



# **The Friends of All Saints' Church, Brightlingsea**

Charity registration number: 260143

## **Trustees' Annual Report**

**for the period 1st September 2022 to 31st August 2023**

### **Objectives and Activities**

The Friends of All Saints' Charity was founded in 1969 for the preservation, protection and improvement for the public benefit of the historic All Saints' Church, Brightlingsea and the protection and augmentation of the amenities of the churchyard and its surroundings. The town and church have a closely interwoven maritime history, as the church is a well-known navigational landmark, with a Tudor Tower and iconic wall, and a unique memorial the 'Tiles of Tragedy' which pay tribute to sailors and seafarers lost to the sea over the past 150 years. The 7.5 acre churchyard is thought to be the largest in southern England and offers ample opportunity for outdoor trails and appreciation of nature.

Over the last 50 years it has raised funds for urgent repairs and some of the running costs of the church. The Friends have organised events, fund-raising opportunities and appeals to cover the costs involved (eg. concerts, summer fairs, teddy-bear races, and bluebell walks).

During 2022-23, the Friends began an ambitious programme to engage with the local community on a wider basis to spread awareness of the local heritage, to stimulate interest in and inform the local community, enrich and broaden the lives of local people, and to ensure a flourishing future for our local heritage.

The charity works in partnership with the Parochial Church Council to organise activities, events and workshops to promote well-being through a series of art, craft and music workshops. It displays local talent through concerts and exhibitions. Using heritage-themed activities, it engages and informs a wide audience of all ages and generations, for everyone whatever their faith or with none, whether in visiting groups (eg art clubs, school visits) or as individuals dropping in for a casual visit (eg using trail sheets to guide them around the churchyard).

The charity has always relied on volunteers to organise activities, fundraise and to act as custodians when the church needed oversight during opening hours. The Trustees would like to thank all the volunteers who have assisted the work of the Friends, through fundraising, supporting the charitable activities and raising awareness of the contribution the church makes to the community in Brightlingsea. The Charity has been working to broaden its volunteer and support base to match more closely to the town's demographic profile. In addition, it has begun to engage with specific activity leaders, and ensure that all have relevant training and compliance with statutory requirements.

The Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. Activities planned supported by the charity aim to address areas of social isolation, stigma and discrimination, unemployment and health inequalities, by engaging with the local community. The activities provide opportunities for education, particularly around protection of the environment, and aim to promote and protect the environment both around the church and beyond.

## Achievements and Performance

### Major programme of building work

During the 2022-3 year, the main programme of work was securing funds and supporting the delivery of major building work. This followed a huge amount of fundraising work and public consultation in 2021 about priorities for the work and finished facilities.

In December 2019 the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NtILF) awarded a grant to All Saints' Church in Brightlingsea to fund the development phase of the Tower of Strength Project. This was a two phase project including a Capital Build which looked to carry out extensive renovation of the Bells Tower and substantial new works to remodel the Church to include a Kitchenette and indoor Toilet. The second phase of the project was an Activity Development Phase to test and explore different types of activity that can subsequently be further developed to become core Church and Community Activity. The aim was that the new extension with Kitchen and toilet facilities would present more opportunities to develop a robust activities' programme to share the remarkable heritage of the Church and Community. However, as a result of the discovery of rot in the main roof beam of the Tudor Tower and the necessary remedial work, the capital phase ran over. The building was not handed over until 31 October 2023.

The build included two main areas:

- 1) An extension to the building to provide kitchen and toilet facilities for the church

The small extension to the north side of the church sited at the north door to the nave mirrors the porch on the south side. This has been completed in sympathy with the character of the church. The new entrance to the west of the extension reduces the impact of the extension while creating an equal access entrance lobby to the church via an external ramp. The means of access and egress from the building are therefore vastly improved. Improved external lighting has improved future access and security for the church.

The extension is fully sympathetic to the design of the church and sits below the original roof and parapet lines to reduce the visibility from a distance. With the new extension mirroring the south porch, the building is now - very appropriately - cruciform in plan. The materials used have been selected to be in character with those used in the existing North aisle and are typical of other East Anglian churches. The windows and corners are faced with Ancaster Hard White stone to ensure that the overall aesthetic is sympathetic to the Caen stone in the original construction of the church and is beautifully carved. The architects praised the stone craftsmanship.

The extension houses a fully accessible toilet that allows for the turning circle of a wheelchair. There is also a kitchenette which has been furnished with catering facilities that will allow tea and refreshments to be served after services and events. The kitchenette is compliant with the relevant Environmental Health Standards. Both of these facilities will support a wider range of cultural, educational and fundraising activities for the local community and beyond and make the church a much more welcoming and inclusive venue for visitors.

The work has been carried out to the highest standards, as would be expected for a Grade 1 listed building, and care has been taken over design for example the lime paint allows the building to breathe, and the colour chosen is that of the rusty red of a Thames Barge sail which resonates well with the history of the building. Internal and external oak doors are in character with the original church doors and the door furniture is also in keeping with the age of the church. Originally a steel lintel was considered for the west entrance but the decision

to use a stone exterior for aesthetic reasons was appropriate and successfully integrates the entrance into the character of the church. The external walls of the extension were rendered using lime mortar which allows the building to breathe.

A robust drainage system has also been developed. The toilet drains to a newly installed 18,000 litre septic tank, obviating the need for the portaloo in the graveyard. The location of the tank was carefully considered due to the gravestones and archaeology within the church and appropriate means of access for future decanting, management and maintenance. The cess tank is accessible from the road. This is important as it means that the future integrity of the graveyard is not put at risk by large vehicles arriving to drain the tank. The area chosen for the site was the unmarked resting place for 87 bodies, mainly children, possibly unbaptised infants. Discovered during the archaeological exploration, their remains were carefully moved and reinterred in a more suitable place within the churchyard by The Vicar, as required by Ecclesiastical Law. The area where the cess pool is situated has been grass seeded to facilitate its integration into the landscape.

In addition to the cess tank, new water drainage has been incorporated, including new rainwater goods and downpipes, with a separation of foul and rainwater to improve the ecological impact. New cast iron guttering has been installed in keeping with the original. A new zinc covered roof is in keeping with the current leaded nave roof. Zinc was chosen due to low theft value, whilst offering the same aesthetic. The external water tap has been relocated and is fully functioning. The new build includes underfloor heating which will benefit users in the winter and keep the pipes from freezing.

## 2) Repairs to the tower

The impressive installation of a new main central roof truss has ensured the future of the tower and has prevented further movement in the building. Replacing the roof truss was vital to the survival of the building that was cracking. The careful replacement and repair of the stonework around the parapet will also safeguard the building for the future. The pinnacles on the roof have been replaced as there was evidence of 'oxide/rust jacking' that caused corrosion. The beautifully carved new stone pinnacles shine in the sun making the building look 'like a Christmas tree' and underlining its reputation as a 'beacon of home'. The flagpole tabernacle has been repaired to prevent further water ingress and now has a top hat arrangement to mitigate future weathering issues. Other works included:

- Re-leading the tower roof
- External buttress repairs to the belfry, including repair and replacement of the oak louver and lattice
- External buttress repairs to the ringing chamber, as well as stone replacement to the ringing chamber sill. The glass in the ringing chamber windows was removed and taken away for re-leading repairs
- The black cement that held the windows in place has been replaced by more appropriate material
- The window tracery was also removed and replaced with more appropriate materials
- External low-level repairs to the tower plinth.

Approximately 38 tonnes of stone were required for the building works, incorporating the replacement of 220 stones in total, the heaviest of which weighing over quarter of a tonne.

Prior to any masonry work a full bat inspection was carried out to ensure the safety of the bats. To enable the tower and external repairs, the tower was completely encapsulated within a large scaffold, to enable safe access and protection from the weather.

The build-up of guano (bird mess), which is hazardous to human health, in the belfry chamber, has been cleared by specialists and bird guard mesh was removed, cleaned, repaired and reinstalled. The majority of repair works should reduce the risk of future bird access preventing further build-up of hazardous material.

A full asbestos survey was carried out to highlight any areas of concern, of which there were none, due to the medieval stone fabric.

The staircase to the tower has been cleaned of debris left by jackdaws, to reduce the trip hazards. Furthermore, in order to make the stairs to the belfry and the rest of the tower safer and more accessible, a rope handrail has been installed. The ringing and belfry chamber floors have been made structurally sound around the access hatches allowing for safe access.

A new lightning conductor system was installed to replace the old one that was no longer effective, improving the safety of the building which is on high ground and therefore exposed to lightning strikes.

### **Review of the building project**

The project experienced some unexpected and unwelcome changes to the scope of the work which meant that substantial additional funds and time were required. However, it is testament to the excellent project management and the extremely effective team of professionals appointed to carry out the task, plus the impressive fundraising of Elizabeth Foss-Smith, that enabled the project to be completed successfully.

The continued support and advice from the National Lottery Heritage Fund has been notable. The evaluation of the project found that this resulted in delivery of a hugely successful building project that has met with public approval, secured the building and improved the functionality and accessibility of the church into the future. The church acts as a very real focal point for the community of Brightlingsea, evidenced by almost 500 people enthusiastically attending the 2 opening days, this is 6.25% of the town's overall population. Sustained support from NLHF, including a substantial financial uplift, has clearly been crucial to the success of the endeavour, with all partners contributing their expertise in building and conservation as well as their financial resources.

There were also regular meetings and communication between different stakeholders, for example the Holy Mowers (the volunteer gardening team) and church wardens, which were reported to be effective. The vicar, Revd Caroline Beckett, has taken an active role throughout the project as an advocate for the work, liaising with key stakeholders, including the Parochial Church Council (PCC), Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) and the local and wider communities.

The church was effectively closed during the building works, but allowances were made for weddings and for burials and use of the Ash Lawn. The Hard Hat tours of the site were also very well received as a means of keeping the local community abreast of the building activity and people on the tours were overwhelmingly positive about the work. The tours were also accessible on-line so that more people could see the progress being made and appreciate the care and skill required to do the work. The close communication between the project manager and the project board enabled the DAC to be kept informed and facilitated smooth Diocesan relationships.

The Governance of the project is through a partnership known as All Saints' Angels whose primary purpose is to use the funding obtained to make All Saints' Heritage programme 'Tower of Strength' sustainable in the long term. The partnership consists of the Parochial

Church Council of the Parish of All Saints' with St. James (PCC) and The Friends of All Saints' Church Brightlingsea (FOAS). The decision making structure and working methods are set out in the Project Execution Plan, which includes details of the Project Group, expert advisors, professional services and professional project team. An external evaluation by experts was commissioned

## **Activities**

The church was closed to enable the building work to take place. However a programme of events was organised using the churchyard.

Brightlingsea Christmas Tree Festival was held at St James' Church on the High Street this year on 9th, 10th and 11th December 2022. The Easter Egg Hunt was held as usual in the churchyard.

The heritage activities programme started in Spring 2023. This followed a consultation which identified issues facing children and young people following the pandemic, including lack of physical fitness as well as loss of skills and reduced confidence. A high value was placed on being outdoors, allowing child-led learning and building confidence through Forest Church and other nature based activities was cited by teaching staff as being invaluable for children's development and recovery post Covid-19.

The activities programme began during the financial year and will be built on in future years to cover:

- Trails based outdoors on nature, gravestones, environment; or indoors on Tiles of Tragedy (church wall tiles), stained glass, monuments, architecture.
- Forest-school type activities - bat watch, star-gazing, dawn chorus, bushcraft.
- Written word activities – poetry, prose, drama and songs, often based on maritime history & mariners.
- Oral activities – personal family stories; social history linked to iconic wall tiles and other church artefacts.
- Art and craft work – drawing , sketching, water/oil based art, quilts/patchwork/embroidery. Spinning and ceramics, natural art using flora/outdoor materials.
- Photographic and video displays – of architecture, nature and historical significance, exhibitions and contributions to TV display.
- Music & Drama – Music for a spring afternoon by the Marenzio singers held in March 2023

## **Floodlights**

The floodlights of the church (which are available for people to sponsor in memory of a loved one) were replaced with low energy alternatives. This enabled this important activity to continue, lighting up the church at night to enhance the experience of the community and to remember loved ones, whilst also raising valuable funds for the church and reducing its impact on the environment.

## **The Tower Beam**

The Tower Beam Emergency Appeal was launched in May 2023 following the identification of the problem with the 7m oak beam supporting the tower roof during the repairs. It was in a state of terrible decay, well beyond piecemeal patching and in need of total renewal. The Beam is dated to c1420, so had lasted for just over 600 years. The raw timber was sourced, but the additional cost of £70,000 was well in excess of our budget. This necessitated an additional appeal which was launched at [www.justgiving.com/friendsofallsaintsbrightlingsea](http://www.justgiving.com/friendsofallsaintsbrightlingsea) The building work was finished in September 2023.

## **Structure and management**

The Friends of All Saints' Brightlingsea is run by the Trustees. These are recruited from members of the local community who care about the church and the town, and are willing to devote time and expertise to running the charity, its fundraising and community activities. In addition, the Trustees also include the Churchwarden and Vicar for Brightlingsea, given the relationship with the Church. The PCC (Parochial Church Council) run the Church of England in Brightlingsea, All Saints' Church and also St James' Church, as part of the Diocese of Chelmsford. The Diocese owns the church and must give permission for repair work, the PCC have responsibility for running the church, and the Friends agrees to support the work of the Church with the community and fund repair works to enable All Saints' to continue to be viable and an important centrepiece of the Brightlingsea community.

## **Risks and issues**

The major risk facing the charity was an increase in costs associated with the building repair works, and therefore an urgent need to increase fundraising to cover the increased costs in order to deliver a successful repair to the church, enabling it to reopen (the church was able to hold its first services after the building works in October 2023).

There are other risks associated with the financial climate and increase in building costs, and the need to engage a broader section of the community in the work of All Saints', made more challenging by the closure for building works.

Looking to the future, there are risks around securing the level of community engagement and successful delivery of the programme of activities that has been pledged to be delivered as part of the Lottery grant award, and the delivery of staff members hired to support this. These risks are actively managed and scrutinised by the Trustees of the charity.

## Financial Review

Income was received from the following:

Subscriptions, donations, legacies	1,680.23
Interest	15.57
Fundraising activities	33,369.94
Grants	53,392.49
Sundry	112.50
<b>Total income</b>	<b>89,431.13</b>

Expenditure

PCC (to fund direct repairs to the church)	75,000
Insurance	6,204.33
Floodlights	250
Sundry	1,873.13
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>83,327.46</b>

**Total reserves held at year end: £80,651.01**

This financial year saw a step change in the charity's fundraising activity and financial position, to secure funds for the major building works. This saw a ten-fold increase in income, from £8,670 in the 2021-2 financial year to £89,431 in the 22-23 financial year. In terms of expenditure, this also increased dramatically from £6,533 in the 21-2 financial year to £83,327, as the funds raised were spent on the building works.

Reserves have been held to cover the completion cost of the building and improvement works and also for the development of activities once the work is completed. It is expected that the reserves held will decline substantially during the 2023-4 financial year as the remaining improvement works are funded by the Friends.

It is important to note that the majority of the building works are directly commissioned by the PCC who run the church with the charity transferring the funds to the PCC so that they can commission the work. They are also able to reclaim the VAT via the Listed Places of Worship Grant. The scale of the building work and the fundraising to pay the costs of this is a huge achievement for the charity, to provide a massive investment in the church which will stand the test of time for the future.



## **Conclusion**

The 2022-3 financial year saw a number of major changes with the grant income allowing the major building works to be undertaken. With the reopening of the church in the autumn of 2023, the trustees are pleased that members of the community will be able to benefit from the use of these improved facilities and an enhanced activity programme.

The trustees would like to express their gratitude to all our donors, who include members of the community and people making regular or one-off contributions, and also some major grant givers who have enabled the building project to take place. The contribution of the National Lottery Heritage Fund was particularly important and this is a donation that straddles the financial years. Together, our donors and volunteer fundraisers have given the church a strong financial basis on which to build plans for future activities for the benefit of the community and our heritage.

## **Trustees for 2022-23**

Neil Ballard

Rev Caroline Beckett

Vivien Chapman

David Dixon

Elizabeth Foss-Smith

Mary Girling

Robert Goodenough

P Patrick

P Reilly

Janet Russell

Ray Stollery

5978.77	fundraising	860.00
658.00	floodlights	112.50
00.00	sundry	53392.49
00.00	grants	89431.13
8669.82	TOTAL INCOME	14775.37
00.00	inter account transfers	104206.50
8669.82	TOTAL RECEIPTS	

#### Payments

00.00	pcc/direct	75000.00
4246.41	insurance	6204.33
48.60	funding expenses	00.00
250.00	floodlights	250.00
1988.41	sundry	1873.13
6533.42	TOTAL PAYMENTS	83327.46
00.00	inter account transfers	63678.06
6533.42	TOTAL OUTGOING	147005.52
Bank balances;		
35647.12	Lloyds[saints alive acct.]	14785.49
70271.73	BBL[c]	55080.14
712.48	BBL[p]	366.68
113031.33	TOTALS	70232.31

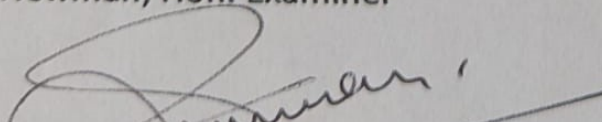
#### BALANCE SHEET;

Funds at 8/22 113031.33  
 Less reduction 42799.02  
 Total funds 70232.31

#### Examiners certificate

I have examined the above records and certify that the receipts and payments and balance sheet are in accordance therewith

Barry Newman; Hon. Examiner



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44 Ladysmith Avenue  
Brightlingsea  
Essex  
CO7 0JD  
01206303757

Secretary: Mrs Lynn Ballard  
16 Richard Avenue  
Brightlingsea  
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Examiners report to the Friends of All Saints Church Trustees

Period covered;

I report to the Trustees of The Friends of All Saints Church  
Brightlingsea for the year ending 2023

As the Trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the  
preparation of the accounts in accordance with the  
requirements of the Charities act 2011[the act]

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts  
carried out under section 145 of the 2011 act and in carrying  
out my examination I have followed all the applicable  
directions given by the Charity commission under section  
145[5][b] of the act.

Independent examiners statement.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material  
matters have come to my attention in connection with the  
examination giving me cause to believe that in any material  
respect

1]Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as  
required by section 130 of the Act:or

2] the accounts do not accord with those record

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in  
connection with the examination to which attention should be  
drawn in this report in order to enable proper understanding  
of the accounts to be reached.

Signed

Name