

Trustees Annual Report to 31st December 2023

Registered Charity Number 1184596



Trustees

Trustees in positions until 5th April 2025.

- Joanne Slade (Chair)
- Sheila Vincent (Secretary to Friends and District Church Council member)
- Shan Moule (District Church Council member)
- Hilda Roxborough (District Church Council Secretary)

Focus for 2023

The Friends of St John's focus for 2023 was to organise profile raising events and to concentrate on the application to National Lottery Heritage Fund for a grant towards the Spire Appeal. Over the course of the year, the budgeted cost of the Spire Appeal increased to £360,000 plus vat, due to inflation and the increased cost of building supplies.

The Spire

The top 2.25m section of the spire at St John's, the tallest in Worcestershire, urgently needs to be removed and replaced. The iron vane rod, which is encased in sandstone, has rusted. The rusting has caused the stonework to crack. This is evident on the east and west elevations with the solid top section of the spire. The cracking spire top is secured with eight stainless steel bands and the cracks are filled with resin to hold the stone together. The annual spire inspection undertaken by Dawson Steeplejacks in November 2023, revealed that the resin was falling out and the cracks were expanding. The bands and resin will be renewed in early 2024.

Building At Risk

The church remains on Historic England's "Buildings At Risk" Register.

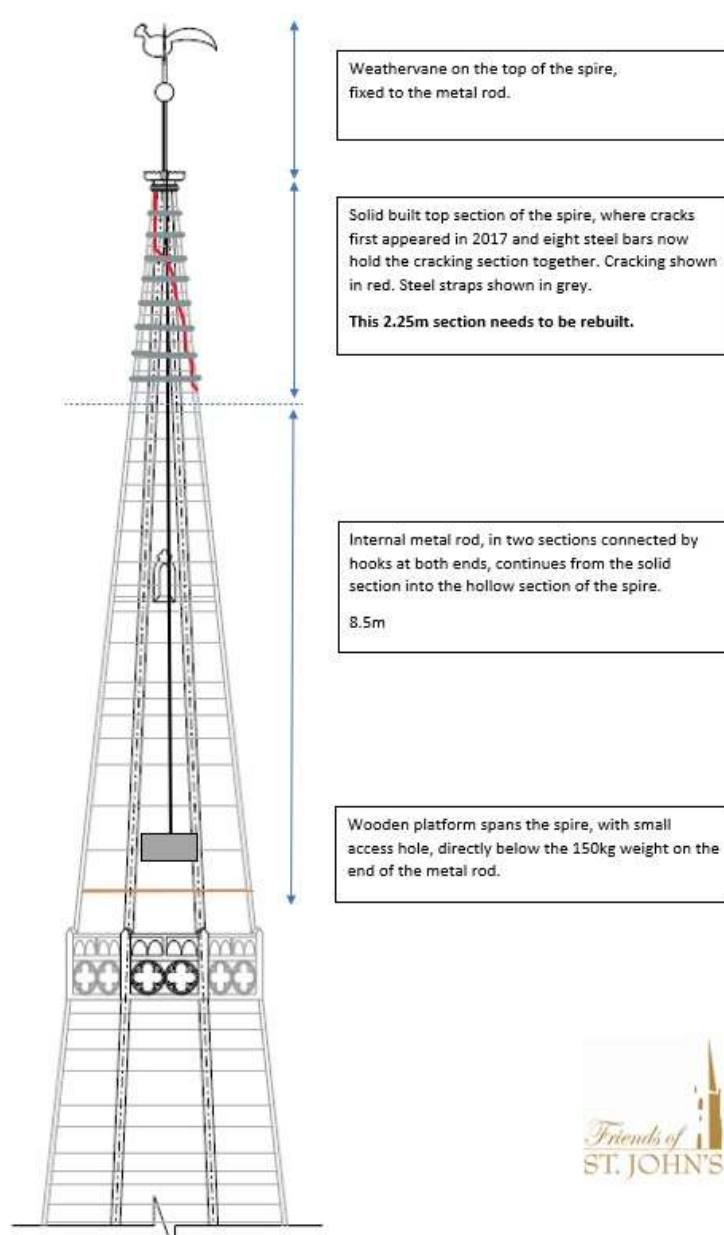
Spire Appeal Project and Funding

On 2nd November 2023 an application for funding was submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for £249,975 towards the anticipated cost of £360,000 plus vat. Letters of support for the application were received from the Rt.Hon. Sir Sajid Javid MP for Bromsgrove, Cllr Mrs Sam Ammar, Chairman Bromsgrove District Council, the Venerable Nikki Groarke Archdeacon of Dudley, Leigh Blakeman Chadsgrove Specialist College and Jane Earl Chair North East Worcestershire Cultural Compact.

Additional sources of local and national funding have been identified, but no applications will be made until news is received from the NLHF.

Architect and Faculty

Following the retirement of the church's long-standing Architect Richard Lamb, Friends need to appoint a new architect to take on the spire project. Once an architect is appointed the application for a faculty from the Worcester Diocese can be made. The capital work required is a like for like replacement, using a non-ferrous metal rod and new sand stone. The DAC are fully aware of the need and the scope of the project. A full faculty is required. This will take time and it is hoped that the process won't delay the urgent work being undertaken before the winter of 2024.



Events and Initiatives Organised

Friends held an open day in the summer which attracted many people who climbed the tower and had a go on the organ. The Heritage Open Day in September was equally successful. Local organisations supported the Spire Appeal through their events. Consensus Opera's night at Avoncroft Museum and the Housman Society's 50th Anniversary Celebration Concert at Routh Hall were held in aid of Friends. The Bromsgrove Carnival organising committee chose Friends as a charity to support at their community event.

Towards the end of the year many local individuals and organisations raised funds on behalf of the Spire Appeal, following publicity gained from the submission of the application. The Orchestra of St John performed The Snowman at Christmas in Routh Hall, Bromsgrove School, local residents Jeff & Jules Evans asked for donations in lieu of gifts for their 40th Wedding Anniversary and Bromsgrove's Got 2 Sing Christmas Concert raised funds for the Spire Appeal. Everyone had their fingers crossed for the application!



The 100 Club was launched to encourage fundraising by individuals and small groups who pledge to raise a minimum of £100. A pre-loved clothes sale and a Christmas table-top sale were the first two contributors, which together raised over £1,100.

Bromsgrove Christmas Markets, held on High Street in November, in conjunction with Bromsgrove District Council, were as popular and successful as ever! Thousands of people visited. Friends raised almost £2000, raised the profile of the Appeal and supported a number of local charities through this community event.

Friend's Heritage Engagement survey received over 130 responses and was used in the application to National Lottery Heritage Fund. Friends were happy to support the churchyard clean-up day, the Railway Society conference, the earthquake appeal concert and the monthly Cake and Coffee Concerts. Friends is an active member of Bromsgrove Arts Alive and we are represented on Bromsgrove District Council's Cultural Compact and ReNEW project.

Social Media, Press & Publicity

www.facebook.com/FriendsStJohnsBromsgrove page has over 1200 followers. X (formerly Twitter)

[@FriendsStJohns](#) has over 700 followers. Instagram [@CelebrateBromsgrove](#) (Shared with Bromsgrove Society) has 925 followers.

Articles about Friends of St John's projects and activities appear regularly in community magazine, Completely Bromsgrove, newspapers The Bromsgrove Standard and Bromsgrove Advertiser, and other media channels online including the BBC.

Income Received

Friends Subscriptions, Donations, books sold	£ 4,945.92
Grant from Bromsgrove Carnival	£ 1,550.00
Gift Aid Received	£ 997.37
Income for events (after expenses)	£ 1,989.88

Friends of St John's Accounts to 31st December 2023			
Registered Charity 1184596			
The Friends of the Church of St John the Baptist, Bromsgrove			
Summary of Account 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023			
Balance Carried Forward from 31.12.2022			£19,725.70
Item	Income	Expenditure	Totals
General Donations			
Friends Subscriptions	£1,281.05		£1,281.05
One off donations	£2,551.37		£2,551.37
100 Club Donations	£1,113.50		£1,113.50
Grant Received from Bromsgrove Carnival	£1,550.00		£1,550.00
Gift Aid	£997.37		£997.37
General Expenditure			
Ormerod Rutter Accountants		£360.00	-£360.00
Subscriptions		£15.00	-£15.00
Insurance		£380.75	-£380.75
HSBC Bank Fees		£15.00	-£15.00
Website		£43.00	-£43.00
Sundry Expenses		£0.00	£0.00
Events Organised			
Consensus Opera	£500.00		£500.00
Housman Concert	£1,000.00		£1,000.00
OSJ Snowman	£400.00		£400.00
Christmas Markets November	£4,133.88	£2,144.00	£1,989.88
TOTAL	£13,527.17	£2,957.75	£10,569.42
Closing Balance at 31.12.2023			£30,295.12
HSBC Year End Balance	£0.00		
Lloyds Current Account Year End Balance	£9,250.23		
Lloyds Online Savings Year End Balance	£100.89		
Lloyds Fixed Savings Year End Balance	£20,000.00		
PayPal Year End Balance	£944.00		
	£30,295.12		
Project Costs	Total Project Spend	Contribution from DCC Church Funds	Grants made to St John's Church DCC by the Friends of St John's
	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Grants and Funding Received			
Bromsgrove Carnival	£1,550.00		
100 Club Projects	£1,113.50		
Housman Celebration Concert	£1,000.00		
Consensus Opera Evening	£500.00		
Christmas Markets	£1,989.88		
OSJ Snowman 2022 & 2023	£400.00		
Listed Places of Worship VAT grant	£0.00		
	£6,553.38		
Notes			
The HSBC bank was closed. All standing order from regular supporters were move to Lloyds or cancelled.			
Friends income £13,500 - no independent examiners report is required. HMRC do not require a tax submission.			
No contributions were made towards the church maintenance as all efforts were put into the Spire Appeal Fundraising			

Looking Forward – the first quarter of 2024

In early January 2024 the Friends of St John's received fantastic news from the National Lottery Heritage Fund – a grant award of £249,975 had been made for the Spire Appeal to repair and restore the top of the spire and carry out a Heritage Engagement and Enhanced Learning project for the benefit of Bromsgrove residents and visitors to the town and church.

[Celebration time as Bromsgrove's Friends of St John's Church get £250,000 Heritage Lottery grant to restore spire - The Bromsgrove Standard](#)

Funding applications to other local and national charitable trusts began in earnest!

Fully Funded Digital Survey

In February a team from the University of Wolverhampton and the National Brownfield Institute spent two days at St John's. They surveyed the ancient building, inside and out, with state of the art equipment and produced a 3D Cloud Point survey along with a 3D Matterport internal virtual tour. These surveys will be used by the Architect and Structural Engineer to produce the technical drawings for the faculty and tender documents. The 3D Virtual Tour will enable access to the inside of the church from anywhere in the world via the internet.

[State of the art digital survey's boost St John's Spire Appeal - The Bromsgrove Standard](#)



Thanks and Recognition

The Friends team have been honoured to receive thanks and recognition from Sir Sajid Javid MP and Bromsgrove District Council via Chairman of the Council Cllr Sam Ammar for securing a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Sir Sajid, a long-standing supporter of the Friends of St John's and the work we do to restore and maintain the ancient, landmark church, visited the team to personally congratulate us on our efforts to secure the National Lottery Heritage Fund award and to learn about the plans to successfully achieve the urgent work.

Prior to the Council meeting in January, Chairman of the Council Cllr Sam Ammar presented Friends Chairman Jo Slade with a council plaque. In her opening comments she thanked the team at Friends of St John's, on behalf of the council, for the dedicated months of volunteer time and resulting award of £250,000. She said St. John's was of great significance to the town, but had been listed on Historic England's "Building's At Risk" register due to issues on the spire – the tallest in Worcestershire.

Architect, Structural Engineer and Temporary Spire Repairs

Stephen Oliver of Oliver Architecture has been appointed as project architect and Ian Ceney of C2Designs remains as the appointed Structural Engineer.

In early March steeplejacks replaced the steel bands which hold the cracking top section of the spire together as they had become tight with additional movement. The resin in the cracks was removed and reapplied. These temporary repairs were funded by the Bromsgrove Rotary via the Len Giles Trust.

Ways to Support

There are many ways to support the Spire Appeal project. You Can contact the team by email at friends.stjohns.church@gmail.com or make a donation via www.justgiving.com/campaign/stjohns-spire or follow on social media www.facebook.com/FriendsStJohnsBromsgrove X (Twitter) @FriendsStJohns Instagram @CelebrateBromsgrove or start a 100 Club or join the fundraising team.

Our Positive Ambition

The team are confident that the outstanding funding can be found, and a contractor engaged for the work to be undertaken in 2024, before the winter.

Become a friend today

Supporting the ongoing maintenance, restoration and improvements at Bromsgrove's landmark, historic church building.
Charity Registered with the Charity Commission Number 1184596