**FRIENDS OF HOLY TRINITY, BLYTHBURGH**

**Chair’s Report May 2022**

The aims of the Friends of Holy Trinity are to sustain a broad membership in order to support the fabric and thereby the ministry of Holy Trinity, and to spread information and increase interest in our historic church.

**Trustees**

Our Trustees at the date of this report, 21 April 2022, are: Sue Powell (Chair and Secretary), Sue Gerrard (Membership & Treasurer), Meryl Doney (Newsletter Editor), Roselyn Crane, and Terry Goss. Jenny Allen resigned in the autumn of 2021 and was thanked with flowers at the autumn wine tasting (see below). The Trustees are grateful for her long service to the Friends, and we are delighted that Roselyn Crane has been able to take her place.

**Membership**

As of April 2022 we had a total membership of 76 Friends (with two Honorary Friends). New members in 2021/2 have numbered nine: Martin Briggs; JT and GN Campbell; Tony and Pat Cronin; Clare Curtis; Tom and Kay Smith; Robert and Amanda Tasker; Laura Wade Gery; Francesca Warner; Jonathon Willson. (See further below.)

**Friends Open Afternoon**

The situation with regard to the pandemic was too uncertain for us to be able to arrange our planned Open Afternoon in 2021 (as it had been because of lockdown in 2020). The Open Afternoon 2022 took place in church on Saturday 14 May and consisted of a talk by Simon Roberts of Union Farm on the subject of ‘New Findings near Blythburgh’, followed by our usual tea and cake, and a tour of the church by Colin Huggins. The afternoon was very successful, with 35 attendees (16 of whom were Friends, with 3 new Friends signing up). The Trustees wish to thank the church for supplying tea, coffee and church-stall gifts for the speaker. After expenses (cakes, printing leaflets and posters, advert in Focus, and wine for the speaker), there was a fine profit of £119.75 in donations.

**Autumn Event**

We were able to hold the postponed spring event of 2020, a wine tasting hosted and funded by Sonia Boggis, in the church on Saturday 8 September 2021, the day before our Harvest Festival service and lunch. The Trustees are most grateful to Sonia for her generosity and knowledge, and to Jim Boggis for his own role in the event. It was a great success, with an attendance of 21 people. The Friends made a profit of £275.

**Finances**

It is always pleasant to find that people unknown to us value our church, and in March 2022 we received a bequest of £250 from a Mr Skilbeck. £1984.92 was received as a Gift Aid return in 2021, and the Friends balance at the end of March 2022 was £73,428.33. With the support of Jenny Allen, treasurer of the PCC, it has been decided to invest £70,000 until funds might be requested by the church.

**Initiatives**

1.The Friends’ offer of a substantial grant towards the reglazing of the east window of the church still stands, although PCC discussions have reached a pause, partly because of a need to concentrate on the project to install toilets and a small kitchen in the tower space.

2. Rev. Canon Simon Pitcher was invited to be our second Honorary Friend in 2021.

3. A panel showing the work of the Friends is on permanent display in the church, and material and pew cards inviting membership are always on hand.

4. Newsletters are sent to Friends in spring and autumn of each year.

5. The Trustees wish to ask the Parish Council to discuss in council the reinstatement of the lapsed Welcome Packs to new residents of Blythburgh, to which Friends material would be contributed.

**Thank you**

I would like to say how gratifying it is that we have a positive and energetic team of Trustees, who work together to raise the profile of, and funds for, Holy Trinity Blythburgh through both regular special events and regular communication with our Friends in church and by email.

Sue Powell