



The Friends of St. Margaret's

Newsletter

Spring 2020

Dear Friends,

This Spring Newsletter is one of the twice yearly communications through which I try to keep our loyal group of members aware of our events, past and planned, and the progress made in pursuing restoration projects maintaining and enhancing St. Margaret's Church.

Due to the Coronavirus Emergency Measures prohibiting meetings, all planned events are postponed until the restrictions are lifted. One planned event must proceed if we are to remain "On Track" for our registration with the Charity Commission, The Annual General meeting planned for Monday 1st of June. It can't take place in traditional form but my proposal is that using e-mail and hand delivered post where necessary, the following documents will be shared:-

- The Minutes of the 2019 AGM. (15.05.19).
- The Minutes of the EGM (10.02.20)
- The Financial Report
- The Chairman's Report, contained in this Newsletter.
- The Proposed Constitution complying with Charity Commission (C.C.) rules and including the names of the Trustees.
- A copy of the C.C. Application Form.

- A timetable for Questions and or Responses to be shared in an attempt to replicate as near as possible the normal business of an AGM.
- Unfortunately there will be limitations on the open discussion that would normally occur. Our Data Protection policy prevents me from sharing e-mail addresses so all dialogue will go through me unless you are able to discuss the issues by e-mail or phone with any members who have given you their contact details direct.

The Coronavirus "Lock In" - Scarecrows!

It would be a great shame if we lost our annual Scarecrow Festival to this dreaded Virus. The display in front gardens, then on to the Rectory Garden Party and subsequently into the Churchyard has been a much talked about feature of High Halstow's summer. It could be again this year. One thing most households have now is captive time at home and making the scarecrows could be a great family project. . Even if we do not have a Garden Party I believe we should keep the tradition alive by exhibiting in our gardens. Only time will tell how the Emergency progresses but a focus that supports pride in our village community must be a good thing. Viewing the displays will definitely count as a family exercise. This is not primarily a money making event, its focus is community, but I will be asking Bob to accept donations in the Village Shop. Posters will be printed and Facebook activated. Scarecrows can be displayed as soon as you like and stay on display until the "Lock in" over and we might try to show them as a group, perhaps in the Churchyard or autumn is upon us! **Tell your friends!**

Chairman's Report. 2019 - 2020.

We have had a very successful year. Many events have taken place and funds have grown. The events listed below have been enjoyable but often their most significant benefit beyond donations received has been recruitment. We now have sixty members subscribing jointly or as an individual, a very significant increase having doubled

in the last three years. In order to build upon our success it is important that we recruit new members. Do you know anyone who cares about their church and wishes to help preserve the oldest building in the village so that it remains our distinctive landmark and is available for generations to come?

Important work has been undertaken. Two Window restorations have been completed at a cost of £13.710. Work on two more is well under way with a further two commissioned. We offer grateful thanks to the High Halstow Community Lottery for a very generous donation of £1000 and £2000 from the Headley Trust.

Knit and Natter Group.

Our dedicated Knitters met, chatted and produced Remembrance Poppies and a variety of items including blankets for worldwide children's charities.

Scarecrow Festival / Rectory Garden Party.

Numbers were a little down this year but the display at the Garden party and in the Church Yard afterwards earned many appreciative comments.

Autumn Heritage Days.

Ray & June led this event. Refreshments were served to visitors from near and far who made donations and a new member was recruited. We also welcomed cyclists taking part in Ride and Stride for the Friends of Kent Churches.

The Christmas tree Festival.

The Annual Festival took place in the Church in December. The trees were beautiful and enhanced the Christmas atmosphere.

The Christmas Concert with the High Halstow Community Choir took place on 14th December.

My thanks to June, Ken and Maggie for organising this very successful event.



High Halstow REAL Christmas Trees were sold and delivered in the village.

My thanks to Tamsin and Craig for organising the sale. The trees were much admired by their purchasers and nearly £200 was raised.

High Halstow Christmas Cards

Cards were made available again this year sold by their designer, Ray Collins. A good number were sold to appreciative customers.

Coffee Tree

A successful social event which raises significant sums but has been delayed this year for personal reasons.

Summer Community Days

We had a stall at the Cricket Family Day 25.08.19 and recruited new members on a very hot day.

The Christmas Market

Christmas Cards were sold and the Friends was promoted.

High Halstow Primary Academy.

The School has continued to participate in Friends events including The Sunflowers, entering the Scarecrow Festival and Christmas Tree Festival. The Friends were able to arrange for Santa to visit every class in the School and distribute a small gift from the PTA to every child.

Monies Raised.

Monies raised from these events plus your subscriptions totalled almost £8000. With successful grant applications this has allowed us

to fund the ambitious Window Renovation Program. A church roof condition survey was also funded.

Gift Aid.

It would be appreciated if anyone able to gift aid their donations who has not completed the necessary form, could do so to take advantage of the extra income this would generate.

National Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Committee are preparing an Expression of Interest in making an application for funding to address the extensive list of remedial issues and eventually those works that could improve the range of uses for our historic building. This is a complicated task and we would be delighted to receive help from persons who have experience of making such applications. This initiative, if successful, could be immensely significant. Other Peninsula Churches have been successful, why shouldn't we? Any ideas to Mike Meredith, Jane or Chris Cook please.

Other Funding

We are in the process of making a number of applications to charitable organisations and local businesses for funding towards renovations on the remaining windows, the ongoing pointing problem and other maintenance issues.

The General Data Protection Regulation - or GDPR

Members are requested to give their permission for us to hold your contact information. If you don't we can't contact you. Most members have already complied with this request but new members and others who haven't found the time are requested to do so by contacting Michael Meredith, Chairman, at 4, Medway Avenue. If you have any concerns then please raise them with me by phone or e-mail.

The Charity Commission.

At the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 10.02.20. Members ratified the decision to instruct Potheary, Witham, Weld, Solicitors to prepare an application to Register with the Charity Commission based on a draft Constitution researched and prepared by officers of The Friends. The Constitution and Application Forms have now been completed and await approval from the Membership.

Future Events

When life returns to normal we hope to return to our popular activities from last year's calendar and add to those events Historical Talks pertinent to the local area and held on a regular monthly basis. We have two ready to go. We also have a priority to work on publicity. If any Members have media contacts could you let me know?

Membership.

A new Flyer/membership Form has been prepared. Anyone wanting copies for circulation should contact- Ray Collins, June Collins, Di Welch, Mike Meredith or Chris Peek, our Membership Co-ordinator.

Our membership continues to grow and has doubled in the last two years. In order to build upon our success it is important that we recruit new members. Do you know anyone who cares about their church and wishes to help preserve the oldest building in the village so that it remains our distinctive landmark and is available for generations to come?

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Meredith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" and last name "Meredith" clearly distinguishable.

Mike Meredith

Chairman.