

St Sampson's church report to Golant Parish Council Meeting May 2025

St Sampson's Church has continued to thrive with its wonderful choir, handbell ringers and the big bells all encouraging people to services and events over the year. Last summer the choir and handbells also ventured down into the village itself as we celebrated Sea Sunday – in the wonderful location of the Fisherman's Arms with its great view across the Pill to the river Fowey. Marking Sea Sunday down by the river meant that it was a wider community gathering and we plan to do the same this July as we also raise funds for the Mission to Seafarers. The handbells have also gone on tour around the local area as they have visited care homes and provided excellent entertainment for the residents and staff.

There is a regular stream of visitors to the church who enjoy the peace and beauty of spending time in a building steeped in history and where the years of prayer have resulted in it feeling a very special place. The comments in the visitor book are always a joy to read and many of those visitors have long distant connections to Golant as well as the many pilgrims who call in on route along The Saints Way. Many who visit comment on how well kept the building and grounds are. As with so many organisations, we are very grateful for the hard work and dedication of people who volunteer their time to ensure we leave things in good order for future generations. At this busy growing season we try to find a balance between maintaining the churchyard as a living, environmental habitat for pollinators and other wildlife whilst also not letting the grounds become unmanageable. There are many varied views on how this should best be done and so we tread carefully with our decisions! As part of our routine maintenance we will be re-decorating the interior of the church this summer so please bear with us as this work is undertaken. All the work we are able to do to keep the church in good condition for the community and its future residents is manageable only by the generous financial support of its worshipping members and through legacy giving. We are very grateful for that commitment. Our able and diligent church treasurer, Penny White, stepped down after 27 years in the role and we are very thankful for the care she has taken over our finances in that time.

St Sampson's has continued to work alongside Saint Andrew's in Tywardreath as we share seasonal services but all major festivals are marked in some way as well as Remembrance Sunday. Our Christmas celebrations were wide ranging and offered a

number of opportunities for everyone to gather to mark the importance of the season from both a spiritual and community perspective. As ever, the church is open to support families at important moments in life and, in particular, at the end of life with many people seeking to make their final resting place in the church grounds. We are mindful of the limited space we have available but all residents of the village are entitled to be buried or interred at St Sampson's and we are glad to help families in this way at a time of sadness. This year and next we are delighted that weddings will be taking place as well.

In the coming year we are exploring how the three parishes of Golant, Fowey and Tywardreath can become one Benefice (group of churches) and build stronger links across the three churches and their wider communities. The original three-year licence of Shona as Priest-in-Charge will end next January so it is important these conversations are held in good time to work out the best way forward for all the parishes. It is hoped that whatever the final arrangement becomes, the impact on services offered would be minimal and there is every expectation that Shona will continue in post for some time.

Revd Shona Hoad
(Priest in Charge, St Sampson's)