

2024 REPORT TO THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

THE FRIENDS OF ST PETER'S

The last 12 months have seen noticeable and pleasing improvements on the South side of the church. What is so encouraging is that the changes have blended in so well. The base of the Tower with its knapped flints, S.W. corner of the nave with new stone quoins, the extended roof with matching tiles and the Vestry with new cast pipes all look really smart, however we have had to spend over £25,000 gross. This development completes the necessary work on the outside of the church.

The churchyard continues to be kept smart and a big 'thank you' to the 40 volunteer 'mowers', who make the tasks so much easier. At this time of year it takes over 5 man hours every week to maintain and cut the grass, with work on the 14 flower beds, the hedges and trees in addition.

The village was able to enjoy the Salvation Army band for Christmas Carols on the village field: a 'thank you' for the £5,000 donation towards their work in Felixstowe, which, encouragingly, is being used to develop a successful training initiative for the unemployed.

The Ride and Stride event in September for the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust saw a record collection of £1,350, half of which comes back to Friends' funds.

We had a planned deficit of over £7,000. The need for more annual income, via Standing Orders or bequests, is going to be essential, if we are to continue our work. We thank Pat Owen for her bequest of £4,500 received during the year.

We thought that the Friends' concentration this year would be on the inside of the church, but the granting of The Ship's planning permission to double the size of the pub has meant that we will no longer be able to use their Car Park for our bigger services. Thus the need for a church Car Park in the churchyard extension, with access via our back gate, is having to take precedence. This will require planning permissions from both

the Church (DAC) and East Suffolk Council. It will necessitate the possible de-consecration of some of the churchyard land, re-positioning of the rabbit-fencing, the re-siting of some of the leaf-pounds and the laying of heavy-duty plastic re-enforcing mesh to stabilise the surface. It may cost over £10,000. There is likely to be a restriction on the use of this facility to 28 days a year, so it will have to be for church use only.

The detailed design of the internal improvements is taking shape, but we are some way from applying for a faculty. However, it will include new floor and storage cupboards in the Tower, a small kitchen facility, the withdrawal of 8 pews (4 either side at the back of the church) and a new P.A. system.

My thanks goes to the Friends' Committee of 7 which recently recruited Allison Girling and particular thanks to the Treasurer, Peter Allan. The Friends, which is regarded as an example of good practice, is being copied in other parishes. However, we are only as good as our last performance and the future is going to be very challenging, both in terms of our output and our ability to pay for expensive re-organisation. If you know of anyone with spare cash, please introduce me to them.

Ian Angus (Chair of the Friends of St Peter's)
29/04/2024