

Trustees' Annual Report

The Friends of St James the Great, Thorley *Registered Charity No: 288678*

Year ending 31 December 2020

Legal and Administrative Information

This report is for the financial year beginning on 1 January 2020 and ending on 31 December 2020.

The Principal Address of the charity is:

60 The Paddock
Bishop's Stortford
Herts
CM23 4JW

E-mail: friends.stjames@btinternet.com

Website: www.friends-stjames.org

The object of the charity is to help and support the Rector and Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. James the Great, Thorley (subject to any necessary faculties being obtained) to:

- maintain and embellish the fabric, furnishing and fittings of St. James the Great, Thorley
- maintain, protect and beautify the Churchyard of the Church.

The Governing Document of the charity is the Constitution as adopted on 21 February 1983 and amended on 18 March 1984 and 1 October 2021. This calls for the management of the charity to be in the hands of a Committee of Trustees consisting of two members appointed by the Parochial Church Council of St. James the Great and six members elected at the Annual Meeting of the Association. The Committee may co-opt additional members as necessary and invite the Incumbent of St James the Great to be an ex-officio member. The Officers of the charity are a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary who are appointed by the Committee. The Constitution calls for an Annual Meeting to take place in the month of March and the Accounts to be made up to 31st December every year.

In fulfilling the object of the charity, the Trustees have had due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

At a meeting of the Committee held on 15 January 2007 it was agreed that it would be prudent to maintain reserves at a level of £2,500.

The following table details the Trustees as of October 2021 and those who acted during the period covered by this report.

Name	Office (if any)	Dates Acted Since 1 January 2020	Mode of Appointment
Mr Desmond Conridge	Treasurer	1 January 2020-present	Elected
Mr Daniel Daniells-Smith		1 January 2020 - present	Elected
Mr Bill Hardy		1 January 2020-present	Co-opted until 13 March 2020 Elected from 13 March 2020
Dr Philip Hargrave	Chairman & Secretary	1 January 2020 - present	Elected
Mr Clive Hayball		1 January 2020-present	Parochial Church Council Appointee
Mrs Lina Loadman		1 January 2020 - present	Co-opted until 13 March 2020 Elected from 13 March 2020
Mrs Margaret Morley	Vice Chairman	1 January 2020-present	Elected
Mr Graham Rundle		1 January 2020 - 13 March 2020 1 April 2020-present	Elected until 13 March 2020 Co-opted from 1 April 2020
Mrs Sue Russell		1 January 2020- 13 March 2020 1 April 2020-present	Elected until 13 March 2020 Co-opted from 1 April 2020
The Revd Gareth Tracey		2 July 2021 - present	Ex-Officio
Mr Clive Weir		1 January 2020 - present	Parochial Church Council Appointee

Chairman's Report to the Annual General Meeting held on Friday 1 October 2021

Good evening and thank you all for coming to the 2021 Annual General Meeting of the Friends of St James the Great, Thorley. That is something that I had hoped to say back in March of this year but was unable to do so because of the public safety measures then in force in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act of 2020 enabled some organisations to switch to holding their Annual General Meetings online. Regardless of whether the Committee considered an online only Annual General Meeting as appropriate to the membership of the Friends, that Act only applied to charities that were Companies or Incorporated Organizations. It did not apply to Charities such as the Friends that are Associations. These were only allowed to hold Annual General Meetings online if this was specifically permitted in their Constitutions. Unsurprisingly, the Friends' Constitution, which was last modified in 1984, currently makes no provision in this respect.

The guidance from the Charity Commission under such circumstances was to investigate the possibility of amending the Constitution to allow such meetings to be held online. This was not an option for the Friends as our current Constitution clearly states that alterations to it must receive the assent of the members *present* and voting at an Annual General or Special General Meeting. The Charity Commission recognised that not all Charities would be able to amend their Constitutions and advised that, if a Charity was unable to do so, it might have no choice but to cancel or postpone its Annual General Meeting. The Committee accordingly decided to postpone the Friends' 2021 Annual General Meeting until such time as it considered that it would be legal and safe to hold it. As consequence of this decision, we find ourselves here tonight, some six months later than had initially been intended.

You may have noticed from the Agenda that we are following the Charity Commission's advice and taking the opportunity of this meeting to consider a motion to amend the Constitution of the Friends to give the Committee the flexibility to determine that any future Annual General, Special General or Committee Meeting be held entirely online or as a hybrid meeting with attendance both in person and online. If approved, these options would enable such meetings to go ahead regardless of any restrictions on physical attendance that might be imposed in the future. The hybrid option might also be deemed of value in increasing participation in a meeting even in the absence of such restrictions. However, the Committee has no intention of the Friends going down the online only route for General Meetings unless necessitated by restrictions.

We have been sad to learn of the death of five of our long-standing members since our 2020 Annual General Meeting: Albert Forino, Ron Horsman, Harold Murdoch, Rosemary Jones and Colin Sampford. Rosemary was not only a member of the Friends but also served on the Committee and as our Treasurer. She was first elected to the Friends' Committee at the 2004 Annual General Meeting. At that time, Adrian Phillips was our Treasurer, but had indicated that he wished to stand down from that role and as a member of the Committee with effect from the 2005 Annual General Meeting. Rosemary stood for election at the 2004 Annual General Meeting with a view to shadowing Adrian during the year then ahead and offering herself for the role of Treasurer after the 2005 Annual General Meeting. Rosemary did indeed take on the position of Treasurer after that latter meeting and gave fourteen years of sterling service before standing down as Treasurer, and as a member of the Committee, at our 2019 Annual General Meeting. Rosemary's contributions in her many roles in our local community were numerous and she will be sorely missed.

At the time of our last Annual General Meeting on 13 March 2020, the Committee had plans for the remainder of that calendar year in respect of a sale of Nursery Plants in May, the offering of Sunday Afternoon Teas from the Church Room during the months of May to September and an Autumn Craft Fair in November. None of these activities were destined to take place and the Friends' Quiz Evening on 7 March 2020 turned out to be our only fund-raising event of 2020. It was just ten days after our 2020 Annual General Meeting that all our planned activities were put on hold by the restrictions put in place on 24 March 2020 in response to the pandemic.

Although it was soon clear after the announcement of these restrictions that the Friends would not be able to hold a Sale of Nursery plants in May 2020, the Committee initially hoped that it would be possible to offer Sunday Afternoon Teas from the Church Room during the latter part of the 2020 season. However, it was concluded by the Committee through an exchange of emails during July 2020 that this was by then unlikely to be the case and the entire 2020 season of Sunday Afternoon teas was therefore cancelled. The

Committee agreed at that time to defer any consideration of the viability of holding the planned Autumn Craft fair in November 2020 until the middle of September 2020. At that latter time, it was concluded that it was extremely unlikely that it would be possible to hold such an event in a way that would be compliant with the regulations likely to be in force at the time. The planned 2020 Autumn Craft Fair was therefore also cancelled.

As a result, I have very little to report in respect of the Friends' activities during 2020. As I have already mentioned, we did host one fundraising event, namely a Quiz Evening in March 2020. We also endeavoured to continue to maintain the Churchyard during the growing season, but this proved to be extremely challenging as we were initially limited to deploying a maximum of two volunteers to undertake all the work. Fortunately, this limit was increased to four later in the season. We were very grateful to those who put in so much effort

As regards expenditure during 2020, in addition to that on the annual servicing of the equipment used to maintain the churchyard, the Friends purchased a new mower and, in anticipation of the arrival of our new Rector, a new board for the Church to display the names of future Rectors. This has been positioned immediately below the previous one that had no room for further additions. I'll leave it to the Treasurers' Report to consider financial aspects of these matters.

Towards the end of 2020, the Friends' Committee agreed to make a grant of approximately £7,200 to the Parochial Church Council to cover the full cost of repairs to the fabric of the Church that had been outstanding since the 2014 Quinquennial Inspection, together with those additionally identified during that of 2019, as costed in quotations received by the Parochial Church Council in November 2020. Most of this work has now been completed, but the contractor appointed by the Parochial Church Council to undertake it has yet to submit an invoice as a small number of items are still outstanding. The payment of this grant by the Friends to the Parochial Church Council is therefore still pending.

No Friends' fundraising activities were possible during the first half of this year but, following the lifting of most restrictions on social contact in England on 19 July 2021, we were able to host a short season of Sunday Afternoon Teas from the Church Room from the first Sunday in August until the last Sunday in September. We are currently in the mist of planning an Autumn Craft Fair to be held in the St Barnabas Centre on Saturday 13th November 2021 from 11:00 am to 3:30 pm. Refreshments in the form of hot & cold drinks and cakes will be on sale throughout this event, and home-made soup and bread & cheese lunches will also be available from 12.00 noon to 2.00 pm. We would like to be able to offer a range of refreshment cakes and would therefore be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to volunteer to do some baking to help in this respect. We are also planning a Quiz Evening for early in the New Year.

This year has also been another challenging one in respect of Churchyard maintenance, not because of any limitation on the number of volunteers but due to the excessive growth of the grass and the wet weather. In addition to undertaking the usual seasonal work, the team have cleared the large area of tangled ivy and undergrowth that was remaining following the removal of the dead beech tree. Again, we have been very grateful to everyone on the team for their dedicated efforts. There has been considerable wear and tear on all the machinery this year and we have been indebted to Mokut, our local repairers, for their valuable and prompt help with maintenance, particularly given the present severe shortage of spare parts. We also have plans for a Quiz Evening early in the New Year.

Once the necessary business of this Annual General Meeting has been completed, Edward Miller will be giving a short presentation entitled 'Growing Up in the Parish of Thorley', and the evening will conclude with a 'bring and share buffet' with drinks provided. As with the Friends offering of Sunday Afternoon Teas this year, self-service options will be minimised, with items being served unless individually wrapped.

I will now draw my report to a close by thanking Margaret Morley, our Vice Chairman and Des Conridge, our Treasurer, and indeed all the members of the Committee, for their help and support during

the eighteen-and-a-half months since our last Annual General Meeting. On behalf of the Committee, I would also like to thank you all for your continuing support during a difficult period when there have by necessity been few activities.

The Treasurer has sent his Apologies for Absence to this meeting. Unless there were any questions, I will move on to delivering the Report he has prepared on his behalf.

Treasurer's Report to the Annual General Meeting held on Friday 1 October 2021

This is the Annual General Meeting which would normally have been held in March this year, when I would have reported on our finances for the year ended 31 December 2020. Now however, we are already three quarters of the way through the current year, so I was a little undecided how to frame this report.

I have decided therefore to divide the report into two. Firstly, reporting on our financial affairs up to December 2020, and then giving you a sneak preview of the current year with some of the things I will be reporting when we have our next Annual General Meeting in about six months' time. You will be pleased to know that both parts of this report are quite brief.

The Accounts (Annex A) show how income was received and expenditure incurred in the year ended 31st December 2020, with comparative figures for 2019. It was an exceptional year with most of our planned events cancelled because of the pandemic. We were fortunate to get the annual Quiz Night in just before the first lock-down in March 2020.

Our total income for 2020 was £2,240. (£6,499 in 2019) This was made up of:

- £835 in subscriptions;
- £122 in donations;
- £947 (gross) from the Quiz Night;
- £91 bank interest;
- £244 tax refund for Gift Aided donations.

Our total expenditure in 2020 was £1,188. (£2,169 in 2019) This was made up of:

- £209 for Quiz Night expenses;
- £644 for repairs & maintenance – mainly for a new mower and servicing our existing ones;
- £75 for a new Rectors' Board in Church;
- £239 for Insurance;
- £21 for photocopying for the Annual General Meeting.

At the start of 2020 our total reserves were £24,749 and at the end of the year they had increased by £1,052 to £25,801.

Moving onto the current year, once again most of our planned events have been cancelled, but we have just completed a short season of Sunday afternoon teas and we have the Craft Fair in November to look forward to.

Our total income so far in 2021 is £922. This is made up from:

- £605 in subscriptions;
- £107 for Sunday teas (that's only two weeks banked so far);
- £9 bank interest;
- £201 tax refund for Gift Aided donations.

Our total expenditure so far this year is £710. This includes:

- £414 for mower repairs & servicing;
- £253 insurance;
- £30 for painting radiator pipes in Church;

- £13 for photocopying.

At the start of 2021 our total reserves were £25,801. At the end of August 2021 this had increased by £212 to £26,012.

The only large expenditure which we are aware of is the cost of Quinquennial repairs to the Church. The PCC is expecting a bill from Lodge's for these repairs and The Friends' have agreed to pay a sum of £7,164 which is the total cost of the work less VAT.

Authorisation

This Annual Report is issued on behalf of the Trustees and was approved by them through an exchange of emails during October 2021.

Philip Hargrave
Chairman and Secretary

Margaret Morley
Vice Chairman

Desmond Conridge
Treasurer

October 2021

Annex A

**FRIENDS OF ST JAMES THE GREAT, THORLEY
BALANCE SHEET**

AS AT 31st DECEMBER

2020		2019
£		£
NET ASSETS		
3,788	Barclays Community Account Bank Balance	5,078
22,012	CBF Church of England Deposit Fund Bank Balance	19,671
25,801	TOTAL NET ASSETS	24,749
REPRESENTED BY:		
24,749	Surplus Brought Forward from Previous Year	20,419
1,052	Year Surplus / (Deficit)	4,330
25,801	TOTAL RESERVES	24,749

FRIENDS OF ST JAMES THE GREAT, THORLEY

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER

2020		2019
£	INCOME	£
835	Subscriptions	1,107
122	Donations	506
	Fund Raising	
947	Quiz	727
0	Plant Sale	1,129
0	Craft Fair	1,012
0	Refreshments	1,624
0	Sundries	0
947	Sub-total Fund Raising	4,492
91	Bank Interest	115
244	Tax Rebate (Gift Aid)	279
2,240	TOTAL INCOME	6,499
	EXPENDITURE	
0	Church Heating	200
	Fund Raising Costs	
209	Quiz	187
0	Plant sale	732
0	Craft Fair	38
209	Sub-total Fund Raising Costs	957
	Other	
21	Annual General Meeting	32
75	Rector's Board	0
239	Insurance	205
644	Repairs and Maintenance	775
979	Sub-total Other	1,102
1,188	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	2,169
1,052	TOTAL SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	4,330

Desmond Conridge Treasurer
March 2021