

Friends of St Peters AGM
10.30 Wednesday 15th May 2024

Present: Committee: Chair: David Holmes, Treasurer: Tim Hailstone, Peter Barker, Suzie Dodsworth, Mary Bell, Anne Worsfold.

Members and supporters: Mike Dodsworth, Rosemary Shiffner, Sue Walford, Marion Holmes, Diana Knight, Gary Larson, Heather Stramik, Jenny Farmer, Jenny Harris, Douglas Williston, Louise Parrish, David Curry.

1. **Welcome:** David Holmes welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **Apologies** were received from: Ashley Hutton, Trevor & Joan Mason, David & Rosemary Boutle, Graham & Sue Tweed, Peter & Anne Bailey, Teri Larson, Graham Fice, Mary Newman, Judy & Kevin Sumner, Mike Bell, Juliet Lambert.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising:** it was noted that the 2023 minutes had an inaccuracy in that Michael Bell was listed as having sent apologies but was present.

Rosemary Shiffner enquired about the flagpole plaque in memory of the Duke of Edinburgh, which needs a full faculty, and whether the PPC are aware of the situation. The chairman said that the faculty processes for the current projects have been so difficult that it was not practical to include the plaque in these projects.

Rosemary Shiffner also enquired about the fact that there was no interest on funds in the bank in 2022/3. Treasurer Tim Hailstone said that general interest rates had been so low previously that it was not worth locking in funds.

The minutes were accepted. Proposed by Gary Larson, seconded by Rosemary Shiffner,

Chairs Report, including projects: Chair, David Holmes, started by paying tribute to the very active and expanding team who are taking forward the churchyard project, especially the project leader Jenny Hailstone, Anne Bailey's excellent work on the website, and all the other volunteers. He said that still more 'hidden' graves have been uncovered when brambles were cleared. Diana Knight commented that more wildflowers have grown in the place of the brambles, and also that four enclosed graves have been re-sewn with wildflowers. Rosemary Shiffner said that the church stands more proudly in village now the overgrowth has been cleared.

David Holmes reported that there are plans to install two new benches this year – one of which will be a 'story telling' bench with a small semi-circle of tree stumps as children's seats.

Surveys of moths, bats, insects, birds, wildflowers and grasses have been conducted and the results are available on the FoSP website. In one night, 30 different species of moth were counted and 13 different species of bat including some very rare ones. The next survey will be of the numerous varieties of lichen.

The plan to restore the pathway that leads from the east gate to the war memorial, widening and resurfacing it to enable wheelchair access, is in its final stages. The church is awaiting final permission which will hopefully be granted at the June DAC meeting (Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches). FoSP will donate the whole cost of about £10,000. A sample of the surface material was passed around. Rosemary Shiffner remarked that the path should be closed one day per year to maintain its status.

The project to improve the toilet and kitchen facilities has moved on, though at times slowly. The DAC have given initial approval, and the project is now in a stage of consultation. FoSP has provided the church with a letter of intent to contribute £10,000 to the cost of this project. Suzie Dodsworth talked through the plans for the new toilet (with fold-down changing mat), washing up area, and new servery. Jenny Farmer questioned the access to the toilet through the washing up area, and it was explained that this was dictated by plumbing constraints. Tim Hailstone said that the new Rector, the Rev. Matt Gorton was proactive and supportive of proposed changes and knowledgeable about procedures.

The planned series of talks and musical recitals under the heading of "Soirées at St Peter's" had a slow start. After the talk by David Curry on the importance of churchyards for wildlife and biodiversity, the musical

evening with the Lyric Trio was postponed – but it is expected to happen later this year. On 14th June Anthony Mangnall MP has agreed to give a non-political talk on Westminster from an insider's perspective. FoSP also has agreement from Monty Halls and Judy Oliphant ("Prickles in a Pickle") to give talks, so the Soirées are gathering pace.

David said that he had decided, after 3 years working with the Friends, to step down as Chair of FoSP. He said he had enjoyed his tenure and looks back at FoSP's small achievements of the flagpole and floodlighting and the larger ones of the Living Churchyard and, hopefully, the pathway and kitchen/toilet improvements with some pleasure but also a little frustration at the slow pace of the approval process.

He was pleased to say that the Friends' committee currently has 7 members – and he thanked them all for their work this year. FoSP now needs to find a new Chair so new committee members will be very welcome.

4. **Treasurer's report:** Tim Hailstone reported that FoSP is in a very good financial position; that expenditure has been low, and income is around £5,000 p.a. The churchyard project is the most active project and requires very little expenditure. In the coming year FoSP plans to entirely fund the re-surfacing of the path, and give £10,000 towards the Servery and Toilet project. FoSP funds will then be around £5,000. The fact that FoSP has spend so little of its funds is a source of concern to the committee but was largely dictated by the speed of the church processes.

The financial report was accepted. Proposed by Rosemary Shiffner and seconded by Diana Knight.

5. **Committee nominations / election:** All committee members are obliged to stand down and offer themselves for re-election. All agreed to re-stand and were re-elected in a block vote. Proposed by Diana Knight and seconded by Mike Dodsworth. David Holmes was warmly thanked by Tim Hailstone on behalf of all the committee for his excellent chairmanship and it was agreed that he would be a hard act of follow.
6. **Projects:** covered in chair's report.
7. **Fundraising:** Subscriptions form the majority of the income, with an income of around £5,000 p.a. with an additional approximate £1,000 in Gift Aid. Three new members were recruited by Suzie Dodsworth. Events have brought in moderate amounts of money and buying through 'Easyfundraising' around £60. Sales of Suzie's cards bring in about £50. Marion Holmes asked if fundraising would increase when new projects were underway, and it was agreed that it would, and that it was expected include raising funds through applying for grants. In answer to a question from Rosemary Shiffner it was stated that funds from FoSP would not be tied to a specific item in a project. Following questions, it was also confirmed that the newly resurfaced path would not be lit, that it was not likely to grow weeds, and that although laying it was partly weather dependant it was expected that the path would be laid in the autumn.
8. **AOB:** none

David Holmes thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 11.45