

Minutes of a meeting of The Friends of St Mary's, Bacton
Held on Thursday 20th November 2003
At The Bull, Bacton
At 7.30pm

Present:

Robert Black
Peggy Boyer
The Revd Robin Jack
Dr Peter Franks
Sheila Franks
Simon Holditch
Dick Middleton
Sue Middleton
Janice Shea
Helen Thomson

1. Welcome and apologies

Robin welcomed those present to the meeting, and noted that the following had offered their apologies:

Barbara Bilston
Rosemary Black
David Black
Anne James
Rose Graham

Robin then proposed that Dick Middleton should chair the initial meetings of the Friends. This was seconded by Helen Thomson, and agreed unanimously.

2. Constitution and status.

The Chairman thanked the meeting for their support, and referred back to the last meeting of the Friends, at which a draft constitution had been discussed. He suggested that, although it had been decided that the Friends should be a separate registered charity, most people had seemed to want to retain close links with the Parochial Church Council (PCC). Having talked with Robin and taken advice from Malcolm Green (of the Diocesan Office), there might be advantages in postponing the establishment of a separate charity, and establishing the Friends as a sub committee of the PCC. This would allow the Friends to develop naturally according to need: it would avoid having to write a detailed constitution: it would be less formal and more friendly. Governance, and all the responsibility that accompanies trusteeship, would remain with the PCC. There would be no need to report and account separately to the Charity Commission. All that would be required to empower the Friends would be to ask the PCC to establish the group as a sub committee, and to have this recorded in the minutes of the relevant meeting. The Friends could have a separate bank account, use the PCC charity status and number, and report to the PCC.

The Friends would need a Secretary, principally to record the minutes of meetings, which might initially be held monthly, and thereafter quarterly, and also a Treasurer. Members were asked to consider who might take on these duties.

Action:
All

After very little discussion, it was agreed unanimously to establish the Friends as a sub committee of the PCC, and Robert Black agreed to ask the PCC to draw up suitable terms of reference for the Friends, based on the originally proposed Objects of the draft constitution.

Action:
Robert Black

3. A Plan of Action

The Chairman outlined a possible way forward for the Friends to begin to plan a course of action for the future. He suggested that there might be a need to raise considerable sums of money every year, but there was a need to discover exactly what the needs were, and then to plan activity to meet those needs. He suggested that the following activities might be considered:

Research. The Friends need to establish the likely amount of money needed, and what the specific maintenance requirements were. There was also a need to draw together an authentic and properly documented history and description of the building, which properly described its architectural and heritage value.

Major Fundraising. There would undoubtedly be a need to raise substantial sums of money, which would entail accessing grant making trusts and heritage funding.

Community fundraising. It is important to create ownership of fundraising within the village. Although the sums raised might not be great, the value to the community of helping to support the needs of the building would be great. Such activity would also help to access major trusts and funds.

Community activity. There is a need to raise the awareness in the village of the value of the church building, its place in our lives and the heritage it represents. The Friends might encourage the use of the church for community activities, and eventually establish St Mary's as a centre for village activities. Community use would also help unlock major funding opportunities.

Membership. A membership scheme had already been discussed, but the form of membership would need to be decided: the benefits, the charges: the need for a membership secretary to administer the scheme.

Education. St Mary's is architecturally important. The Friends might consider raising awareness of the building and creating opportunities for others to appreciate its value. Not only might children be introduced to its heritage, but others such as architects and builders might benefit from being able to examine its structure and construction. Such activity would also enhance our ability to access funding.

Discussion.

The membership scheme was discussed, with varying amounts suggested as appropriate contributions. Its value as a "steady" fundraiser was noted. It was suggested that the Friends might produce a simple Newsletter, to widen the awareness in the village and invite membership. The Scouts were suggested as a possible means of delivering it to every household: the limited circulation of the Parish magazine being noted. It was suggested that it would not need to be published until well after people had recovered financially from Christmas.

The need to work and liaise closely with the Friends of Cotton and Wyverstone was noted, and the Chairman agreed to write to the Chairs of both groups to introduce the Friends of St Mary's and to offer our cooperation

**Action:
Chairman**

Sheila Franks agreed with the general encouragement for community involvement in the Friends activities

Peter Franks clarified the aims of the Friends as being to support the building, and not to assist the PCC in meeting the Diocesan Quota.

The Chairman suggested that it would be helpful if the members were to consider their own skills and abilities (and those of their friends) against the proposed list of activity, and perhaps at the next meeting, to propose how they might individually contribute.

4. Date of next meeting

The Date of the next meeting will be on Thursday 15th January 2004 at 7.30pm at the Bull