

FRIENDS OF SOMER VALLEY MEDICAL GROUP
formerly Friends of St Chads & Chilcompton Surgeries & Friends of Somerton House
Chair's Annual Report 2025

INTRODUCTION

Ther merger of our surgeries took place in April 2024, but the bureaucracy for the Friends extended through until Christmas, as we worked to merge a charity and a non- charity, change our name and constitution, and persuade our bankers that we were on the level. The Charity Commission were very helpful, and the bank was finally persuaded in January 25. The original St.C&C committee members remained, but less of the Somerton House committee than we would have hoped decided to join the merged body, but we welcomed Gillian Huxford and Colin Tincknell . We have since also welcomed new members Karen Williams, Marianne Parry, Margaret Burraston & Carol Channon.

The value of having a GP and our Deputy Manager attending our meetings regularly is enormous. I believe it helps our mutual understanding and makes us all more effective in our respective roles.

As I am planning to stand down this AGM, I would like to thank all the officers and committee members who have done so much to support the Friends over the past 5 years. Huge thanks go to Ann Dawson and Ethne Dando, who have served as Treasurer and Secretary, respectively, for 10+ years each.

HEALTH TALKS

Finding suitably qualified speakers who have the time and energy to come to Midsomer Norton and give us a presentation, all for FREE, is not easy. This year we are so lucky to have welcomed:-

Hearing and Lip Reading Beth Claesen and Janice Fisher, Hearing Therapists from St Martins hospital.

Blood Pressure Dr Ali Khavandi, Consultant Interventional Cardiologist

Shoulders & Elbows Andrew Chambler, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

These talks (advertising and venue hire) are funded by our own fund raising and are open to anyone in the local community. We believe that talks enable patients to better understand their condition and to manage it, or to live healthier lifestyles and to avoid or delay some problems.

FINANCES AND FUNDRAISING

Our financial position remains healthy. We have raised £8,071 this financial year and donated £2,848 to the surgeries for additional equipment or to improve patient experience or speed of diagnosis. Those figures are a little deceptive as the committee agreed a donation of just over £4,000 right on the financial year end.

Our main fundraisers are our Christmas Raffle, the 200 Club and our stalls at local events & fairs. Special thanks go to local businesses Mitchard's the Butchers, The Old Down Inn, & to Somer Printing. Huge thanks also go to committee members & volunteers who generously donated prizes and so much time selling tickets and to Bea & Richard for their Bric a Brac stalls.

The new arrangements for Flu Jabs last Autumn gave us extra opportunities to meet patients and to sell raffle tickets which led to a record sale. These events are always such useful occasions for listening to what patients have to say about their Surgery.

The 100 Club was renamed the 200 Club in the hope of recruiting more members from Somerton House patients. We are reviewing prize levels every 6 months to ensure that they keep pace with the membership.

THE BROADER PICTURE

I must repeat what I said last year – "I would like to extend our thanks to all categories of staff who have taken the merger in their stride and continued to provide medical services at a time of such huge demand. Whilst no organisation is perfect, we do recognise that the demands on Primary Care have never been higher, and all those patients on waiting lists are looked after by their GP Surgeries and carers whilst they wait. We thank all of them for their dedication and commitment."