



The Friends of St Neots Parish Church

Registered Charity Number 1178630

A charitable association founded by citizens of St Neots in 2014, The Friends raise funds to assist in the repair, restoration and improvement of St Neots Parish Church but do not support religious activities. Membership of The Friends is open to all, individuals and companies, without distinction. The Friends are registered with the Inland Revenue for Gift Aid. www.friendsofsnpc.org.uk

Bruce Elam (Chairman)

John Sinfield (Hon Treasurer)

Vacant (Hon Secretary)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR AGM ON 10th JULY 2024

The Friends Constitution is dated 3rd April 2014, and our inaugural meeting was in May 2014, so this is our 10th anniversary year. Accordingly, this year's AGM is an opportunity to celebrate and give ourselves a little pat on the back for starting The Friends and completing what I would describe as 10 very successful years.

Whilst membership is still low (too low really), and activities less, it is worth reflecting briefly on what we have achieved during these 10 years namely, 13 concerts and 4 cheese, wine and pate parties, with a total raised of £53,493.00. We have given £17,909.00 to the PCC for assorted projects. However, no request for funds has been received since prior to Covid, which explains the large amount on deposit with Skipton Building Society of £31,782.94 with interest accruing daily.

This year we held the Jordan Ashman concert (BBC Young Musician of the Year 2022) which I think was a unique experience for us all. Jordan was a delight to hear and it was a pleasure to meet with his family. The Ashman concert on 5th April was just in our current financial year from 1st April to 31st March and nothing further is planned at present. However, SAVE THE DATE of 31st May 2025 when the Wandering Minstrels will be giving a Gilbert and Sullivan concert in the Church. After that we could return to a choral concert e.g. The Kings Men for the 4th time.

No report should be made without including a huge "Thank You" to St Neots Town Council for the support it has given us over the years in making grants for our main concerts. Also, special thanks to the current Rector, Paul Hutchinson, and his predecessor, Paul Andrews, for the use of the Church for concerts and events. Also, our thanks to Helen Bloxham for administrative support.

On this anniversary I wish to thank each and every one of the Trustees, original and more recent, for their work and support for our charity. In particular, the two original Officers, Peter Raggatt, whose idea it was, with Derek Young, and who helped me set it all up with the Charity Commission and get the charity off the ground. Having stepped back from the role of Secretary recently, thank you Peter, and your wife Eileen, for all your various involvements in the Friends during our ten years.

Next, our financial whizzo, John Sinfield, who has kept immaculate accounts for 10 years, dealing with the bank, Skipton Building Society, and The Charity Commission. Running any business one needs financial competence and efficiency and we have had that 100%. Thank you also to our Independent Examiner, Roger Brittain, for certifying the accuracy of the accounts since we started.

Thank you also to our remaining Trustees, Jane Gustafsson, hostess for meetings with her home being a 'Premier Inn' for artistes to stay and change, together with 'meeter and greeter', Roland. Head doorkeeper for every concert, Philip Barrett, and David Smith, ticket seller bar none and membership chaser. Stephen Gill recently brought the average age down of the Trustees considerably and thank you for joining us Stephen. Also, many thanks to Sally Brooks who is our Minute

Secretary and has attended to the typing and distribution of papers for this AGM. Mary Draper was a trustee initially before moving to Bedfordshire and thank you Mary for your contribution.

As to the immediate future, our search for a new Secretary continues. Personally speaking, I would like to step back from being Chairman so we need to find a younger successor who can continue our good work. No specific timetable but I really cannot go on for ever! Please think urgently about successor candidates.

My thanks again to you all for establishing The Friends of St Neots Parish Church and making it so successful during the first ten years.

E Bruce Elam, Chairman