

THE FRIENDS  
of  
ST MARY'S  
CHURCH  
  
POLSTEAD



ANNUAL REPORT

2007 - 2008

Registered Charity No. 1116464

## REVIEW

Now in the third year of its existence, after its launch in November 2005, the Friends of Polstead Church has continued to attract strong support and provide important assistance to the PCC in the maintenance and conservation of the church and its surroundings. The number of members has remained around a hundred, despite some inevitable fluctuation. The generous support of the local community has continued and the overall income of the Friends is well above last year. Further grants have been made to the PCC for repair and maintenance of the church fabric and a number of other 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)  
\*resigned following his retirement as Bishop

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

Independent Examiner: Roger Huggett (Treasurer of the Friends of St Mary's, Preston, in succession to David Culverwell)

The Chairman, on behalf of the Friends, has thanked Bishop Richard for lending his name so graciously to support the launch of the Friends. It is hoped to announce shortly that another senior member of the Diocese will be willing to succeed him.

Roger Huggett, who has succeeded David Culverwell as Treasurer of the Friends of Preston St Mary's Church, has kindly agreed to act as Independent Examiner, pending confirmation of his appointment at the AGM.

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

## **MEMBERSHIP**

During the course of the year, to 31 October 2008, the number of individual and joint members of the Friends has continued at about 100. A full list of members at 31 October 2008 is on page 8 of this report.

The Committee is most grateful to everyone who has shown an interest in the Friends and is making further efforts 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 £6,122.00 in donations income and £392.00 net from fund-raising. The latter was made up of £302.00 profit on the AGM supper and £90.00 profit on the summer trip to St Peter's Chapel and Layer Marney Tower. 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. Gift Aid tax repayments were £1,147.19 and £523.16 interest was received on the deposit account, bringing the total income for the year to £8,514.35.

Grants to the PCC during the year were £8,082.72 in total, resulting in a surplus for the year of £101.63 and total reserves of £14,023.16 carried forward.

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 2008 is on page 7 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 noted above, 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 express his grateful thanks to the members of the Committee for their continued strong support.

### ***Social Activities***

The Annual General Meeting at the end of November 2007 was combined with the annual supper, after which our Honorary Vice-President, Dr Ronald Blythe gave an inspiring talk about his life as a writer and his feelings for Suffolk churches.

Following last year's trip to Bury St Edmunds Cathedral, a second annual summer trip was organised on 11 June 2008 to St Peter's Chapel at Bradwell on Sea and Layer Marney Tower, with lunch at Maldon Quay. This was very well supported. The weather was kind and the day proved extremely worthwhile and enjoyable.

The Committee decided that this year's annual supper party should again coincide with the AGM, which this year is being held on 28 November. A recently formed local group of singers has kindly agreed to provide a short musical entertainment after the supper; and there will be instrumental interludes featuring our Honorary President and assistant.

### ***Fund Raising***

Mr Alan Keeble has generously offered to organise a clay pigeon shoot in aid of the Friends. Due to organisational complexities, this has had to be postponed until next autumn. Meanwhile, Alan is kindly running raffles in aid of the Friends at the Bower House Estate shoots this season.

The Committee is in the process of organizing a range of quality cards, suitable for every occasion, with external and internal views of the Polstead Church, for sale in aid of the Friends. Leading graphic designer and photographer, Roger Huggett, has generously agreed to carry out the photography and to advise on the production of the cards free of charge. The first photographs have been taken, but poor weather conditions have delayed completion of the full range until next year.

### ***Publicity***

The Friends has continued to publicise its purpose and activities. The brochure, which is on display in the church, has been taken up by numerous visitors and has led to a number of new members joining. 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 further publicised in the Community News and information on the Friends continues to be available on the Polstead website ([www.onesuffolk.co.uk/polsteadpc](http://www.onesuffolk.co.uk/polsteadpc); or just Google "Polstead").

### ***Grants to the PCC***

In addition to the two grants to the PCC reported in last year's annual report (repair of South aisle floor and survey of wall pictures), two further grants have been made in the course of the year. These were for:

*(1) Archaeological survey of churchyard extension*

£1,517.16 paid for a survey, by the Suffolk County Archaeological Team, of the area of the planned extension of the churchyard. This involved the excavation of two large trenches which led to the finding of remains of a Bronze Age defensive settlement. Full excavation of the area of the extension is likely to be a condition of the necessary planning permission for change of use, which is currently being sought. This follows agreement between the PCC and Mr Henry Engleheart about the precise boundaries of the extension.

*(2) Repair of external plasterwork above chancel*

£1,200 paid for repair, by Lathe and Lime, of defective plasterwork above the chancel. Damp had been penetrating the chancel walls and the East wall of the nave. Some of the existing covering turned out to be concrete and had to be left in place, creating a piebald effect. Diluted cow dung has been used to encourage lichen growth in order to match the colour of the old and new surfaces.

No grant was necessary in the case of the Boutell collapsed tomb, which was dealt with by volunteer effort.

***Future programme***

The Friends has undertaken to assist the PCC with the cost of its most urgent on-going maintenance and conservation projects. These include the provision of safe access to the tower (by means of a new safety ladder), repair of the North churchyard wall (definitive bids awaited) and extension of the churchyard (where it is hoped that it will be possible to phase excavations, so as to spread the cost, and possibly also to phase the repositioning of the renovated park fencing).

The Committee of the Friends attaches strong importance to conservation of the wall paintings in the church, which is now ready to be undertaken following redecoration. It is hoped that this will be progressed during 2009, at a likely cost in the region of £3,000.

A further major project is the repair of roof timbers in the North and South aisles, where a professional survey has revealed the need for extensive maintenance and conservation work. One timber, above the North door, is giving rise to particular concern and its condition is being carefully monitored. The total cost of this work is likely to be considerable and the financing will need careful planning.

A further project, for resurfacing of the approach path to the South door of the church, is on hold for the moment while more urgent projects are dealt with.

There continues to be much 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. The Committee considers that it is important for the Friends to be ready with sufficient reserves to meet future major, and possibly unexpected, maintenance and conservation projects. It will be proposing a formal resolution on this subject at the AGM.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends will be held on **Friday 28 November 2008 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) after which there will be a short **musical entertainment**, with instrumental divertissements.

**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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## FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S CHURCH, POLSTEAD

### ACCOUNTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2008

	Yr 2008	Yr 2007
<b>Income</b>		
Donations	£ 6122.00	£ 5577.00
Fund Raising	£ 722.00	£ 870.50
IR Gift Aid	£ 1147.19	£ 1092.48
Bank Interest	£ 523.16	-
Total	£ 8514.35	£ 7539.98
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Village Hall Hire	£ -	£ 16.00
Trips	£ 330.00	£ 56.00
Restoration	£ 8082.72	
Total	£ 8412.72	£ 72.00
Surplus	£ 101.63	£ 7467.98
Cash Reserves at start of year	£14801.87	£ 7333.89
Cash Reserves at year end	£14903.50	£14801.87
represented by:		
Current Account	£ 880.34	£ 801.87
Deposit Account	£14023.16	£14000.00

### Auditors 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 2008.

..... Roger Huggett, Independent Examiner

## Friends of Polstead Church

### Members (as at 31 October 2008)

<b>Benefactors</b>	Mr & Mrs Richard Bartlett Mr & Mrs Henry Engleheart	Messrs W Shadbolt & W Sharland
<b>Donors</b>	Mr & Mrs John Baxter Mrs Maggie Bird Mr & Mrs Lea Blackham His Honour Judge Brandt Dr Roger & Dr Annette Bray Mrs Patricia Brown Mr & Mrs John Buck Mr Michael Connellan Mr & Mrs Julian Coulson Mr & Mrs Richard Davey Mrs Rita Gillham Mr & Mrs Michael Goldsmith Mr Mrs Alan 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
<b>Members</b>	Mr & Mrs Andrew Bardell Mr Lewis Beddison Mrs J Biggs Mrs Elsie Braybrook* Mrs Ruth Crabtree Mr Leslie Creevy Mr & Mrs Robert Derbyshire Mr & Mrs Bill Dodd Mr Richard English Mr & Mrs Michael Evans Dr John & Dr Mandy Flather Pera Francis Mr & Mr Roger Freeman Professor & Mrs John Gorrod Julia Gorrod-Wailes Stella Groschel Mrs Anne Hagger Mr & Mrs Alan Hands <i>* Honorary Member</i>	Mr & Mrs Ed Hynard Mr & Mrs Colin Lewis Mr and Mrs Ray Lowe Mr & Mrs Stuart Miller Mr George Mills Mr and Mrs Martin Mitchell Mr & Mrs Melvin Mitson Frances Mount Mrs Mary Murray Margaret Newman Mr Brian Orriss Mrs Erica Pomerans Mr & Mrs Martyn Rudkin Mrs B Redford Mr R Sandford Mr & Mrs Les Sidaway Mr & Mrs Donald Simpson Amy Wailes
<b>Honorary President</b>	Mrs Susan Wigglesworth	
<b>Honorary Vice-Presidents</b>	Dr Ronald Blythe Mr Henry Engleheart Sir Simon Jenkins Sir Michael Scholar	