

## **The Idsworth Church Friends Trust AGM – Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2018**

**1. Apologies:** Pat Carter, John Butt and Jackie Butt. The AGM was attended by 24 members of the Friends.

**2. Chairman's Review of the Year:** 'In the words of most traditional story tellers, are you sitting comfortably? Then, I'll begin! Well, I hope that you are sitting a good deal more comfortably on this occasion as The Friends has just installed a complete set of bespoke pew cushions affording greater comfort for parishioners and attendees at events, as well as improved acoustics. My thanks go to Liz Uren and her team for achieving a successful outcome too.

I cannot believe that it is a year since our first AGM. A great deal has happened in the last 12 months as I will now attempt to summarise.

Even before the Trust was formed, and we were awarded our charitable status in August 2016, the Board of Trustees has been led by Roger Walker. He was there in all the discussions and preparations for the setting up of the Friends and his advice was particularly valuable as we went about forming a properly constituted Trust. Roger resigned from this role in January of this year in order to concentrate more fully on his role of Buildings Officer for the PCC. We must extend our thanks and gratitude to him for all that he has done for the Friends. Roger, thank you. Communication between the Friends and the PCC is of vital importance and even more so now that we start to enter the territory of Grant Application and, subsequently, repairs to the church building, and we look forward to working closely with you.

In January, we welcomed Mike Driver to the Board of Trustees. Mike is a lecturer in architecture at Cambridge University.

So what have we achieved during the course of the last year?

In our first year, one of our main aims was to remind the local community of the significance of St Hubert's as an important part of our heritage. We set about doing this by encouraging people to visit the church for various events: we put on quite an eclectic programme to cater for all tastes but essentially to bring people to St Hubert's, many of them for the first time. Over the course of the 2017 season, we welcomed some 1500 people from far and wide: there was a folk evening, poetry and prosecco, teas and refreshments, farm walk, summer concert and picnics, art exhibition organised by Deborah Richards, attracting 800 visitors, and an autumn concert. Our visitors have included cyclists, ramblers, artists, photographers, historians, to name but a few.

One of our declared aims in the constitution is, 'to advance education of the public in the heritage of the church by providing information on its history and architecture'. We also

established links with the local schools, Ditcham Park and St John's Primary so that many people discovered this very special place.

In a small charity such as ours, when the offer of help comes your way, you really DO appreciate it. Tim Walker was married in the church and saw my article in the Portsmouth evening news...that link brought about the Folk evening. Stephan and Sara Venter were married in the church some 19 years ago and when they heard of our plight they gave of their time, amounting to many days of work, and skills as promotional photographers to create a film and virtual tour of the church which is easily accessed on our website. We have received donations of items from people for raffle prizes, assistance with leaflets and posters for events which has been marvellous. Steve Radcliffe has given hours of support and advice regarding publicity and he deserves our thanks too.

In the meantime, the Grants committee has been looking at opportunities to apply for funds and you will hear about this in more detail shortly.

Whilst the funds have been growing, the Friends were also able to support the PCC with a grant of £3000 towards the guttering on the North Wall, a vital project as this wall is home to our priceless wall paintings.

We have embarked on a programme of environmental monitoring: over the course of the next 12 months we hope to understand better the internal environment of the building and how best to heat and ventilate the church in the future in the best interests of preserving the wall paintings as well as visitors and congregation. Links have been set up with Cambridge University to help with the interpretation of the data.

The Friends have purchased a new entrance gate and also a hand-held microphone which should be helpful at concerts and events. We have also bought a gazebo for events and I am grateful to Ann Hartley, our catering supremo, for building up a good set of catering equipment for that vital glass of procecco or mulled wine. She has also researched and created the banners for our events – many thanks, Ann.

We have also spent valuable time getting to know our neighbouring organisations, seeking their advice and assessing where they might be able to help. The team from the Butser Ancient Farm, the South Downs National Park, our local district, parish and county councillors have all played a part. The Rowlands Castle Association has been extremely supportive in all sorts of ways and, along with our district and county councillors, we thank them for their financial support too. Rebecca Probert Communities Officer for East Hants District Council has been an enormous help over the printing of tickets and fliers for events. Recently, we have been in discussion with the RC Heritage Centre to explore opportunities and links between our two organisations.

During the winter months, the Trustees came together for a series of Brainstorming Sessions to help us in formulating our vision for St Hubert's. Out of these meetings, seven themes were established to advance and develop the safeguarding of St Hubert's for the future. These

seven themes were the Character of St Hubert's, the Fabric of the building, the exterior environment, the interior environment, the people involved, outreach and progress. I am most grateful to David Uren for leading us in our discussions and for formulating these ideas which will be helpful as we build and prepare our grant applications to the various funding agencies. It was a very useful exercise, the results of which we will share with the PCC in May.

When dealing with a Grade 1 listed building, one needs to learn to appreciate that progress will be slow and that there are numerous hoops through which to jump. But we are making good progress with the South Downs National Park and the setting up of a Shared identity Scheme should help to advance the heritage of the church to the general public.

Outreach to schools and young people is high on our list of priorities: I am delighted that St John's has been back before Easter for a return visit and we also welcomed Westbourne Primary for the first time. At the other end of the age-range, a group of 25 archaeologists from Southampton came for a tour of the church a couple of weeks ago.

And now, before I hand over to Tracy Eggleston, our Treasurer for her report on the last financial year, I wish to thank our previous treasurer, John Bates. Like Roger, he was there from the outset as we set up the Friends. I am most grateful to John for his hard work and support and, in particular, for the efficient way in which he obtained and established our Charitable status and Gift Aid procedures for the Trust. John retired from the Friends in November and handed over the baton to Tracy'.

### **3. Treasurer's Review of the Year:**

#### *Activities:*

- Identifying projects which the Trust will raise funds towards through either Grant Applications or fund raising events
- Developing its long-term strategy in consultation with the PCC and congregation
- Identifying sources for grants and submitting applications e.g. HLF and Hampshire county Council
- Hosting a series of events at and around St Hubert's to increase awareness of 'the little church in the field', to promote the Heritage of the site and to raise funds

The trustees have, during discussions and at Trustee Meetings had due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers when the guidance is relevant.

#### *Achievements and Performance:*

- The treasurer outlined the achievements over the past year including the increased footfall to St Hubert's through the events programme. We welcomed 800 visitors to

the Art Exhibition in September and, overall, 1500 visitors supporting the 2017 programme of events.

- Increased awareness by the public of the plight of the building through information disseminated by the Trustees through leaflets, notice boards and website has generated donations
- Grant applications – grants and donations have been received from the RCA, EHDC, Hampshire CC. Other applications in progress include the Hampshire and Islands Historic Churches Trust, the Headley Trust and the SDNP authority. Our first application to HLF was turned down but we were asked to re-apply and will do so in May 2018.

#### *Reserves Policy:*

The trust does not currently have a reserves policy. This will be reviewed during 2018/19 to ensure an appropriate policy is put in place.

#### *Financial Review:*

As at March 31<sup>st</sup> 2018, the gross income for the Trust is £17,270. Since the formation of the Trust in August 2016, £42,475 has been raised.

Principle funding source during the financial year had been as follows:

Donations: £6,357

Art Show: £3,036

Ticket sales for events: £2,691

The largest expenditure was the issue of grants to St Hubert's amounting to £3,316. The largest grant was for £3000 towards the replacement of the guttering on the North Wall.

The Trust has received no loans during the year neither has it made any investments.

At the end of the year, the Trust is owed £132 in Gift aid from HMRC and owes £2,704 to the Church cushions company following delivery of cushions within the next few weeks.

The Chairman concluded, 'I am most grateful to Tracy for all her hard work. She has already contributed an enormous amount in her first few months wearing many different hats and offering advice on Data Protection, Risk Assessments, MyDonate as well as a Budget Plan and today's Financial Statement'.

**4. Grant Applications:** The Chairman commented, 'As far as the Trust is concerned, a vital area of our work, time and effort is devoted to the application to various funding agencies for

grants towards the church. Our Grants sub-committee of Simon Hartley, Mike Driver and myself is led by Liz Uren.’

Liz Uren’s Report:

Past Grants from the RCA and Hampshire CC gratefully received

- New pew cushions paid for which will help encourage attendees at future events and will help maintain warmth and comfort at future events in colder weather
- Replacement North Wall Guttering
- New entrance Gate
- Additional Microphone
- Installation of environmental monitors for temperature and humidity to help decision making for the design of a new system in the future

Current Applications:

- Headley Trust – with an answer by 24 April
- Hampshire and Islands Historic Churches Trust – waiting to hear
- Rowlands Castle Developer’s Fund – invited to present on 23 April (with four other projects)
- SDNPA – Shared Identity Project. Application to be submitted in August
- Other Grant sources have been identified but are ‘on hold’ until after the Heritage lottery Application has been submitted in May

Heritage Lottery Fund - Heritage Grant

- Applied last summer for Heritage Places of Worship Scheme but unsuccessful in a highly competitive process
- However good feedback
- Asked to reapply for a Heritage Grant with deadline in May
- Remains a very competitive process
- New Grant gives focus to people learning about Heritage and the benefits for the community
- We are now focussing on the 14<sup>th</sup> Century wall paintings
- Discussions with wall paintings expert and HLF progressing well
- Estimate of funding needed circa £500,000

The Chairman concluded, ‘I am most grateful to my colleagues on the sub-committee for all their hard work over the past twelve and very much hope that, at the next AGM, we will be reporting back with good news of our application to Heritage Lottery and other Grant Funding agencies’.

## **5. Forthcoming Events:**

Today's AGM marks the start of a very busy season of events for the Friends. Building on the success of last year, altogether, we have planned some 10 events at the church and I hope that you have already got your hands on our programme leaflet.

We do need your active support to make this programme of events really successful:

- Take extra leaflets, tell your friends, spread the word
- Come along to events but bring your Friends, too, to fill the church
- Please do all the networking you can to help us. We are a small team of trustees but to make the events work we need your support
- We want to build on the 1500 visitors who attended the events last year and introduce many more people to the Heritage and History of this very special place

**Chairman's closing remarks:** 'When measured by the footfall and support for our events, which when added to new Friends that have joined us and the funds we have managed to raise, the Trust has made great progress over the last year. However, we must not become complacent: there is still a huge amount of work to be done and we have significant challenges ahead if we are to safeguard this building for future generation to enjoy. We are extremely fortunate with the quality and output from our trustees but, if we are to be truly successful, we must count on your support. We cannot rely just on the small band of trustees but we all need to shoulder some responsibility. We need you to support events and spread the word; we need you to network and make sure that the Friends remain in the hearts and minds of the local community.'

Importantly, the Trust is looking to appoint another Trustee with some skills in the area of marketing, advertising, website and event management and, ideally, with some skills in computers. If you are the person or know of someone who might be able to fill this vital role, please do get in touch with me. Thank you.

**6. AOB** – no matters were raised

The meeting closed at 2.55pm

***Tea and Refreshments were served before an illustrated talk by Mike Driver, architect and Trustee: 'St Hubert's – an Architect's View'***