of the church, please do forward them to me and I will be share them. There is a significant interest in Churches, pilgrimages, and architecture online and I would like St Michaels' to be appreciated widely. Presence on Instagram and other social media also helps to publicise our events and encourage membership.

Committee News

During this last year we have said farewell to Kit Stallard who retired as Churchwarden at the APCM and Barry Hooton, the new Churchwarden stepped into his shoes as an ex-officio member of the Committee.

Alison Heard, who had done so much to carry forward the work of modernising the financial side of The Friends, and steered us through the enormous responsibility of the Lottery Grant for the Tower Stories moved with her family away from Mere. We are delighted to say that our new Treasurer is indeed a local Treasure, and a long-term Friend; Jane Rees.

Also co-opted onto the team during the year was James Hobhouse, who has been an invaluable help in organising events and bringing insight to the decisions we make.

I plan to step aside from Chairing the Committee after the AGM this year. It is time for someone else to take the Friends forward to the next chapter, and while I will continue to be involved in all Friends' events and will support the work of the Friends in any way I can, I have family commitments that have increased this year.

Elisabeth Barrett, our Secretary, who has been an absolute mainstay of the Committee for many years has decided to stand down as a Trustee, although she won't be going far. The AGM will be an opportunity for us all to express our gratitude to her and thank her for her support and I know you will all join me in this.

As a consequence, we are keen to recruit more members to the team. Involvement in the Friends is a brilliant opportunity to get involved in the work of the Friends; to join the collaborative effort to support the beautiful Church at the heart of Mere, and bring your skills to support a great cause. If you would like to stand for election to the Committee, please drop Elisabeth Barrett an email (elisabethbarratt4@gmail.com) or speak to a member of the Committee by 6pm on Saturday 3rd October 2026.

The Friends' AGM

The Committee warmly invite you to join us at the AGM in St Michael's Church on **Tuesday 6th October 2026**. The AGM agenda can be found *here*, and the Minutes of the last AGM (2025) and this years' Accounts can be found on the website *here*[&*here*].

I am delighted to say that after the business of the meeting is concluded and after a short break, we will hear from Fiona Davies, Author of the lottery sponsored "Guide to St Michael's Church", which we will be launching at the AGM.



In conversation, we will hear how she went about her research, and her reflections on St Michaels' and the people of Mere whose stories she uncovered. Copies of the Guide will be available and it will be a lovely opportunity to say a big 'thank you' to Fiona and to Steve Hawkins (who produced the photographs) for their work on this project.

I look forward to seeing you all at the AGM!
Felicity Wilson