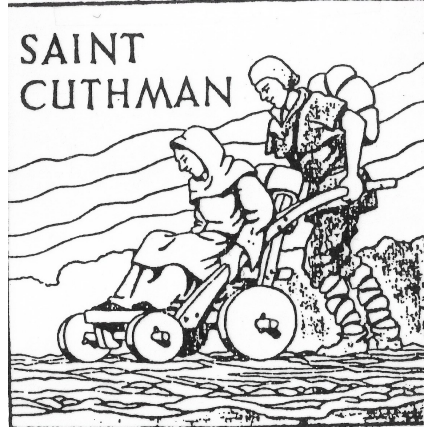


The Steyning Society

Annual Report
for the year ended 28 February 2026

www.steyningsociety.org.uk



Registered Charity No.2698591

The Steyning Society

The Society was founded in 1963 and its prime purpose and objects are -

- (a) To conserve and enhance the town of Steyning, particularly its conservation area and to protect the surrounding environment.
- (b) To maintain and improve the amenities of Steyning and to produce appropriate literature and papers.
- (c) To advance such purposes by making grants and providing other financial support as permitted by Charity Law for England and Wales
- (d) To hold talks, meetings and events for members and other interested parties and cooperate with other relevant charities.
- (e) To raise funds, receive grants and donations from members to carry out the work of the Society or other expenditure relating to Steyning
- (f) To comply with the requirements of the Charity Commission.

The following trustees are proposed for 2025 - 26

- **Chair - Nick Bennett**
- **Vice-Chair and Membership Secretary - Catherine Mant**
- **Treasurer - Adrian Gobat**
- **Secretary - Tony Struthers**
- **Committee Members - Julia Bonner, John Downe, Brian Lavery, Lynne Broome, Nicola Mason, Sarah Lavery**

Nick Bennett, Chair, writes

The Society has had another busy year. We had a wide range of excellent talks on subjects which included the Passmores and Applesham Farm, the Art of the South Coast, Bird Watching in Steyning and a member's experiences while working as a dentist in Zambia in the 1960s.

We made more trips this year than for a very long time. The first was in May and was organised in conjunction with the Friends of Steyning Parish Church, when a group went to Winchester. The day started with a tour of the Hospital of St Cross, where the group saw and heard how the brothers live and then spent time in the Hospital's church, which is believed to have been carved by masons who later carved in our parish church. The more energetic members then enjoyed the sunshine while walking along the banks of the River Itchen into the City. After lunch in the Cathedral's café, the group was shown round the Cathedral and admired its treasures, including the Tournai font and its splendid narrative carvings, the painted chapel of the Holy Sepulchre and the Winchester Bible. They also visited the Kings and Scribes Exhibition about the archaeological history of the Kingdom of Wessex.

In September, a group joined a cruise on the Waverley, the world's last seagoing paddle steamer. They went from Southampton to the Isle of Wight before docking at Portsmouth. The cruise was originally planned to start at Shoreham but was curtailed because of heavy storms earlier in the week.

At the beginning of November, another group visited the Tangmere Military Aviation Museum, where they were told about the Special Operations Executive (S.O.E.), which operated out of Tangmere during the Second World War, and then went round the Museum. After a pub lunch at the Anglesey Arms, they visited Boxgrove Church and Priory before returning home.

A group will be going backstage at Chichester Festival Theatre at the beginning of April, seeing the dressing rooms, wardrobe department, scene dock, and auditorium and learning about how shows are put together, as well as something about the theatre's history and architectural design.

The year's Steyning Bowl Awards were presented in April after the AGM. These awards recognise and thank publicly those who have made significant contributions to Steyning and were focused this time on those who work with the Senior Generation. As guest of honour, Nigel Hartley presented the Bowl to Vintage Years, as well as Highly Commended Certificates to Elizabeth Brown, Kate Burnett, Jackie Flowers-Leek, Ann Long, Sally McNiff and Judie Thomson.

Tim Melton and Bernardean Carey very kindly allowed us to hold a party in their beautiful garden in July to raise funds for the grants we make to local organisations. The weather was exactly right that evening, neither too hot nor too cold, and background music from Riverboat Shuffle added greatly to the atmosphere. There was a tasty and plentiful selection of canapes which were made by members of the Committee and their spouses. The evening was made all the more enjoyable by the Smock Alley sparkling wine very generously donated by Sarah Lavery. We made a profit on the evening of over £1,700 for our grants.

We ended the year with our annual Christmas Supper. As usual, we organised this in conjunction with Steyning Museum and held it at the Steyning Centre. After a splendid meal catered by Normandy Dining, we were entertained by the SeaJam Jazz Quintet. For many, this was the beginning of the Christmas festivities.

In addition to these activities, we made small grants to Southdown Nursery, Steyning Woodcraft Folk, Steyning Downland Scheme, Steyning Town Community Football Club, the Tracing the Rails project for its documentary about the Steyning Railway, Steyning Community Orchard, Steyning Parish Church towards additional lighting in the Churchyard and Steyning Business Chamber towards the cost of Christmas trees for the High Street, so the money raised in July has been put to very good use.

We completed our revisions to Harry Ford's Guide to the Conservation Area to bring it up to date and arranged for a new edition to be printed. We are very grateful to Chris Tod for

his helpful suggestions about this. The Guide is now on sale at our meetings, at the Museum and at Steyning Bookshop.

We were also involved in protracted discussions and correspondence with Steyning Parish Council and West Sussex County Council about much needed repairs to the pavement, steps and retaining wall and the reinstatement of the railings at the junction of Church Street and the High Street. We are pleased to say that agreement was finally reached at the beginning of this year for the County Council to carry out this work which, we hope, will start before long. This agreement was only achieved by the Parish Council agreeing to pay about half of the cost and by the Society agreeing to contribute to the Parish Council's share. This was necessary because the County Council refused to pay for anything more than basic repairs and modern safety rails - despite having agreed with the Society that it would be responsible for the future maintenance of the railings when they were installed at the beginning of the century. In conjunction with the Parish Council, we made every effort to persuade the County Council to honour this agreement before agreeing to contribute but we reluctantly concluded that we had no other option if we wanted to preserve the character of this part of Steyning because the County Council was adamant that it would not pay the whole cost. We believe that the railings are an important and distinctive part of the town's heritage because old paintings show that there have been wooden railings at this corner since at least the end of eighteenth century which were originally used to tether oxen being sold at the market held in the High Street. We are grateful to the Parish Council for agreeing to take responsibility for ensuring that the railings would be preserved by paying much of the extra cost.

There has been little change in planning issues this year, but two big developments are expected in the western part of the town. Glebe Farm has been given planning permission and Steyning Grammar School has published its proposals for a new school to replace the existing buildings on its site at the entrance to the town. These developments will have a major impact on Horsham Road and the Bypass and will therefore need to take account of pedestrian and cycle access at these pinch points.

Finally, I am very grateful to all members of the Committee for their hard work and for their sound advice throughout the year. Running the Society involves a lot of work behind the scenes and, with so many activities, this year has been no exception. Every Committee member has responsibility for at least one of our activities (and often more) and is usually involved in helping to run our events in one way or another. Every Committee member has contributed greatly to the success of the Society so I am sure that all members will join me in thanking them very much for this.

Nick Bennett, Chair, March 2026

Adrian Gobat, the Treasurer writes:

We end the year in a very strong position. Our surplus (£1,216) for the year is encouraging. Our trips and social events have been well supported, much enjoyed by many people and are always financially viable. Our subscriptions have remained fixed since March 1st 2024 and there are no plans to change them in the foreseeable future. We feel that members get really good value for their money. The amount paid per meeting varies from £1.70-£2.20, depending on type of membership.

Adrian Gobat, Treasurer., March 2026

The Steyning Society (Charity No 269859)
Income and Expenditure Account for the Year ended 28 February 2026

	2025-26	2024-25		2025-26	2024-25
	£	£		£	£
<u>Income</u>			<u>Expenditure</u>		
Subscriptions	2827.44	2779.50	Hall hire	1047.7	984.33
Visitors/donations	457.44	521.94	Speakers	530.00	721.00
Contributions for refreshments	796.31	1013.50	Refreshments	717.90	965.67
<u>Outings</u>			<u>Outings</u>		
Ticket sales	3161.39	120.00		2706.60	0
<u>Christmas Supper</u>			<u>Christmas Supper</u>		
Tickets/raffle	3066.21	2348.69	Hall /catering	2670.78	2288.00
<u>Garden party</u>			<u>Garden party</u>		
	2070.76	1415.26		265.43	860.65
<u>Conservation guide/Heritage list sales</u>			<u>Conservation guides/ Heritage list printing</u>		
	66.87	130.00		370.00	0
<u>Other sources</u>			<u>Printing/postage</u>		
	217.89	237.00		83.40	41.00
<u>Grants awarded 25/26</u>			<u>Publicity</u>		
Woodland Folk: £250				128.00	288.20
SDS: £250			<u>Subscription to other associations</u>		
Steyning Community FC: £250				220.00	245.00
Tracing the rails: £250			<u>Sundries</u>		
Southdown Nursery: £250				269.00	175.98
High Street Xmas trees: £250			<u>Grants:</u>		
Parish Church lights: £500				2440.00	300.00
Community Orchard: £440					
<u>Total income:</u>	<u>12664.32</u>	<u>8565.89</u>	<u>Total expenditure</u>	<u>11448.81</u>	<u>6869.83</u>
			<u>Surplus/deficit</u>	<u>+1215.51</u>	<u>+1696.06</u>
			Balance at 1.3.25	9399.97	7703.91
			Deficit/surplus for year	+1215.51	+1696.06
<u>Assets:</u>			<u>Bank reserves</u>	<u>10615.48</u>	<u>9399.97</u>
Barclays Bank	10615.48	9399.97	Notice board fund	2970.00	3156.30
Dudley Building Society	2970.00	3156.30	<u>Total:</u>	<u>13585.48</u>	<u>12556.27</u>
	<u>13585.48</u>	<u>12556.27</u>			

Signed: Nick Bennett
(Chairman)

N. F. Bennett

Adrian Gobat
(Hon Treasurer)

A. G. Gobat

Independent Examiner's Report: I have examined the above Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet for the year ended 28 February 2026 and confirm that the above accounts are in accordance with the books and records of the Society as presented to me,

Signed: David Jaggar (Examiner)

David Jaggar

Date: 27/3/26

