

THE FRIENDS OF WALPOLE OLD CHAPEL

England & Wales · Charity number 1198030

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2022-02-23

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address c/o Oak Cottage
Halesworth Road
Walpole
Suffolk

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Activities

Objects: TO SECURE, FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND THE PUBLIC GENERALLY, THE PRESERVATION, REPAIR, MAINTENANCE, AND DEVELOPMENT OF WALPOLE OLD CHAPEL, TOGETHER WITH ITS CONTENTS, BURIAL GROUND, AND CURTILAGE. TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF WALPOLE OLD CHAPEL.

Activities: The Friends of Walpole Old Chapel help to care for, maintain and develop Walpole Old Chapel, for the benefit of the general public. We also help to educate the general public about the historical and cultural significance of the chapel by opening the building to the public and by providing educational material, displays and performances

Classification

- **How:** Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space
- **What:** Arts/culture/heritage/science
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Suffolk

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£19,200	£10,462	-	-
2024-03-31	£10,903	£6,637	-	-
2023-03-31	£7,936	£7,779	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Dr Paul Douglas Simmons		2021-12-01
Dr SIMON JONATHAN WEEKS PHD		2021-12-01
Jacquelin Burgess		2024-06-08
LINDA LE VERSHA		2021-12-01
Lyn Mary Banks		2021-12-01
Miriam Joan Stead		2023-06-03

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**The Friends of Walpole Old Chapel
Charity Registration number 1198030**

Annual Report for the Year 2024-2025

The third year of the Friends of Walpole Old Chapel [FWOC] has seen significant progress in meeting its charitable objectives. This report deals first with developments in the proposed transfer of ownership of the Chapel from the Historic Chapels Trust [HCT] to FWOC. Second, a major grant to fund the first phase of conservation work to re-render the west and north elevations of the building was secured in March 2025. Third, activities to educate the public about the religious, historical and cultural significance of the Chapel were expanded. Finally, income and donations from visitors and audiences increased in 2024-5; more Friends willing to support the Chapel have been recruited, as have the number of active volunteers. The report ends with the financial position of FWOC as of 31 March 2025.

The year began with uncertainty regarding future ownership of the Chapel. The prospective new owner withdrew from negotiations with HCT in late May 2024 which meant the Chapel was at risk of being sold at public auction. The Trustees, after careful deliberation about the potential risks and benefits of taking on ownership of the building, decided to proceed with an attempt for FWOC to take on the ownership (as reported at last year's AGM). A Memorandum of Understanding between FWOC and HCT was signed in August, with HCT retaining ownership until the end of 2025 when the property, the Chapel and chapel yard, will be assigned to the Friends charity. FWOC will become the lead organisation for securing funding for phase two of the re-rendering project and take over responsibility for the long-term care and maintenance of the Chapel.

Securing sufficient funds to pay for the re-rendering of the Chapel has been the central concern of the Trustees this year. Local donations from businesses and individuals of more than £42,000 have helped to support the case being made by HCT and FWOC to national funding organisations. In late autumn, led by HCT's professional consultants, we participated in the tendering process for the re-rendering work. Negotiations between the potential major funders between January and March 2025 ended successfully. The cost of re-rendering the north and west elevations of the building will be covered by the Community Asset Fund (CAF) with the remaining cost being met by HCT and the Reserve fund held by FWOC. Cliveden Conservation began work on site on 14 April 2025.

FWOC continued to develop its programme of educational activities in 2024-5. Notable work by volunteer members of the Discovery Project this year included a detailed photographic survey of graffiti in the chapel, and mining the Chapel's Baptism records (1706-1835) to discover the locations and distances that members of the Chapel's gathered congregation travelled for baptisms. Both projects were displayed for visitors at the Heritage Open Days in September. Summaries of the projects have been published in FWOC's quarterly Newsletter which has more than 600 subscribers and full accounts of both pieces of research are available on the Chapel's website.

The chapel hosted 4 visits from students at the local Bramfield House School. The relationship with the School of History at UEA was also strengthened in 2024-5. Three M.A. students completed their public heritage projects with work useful to the

Chapel. In June 2024 we hosted a lecture by Dr Joel Halcombe on 'Walpole & the Puritan Revolution', sponsored by the Centre for East Anglian Studies, now available on the Chapel's website. A full programme of 23 events was held over the summer, comprising ten talks, nine concerts, a music workshop for children, a play, a poetry reading and the annual candlelit carol service. Just under one thousand visitors attended the events, with ticket sales and donations showing an increase on the two previous years.

Prudently, the Chapel has retained its certification as a Registered Place of Worship since 1996. The 2024 Carol Service was the last one to be led by Revd. Bill Mahood, who has retired after 18 years as our minister. We are grateful for his years of devoted service officiating at all the weddings, funerals and baptisms held in the Chapel. The Revd. Dr Catherine Ball will be taking over the role as our new minister and we look forward to welcoming her to Walpole Old Chapel.

The Trustees were sorry to learn of the death of Dr Kate Tiller, one of our patrons, who had a deep love of the Chapel and was a generous donor to the Chapel's repair and conservation fund. The professional opera singer, Robert Gildon, has agreed to be a Patron. His enthusiasm for the building and recognition of its superb acoustics for music events, many of which he has personally initiated and participated in, complements the gifts of our other patrons. All are warmly thanked for their support during the year.

The numbers of paid-up Friends of Walpole Old Chapel rose to 80 with three honorary life members. The mandate from the 2024 AGM to have three tiers of subscription levels has largely been successful. FWOC now has 16 Friends at Supporter level and 18 at Benefactor level within the total number of Friends. Friends' income is used to support the running costs of the Chapel. One Friend has played a very active role in promoting the Chapel within his social network and we hope to expand this aspect of recruitment next year. Finally, FWOC recruited a new Trustee in September 2025 through the UEA link, and the number of volunteers has also increased to more than 20 and the Trustees are exploring ways to encourage more active participation in hosting the Chapel's open afternoon and summer evening events.

FWOC ended the financial year with £44,398.52 in its bank accounts. The target for 2024-25 was an operational surplus of £2,500 but this was surpassed more than threefold with a surplus of £8,737.72. This was achieved by concerts and events at the chapel, which contributed £3325 in profits, and the generosity of the Friends, whose membership contributions amounted to £4,678. Funds brought in by the Friends have been used for the day-to-day running costs of the chapel. During the year, FWOC also received specific donations of £2183.06 for the Unwrapped Refurbishment Project and this reserved fund is £13,430.98 in credit as of 31st March 2025.

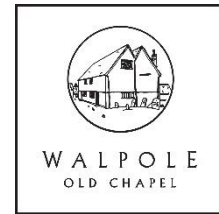
The Trustees of FWOC: Simon Weeks (Secretary), Lyn Banks (Treasurer), Paul Simmons (Membership co-ordinator), Lin le Versha (Summer programme convenor), Miriam Stead (Discovery Project leader), Jacquelin Burgess (new trustee, autumn 2024)

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Annual Report for the Year 2023-2024



We are pleased to report we have had a successful year, our second as a Charity.

We have continued to lead and secure progress on the major project for repairs and conservation to The Chapel. We have also been exploring a new partnership with another organisation as the time moves towards the Historic Chapels Trust's intention to devolve ownership of the chapels in its care to other bodies.

We had a good turnout of people at the Chapel on Monday 8 May to be part of the post- Coronation volunteering day. Our aim was to tackle the brambles and other invasive plants in the Chapel yard, in order to help preserve the rare, herb-rich grassland. Further work was undertaken in the autumn by a professional firm who have removed many of the elm suckers that had sprouted around tombstones.

Our small but dedicated group of volunteers continues to beaver away on our research project about the history of the Chapel and its community, in partnership with Halesworth & District Museum. On the website you can find a brief history of the Chapel with a timeline, the graveyard survey, baptism registers and accompanying notes, the story of John Baldry Saunders, a conscientious objector, and a transcript of our original title deed, along with the story of Alma Dale, the celebrated Quaker preacher from Canada who died in Walpole. We are finding out about her final years through our oral history project, which has also gathered stories from seven people with close connections to the Chapel.

Our relationship with the History Department of the University of East Anglia has proved very fruitful, as we have hosted another four student placements.

We have initiated a project to acquire legally secure parking for Chapel visitors, realising how important it is to the success of the Chapel's activities.

We have opened the Chapel to the public on Saturday and Bank Holiday afternoons from Easter till the end of September.

We have hosted a programme of concerts and other events over the summer months, a third of which have been designated as 'educational'. These numbered 15 in total; highlights being Blake Morrison and the Hosepipe Band where we provided wine and soft drinks in the interval which increased out funds, and the Gainsborough Quartet.

During the Aldeburgh Festival, The King's Singers had three sell-out performances and raised our profile amongst that clientele.

We have expanded the content of our website and our social media coverage with many thanks to Mark Wenham.

We have produced an informative quarterly newsletter, which is distributed to approximately 600 in two versions – general public and specifically one for the Friends

We have Increased our membership to 67 and will continue to promote this form of support for the Chapel as well as, hopefully, providing more volunteers for our Open Saturdays and other events.

The Trustees have a business plan, which contains 30+ annual targets and milestones, linked to 8 broader objectives. These help to direct the charity's activities and priorities. Our achievements against these targets and milestones are reviewed by Trustees at mid-year and year's end. The results for the year to March 2024 have been as follows:

At the year-end review in April 2024, we had met 24 of the 32 targets and milestones for the year (75% - up from 61% the previous year)

Trustees have a policy that £4,000 should be held as a designated reserve, this being sufficient to cover 12 months' worth of fixed costs.

Lyn Banks
Lin le Versha
Miriam Stead
Paul Simmons
Simon Weeks

May 2024

Walpole Old Chapel Annual Return April 2023 - March 2024

ASSETS			Start of year April 23	End of year March 24			
	Cheque a/c		12,812.81	8,810.64			
	Deposit a/c (general)		13,964.41	22,177.04			
	Deposit a/c (legacies)		4,617.91	4,673.12			
	Total assets		£ 31,395.13	£ 35,660.80			
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		April 2023	£ 31,395.13				
INCOME							
General							
	Weddings	900.00					
	Open days & donations	3,406.79					
	Concerts, etc.	3,536.05					
	Sales	638.34					
	Consultation events	100.00			Meeting with Historic Suffolk		
	Interest from deposit a/cs	267.84					
		8,849.02					
	Membership/Friends	1,301.00					
Unwrapped							
	Plaster Squares	195.00					
	Ride & Stride	557.50					
		752.50					
	OVERALL INCOME	£ 10,902.52		£ 42,297.65			
EXPENDITURE							
General							
	Printing & advertising	282.20					
	Water/electricity	410.79					
	Websites	475.20					
	Concerts	2,404.87			Artists' fees		
	Weddings	140.00			Fees to minister and authorised person		
	Merchandise for sales	358.75					
	Maintenance	796.00			Tree surgeon work, regular cleaning, PAT		
	Consultation events	150.00			Meeting with Historic Suffolk		
	Equipment	379.90			New external signs, picture of chapel, signs for use on the roadside, fire safety equipment, post box for gate		
	Consumables	68.01			Refreshments, biros, toilet rolls & paper towels		
	Subscriptions	128.68			GoodBox rental, Assn of Suffolk Museums		
		5,594.40					
	Membership/Friends	490.68			Advertising for members		
	Unwrapped - Discovery Project	551.77			Digitisation of baptism records, book, copyright agreement		
	OVERALL EXPENDITURE	£ 6,636.85	March 2024	£ 35,660.80			
OVERALL SURPLUS				£ 4,265.67			
	Surplus - General			3,254.62	This includes Concerts: + 1131.18, Sales + 279.59		
	- Friends			810.32			
	- Unwrapped			200.73			
SUPPORTING INFORMATION							
Allocation of Assets					Equipment and physical assets		
	Working reserve	4,000.00			New external signs and fire safety equipment and signs.		
	General	17,729.33			Post box for gate		
	Friends	1,235.32			Various pictures/ artwork of the chapel		
	Unwrapped - non-specific	11,247.92			A-board, Key safe, Hasp & lock		
	Unwrapped - Discovery Project	1,448.23			First Aid Kit, Visitors book		
		£ 35,660.80			Hand held vacuum cleaner		
					Wine glasses, coffee mugs, boiler, kettle & some crockery items		
					External advertising boards		
					Approx £250 worth of post cards		
Unwrapped Project							
			Funds held by FWOC		Funds held by HCT	Total funds	
	Start of year April 23		£ 12,495.42		£ 40,998.80	£ 53,494.22	
	Income	Plaster Squares	195.00	Donations	9,668.36		
		Ride & Stride	557.50	Historic England Grant	21,650.00		
			£ 752.50		£ 31,318.36		
	Expenditure	Discovery Proj. - digitisation of baptism records	504.00	Investigatory work required by Historic England - surveys, trial repairs and making good, etc.	54,462.47		
		Discovery Proj.	47.77	General repairs	571.20		
			£ 551.77		£ 55,033.67		
	End of year March 24		£ 12,696.15		£ 17,283.49	£ 29,979.64	

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Walpole Old Chapel Annual Return April 2022 - March 2023

ASSETS			Start of year April 22	End of year March 23			
	Cheque a/c		12,689.64	12,812.81			
	Deposit a/c (general)		13,937.96	13,964.41			
	Deposit a/c (legacies)		4,611.29	4,617.91			
	Total assets		£31,238.89	£31,395.13			
		April 2022	£31,238.89				
INCOME							
General							
Hire of chapel	665.00			Witchfinder & Suffolk History Society			
Weddings/funerals/memorials	1,800.00						
Open days & donations	2,242.23						
Concerts, etc.	1,366.72			610 via Ticketsource			
Sales	886.11						
Ride & Stride	20.00						
Consultation events	115.00						
Interest from deposit a/cs	33.07						
	7,128.13						
Membership/Friends	380.00						
Unwrapped							
Donations	150.00						
Plaster Squares	277.61						
	427.61						
OVERALL INCOME	7,935.74		£39,174.63				
EXPENDITURE							
General							
Printing costs & advertising	342.98						
Water/electricity	885.79						
Websites	416.40						
Concerts	865.60			Artists fees and temporary lighting			
Weddings/funerals/memorials	710.00			Fees to minister and authorised person			
Merchandise for sales	768.23						
Hire of GoodBox	103.68			Yielded 919.11 income for dons, sales & tickets			
Contributions to HCT	1,000.00			2 x £500 towards insurance			
Maintenance	506.50			Tree surgeon work, regular cleaning and fire extinguisher service			
Consultation events	266.85						
Equipment	238.47			A-board, First Aid kit, key safe, hasp& lock, visitors book, vacuum,			
	6,104.50						
Membership/Friends	275.00			Paid for repairs to water leak in toilet			
Unwrapped							
Consultancy fees	1,400.00						
	1,400.00						
OVERALL EXPENDITURE	7,779.50	March 2023	£31,395.13				
OVERALL SURPLUS			156.24				
Surplus - General			1,128.63				
- Unwrapped			-972.39				

		Allocation of Assets			Protected funds held by HCT		
		Working reserve	4,000.00				
		General	14,474.71				
		Friends	425.00				
		Unwrapped	12,495.42		Unwrapped	£40,998.80	£53,494.22
			£31,395.13				
		Equipment and physical assets					
		A-board,					
		First Aid Kit					
		Key safe					
		Visitors book					
		Hasp & lock					
		Hand held vacuum cleaner					
		Wine glasses, coffee mugs, boiler, kettle and some crockery items					
		External advertising boards					
		Approx £250 worth of post cards					
18.05.23							