

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF

THE FRIENDS OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH

POLSTEAD

Held on Friday, 6th May 2016

The Chairman, Bill Wigglesworth, welcomed everyone present to the 11th Annual General Meeting of the Friends and, in particular, Henry and Victoria Engleheart, Bill Richardson, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Simpson and Horry Parsons whose lecture entitled "More Tales from the Tower" was eagerly awaited by all.

Apologies: had been received from John and Sheena Baxter, Jane Blackham, John and Anne Buck, Julian and Joan Coulson, Bob and Jan Derbyshire, Michael and Marion Goldsmith, Barrie and Mandy Hall, Caroline Mansfield, Erica Pomerans, and Paul and Jackie Trudgett.

Minutes of the last meeting: had been circulated. No points were raised and the minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising: these would all be covered later in the meeting.

Chairman's Annual Report:

Review of the year

Our last financial year 2014 – 2015, ending on 30th October, had been a year of consolidation. Several projects had to be delayed through unforeseen circumstances, including postponement of electrification and re-gilding of the clock due to adverse weather conditions; and hold ups with other projects due to the resignation of the Church Architect, Rod Shelton, for personal reasons. The PCC had been very sad to see Rod go.

However, we were delighted that Philip Orchard of Whitworth & Co., a very experienced Church Architect and member of the Diocesan Advisory Committee, had agreed to take up the position. Because of Rod's resignation, work on the stone facing of the tower had been delayed.

The Quinquennial inspection of the church would shortly be due. The Friends were ready to address the funding of any projects identified for completion over the next five years.

Projects completed during the year

These had included the following:

1. Roof Alarm

A roof alarm had been installed to counteract any future lead thefts. Polstead had lost most of its lead in the 1970s but there remained enough to be stolen from the Nave Roof for it to be worth installing an alarm. The Friends had covered this cost.

2. Churchyard West Wall

John Presley had carried out excellent reconstruction and repair to the flint and brick west wall of the churchyard, which had become greatly dilapidated. The Friends had covered the cost.

Personnel changes

The Chairman welcomed the nomination of Professor Lionel Tarassenko of St John's College Oxford as one of our Honorary Vice Presidents, in succession to Sir Michael Scholar. This continued our valued link with St John's College as patron of the living. In addition to his distinguished academic position, Professor Tarassenko is also a Lay Canon of Christchurch Cathedral, Oxford.

The Chairman reminded us of the sad and sudden death of our Committee member Professor John Gorrod. John had been a leading toxicologist and a very supportive member of the Friends Committee. He had attended Polstead School in the 1940s and had contributed much to the Polstead community and to our meetings.

Revd. Adrian Mason our vicar had returned to his home diocese of Lincoln for family reasons and we had been very sorry to lose him.

On a happier note, the Chairman was delighted to welcome the recently announced appointment of Revd. Mark Woodrow as Priest in Charge of the benefice. Mark had been, a Curate at Lavenham. His Licencing Service would be held at Stoke by Nayland Church on 21st July.

Summer Party

To celebrate the completion of the first ten years of the Friends, the Committee intended to hold a drinks party in July with an exhibition in the church of what the Friends had achieved.

Visits

The outing to Bawdsey Radar Centre, charting the process of radar development had been a great success. A large grant from the Lottery Fund had been acquired for major redevelopment. After lunch The Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears Trust Museum visit added great interest to the day. This year a visit to the Shuttleworth Collection of veteran aircraft and vehicles and to the adjacent Swiss Garden was being arranged.

The Chairman concluded by drawing attention to the widely acknowledged and appreciated role of the Friends in helping the PCC to keep the church in excellent condition.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer welcomed everyone and thanked them for their support. Donations during the year had totalled 50p short of £6,000. There had been expenditure of £3,000. Because of delayed projects, we had another surplus. Cash reserves were £41,000. The Friends continued to be in a very stable position.

The Treasurer mentioned £20,000 had been earmarked for the big project of the roof beams, involving the insertion, where necessary, of sections of new timber reinforced with stainless steel.

There were no questions and the report and accounts were approved.

Election of Honorary Officers and Committee Members: Two vacancies had arisen and the Chairman said that any suggestions for new members would be most welcome. The proposal to re-elect the Officers and Members of the Committee en bloc, proposed by Sue Freeman and seconded by Pauline Hatch, was approved unanimously.

Other Activities: The main outing to Shuttleworth had been discussed.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00p.m.