



Dear Friends

Greetings from the Committee of our organisation, in these most unexpected and difficult of times. We sincerely hope and pray that you, your families and all your loved ones are managing to come through as well as possible both personally and professionally.

This summer Newsletter would, of course, normally bring news of a variety of recent activities and the plans for our Annual General Meeting in Highnam. Our Constitution states that the AGM shall be held in May or June. Clearly, we cannot hold such a gathering of members of the Friends during the current lockdown arrangements, much to everyone's regret. However, the committee met late last month – via Zoom as is now the only practical way to hold collective discussions, which enables me to outline in this edition of the Newsletter how we would ask you to consider conducting essential business, and to let us have your views. **Please see the committee's recommendations on the next two pages.**

Whilst looking to the future and hoping for a return to a satisfying degree of normality, including the church re-opening, it is worth saying from my experience how fortunate we are to live in the beautiful village of Highnam, which offers the 'luxury' of many lovely countryside walks. Most of these offer stunning and reflective views of our magnificent church, in its parkland, which focus enduring testament to the vision of Thomas Gambier Parry.

Graham Rosam, Hon Secretary

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

As a fully established charity The Friends has a detailed Constitution which defines the objects and obligations for running the organisation. This sets the AGM as the key method of ensuring proper open governance with involvement and representation of the membership. Mindful of these duties the Committee feels that we should be pro-active in meeting AGM obligations, if possible, within the obvious constraints of the pandemic lockdown in place in England at the present time.

Whilst there are some regular and always-enjoyable social aspects to holding the meeting, we can't offer these just yet. Therefore, the Committee thought the practical approach is to regard the essential elements of the AGM as:-

- i. **Presentation of the accounts, and**
- ii. **Election of Officers**

...both of which require to be approved by voting at the AGM. A **quorum at the AGM is defined as "10 members or 5% of the membership** whichever is the greater." We have 39 subscriptions (some representing a whole family, some possibly lapsed) plus three honorary Trustees. Even if membership counts all relevant family members, this confirms a quorum at the level of 10 members.

The options we considered for meeting these minimum requirements were:-  
**(a)** to postpone the whole event until it is permissible to hold the usual 'mass' gathering i.e. possibly late autumn earliest(?); **(b)** to convene a full virtual meeting via Zoom, which with domestic IT equipment we felt would be possible but rather challenging and may incur additional cost for time required; or **(c)** to conduct the two essential elements as above via correspondence in this Newsletter, with the intention to arrange a proper meeting to cover the social and interactive parts of business when this becomes possible again. **Option (c) is our preference & recommendation.**

**Your views on which option to adopt are invited, by email to me or by telephone to any member of the Committee please, with a requested deadline of the end of June. Thank you.** We will notify everyone of the outcome of these consultations.

**(i) FINANCE:**

In any event we enclose/attach the normal Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 [remember those halcyon winter days??!!]. With grateful thanks to church treasurer, Ken Starr, for auditing the records. The main features here are:

- A healthy and raised level of income in 2019/20 and low expenditure resulting in a surplus on the year of £972.42
- This includes significant catch-up with monies due from Gift Aid and HMRC rebate
- We continue to hold £1430 in the General Fund donated in memory of Roger Hanbury (see additional information below).
- Total assets shown as £20,635.74

Since 1<sup>st</sup> February the main change has been the grant of £5,000 to Highnam Church towards the major project to repair rainwater equipment/guttering and interior plaster repairs (further news below). Please contact Brian, our Treasurer, if you have any questions on the Statement of Accounts.

**(ii) ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

As always, there is now an open invitation to any member to come forward to join the committee/Officers. These are

- Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- & other committee members

All must be proposed and seconded.

The current team of Anna, Brian, Debbie, Linda and Graham are all willing to continue in our present roles, and we have nominated each other as usual.

**APPROVAL OF PROPOSALS**

If your response is to follow option (c), would you please at the same time indicate whether you vote for or against (i) adopting the accounts and (ii) the election of current Officers and Committee members: MANY THANKS.

**FRIENDS NEWS**

- "In other news" to quote a well-known saying, it is pleasing to report that the improvements to the church gutters and rainwater management systems have just about been completed, with some of the re-pointing remaining to be done. And the plasterwork damage above the font has also been repaired.
- However, due in part to the closure of churches, it has not yet been possible to complete the re-painting of the related fresco stencil. It is hoped that it will be done by the end of this month.
- Sadly of course, we had to cancel the outing to visit two churches in Cheltenham scheduled for April. We hope, once again, that we will be able to re-establish these arrangements in the near future.
- Another important aspect of our work which has been slowed up by the lockdown arrangements, is collaborating with the PCC to find a suitable Welcome & Display stand for the entrance to the church. This would of course have to be suitable in the sense of appropriate for a Grade I listed building and acceptable to the Diocesan Advisory Board which has to approve such additions to the permanent furniture. Design work is being undertaken, which would then enable us to look for suitable manufacturers and/or suppliers. You may recall from previous discussions, that it is hoped this addition to the church's focussed communications can be funded by the generous donations made in memory of our previous Chairman, Roger Hanbury.
- Some of you may not have been aware that our Vicar, Revd Helen Sammon, has been doing a first class job in putting together regular 'virtual' church services, with expert technical input from Revd Geoff Crago. These have been a great source of comfort and enjoyment throughout this difficult period, and have reached a very wide audience. They have appeared on YouTube. An example can be viewed via the link below, which also includes the fantastic recording of Aled Jones singing 'Dear Lord and Father of Mankind' made in 2008 in Highnam Court. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6d5rph76J8&feature=youtu.be>

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