

The Idsworth Church Friends Trust – AGM, 30th June 2021

Chairman's Annual Report

1. Welcome and thank you to Rev Vickie Morgan for allowing us to host the AGM here at St John's Church Centre. In normal circumstances, we would have met in April up at St Hubert's and the plan was to have had Wall Paintings Conservator, Peter Martindale to speak to us about the protection of the wall paintings in the East Window reveals which he supervised during the building repair work in 2019...but that will be for next year. More about Peter Martindale's latest project later in the meeting...

Apologies: Apologies have been received from Mike Driver, Rev Vickie Morgan and Mrs Dawn Bishop

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the last AGM, 30th September, 2020

Proposed by Mr Simon Hartley and seconded by Mrs Nicola Callender

3. Treasurer's Review of the year: Details of the financial year were highlighted by the treasurer, Mrs Tracy Eggleston. Please access a pdf copy of the Annual Report & Financial Statement for the year ending March 31st 2021 which is available on our website

4. Chairman's review of the Year: Due to the Pandemic, all events for 2020 had to be cancelled and it seems strange to have to cast our minds back to April 2019 and our Flanders and Swann evening at the Parish Hall in Links Lane for our last event.

So what has been achieved over the past year, April 2020-March 2021?

- Despite lockdown, work to explore and promote the heritage of St Hubert's has continued further during the course of this year as part of a 'Shared Identity Project' with the South Downs National Park Authority and I am grateful to Rebecca Saunders and Emily Summers and their design team for their advice and expertise as we took a number of projects to fruition:
- Many of you will have seen the **Interpretation Panel** which now stands alongside the gateway entrance on the roadside at St Hubert's. As Andrew Fisk will agree – it is a massive oak structure which he dug 4ft into the ground when, using tractor and digger, it was installed in early December. The panel gives a nutshell history of the church in the context of the Idsworth Valley and it is hoped that it will both raise awareness and appeal to our visitors. I am grateful to Tanya Heath, Church Historian at Oxford University for her input into the content for the Panel.
- In order to make life a little easier for visitors arriving by car, **Re-surfacing of the Roadside Lay-by** was carried out last summer, the project having been delayed by the flooding that affected the area throughout the spring of 2020. The work was done by Andrew Fisk and I am very grateful to him for the excellent job he did. Clearly, it was a matter of great frustration that, no sooner than the new surface had

been laid, than Network Rail parked its heavy machinery in the lay-by causing considerable damage to the surface. Despite our protests, this has recurred on a number of occasions. Correspondence with Network Rail is ongoing and we hope to carry out some repairs and 'making good' once positive assurances from Network Rail have been received that no further damage will be incurred

- Another strand of the project with the South Downs National Park was the **Children's Activity Trail**. The aim was to create an interesting and eye-catching activity sheet for children of Primary School age who visit the church. The content was written by Tanya Heath and the sheet is available in the back of the church ready for our young visitors to enjoy
- Only last week I received the **Adult Tour Guide of the Church leaflet**. Content was written by Tanya Heath, an expert on Church Wall Paintings and I hope you will agree that the leaflet is both eye-catching and informative. Leaflets are available at the back of the church as well as in an all-weather leaflet holder mounted on the frame of the Interpretation Panel
- And only yesterday, I received a further part of the Shared Identity Project when the **Walks leaflets** arrived. The leaflet sets out two walks for ramblers to enjoy: one devised by Tracy and David Eggleston from Rowlands Castle to St Hubert's; the other devised by David Uren with Andrew Fisk. The maps of two walks around the church have been shared with the South Downs ranger and have now been approved and will be on display throughout the South Downs National Park – encouraging more visitors to visit St Hubert's (which, incidentally, was nominated as the No.1 of Ten Top Picnic Spots in Hampshire in the Southampton Daily Echo, recently)
- The trustees were delighted that, after discussion with Rev Vickie Morgan and the PCC, the project to install an **Access Gate for the Disabled** got the go-ahead. The access gate has been sited adjacent to the kissing gate at the top of the hill-side entrance into the church and was part-funded by an EHDC grant from Cllr Malcolm Johnson. Families with buggies, artists with easels, musicians with instruments will all find access into the church that much easier from now on
- So our work with the Shared Identity Project has now been completed and I am very grateful to the SDNPA for the generous grant of £5000 they awarded the Friends back in September 2018 in order to carry out this work
- No review of the year could be complete without mention of my very loyal and hard-working board of trustees. Despite the challenges of this past year, they have continued to give tremendous advice, guidance and support in so many different ways. Thank you. Mr David Uren resigned as trustee in July 2020 due to pressure of commitments. David joined the Trust from the start in 2016 and I am very grateful to him for his invaluable contribution in so many ways. In particular, he was instrumental in guiding us through the 'Brainstorming' process which led to our formulation of our vision for St Hubert's. He assures me that, if available, he could be persuaded to take photographs at our events from time to time.

- I would also like to thank Rev Vickie Morgan for the meetings we have had and the support she has given to the Friends over the past year. And also, in particular, to John Bannell, the PCC Buildings Officer, for his expert advice and readiness to keep the lines of communication open.

5. Forthcoming Event: Despite the restrictions imposed on us due to the pandemic, the trustees were keen to stage another social event. Trustee Ann Hartley explained that, by kind permission of the farmer, there will be a **'Musical Picnic'** held in the meadow adjacent to the south side of the church on Saturday 14th August, 5.30-7.30pm. Jazz music will be by Colin Berry and Folk music by the Driftwood Troubadours. This is an event for all families and friends.

6.. 'Touching Out' of the East Window reveals: Following the successful building repair project to St Hubert's Church East Wall and Window in 2019, a meeting, attended by Vickie Morgan, Peter Martindale (Wall Paintings Conservator), David Cain (DAC secretary) and myself was held at the church in September 2020 to look at this project which had been highlighted by Peter Martindale in his report. The DAC granted a faculty for the work which is to clean and enhance these nationally important wall paintings, so completing the 2019 work on the East Window. The work is being undertaken this week.

7. In her report, the treasurer made reference to **The Margaret Lyle Legacy.**

Simon Hartley, the chairman of the Friends Legacy Sub-committee stated: 'Margaret Lyle was 82 when she died. She was a daughter of a church-going family and had her marriage cut short when her husband was killed in the war. Margaret firmly believed that the establishment would not support small vulnerable churches which convinced her that private endowment was the route to save their futures. Her legacy's sole purpose was to maintain the heritage and fabric of St Hubert's. The Friends Trust was the natural home for the legacy and it matched Margaret's wishes.

The Legacy was donated in two forms:

- i) £100,000 was to be used to support fund raising and would provide the matched funding requirement.
- ii) £200,000 was to be invested in a restrictive investment package to create future capital and income for St Hubert's.

The legacy has been successfully deposited and invested. The Friends Trust is now in a position to apply for funding using the matched funding facility.

The Friends Trust has now established a policy for future fund raising, namely: a) Grant Applications with matched funding; b) Legacies (thanks to Margaret Lyle); c) Income from events and donations. The policy will go a long way to secure the future of St Hubert's.

The Friends extend their thanks to Margaret Lyle's family and to the executor of her estate.'

8. Future Plans:

i) This year, the next **Quinquennial Report** on the church is due to be carried out. However, I am pleased to be able to inform you that, on the initiative of John Bannell, the PCC Buildings Officer, an 'Expanded Quinquennial Report' will be undertaken, commissioned by the Friends Trust. This vital and detailed report will inform everything that the Friends Trust does in providing funds for the future repair work.

ii) **Fund Raising** - Liz Uren, Chairman of the Friends Grants Committee, gave a brief update on future plans and stated: 'I last gave an update at our AGM in 2019, specifically on grant applications and reminded all who attended that, with one exception, we had received grant funding from every application that we had made to date: East Hants District Council (Developers Fund), Headley Trust, South Downs National Park, and our local councillors who continue to support us.

The Margaret Lyle Legacy gives us a fantastic start with future fund raising and we will build on that.

We need an up-to-date report on the current condition of the building, what work is required and an accurate assessment of how much it will cost. The last Quinquennial Inspection was done 5 years ago. John Bannell, PCC Buildings Officer, has set in place the new inspection now required – in effect a Quinquennial 'plus'. This will deliver the detailed information we need to inform our grant applications. By working closely with the project architect, structural engineer and quantity surveyor, this will mean that our applications will be accurately costed and of high quality.

The report should be available in time to support grant applications in late 2021/2022 with a view to the next stage of the building work starting in 2023.

Matched funding is of vital importance in grant applications and in the past we have been restricted in the funders we could approach for the sums needed as we didn't have sufficient matched funding in place. We now have a substantial matched fund so we will be able to research potential big funders. New funders to approach include the National Churches Trust. Research into other funders will continue.'

iii) **Future events** at St Hubert's will be planned for 2022 and, just to whet the appetite, there is a distinct possibility that we will be staging a third Art Exhibition in September 2022.

9. Closing remarks: there is no doubt in my mind that the Margaret Lyle Legacy has given the Trust a confidence and an optimism as the board of trustees navigate the way forward in safeguarding the church building for future generations to enjoy. Armed with an in-depth and detailed report on the condition of the building, together with a prioritised and costed list of works required, I am sure that significant progress will be made towards securing the building.

AoB i) There was a request from Alan Drinkwater for the Friends Trust to look at the possibility of cultivating heritage links with other churches and chapels in the area.