



The Friends of Dedham Church Charity

Annual Report 2019

Registered Charity Number:

Charity No: 1103634

Registered Address:

Badgers, Coopers Lane, Dedham, Colchester CO7 6AX

Charity Trustees who served in 2019

Peter Wilson (Chairman)
Beth Mitchell (Secretary)
David Druitt (Treasurer)
Maria Johnston (Membership Secretary)
Jane Jewell
David Jewell
Jill Strangward
Peter Rowles
Suzanne Woods
Kevin Taylor
Jayne Anderson
Jean Flewin (Minutes Secretary)

Independent Financial Examiner

Philip Strangward

Objective of the Charity:

To maintain, repair, restore, preserve, improve, beautify and reconstruct for the benefit of the public the fabric of the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Dedham its monuments, fixtures, fittings, furniture, stained glass, ornaments and other chattels and its churchyard. In addition, the Society may support any charitable purpose in the parish of Dedham that promotes the whole mission of the said Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

Background

We are presently living in very uncertain times which has caused us to postpone the AGM which had been scheduled for the 29th April. I am sure you will all appreciate that maintaining the health and security of all our members is of paramount importance at this time, and will understand the need for us having taken this decision.

We will, when circumstances permit, rearrange the AGM at some time in the future, and will of course give members the required notice. Meanwhile we felt it important to keep you all informed and updated on the activities and business of the Friends, our plans for the year ahead and to provide details of our financial performance.

If you have any questions or queries relating to the reports below, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Membership

I am pleased to report that Membership of The Friends has increased during the past year from 155 as at 31 December 2018 to 164 members as at the 31 December 2019. Life members have over this same period increased from 26 to 34. Can I remind all Friends that the membership fee is now £15 for single membership and £30 for double membership; unfortunately, we still have a few members who have not updated their standing orders and continue to renew at the old rate. If you are one of these people, we would be grateful if you could attend to this.

While we are pleased at our continued increase in membership, we would like to improve the age profile of the membership by attracting more younger members. The church and its environs is central to village life, and is a key attraction for visitors who contribute so much to the prosperity of the village. Please encourage the younger people in the community to join us.

Main Donations 2019

As in previous years we supported our local school by paying for the hire of a coach so that pupils could on two occasions visit Blackbrook Care Home to give a concert to the patients. This is much appreciated by the patients and a valuable experience for the pupils. The Friends contributed to the relaying of the pathway in front of the Church leading to the Royal Square, a repair to a window in the Porch and also donated 50% of the money placed in the two Friends collection boxes in Church.

Unfortunately, my optimism for the completion of the toilets and hospitality unit in 2019 proved unfounded, as the design work and obtaining faculty approval took longer than expected--- but read on for better news.

Future Church Fabric Needs

The considerable preparation work for the toilets and Hospitality unit has finally borne fruit, with faculties having been granted at the beginning of March for both projects. Following on from a tendering process the contract was awarded to a local contractor, and work has now commenced. We had hoped that the works would be completed in early May but this is now clearly dependent on the impact of the corona virus.

The other urgent work requirement is the repair of the gutters; failure to address this can lead to further damage to other aspects of the church fabric and this is our next priority. As I reported last year some of the stained-glass windows are exhibiting bowing and cracking with small holes seen in some; these repairs will be expensive and the Friends will consider how we can assist the church in this work.

The other major concern is the poor state of the organ which is now showing signs of failure. Experts have been consulted on its condition and the consensus view is that further repair work will not resolve the issues and that it will need to be replaced. A group has been established to look at all the possibilities which include a new pipe organ, a fully refurbished pipe organ and a digital organ: the history of the church warrants a pipe organ, but clearly cost will have to be taken into consideration.

Fund Raising Activities

A slightly smaller range of events last year as it was decided not to hold the golf day. Our first and principal fund raising event was the annual Ball which was again a total sell out. Superbly organised by Jayne and with a new live band, the evening was greatly enjoyed by all—young and the older attendees! We must thank the local businesses and individuals who donated prizes for the raffle and the silent auction and helped to make the event a great financial success, raising £10063.00 for our funds.

The Friends Summer Pimms party was held at the home of David and Vee Druitt on a beautiful summer evening. The garden was looking wonderful and the large attendance enjoyed the usual very high standard of canapes provided by the lady members of the Friends and certainly no one left hungry. Drinks were again donated so the event raised £522.07 for the Friends funds.

The final event of the year was the trip to Hampton Court which was very well attended and enjoyed by all: the event raised £203.06 for our funds.

Financial Review

The financial performance for the year is provided separately in the accounts which have been prepared by David and which are attached to this report. During the year the Friends generated a profit of £10,413.90, and at the year-end had current assets of £95,349.30. Of this sum a maximum of £35,000 has been committed to the church as a grant towards the toilet and hospitality project, and a further sum of up to £10,000 has been promised as a grant towards the repair and replacement of church gutters. The Accounts have not yet been formally approved by the Trustees, but if you would like a copy please contact David by email at daviddruitt@gmail.com

Future Events

With the current uncertainty caused by the corona virus it is impossible to say what events we may be able to hold this year. We have already been forced to cancel the Ball that was planned for 26 June but we have booked Le Talbooth for 25th June 2021 for the next Dedham Ball. The next planned event this year is the Friends summer party which is due to be held on the 13 August in the vicarage garden, but this is clearly dependent on how long the current restrictions continue to apply. The same uncertainty surrounds the planned summer outing on the 11th September to Waddesdon Hall and we will keep you updated on both these events.

Trustees

The details of the trustees who have served during the year are detailed in this report. Peter Rowles has indicated that he would like to stand down as a trustee at the AGM and we thank him for his support and contribution to the Friends. In line with our constitution two of our trustees, Beth Mitchell and Jane Jewell resign, but offer themselves for re-election.

I have decided to step down as a trustee and chairman; I have held this position for eight years and am grateful to have had the opportunity of helping the Friends continue to play such a major role in helping to maintain the fabric of the church, but I feel that now is the time to pass on the baton and for me to focus on other activities. I would like to thank my fellow trustees and our secretary Jean for all their help and support, and to also thank all our members for their generosity over the years. Jo and I will of course continue with our support of the Friends and look forward to meeting you all at future events.