

THE FRIENDS OF THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST ANDREW DONHEAD ST ANDREW

2021 AGM

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON THE CALENDAR YEAR 2020

INTRODUCTION

Who would have thought, so soon after our 2020 Friends AGM on 14th March, that our world would be turned upside down by the impact of the Covid-19 virus?

Within a couple of days, social activities, face-to-face meetings, charity events, choir practices and church services were being cancelled across the country.

It is so sad that our programme of community activities planned for 2020 and for the first part of 2021 has had to be postponed.

St Andrew's Church stands warm and welcoming but devoid of villagers apart from on Tuesdays and Fridays when the church is open for private prayer and contemplation.

THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AND APPEAL

You have heard from George that the Development Project is complete, apart from a very few items held up by the impact of the Covid-19 virus.

You have heard from Danuta that the funds raised for the Development Appeal and the Chair Appeal have, together, covered the entire cost of the Project.

There is even a small surplus, which will be transferred to the Fabric Fund.

THE CHAIR APPEAL

The Chair Appeal will continue until such time as all 124 chairs have been sponsored. So far, just over 60 chairs have been donated.

Please don't forget the idea of giving a chair in memory of a loved one or to mark a major family celebration.

THANKS

Now that the Development Project and Appeal is concluded, the PCC's Hon Treasurer, Alistair Stoker, will present the final Development Project Accounts at the church's APCM on 24th April.

That will mark the end of a process which began with conversations between villagers before the year 2000, led to the founding of the Friends in 2003, the consultations with villagers in 2011-12 and the launch of the new Vision & Mission for the Church and its associated Appeal in 2012.

Building work began in 2017 and finished in 2019 and we celebrated the re-opening in style in October of that year.

As this chapter of the life of our church in its community draws to a close, I would like to thank the many people who have supported this endeavour through 'thick and thin'.

Sadly, some of them are no longer with us. Twenty members of the congregation have died since the year 2000 and about thirty have left the village. As one looks at the names, it's easy to recall their many contributions to the Project and the Appeal. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

When one looks round the village now, there are so many villagers who have helped in so many ways, on the Friends Committee, running events and activities and so much more. Every year at this AGM I tried to thank them by name. This year I will simply thank everyone collectively.

And, of course, they continue to help as we work on the churchyard project, which is already looking terrific as the planting from last year starts to show itself.

IN CONCLUSION

Once the lockdown is over, we will be able to re-discover, appreciate and start to use again our fine mediaeval church, which has been beautifully conserved; is warm, well-lit, comfortable and flexible with a fine organ and with all the resources that the Development Project and the new extension have given us.

It will again be a place of regular worship. A haven for popping in to and for quiet contemplation. A building with a strong sense of continuity with its past and a clear understanding of and enthusiasm for its long-term future.

It will again be the place where the village gathers for a wide range of social and cultural activities and a place where the community can gather to celebrate baptisms, weddings and anniversaries and to mark the deaths of loved ones.

I hope we all agree we can look forward with confidence to realising the Vision for St Andrew's Church as a centre and focus for our village community.

Thank you all.

Michael Hockney

March 2021