

FRIENDS OF POLSTEAD CHURCH

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

To be held on Thursday 6th July 2023

at Polstead Mill at 6.00pm

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 20th May 2022
3. Matters arising
4. Annual Report:
 - Chairman's Report
 - Treasurer's Report
5. The Quinquennial Report
6. Election of Honorary Officers and Committee members
 - (a) The officers and elected members of the Committee offer themselves for re-election
 - (b) Other nominations
7. Any other business

FRIENDS OF POLSTEAD CHURCH

Minutes of the 15th Annual General Meeting, held at Polstead Mill on Friday 20 May 2022 at 6.0 pm

Bill Wigglesworth welcomed members to what should have been the 17th annual general meeting of the Friends but, due to the intervening Covid restrictions, was in fact the 15th AGM. On behalf of members, he thanked Lucy Bartlett for hosting the meeting on this occasion.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Toby and Emma Owles, Bob and Sheena Baxter, Lionel and Pauline Hatch, Juliet Allerton and the Reverend Stephane Javelle.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on 10 May 2019.

The minutes were approved and signed. There were no matters arising.

3. Annual Reports for the Friends' financial years ending 2019, 2020 and 2019

Chairman's Report

Bill Wigglesworth briefly reviewed the three reports that had been combined into one document for convenience. Throughout the Covid restrictions the Friends had continued to fulfil its function of funding the PCC's maintenance and improvement projects of the church building and its surroundings. Particular thanks were due to Martin Mitchell for latterly handling single-handedly all the local activities of the Friends in addition to his other onerous responsibilities.

In year ending 2019 the funding provided by the Friends concerned repair of the churchyard west wall, which had finally been completed, along with improved earthing of the lightning conductors. Fortunately, work had all but completed on the major repairs undertaken just before the first lockdown began, which were funded in year ending 2020. These included, most importantly, the complex repair of the main roof beam in the north aisle, and associated works, as well as extensive repairs to external stonework of the tower, nave and chancel, and internal replastering in the tower and chancel. With the replacement of the gateposts to the Hall during year ended 2021, all outstanding maintenance had been completed; in addition helpful internal improvements had been made to the Choir Vestry facilities. Despite the considerable costs incurred over the period, the Friends had ended the last year with satisfactory reserves of over £30,000.

Treasurer's Report

Martin Mitchell had nothing noteworthy to add to the financial information set out in the reports. But he felt it worth noting that TSB in Hadleigh had, without notifying its customers, closed its premises, effectively forcing a change to online banking, supported by use of Polstead Post Office to receive cheques. In the event, he had found, after instituting this change, that the new arrangements made things much easier for the treasurer.

4. Election of Honorary Officers and Committee Members

(a) Resignation of Chairman and Roger Bray from the Committee

Bill Wigglesworth confirmed that, as he had already told members, he was standing down from the Chairmanship after he and Sue had downsized to Lavenham. He found it difficult to credit that, the Friends, whose foundation had originally been planned with the then PCC treasurer, the late Tim Stovold, had been in existence for 17 years. Its success was a tribute to all the many supporters in Polstead and beyond who had donated so generously. He was delighted that Lucy Bartlett had expressed a willingness to take over. It was a task for which she was exceptionally well qualified.

The meeting noted Roger Bray's resignation from the Committee and Bill Wigglesworth agreed to write to him, on behalf of the Friends, thanking him for his years of wise advice and counsel on the Committee.

(b) Election of new Chairman

On a proposal by Bill Wigglesworth, seconded by Jane Oldrey, Lucy Bartlett was unanimously elected Chairman. Lucy Bartlett accordingly took the chair.

(c) Other officers and elected members of the Committee

There being no other nominations, the other officers and elected members were unanimously re-elected. The Committee noted that Robert Jennings, Treasurer of the Friends of Preston St Mary's Church, was standing down as reviewer of the accounts. The Committee expected to appoint a replacement before the end of the Polstead Friends' financial year.

Jane Oldrey, on behalf of the Friends, presented Bill Wigglesworth with a farewell gift of wine, with their thanks for his exceptional work as chairmen, leading the Friends with quiet determination resulting in the excellent state of repair that our Grade 1 listed church is now in. Bill expressed his grateful thanks and appreciation for the generous gift and for the years of wonderful support from the Committee and members.

5. New Chairman's introduction

Lucy Bartlett gave a brief indication of how she saw the Friends developing in future. She was concerned that the War Memorial in the churchyard, which was now an Ancient Monument in its own right, and its surroundings, now needed further maintenance work; she expected the PCC to give this work priority, in consultation with the relevant authorities, and thought that funding this would have widespread support from members of the Friends and the local community. She had also noted the recommendation from Bishops and Sons for urgent and extensive work to the organ, which was now especially needed because the church now had an organist available for each main service. She hoped that it would be possible to appoint a Secretary for the Friends shortly.

6. Any other business

There being no other business, the meeting closed accordingly.

FRIENDS OF POLSTEAD CHURCH 2022 CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

Dear Members and Supporters of the Friends of St Mary's Polstead,

The Committee is immensely grateful to the members of the Friends (see full list on the final page of this report) for their continued generous support.

HONORARY PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENTS AND OFFICERS

The following held office during the period of this report:

Honorary President: Toby Owles

Honorary Vice-Presidents: Victoria Engleheart
Sir Simon Jenkins
Professor Lionel Tarassenko

Executive Committee: Lucinda Bartlett (Chairman)
Martin Mitchell (Treasurer)
Jane Oldrey
Jackie Mitchell (representative of the PCC)
Revd Stephane Javelle (ex officio)

Independent Examiner: Margaret Ryan

Honorary officers and elected members

Jane Oldrey is standing down from the committee after many years' service, all the other honorary officers and elected members offer themselves for re-election.

I am pleased to present my first Chairman's Review for the Friends of St Mary's Polstead. It has been an eventful year, and I would like to share some highlights and important updates with you.

Firstly, I am delighted to report that the Diocesan Architect's inspection, conducted on 20th April 2022, acknowledged the outstanding work done by Bill Wigglesworth and Martin Mitchell. The report states that "The church remains beautifully presented inside and outside and in reasonable order overall." We owe a tremendous debt of thanks to them for their contributions.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) has been scheduled six weeks later than usual this year to incorporate the Diocesan Architect's Quinquennial report. While significant work was carried out in 2022, it fell outside the fiscal year. Therefore, I will present a report on fiscal year 2022 and provide an update on the current year-to-date position for 2023, giving us a more accurate reflection as we embark on the new Quinquennial.

Finance Report Fiscal Year 2022 (ending 31st October):

During the fiscal year, our income reached £5,087, with donations and associated gift aid contributions returning to normal levels compared to previous years. Although there was no expenditure during the fiscal year, work began on installing CCTV and refurbishing the organ, which was paid for after the year's end. As a result, we achieved a surplus of £5,087, leaving us with cash reserves of £38,668, including a major project reserve of £21,048.

THE FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S CHURCH POLSTEAD

Accounts for Financial Year Ended 31st October 2022

	£
Income	
Donations	3,940
Fund Raising/AGM	330
IR Gift Aid	818
Other income	-
Total	<u>5,087</u>
 Expenditure	
Other	-
Church Restoration	-
Total	<u>-</u>
 Surplus/Deficit	 5,087

<i>Cash reserve at start of year 01 Nov 2021</i>	33,580
<i>Cash Reserve at year end 31 Oct 2022</i>	38,668

Major Project reserve stands at 21,048

Auditor's 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 2022.

..... Margaret Ryan, Independent Examiner

Financial Fiscal Year 2023 to Date:

Since the end of the previous fiscal year, we have made grants to the PCC for two important projects. The full restoration of the organ by Bishops (£12,900) was completed in November and December 2022. Additionally, the installation of a CCTV system (£1,000) was made possible through the generous legacy of Dick McGregor.

As of June 1st 2023, our Cash Reserve stands at £27,137, and the Major Project Reserve amounts to £21,544.

The Quinquennial Report:

The Quinquennial Report highlights three key areas that require attention in the next five years: the Bell Tower, Chest Tombs, and Boundary walls. The Architect estimates that these works will entail approximately £30,000 of expenditure.

To streamline logistical and financial matters, it is advisable to scaffold the Bell Tower only once and carry out all necessary works simultaneously. While not all items have the highest priority, focusing on the parapet works is recommended. We may need to engage in short-term fundraising efforts to ensure the Friends remain well-equipped to meet future vital maintenance expenses.

Further Action:

I would like to emphasise the importance of broadening the membership of the Friends. The number of Friends has declined significantly since our inception, and we have an opportunity to expand our membership through improved communication and outreach efforts.

Charitable Status:

Our charitable status enables us to reclaim Gift Aid on donations where applicable. This support greatly assists in raising funds for the preservation of the church, maintaining our heritage for the benefit of the community, the general public, and future generations. To minimise administrative costs, we encourage the mandating of Gift Aid and the use of standing orders for annual donations.

Annual General Meeting:

I am pleased to announce that the Annual General Meeting will be held at Polstead Mill, on Thursday 6th July at 6pm. It will be followed by drinks and refreshments and the opportunity to wander around the garden. All members and supporters of the Friends are warmly invited to attend.

Lucinda Bartlett, Chairman

13th June 2023

