



Dear Friends

Welcome to the Christmas 2019 edition of Newsletter containing a brief report of our AGM held on 12<sup>th</sup> June and all the other recent news.

It is a great pleasure to have welcomed new members in recent months, namely Deborah Clarke from Ampney St Peter nr Cirencester, Philippa & Jeremy Brunt, Gina Wigginton and Brian Henry – all from Highnam. Sadly, however, we mourn the loss of longstanding member and supporter Mrs Anne Trott from Tewkesbury, after a short illness. On behalf of us, all we extend our deepest sympathy and condolences to husband Michael and his family. A number of us were privileged to attend Anne's funeral in October.

Looking to future activities, I am pleased to announce that our **next outing** will be to visit two special churches in Cheltenham on **Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> April**. Further details overleaf.

Now on behalf of our committee I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We also to send everyone thanks on behalf of our organisation, and the church in Highnam as a whole, for continuing to support all we do. With very best wishes from us all.

Graham Rosam  
Hon Secretary



## OUTING – 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

We are pleased to announce that we have arranged to visit All Saints and St Christopher's Churches in Cheltenham. All Saints is a Grade I listed church built in the French Gothic style. It is described as exquisitely decorated inside in the style of the Arts and Crafts movement including a particularly fine stained glass window and fresco.

We shall then move on to St Christopher's Warden Hill. This is a modern church with a magnificent set of ten stained glass windows designed and executed by Thomas Denny, each based upon a parable from the Gospels. Here we shall also be able to take tea and cake (£3.50 per head).

We will send full details nearer the time, **but please note the date for now.**

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT

The meeting was held in church on 12<sup>th</sup> June and was attended by 20 Members with 20 apologies for absence. Particular greetings came from our Patron, Bishop Rachel of Gloucester, and founding Trustee Dr Peter Burman.

Following brief verbal reports on the standard agenda items of Chairman's and Secretary's reports, and re-election *en bloc* of the committee, we welcomed Brian Mayell to his first report as new Treasurer.

The accounts recorded over £1,300 donations in memoriam following the sad loss of Roger Hanbury in May 2018, which will be used in agreement with the PCC to recognise Roger's outstanding contribution as Friends Chairman.

There had been a reduction in Subscriptions from members (down 50% to £322), which we plan restore in the coming year. However, after other income received, a small excess of £96 over expenditure was achieved, including costs of £164 for printing our new leaflet and donating £350 for repairs to the organ. Current total assets stood at £19, 936.82.

In the usual discussion about the use of our funds we heard of the PCC's plans for significant expenditure to address major works to the guttering and rainwater management systems, as well as re-wiring, lighting and heating. The Fabric Committee were in process of looking at funds available in the church accounts and also grants from external bodies.

## Election of Committee

From the Chair Anna once again extended an open invitation to any member to join the committee, or alternatively to offer help for specific projects. With grateful thanks from Members present, the existing Committee members were again re-elected *en bloc*.

## A NOTE FROM OUR VICAR

Dear Friends of Highnam Church,

The word 'variety' comes to mind as I reflect on the life of the church over the past year. It is easy, when we think of church life, to simply picture Sunday services, and somehow imagine the door closed for the rest of the week. This is very far from the case in the life of Highnam church! Even an 'ordinary week' will see the church host quiet services of Morning Prayer, the Benefice Choir practice, perhaps the monthly Prayer Circle meeting, Friday hymn singers, or even a Messy Church planning meeting, and – of course – many visitors. During the year we have had a rich variety of worship and events in the church. Our Sunday services are varied, and include a monthly informal service, with music led by a band of guitars, drums, keyboard etc. Our combined Benefice services have followed a series called 'Tackling Big Issues, at which we have welcomed a variety of speakers to help us engage with some of the challenging issues facing society. We were delighted to welcome the Cathedral organist who gave an improvisation on the Stations of the Cross at Easter, and the Cathedral Youth Choir and organ scholar for Evensong. We have had some very well attended services with local families and children, including Mothering Sunday, Harvest Festival and Remembrance Sunday. Never a dull week!

The church however continues to require considerable upkeep. The main projects we are focusing on at present are the repairs and improvements to the guttering; and a much needed new lighting system which will also require extensive re-wiring. We thank the Fabric Committee for the time and effort they give to this work. Although very costly projects I would echo the cosmetics advert when thinking of Highnam church - and say : 'because you're worth it'!

**Revd Helen Sammon**

## FRIENDS NEWS

- You may recall our plans, as part of our mission to engage with our local community, to hold another Open Event in church. Despite wide publicity and individual invitations to 130 of the newest houses in the parish, only two new residents attended. Engaging our new neighbours is definitely proving difficult.
- By contrast we enjoyed hosting nearly 30 Three Choirs Festival-goers on 1<sup>st</sup> August. Most were first-time and marvelled at our magnificent and – as many remarked – living church. There was new display material (thanks to Michael Trott and Debbie) featuring village history plus insightful information about the Gambier Parrys and Sir Hubert, whose music had been featured in a morning concert. Amongst our visitors were the parents of Roderick Williams, the famous baritone who had performed the morning recital.
- Did anyone else spot newspaper reports that 'our' hymn *Jerusalem* was voted the UK's favourite in a poll by the BBC's *Songs of Praise*? 5<sup>th</sup>. Also featured in the top ten were *Abide with me*, *Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer*, and *Be Still for the Presence of the Lord*. Exalted company indeed!

## USE OF FUNDS

Last month we circulated to Members the proposal to donate £5,000 at the request of the church repairing and improving the guttering and rain management equipment, and repairs to interior plasterwork. The total cost was expected to be nearly £40,000. This followed a meeting with the Church Treasurer and Churchwarden, to hear about these plans and the other major fabric works to be addressed over the coming years. Again, full costs would be way above the means of the Friends, but we shall see what we can do to help. We would like to thank those Members who wrote to give their support to this first grant.

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