

THE FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S CHURCH, POLSTEAD



Wigglesworth

Photo: Bill

Churchyard west wall repair 2016

ANNUAL REPORT 2015 – 2016

Registered Charity No. 1116464

REVIEW

2015-16 was a further year of consolidation for the Friends of Polstead Church. A number of projects which the PCC had expected to complete were unavoidably delayed. These included the electrification of the church clock and the refurbishment and re-gilding of the clock face, which were prevented by problems encountered by Cumbria Clock with bad weather and staff shortages.

The PCC was, however, able to complete reconstruction work on the most important section of west wall of the churchyard, carried out by John Presley, Suffolk's leading expert on flint and brick walls. Work on the last section of the wall is expected to be undertaken during the current year. The electrification of the clock has now been completed early this year and the re-gilding is expected to follow shortly.

The Friends has continued to enjoy strong support, with generous donations from an impressive number of residents in Polstead and others elsewhere. Following increased expenditure, our total cash reserves ended the year at £36,785.29 and our membership continues at over 100. The PCC has expressed its continued most grateful thanks to all the Friends who are so vital to the conservation and maintenance of St Mary's Church.

HONORARY PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENTS AND OFFICERS

The following held office during the year.

Honorary President: Toby Owles

Honorary Vice-Presidents: Dr Ronald Blythe
Henry Engleheart
Sir Simon Jenkins
Professor Lionel Tarassenko

Executive Committee: Bill Wigglesworth (Chairman)
Lea Blackham (Treasurer)
Dr Roger Bray
Jane Oldrey
Jackie Mitchell (representative of the PCC)
Revd Mark Woodrow (*ex officio*) – from July 2016

Independent Examiner: Luke Potter (Treasurer of the Friends of St Mary's, Preston)

Committee Members and Honorary Officers

As our financial year ended Lea Blackham stood down as Treasurer. The Committee would like to record its grateful thanks for his ten years of service in looking after the Friends finances with great skill; and we wish him all the best for the future.

We were delighted that Martin Mitchell agreed to take Lea's place as Treasurer. Martin has a keen interest in the church building, having been instrumental in the expert survey recently completed by NADFAS; and in the writing and production of the excellent short guide to the church which has proved very popular with visitors.

All the current elected honorary officers on the Committee and other elected Committee members offer themselves for re-election at the Annual General Meeting. We do have two vacancies on the Committee and we would very much like to hear from anyone who may be interested in joining us to help oversee the vital input that the Friends makes in enabling the PCC to continue maintaining the church buildings and its surroundings to their present excellent level. Please contact the Chairman if are interested, or if you know anyone else who you think might like to help.

Independent Examiner

Luke Potter, Treasurer of St Mary's, Preston St Mary, has had to step down following his transfer, on promotion, to a new post in the National Trust located in North Wales. We hope that it will be possible to arrange for his successor at Preston St Mary to continue with the Friends of Polstead Church in the same role.

MEMBERSHIP

During the course of the year, to 31 October 2016, the number of individual and joint members of the Friends was just over 110. A full list of members at 31 October 2016 is on page 6 of this report.

The Committee is most grateful to everyone who has supported the Friends and continues to encourage all who have an interest in the preservation of St Mary's Church, Polstead, and its surroundings to become members.

FINANCE

In the course of our financial year to October 2016, the Friends received £5,042.00 in donations income and £450.75 from fund-raising. In addition to those, listed below, who have made membership donations, the Committee would also like to thank those who have made additional personal donations. Gift Aid tax repayments were £1,017.07 and £42.24 interest was received on the deposit account, bringing the total income for the year to £6,552.06.

Grants to the PCC during the year were £10,283.64 in total, resulting in a deficit for the year of £4,035.53, after £146.80 net surplus on fund raising and trips, leaving total cash reserves of £36,785.29 carried forward.

The Committee would like to congratulate everyone associated with this continued excellent financial performance and to thank, in particular, our major donors. A summary of the accounts for the financial year ended 31 October 2016 is on page 5 of this report.

CHARITABLE STATUS

As a result of its charitable status, the Friends is able to reclaim Gift Aid on donations where this is mandated. This is of considerable assistance in raising funds for the preservation of the church and so helping to maintain our heritage for the benefit of the community, the general public and posterity. It is the Committee's policy to encourage the mandating of Gift Aid as much as possible, together with the payment of annual donations by standing order to minimize administrative costs.

The elected members of the Executive Committee constitute the Trustees of the Friends, in accordance with modern charitable practice.

ACTIVITIES

Committee

The Executive Committee met three times during the year to discuss the development of the Friends and its activities. The Chairman would like to express his personal thanks to the members of the Committee for their continued strong and helpful support.

Social Activities

The Annual General Meeting on 6 May 2016 was once again combined with the annual supper, after which Horry Parsons gave an extremely interesting and impressive talk, entitled “More Tales from the Tower” about his work in supervising complex building projects at Bury St Edmunds Cathedral, including the intricate stonework of the tower and the later work on the magnificent roof.

Our annual trip in September was to the Shuttleworth Collection of historic aircraft and vehicles and to the adjoining Swiss Garden, with tea and a tour of the Old Warden House. The visit provided a fascinating juxtaposition of the early history of flight and motor vehicles in Britain and the recent restoration, with Lottery Funding, of a notable eighteenth century and Victorian garden together with a view of the life and artistic interests of the Shuttleworth family in the early 1900s.

The Committee decided to continue holding the AGM in May, to take advantage of the light evenings, but this year to vary the social format to an evening drinks reception with entertainment in the form of a recent film on our surrounding Constable Country (see details of the AGM below).

Fund Raising

Net funds of £144.18 were carried forward from the AGM and the annual trip.

Publicity

The Friends continued to publicise its purpose and activities, through the brochure, posters, the Community News and the Polstead website: polstead.onesuffolk.net

Grants to the PCC

The following grants were made to the PCC during the financial year.

- (1) *Restoration of the Easter Frontal*: £639.00 was paid towards repair, by the Broderers' Guild Workshop at Norwich Cathedral, of this historic frontal from the late 19th century workshop of the Pugin family.
- (2) *Installation of a roof alarm system*: £4,220.84 was paid for the installation of a roof alarm system and associated electrical wiring. This ensured the the remaining lead on the roof was fully covered by insurance, which turned out to be fortunate when a lead theft took place at the end of October.
- (3) *Repair of the west wall of the churchyard*: £2,965.00 was paid for completion of the reconstruction of the most dilapidated section of the west wall.
- (4) *Electrification of the clock and re-gilding*: £2,458.80 was paid for the advance deposit on this work (subsequently delayed).

Future programme

Current projects

The Friends will be making the requisite grants, with the aid of greatly appreciated special bequest, from the late Marie parry-Crooke, to cover refurbishing of the clock face and re-gilding of the clock hands and numerals; and we will also be funding completion of work on the final section of the churchyard west wall with help from a generous bequest from the late Professor John Gorrod.

Longer term projects

Mr Philip Orchard, Polstead Church architect, is shortly due to carry out the next Quinquennial Inspection of the church, which will determine the priority given by the PCC to conservation projects over the next five years.

Future projects on the church fabric are likely to include the delayed work on the stonework of the tower parapet, possible further work on the walls of the church and the major repair work on the side aisle beams. In the churchyard, some of the chamber tombs to the north of the church remain in a dilapidated state and a further section of the churchyard wall needs attention.

The church continues to depend on the support of the Friends for the fully effective conservation and maintenance of the church building and its surroundings, in the interests of the community and for posterity; and the PCC has formally expressed its special thanks to the Friends for the vital support that you all give.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends will be held on **Friday 5 May 2016 at Polstead Village Hall at 6.00pm.**

An agenda for the AGM accompanies this report to members.

The formal business is scheduled to be completed by 6.30 pm and will be followed by a **drinks reception, with light refreshments** (tickets £3.50 available from Bill Wigglesworth, any member of the Committee or from Polstead Community Shop). Following the reception we will be viewing the privately published 2016 documentary film *“A journey through Constable Country and Around”* (80 minutes) beautifully filmed by David Webb (the distinguished BBC documentary film maker) and presented on screen by his daughter, Victoria Lampard (the regular presenter for ITV News Anglia). The showing has been donated free of charge by David Webb, with all proceeds going to the Friends’ funds. Copies of the film will be on sale at £14.90.

All members and supporters, anyone interested in becoming a Friend and all well-wishers, are welcome to attend. Do encourage others to come and support us.

Bill Wigglesworth, Chairman

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FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S CHURCH, POLSTEAD

ACCOUNTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2016

	Yr 2016	Yr 2015	Income
Donations	£ 5042.00	£ 5037.00	
Fund Raising/AGM	£ 450.75	£ 456.50	
IR Gift Aid	£ 1017.07	£ 979.43	
Bank Interest	£ 42.24	£ 26.57	
Total	£ 6552.06	£ 6499.50	
Expenditure			
Trips/AGM	£ 303.95	£ 312.32	
Restoration	£ 10283.64	£ 3096.55	
Total	£ 10587.59	£ 3408.87	
Surplus/Deficit	£ (4035.53)	£ 3090.63	
Cash Reserves at start of year	£ 40820.82	£37730.19	
Cash Reserves at year end	£ 36785.29	£40820.82	
represented by:			
Current Account	£ 15636.51	£19714.28	
Deposit Account	£ 6679.78	£ 7947.54	
Major Projects Reserve	£ 14469.00	£13159.00	

Auditors Report

I have examined the books and bank statements relating to these accounts and, in my opinion, these accounts represent a true record of the Friends of St Mary's Church, Polstead finances for the financial year ended 31 October 2016.

..... Luke Potter, Independent Examiner

