

THE FRIENDS
of
ST MARY'S
CHURCH

POLSTEAD



ANNUAL REPORT

2008 - 2009

Registered Charity No. 1116464

REVIEW

2008-09 was a year of solid achievement for the Friends of Polstead Church. The PCC undertook extensive works for the extension of the churchyard and renewal and repair of its boundaries; and the Friends made grants of over £18,000 to cover the cost, so safeguarding the use of the churchyard for the foreseeable future. The Friends has continued to attract strong support with over a hundred members. The generous support of the local community has continued and the overall income of the Friends was well above the previous year. We can look forward to supporting the on-going programme of maintenance of St Mary's with confidence.

HONORARY PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENTS AND OFFICERS

The following held office during the year.

Honorary President: Sue Wigglesworth

Honorary Vice-Presidents: Dr Ronald Blythe
Henry Engleheart
Sir Simon Jenkins
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)
Dr Roger Bray
Professor John Gorrod
Jane Oldrey
Gale Scott
Patrick Scrivens
Rev Michael Tillet (*ex officio* as Rector)

Independent Examiner: Roger Huggett (Treasurer of the Friends of St Mary's, Preston)

Roger Huggett has kindly agreed to continue to act as Independent Examiner.

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 2009, the number of individual and joint members of the Friends has grown to just over 100. A full list of members at 31 October 2009 is on page 8 of this report.

The Committee is most grateful to everyone who has supported the Friends and is continuing to encourage all who have an interest in the preservation of Polstead St Mary's Church and its surroundings to become members.

FINANCE

In the course of the year, the Friends received £9,536.00 in donations income and £1,694.30 net from fund-raising. The latter included a total of £1,410 raised by Bower House Estates shoot raffles and a summer pigeon shoot and barbecue. 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 £1,478.81 and £374.09 interest was received on the deposit account, bringing the total income for the year to £13,083.20.

Grants to the PCC during the year were £18,610.50 in total, resulting in a deficit for the year of £5,527.30, leaving total reserves of £9,376.20 carried forward (of which approximately £5,000 has been pledged to fund completion of the renovation of the churchyard fencing).

The Committee would like to congratulate everyone associated with this continued excellent financial performance and to thank, particularly, our major donors. A summary of the accounts for the financial year ended 31 October 2009 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 2008 was combined with the annual supper, after which our President, Sue Wigglesworth, introduced a programme of musical items for our enjoyment.

Other activities were mostly precluded pending the recovery of the Chairman from a hip replacement operation; but a number of activities are planned for 2010.

The Committee decided that the AGM should be held over until May to make attendance and the support easier for all concerned. The annual supper party will again coincide with the AGM, which is being held on Friday 14 May. (For details see below.)

Fund Raising

Mr Alan Keeble very kindly ran a series of raffles in aid of the Friends at the Bower House Estate shoots during the 2008-09 shooting season, which raised a total of £300. In early August he generously hosted a clay pigeon shoot and barbecue in aid of the Friends which raised a total of £1,100, gaining helpful local media coverage for the Friends in the process. We are immensely grateful to Alan and all who helped to organise and support these events.

Publicity

The Friends has continued to publicise its purpose and activities, through the brochure, which is on display in the church, the Community News and the Polstead website (www.onesuffolk.co.uk/polsteadpc; or just Google "Polstead").

Grants to the PCC

The following grants were made to the PCC during the financial year.

(1) Full archaeological survey of churchyard extension

£8,866.50 paid for a full excavation and archaeological survey, by the Suffolk County Archaeological Team, of the area of the extension of the churchyard. This was a condition of planning permission for change of use for the extension, which was received early in the year. The excavation took place in June (see the picture on the cover of this report) and led to the discovery of two ancient pots which, most unusually, were unbroken. The archaeological report is awaited.

(2) Erection of estate fencing for the churchyard extension

£5,905.00 paid for the erection by Kevin King of estate fencing round the area of the extension. By agreement with the planning authority, this copied the estate fencing already bordering the churchyard. It also exactly matches the new estate fencing installed at Polstead Hall, creating a greatly improved overall impression. It has been fully rabbit proofed.

(3) Repair of the North wall of the churchyard

£3,839.00 paid for the extensive repair and part rebuilding of the North wall of the churchyard, which had become damaged with age and partly destabilized due to the felling of a large beech tree. The repair to full Grade 1 listed standard, which has been widely admired, was carried out by John Presley, who took part in the building of the new cathedral tower at Bury St Edmunds and is responsible for maintenance of the ancient walls in the Abbey Gardens.

Further renovation of most of the rest of the estate fencing round the churchyard was delayed over the winter but is due to be completed during 2010. The Friends have agreed to meet the cost of approximately £5,000 through a most generous donation from Mr Toby Owles of Polstead Hall and by the very kind gift of a new kissing gate by Kevin King.

Future programme

The PCC will be looking to the Friends to assist with the cost of its most urgent on-going maintenance and conservation projects. These include the provision of safe access to the tower, conservation of the wall paintings in the church, repair of roof timbers in the North and South aisles, where a professional survey has revealed the need for extensive maintenance and conservation work, and, resurfacing of the approach path to the South door of the church (which 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 continued support of the Friends will be vital.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends will be held on **Friday 14 May 2010 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 **Roy Tricker** will give a talk, with slides, on the importance of preserving medieval churches.

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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Polstead
Colchester CO6 5AN

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FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S CHURCH, POLSTEAD

ACCOUNTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2009

	Yr 2009	Yr 2008
Income		
Donations	£ 9536.00	£ 6122.00
Fund Raising	£ 1694.30	£ 722.00
IR Gift Aid	£ 1478.81	£ 1147.19
Bank Interest	£ 374.09	£ 523.16
Total	£13083.20	£ 8514.35
Expenditure		
Trips	£ -	£ 330.00
Restoration *	£ 9744.00	£ 8082.72
Archaeological Work	£ 8866.50	£ -
Total	£18610.50	£ 8412.72
Surplus/Deficit	£ -5527.30	£ 101.63
Cash Reserves at start of year	£14903.50	£14801.87
Cash Reserves at year end	£ 9376.20	£14903.50
represented by:		
Current Account	£ 4374.87	£ 880.34
Deposit Account	£ 3691.33	£14023.16
Major Projects Reserve	£ 1310.00	£ -

* with a further commitment in 2010 of approx. £5000 for fencing.

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 2009.

..... Roger Huggett, Independent Examiner

Friends of Polstead Church

Members (as at 31 October 2009)

Benefactors Mr & Mrs Richard Bartlett Mr and Mrs Toby Owles
 Mr & Mrs Henry Engleheart Messrs W Shadbolt & W Sharland
 Mr and Mrs Alan Keeble

Donors

Mr & Mrs John Baxter	Mr & Mrs Lionel Hatch
Mrs Maggie Bird	Mrs Phyllis Herrmann
Mr & Mrs Lea Blackham	Mr & Mrs Alan Humphryes
His Honour Judge Brandt	Mr Richard MacGregor
Dr Roger & Dr Annette Bray	Mr & Mrs Alastair MacWillson
Mrs Patricia Brown	Mr & Mrs Simon Oldrey
Mr & Mrs John Buck	Mr & Mrs Michael Parry-Crooke
Mr Michael Connellan	Mr & Mrs Brian Richford
Mr & Mrs Julian Coulson	Mrs Gale Scott
Mr & Mrs F W Cross	Mr & Mrs Patrick Scrivens
Mrs Rita Gillham	Mr & Mrs Ken Sparkes
Mr & Mrs Michael Goldsmith	Mr & Mrs Paul Trudgett
Mr & Mrs Barrie Hall	Mr & Mrs Bill Wigglesworth

Members

Mr & Mrs Andrew Bardell	Mr & Mrs Colin Lewis
Mr Lewis Beddison	Mr and Mrs Ray Lowe
Mrs J Biggs	Mr & Mrs Stuart Miller
Mrs Elsie Braybrook (hon memb)	Mr George Mills
Mrs Ruth Crabtree	Mrs Diana Mishkin
Mr Leslie Creevy	Mr and Mrs Martin Mitchell
Mr and Mrs Richard Davey	Mr & Mrs Melvin Mitson
Mr & Mrs Robert Derbyshire	Frances Mount
Mr & Mrs Bill Dodd	Mrs Mary Murray
Mr Richard English	Margaret Newman
Mr & Mrs Michael Evans	Mr Brian Orriss
Dr John & Dr Mandy Flather	Mrs Erica Pomerans
Pera Francis	Mr Tim Rouse
Mr & Mr Roger Freeman	Mr & Mrs Martyn Rudkin
Professor & Mrs John Gorrod	Mrs B Redford
Julia Gorrod-Wailes	Mr R Sandford
Stella Groschel	Mr & Mrs Les Sidaway
Mrs Anne Hagger	Mr & Mrs Donald Simpson
Mr & Mrs Alan Hands	Amy Wailes
Mr & Mrs Ed Hynard	Mr A Webster

Honorary President Mrs Susan Wigglesworth

Honorary Vice-Presidents Dr Ronald Blythe
 Mr Henry Engleheart
 Sir Simon Jenkins
 Sir Michael Scholar