RESULTS FOR 2013 - 2014

The Friends draft accounts to 30 October 2014 reveal a continuing healthy financial position for the Friends. Thanks largely to further generous donations (see below) and gift aid from the previous year, income for the year was £17,024.79. Expenditure on funding maintenance and improvement projects was limited to £6,196.62, leading to a surplus for the year of £10,233.17 and total cash reserves at the end of the year of £37,730.19.

Almost all the unspent funds are already earmarked for funding a series of the outstanding projects which the PCC has in mind over the next two years, including the major works planned on the tower and clock and, most significantly, repair work on the beams of the north and south side aisles.

The Polstead community continues to give us most generous support and our membership remains steady at over a hundred.

TRIP TO BLETCHLEY PARK

The Friends had a highly successful trip to Bletchley Park, Milton Keynes in September. We spent a very pleasant day in the environs of this wartime establishment, and the extensive museum that has now been created, learning about the fascinating process of solving the problems of decoding top secret German communications during the war. It was a wonderful opportunity to study in detail on the spot the dramatic story of this major wartime success that has been receiving so much attention recently; and the day was greatly enjoyed.

2015 AGM AND SUPPER

The 2015 AGM will be held on Friday 8 May at 7.00 pm for 7.30pm at Polstead Village Hall. All members and others with an interest are welcome to attend. Papers for the AGM, including the Friends Annual Report, will be circulated to all members in advance of the meeting.

The business meeting will be followed by a supper. Tickets for the supper, including a glass of wine, are £7.50 and are available at the Polstead Community Shop (cheques preferred – made payable to Friends of Polstead Church) or from Bill Wigglesworth (01787 210029).
After supper Roy Tricker, the enormously entertaining greatest expert on churches and church affairs in Suffolk, will be speaking on the events surrounding the creation of this diocese in 1914 and the subsequent adventures of characters in the diocese. This will be Roy’s third appearance at the Friends. Members may recall that he gave us our first expert and most entertaining introduction to the fascinating, historic and lovely church building that we are dedicated to preserving; and he is always a great pleasure to listen to.

**CHURCH MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

During the year the PCC was held up in carrying out the full range of projects it had intended to complete due to delays in the receipt of quotations and personal problems being encountered by the church architect. The final minor maintenance items recommended in the last Quinquennial Report were completed with funding from the Friends. But other major items remain to be carried out over the next two years.

It is intended to complete the electrification of the clock and the refurbishment and re-gilding of the clock face during 2015. These two items are being funded from generous bequests from the estates of the late Mary Field Reed and the late Marie Parry-Crooke, for which we and the PCC are immensely grateful.

It is also hoped to start work on repair of the stonework on the top of the tower, for which scaffolding will be required. In addition, the PCC has commissioned further work on the repair of the churchyard wall, which forms part of the Grade I listed surroundings of the church, and the work on which is also due to begin later in the year.

Preparations are in hand for the carrying out of repairs to the roof beams of the north and south side aisles, which it is hoped to undertake during 2016. This will be one of the largest of the recent projects at St Mary’s and funding it is likely to involve drawing on the Friends’ major projects fund, which we have been regularly topping up in readiness for such a requirement.

**FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

We hope to arrange another trip, in the late summer of 2015. We have been looking at the possibility of visiting the two main wartime sites for the development of radar, at Bawdsey Manor and at Orfordness. Both are close together on the Suffolk east coast and played a vital role in the development of technology that was vital to the defence of Britain in the Second World War. Unfortunately, it is proving difficult to arrange a joint visit on a single day, so it may be necessary to alter the programme. We will be able to discuss the arrangements and gauge the level of interest at the AGM in May.
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