

FRIENDS OF HOLY TRINITY, BLYTHBURGH

Chair's Report 2026 for 2025

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 for 2025 remained: Sue Powell (Chair and Secretary), Sue Gerrard (Membership & Treasurer), Meryl Doney (Newsletter Editor), Roselyn Crane, and Terry Goss.

Membership

As of April 2026 we have a total membership of 94 Friends (up 15 since this time last year), with four Honorary Friends, Roy Tricker (notable author of many books on Suffolk churches and our Open Afternoon speaker in 2019), Rev. Canon Simon Pitcher (Rector of the Sole Bay team until 2023 and now Vicar of Lavenham with Preston), Charles Morris (Blythburgh resident, architect/designer, and member of Holy Trinity PCC), and Dr Alan Mackley (Blythburgh resident and scholar of Suffolk history).

Friends Open Afternoon

After the unavoidable postponement of the 2024 Open Afternoon (due to the illness of the speaker, the Rev. Malcolm Doney), the programme was held on our usual date, the third Saturday in May 2025. The focus was still on Ronald Blythe, churchman, author, raconteur, and friend of artists, writers and musicians, but the format was different, and arguably more successful, with an interview between Malcolm Doney and Ian Collins, Blythe's biographer, before our usual tea and cakes and optional tour of the church.

Finances

The total income for 2025 was £16,487.33 (£5,000 more than April 2024).

The total expenditure was £18,455.56 (£15,000 more than last year, but including the donation to the Church of £10,000 for the works on the west tower, now successfully completed). With successful investments in a Flagstone CAF account, the balance at 31/12/2025 was £99,837.30 (Flagstone £97,452.95, Barclays current account £2,384.35).

Initiatives

1. The Friends' offer of a substantial grant (set at £70,000) for the clear glazing of the east window of the church was reiterated and accepted by the PCC. An application is currently being submitted to the DAC.
2. The Friends were happy to agree to the request from the PCC for £10,000 towards the tower works, two lavatories and a small kitchen galley, with an organ loft above, designed by Charles Morris.
3. The general commendation of the nave altar (also designed by Charles Morris) led the Trustees to ask if Charles would design a lectern to match. The design was approved by the Trustees, with thanks to Charles, and now awaits further testing of technical details. It will be funded through the £5,000 bequest from Kate Chapman in memory of the Marchmont family.
4. Matthew Sullivan was approached to update and maintain the Friends website, which he kindly agreed to undertake.
5. Meryl Doney continued to progress her project to add a third panel (exclusively for Friends notices) to the existing two-panel memorial notice board in the church.

6. Alan Rutter, Blythburgh resident and artist, designed a much admired Christmas card for the Friends (a black, white and gold linocut of the church). It sold out before Christmas but may be repeated for 2026.

Thank you

I would like, as ever, to thank our small but engaged and energetic team of Trustees, who work together to raise the profile of, and funds for, Holy Trinity Blythburgh through both special events and regular communication with our Friends in church and by email.

Sue Powell