

# **Friends of St Mary's Bletsoe**

## **Annual General Meeting 2020**

### **Chair Report**

This is a short note reflecting the very unusual circumstances of 2020 leading to a virtual Annual General Meeting to fulfill the specific requirements of reporting the Accounts and electing the committee for the next year.

At the last AGM, the note focused on the provisional completion of the chancel restoration project which had taken some six years from concept to reopening, involving many members of the local community with donations from both villagers and 'friends' together with significant grant aid. Over £300,000 was raised in two tranches and while some original aspects of the restoration, particularly the improvements such as new-build lobby and full heating system for the whole church building were deferred to save money, the complete restoration was achieved with the exception of the now-stabilised reredos. This magnificent effort was spearheaded by local resident, FoSM member, even campaigner David Baker acting as Project Manager in concert with architect Michael Dales. Our reopening for Harvest Festival 2019 by the Bishop of Bedford was a justified celebration.

The new space was put into immediate use for meetings and congregational activity with plans made to develop it during 2020 as Spring arrived. However, Covid arrived before that and the church building has largely been locked-down since 23<sup>rd</sup> March with the exception of some low-level church services and private prayer sessions. This has had a dramatic impact on Friends activities and its fundraising not only with events in the church building but in the wider community so, while an excellent second Advent Windows took place which was much enjoyed socially in the village, income from concerts has been largely lost which is very unfortunate since a wide programme was planned to take advantage of the reopening. On the wider stage, whilst the annual Quiz and Breakfast took place, the two big moneyspinners, the Plant Sale and the Fete, were called off during lockdown and it remains very uncertain whether the biennial Haggis Night will be able to be staged in January. It looks very unlikely. The committee took the decision to support the Parochial Church Council with two key contributions to funds, notwithstanding the loss of income, namely the annual Building Insurance and the cost of the five-yearly Quinquennial Inspection. It will be for the new committee to discuss if and how any financial help can be considered in the next year.

The year has not been entirely a write-off. The final completion of the contract involved minor works to adjust some items not considered to meet the specification of work. This period ended in October. Also, and still for final completion, the extra work to mount, secure and display the 13th century gravemarker in a special display space awaits only the final fixing.

Otherwise, the Friends scope of work now turns to the Quinquennial Inspection findings. These are currently with the PCC which will decide on priorities with the architect and at that point will discuss with the Friends the financial implications of the survey over the next five years. Whilst the general condition of the building is very good, there are many issues to be addressed, some consequential to the restoration such as salts appearing on the walls and all are mostly minor but there are some opportunities for more conservation and protective work such as remedying the faults in many parts of the window tracery.

The PCC has worked hard to bring the building back to life, overcome the general disarray following the building work and the general ambience is much improved over recent months. Now is the time for both the PCC and Friends to work together to plan what needs to be done between now and 2025.



# FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S, BLETSOE

Registered charity No 1,000,081

## INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the year ending 30 September 2020

Income	2020	2019	2018
Donations	5035.00	35650.00	19897.25
HMRC	18615.69	30980.53	5200.22
Events (see notes)	3945.00	4686.00	6038.80
Interest on Capital	1.45	36.51	108.13
Grants	5390.00	51360.00	51700.00
Sundries	51.00	51.00	
	<b>33038.14</b>	<b>122764.04</b>	<b>82944.40</b>

Expenditure	2020	2019	2018
Restoration Work (see notes)	30856.07	122205.38	75,699.38
Professional Fees	8623.66	6472.17	28,408.51
AGM Expenses	27.00	30.00	30.00
Subscription (BHHCT)	40.00	40.00	40.00
Sundries	102.00	437.50	78.00
	<b>39648.73</b>	<b>129185.05</b>	<b>104,255.89</b>
<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>-6610.59</b>	<b>-6421.01</b>	<b>-21,311.49</b>
	<b>33038.14</b>	<b>122764.04</b>	<b>82,944.40</b>

## BALANCE SHEET for year ending 30 September 2020

	2020	2019	2018
<b>ACCUMULATED FUND</b>			
Opening balance	39750.11	46171.12	67482.61
Surplus (Deficit)	-6610.59	-6421.01	-21311.49
Debts written off			
	<b>33139.52</b>	<b>39750.11</b>	<b>46171.12</b>

## CURRENT LIABILITIES

Creditors

	2020	2019	2018
<b>FIXED ASSETS:</b>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Current Account	32688.70	39353.74	16714.31
Deposit Account **	363.37	361.92	29325.41
Cash in Hand	87.45	34.45	131.40
Debtors			
	<b>33139.52</b>	<b>39750.11</b>	<b>46171.12</b>

\*\* Charities Official Investment Fund, Deposit Account

## AUDITOR'S REPORT

In my opinion the financial statements shown above give a true and fair view of the affairs of The Friends of St Mary's, Bletsoe at 30 September 2020

Signed *M Rowland*

Name *MALCOLM ROWLAND FMAAT* Date *14th November 2020*

NOTES



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