

THE FRIENDS: Ladies & Gentlemen - Good evening

The bullish Friends' report for 2025 was slightly over-optimistic in what we had hoped to deliver in the 12 months that has followed, but circumstances beyond our control made for unexpected difficulties. With over 150 members and participation on a weekly basis, we remain an active force for good within the village and beyond.

With an income of £14,250 we were able to fit a new P.A. system in the church (£4,600) and we repaired the four louvre windows in the tower at a cost of £6,700. Our costs of £17,250 including £3,350 for architect's fees has resulted in a loss for the year of £3,000, which was taken from savings. As usual the churchyard was well maintained with weekly help from the mowing rota of almost 40 people.

The more ambitious work on the re-organisation of the interior of the church had to be delayed due to the government's regrettable decision to charge VAT on all church work, which has potentially added £18,000 to our costs.

This year we provided two Bishops and their Chaplain for the Ride & Stride event in September and we shared the resultant £1,300 with the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust. We again collected much food for our Harvest Festival donations to Food Banks in Ipswich & Felixstowe, greatly helped by OOCL and BDK. This year £6,300 was generously donated at Christmas for the Salvation Army in Felixstowe: a phenomenal total. People are so generous in their efforts to help us in our work: even a village Grand National Lottery is used to swell our funds!

Thank you to everyone who has supported the aims of the Friends: which are to look after the church and churchyard and be a positive strength within the village. Thank you very much.

FRIENDS' SUMMARY 2026:

1. **Membership:** remains over 150.

2. **Maintenance work:** Government's decision to add VAT to capital spending meant major internal re-organisation was delayed. Potentially £18,000 extra. Churchyard was well looked after (40 on Mowing Rota).

3. **Finances:**
 - i. Income: £14,250 Expenditure: £17,250 so
£3,000 loss (from savings)
 - ii. £4,600 for new P.A. system
 - iii. £6,700 to repair 4 Louvres in Tower

4. **Charity Work:**
 - i. £1,300 collected for SHCT
 - ii. Donation of food for Food Banks in Ipswich & Felixstowe
 - iii. Christmas appeal: £6,300 donated to S.A. in Felixstowe.