



Friends of St Cuthbert's

Spring 2024 Newsletter

As we start to see the green shoots of spring and begin to think about the joy and challenges that each of the forthcoming seasons will bring it seems appropriate to reflect on the previous year and on the support that the Friends of St Cuthbert's have given to our lovely Church since the friends scheme was introduced in 2018.

In 2023 we were delighted to be able to welcome our new Rector, Reverend Dr Susan Salt. She is the Rector of the Joint Benefice of St Cuthbert's and St Thomas' and is passionate about the role that our Churches play within our wider communities. Here are some of Susan's reflections on her first year with us.....

"It has been an amazing twelve months of being inspired and humbled by the hard work and dedication of the many people who worship and care for St Cuthbert's. The past is the foundation of our present and I am thankful for the many people who have and who continue to keep this beautiful building going.

But the past is not our future. The future is ours to write and how it is written rests very firmly on all of us. How are we making a difference as God's church in this place to our community and the wider world? There are many things St Cuthbert's does well. It is a holy space appreciated by many. It is a place of prayer for the community and the wider world. It is here for the joy of baptisms and weddings and the pain and anguish of funerals. The church provides a space for the village to gather at key festivals, to mark the seasons, a place to ponder the big questions as well as supporting the village school.

With your help and the help of the community we hope that we can secure the future of this beautiful medieval church and secure its future for all."

How has our Friends scheme supported us?

We like many Churches need every bit of help we have to stay open and support our communities. The funds raised through our Friends scheme are helping us

to do just that and are used exclusively to support the costs of repair and maintenance of the Church and Churchyard.

So far we have raised around £31,000 through donations, fundraising events and legacies. To date just over £28,000 has been spent on a number of essential projects:

- *Re- roofing and repair to the side celestry window,*
- *Major repair to a chancel monument that had fallen from the wall,*
- *Several roof repairs,*
- *The building of a path within the churchyard extension,*
- *New fenceposts and re-hanging of the gate into the Churchyard extension,*
- *Repairs to the organ,*
- *Repairs to the Boiler,*
- *Development of the plans to address the necessary repairs to the West Window to meet the conservation and heritage requirements,*
- *Painting of the Lych gate*

Thank you so much to all our Friends! We could not have completed any of these projects without your generosity.

Christmas at St Cuthbert's

As we all know the pandemic years put a halt to many of our fundraising efforts so we are now hoping to put some of the 'fun' back into our fundraising work as well as grow our Friends membership. We are constantly looking at refreshing our events and whilst we have not restarted our traditional Christmas fair we have continued to run our Grand Christmas Draw which has been a valuable source of income to the Church.

We were happy to again offer the opportunity to our community to sponsor the lighting of our Christmas Tree which looked spectacular in our Churchyard. The dedications to those who are remembered were displayed around the Tree and we thank everyone who so generously donated.

This last year we again hosted a wonderful Christmas Tree festival with some amazing and creative displays provided by local families, local businesses and our fabulous school children. We are so grateful to all of them. The Church

looked amazing and special thanks to our volunteers who manned the open days and organised the displays.

It was lovely to see many families in Church over the Christmas period both visiting the festival and attending our special services. In addition to our normal planned worship we had a fabulous Christingle service with the Children and a Carol service where we sang our favourite carols with Marshside Brass Band and enjoyed a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie courtesy of members of the congregation.

Thanks also to our wandering minstrels!! We sang Carols in Tesco and the Saracens head again this year and lots of our friends joined us to spread some festive cheer.

What next?

We have for some time been facing considerable challenges not least with maintaining our building and with making it fit for the future. We are currently working with the Church architects on developing the schemes that are needed to make us watertight and to improve access. This will involve major roof repairs, repairs to the significant weather damage to the West window and providing better access for all.

Needless to say we do not have the funds for this work. We will be prioritising working up applications for various grants and raising local funds. We would love you to join us in achieving the vision to be a centre of hope and inspiration for the community.

Joining our Friends scheme

Historically there has been a minimum subscription of £20 payable and renewable annually. All subscriptions are held in a separate "friends" bank account and are only used to maintain and enhance the church building and graveyard.

Whilst times are challenging for everyone we would ask all our friends, old and new, to consider whether they are able to increase their support. Even an additional £10 would help. Thank you.

*If you would like to join our Friends scheme a form can be printed off from our website (see below) or is available from the membership secretary Stephanie Albertina at The Parish Office, Millenium Centre, Church Lane. Lydiate L31 4HL
Tel 0151 526 2292.*

Website: www.halsallstcuthberthub.co.uk

E mail: stthomassteph@btinternet.com

If you are unable to support us financially there are many other ways that you can help us. Whether this is through attending events, joining the friends fundraising team or joining our other volunteer teams.

***To all our current friends, thank you so much for your support. It means a lot!
To new potential friends we look forward to getting to know you.***