

REVIEW

THE FRIENDS
of
ST MARY'S
CHURCH
POLSTEAD



ANNUAL REPORT

2006 - 2007

Registered Charity No. 1116464

In the second year of its existence, since its launch in November 2005, the Friends of Polstead Church has continued to flourish. The number of members has continued to increase, despite some fluctuation due to people moving away etc. The generous support of the local community has continued and the income of the Friends is slightly up over last year. The first grants have been made to the PCC for repair and maintenance of the church fabric and a number of wider activities have been undertaken.

HONORARY PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENTS AND OFFICERS

The following have held office during the year.

Honorary President: Sue Wigglesworth

Honorary Vice-Presidents: Dr Ronald Blythe
Henry Engleheart
Sir Simon Jenkins
The Right Reverend J. H. R. Lewis (lately Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich)
Sir Michael Scholar, President of St Johns' College, Oxford (patron of the living)

Executive Committee: Bill Wigglesworth (Chairman)
Lea Blackham (Treasurer)
Maggie Bird (representative of the PCC)
Professor John Gorrod
Jane Oldrey
Gale Scott
Patrick Scrivens
Rev Michael Tillett (*ex officio* as Rector)

Independent Examiner: David Culverwell (Treasurer of the Friends of St Mary's, Preston)

All the above elected honorary officers and Committee members offer themselves for re-election at the Annual General Meeting.

MEMBERSHIP

During the course of the year, to 31 October 2007, the number of individual and joint members of the Friends has continued to exceed 100. A full list of members at 31 October 2007 is on page 7 of this report.

The Committee is grateful to everyone who has shown an interest in the Friends and will continue to encourage all who have an interest in the preservation of Polstead St Mary's Church to become members.

FINANCE

In the course of the year, the Friends received £6,669.48 in donations income and £870.50 in fund-raising income. In addition to those, listed below, who have made membership donations, the Committee would also like to thank those who have made additional personal donations.

The Committee would like to thank and congratulate everyone associated with this continued excellent financial performance. A summary of the accounts for the financial year ended 31 October 2007 is on page 6 of this report.

CHARITABLE STATUS

As a result of its charitable status, the Friends' organisation is able to reclaim Gift Aid on donations where this is mandated. As the accounts show, this is of considerable assistance in raising funds for the preservation of the church and so helping to maintain our heritage for the benefit of the community, the general public and posterity. It is the Committee's policy to encourage the mandating of Gift Aid as much as possible, together with the payment of annual donations by standing order to minimize administrative costs.

The elected members of the Executive Committee constitute the Trustees of the Friends, in accordance with modern charitable practice.

ACTIVITIES

Committee

The Executive Committee met four times during the year to discuss the development of the Friends and its activities. The Chairman would like to thank the members of the Committee for their continued generous support.

Social Activities

In addition to the modest celebration that accompanied the Annual General Meeting in January, the Friends were involved in two other events during the year.

The Friends were represented at the Flowers and Crafts Festival at Polstead Church from 26 to 28 May 2007. Members manned a stand publicising the work and purpose of the Friends. Despite poor weather, the event was well supported and much appreciated. The net proceeds of £700 were divided between the PCC and the Friends.

The Friends also organised an inaugural coach outing to Bury St Edmunds on Friday 15 June 2007. During a very pleasant day, the party toured the Cathedral and went on in the afternoon to view the Grade 1 listed Unitarian Meeting House in Churchgate Street.

The Committee decided that this year's annual supper party should coincide with the AGM. Dr Ronald Blythe, one of our Honorary Vice-Presidents, has very kindly agreed to speak after the supper.

Publicity

The Friends has been giving further attention to publicising its purpose and activities. A brochure is available in the church, together with information about the preservation work that is being assisted by the Friends. Copies of the brochure are available for members to send to their friends and relatives who might be interested in supporting the Friends.

The activities of the Friends have been publicised in the Community News and information on the Friends is available on the Polstead website (www.onesuffolk.co.uk/polsteadpc; or just Google “Polstead”), together with more extensive information about the preservation work at Polstead church.

Grants to the PCC

Following the end of the Friends’ 2006-07 financial year, in accordance with our agreement with the PCC, the first two grant payments have been made for preservation works in the church. These were for:

(1) South aisle floor

£4,9449.10, for the relaying, by Lodge and Sons, of the main south aisle floor, using appropriate materials. This turned out to be even more important to the long term health of the church fabric than at first thought. A large area of modern concrete was discovered, which had been laid on an impermeable layer of plastic. Moisture had gathered under the plastic and could have been expected to migrate, over the years, to the outside walls with damaging effect. This was replaced with lime concrete, laid on a permeable membrane, which will in due course be covered by a neutral covered carpet on felt overlay, allowing the ground underneath to breathe.

(2) Protection and conservation of wall paintings

£420.65, for advice, from Tobit Curteis Associates, on the protection and conservation of medieval wall paintings. During the current redecoration Mr Curteis has continued to provide advice and has recommended a programme of preservation measures to be undertaken once the redecoration has been completed. The total cost of the paintings preservation programme, including the above grant, is likely to exceed £3,000.

Future programme

Further work that has been undertaken, and which the Friends has pledged to support, includes repair of leaks in the south aisle roof (due to gaps in the mastic waterproofing joints in the stainless steel roof), inspection of roof timbers while scaffolding has been in place for the redecoration and archaeological surveys, by the Suffolk County Archaeological Team, of the south aisle floor and the area intended for the extension of the churchyard.

Work in course of being planned or undertaken, which is appropriate for support from the Friends, includes repair of external plaster above the chancel, repair of the north wall of the churchyard and at least limited repair of the collapsed Boutell chamber tomb (the latter mostly planned to be carried out by PCC volunteer effort).

The PCC has received informal warning of major defects in the roof timbers of the side aisles in particular. These are, of course, a vital element of the church fabric. It is understood that these problems could have serious financial implications. A full report is awaited.

Other items in the future programme of work include renovation and extension of the park fencing round the churchyard, as soon as the intended extension of the churchyard can be carried out, and improvement and development of the access path to the main entrance at the south door, also subject to planning permission.

There is a lot to be done to maintain and secure the church fabric and surroundings for the future, for which the support of the Friends will be vital.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends will be held on **Friday 30 November 2007 at Polstead Village Hall at 7.30pm.**

An agenda for the AGM accompanies this report to members.

The formal business will be followed by a **supper** (tickets £12.50 available at the Community Shop or from Bill Wigglesworth or any member of the Committee) at which our Honorary Vice-President, **Dr Ronald Blythe** will be speaking about his life as a writer and his feelings for East Anglia's beautiful churches, including Polstead, St Mary's .

All members and supporters, and anyone interested in becoming a Friend, are welcome to attend. Do persuade anyone you can to come and support us.

Bill Wigglesworth, Chairman
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Colchester CO6 5AN

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FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S CHURCH, POLSTEAD

ACCOUNTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2007

	Yr 2007	Yr 2006
Income		
Donations	£ 5577.00	£ 7014.73
Fund Raising	£ 870.50	£ 491.89
IR Gift Aid	£ 1092.48	£ 0
Total	£ 7539.98	£ 7506.62
Expenditure		
Printing	£ 0	£ 172.73
Village Hall Hire	£ 16.00	£ 16.00
Trip Bury Cathedral	£ 56.00	£ 0
Total	£ 72.00	£ 172.73
Surplus	£ 7467.98	£ 7333.89
Cash Reserves at start of year	£ 7333.89	£ 0
Cash Reserves at year end	£14801.87	£ 7333.89
represented by:		
Current Account	£ 801.87	£7333.89
Deposit Account	£14000.00	£ 0

Examiner'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 finances of the Friends of St Mary's Church, Polstead for the financial year ended 31 October 2007.

..... David Culverwell, Independent Examiner

FRIENDS OF POLSTEAD CHURCH

MEMBERS (at 31 October 2007)

Benefactors	Mr & Mrs Richard Bartlett Mr William Sharland	Mr William Shadbolt
Donors	Mr & Mrs John Baxter Mrs Maggie Bird Mr & Mrs Lea Blackham His Honour P Brandt Dr Roger & Dr Annette Bray Mrs Patricia Brown Mr & Mrs John Buck Mr & Mrs Michael Connellan Mr & Mrs Frank Cross Mr & Mrs Richard Davey Mr & Mrs Robert Derbyshire Mrs Rita Gillham Mr & Mrs Michael Goldsmith Mr & Mrs Allan Guest	Mr & Mrs Barrie Hall Mr & Mrs Lionel Hatch Mrs Phyllis Herrmann Mr & Mrs Alan Humphryes Mr Richard MacGregor Mr & Mrs Alastair MacWillson Mr & Mrs Simon Oldrey Mr & Mrs Michael Parry-Crooke Mr & Mrs Brian Richford Mrs Gale Scott Mr & Mrs Patrick Scrivens Mr & Mrs Ken Sparkes Mr & Mrs Paul Trudgett Mr & Mrs Bill Wigglesworth
Members	Mr Lewis Beddison Mrs Elsie Braybrook* Mrs J Biggs Mrs Ruth Crabtree Mr Leslie Creevy Mr & Mrs Bill Dodd Mr Richard English Mr & Mrs Henry Engelheart Mr & Mrs Michael Evans Dr & Mrs John Flather Pera Francis Professor & Mrs John Gorrod Julia Gorrod Amy Gorrod Mr & Mrs Alan Hands Mr & Mrs Ed Hynard	Mr & Mrs Colin Lewis Mr & Mrs Ray Lowe Mr & Mrs Stuart Miller Mr George Mills Mr & Mrs Melvin Mitson Frances Mount Mrs Mary Murray Mr Brian Orriss Mrs Erica Pomerans Mr & Mrs Martyn Rudkin Mr R Sandford Mr and Mrs Les Sidaway Mr & Mrs Donald Simpson Lucy Stirling Mr Michael Tricker

**Honorary Member*

Honorary President Mrs Susan Wigglesworth

Honorary Vice-Presidents Dr Ronald Blythe
Mr Henry Engelheart
Sir Simon Jenkins
The Right Reverend J. H. R. Lewis
Sir Michael Scholar