

## MEMBERSHIP

### Current Subscription rates:

Individual membership: £15	Concessions: £9
Family membership: £21	Life membership: £120

Please also renew your membership using a Standing Order form if at all possible (your bank remains in control of this, not ours, unlike a Direct Debit). Reminding members who prefer to use cash or cheque but then forget to renew their subscription is a great burden for the Treasurer.

Taxpayers please also consider completing a Gift Aid Declaration, which allows us to reclaim the tax you have already paid on your membership. Both forms are available from the Treasurer. At present we have around 64 members and would like to increase this number. Details on how to become a member are available at the back of the church.

## FUTURE EVENTS

- Our programme of events for the remainder of the year is still being finalised. Details will be advised via our web site and by separate communication as soon as available.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Sunday 7 May 2015

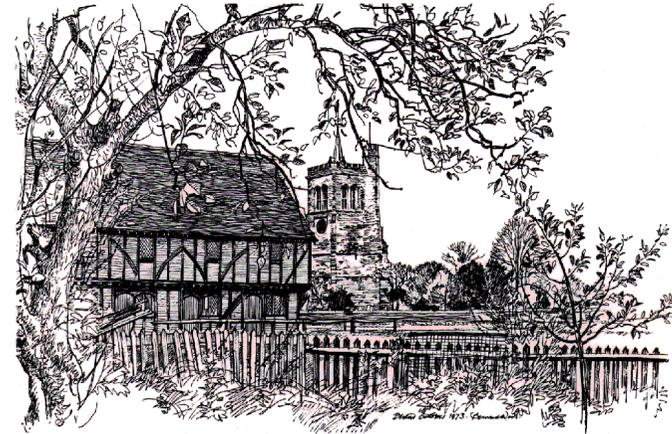
### Programme

4.30 pm	Annual General Meeting
5.15 pm	Tea in the Willis's Garden, 209 Church End
6.30 pm	Evensong.

### Agenda

1. Prayers
2. Welcome followed by apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on Sunday 8 May 2016
4. Chairman's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Membership report
7. Election of Members of the Committee
8. Election of Chairman
9. Election of Treasurer, Secretary & Membership Secretary
10. Future Programme
11. Any Other Business
12. Date of the Friends Annual General Meeting 2018

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## The Friends of Elstow Abbey

Registered Charity number 1044100

*Securing the structure and fabric of our 11<sup>th</sup> century church*

## Newsletter April 2017

### *The Friends' Prayer*

*Eternal God, since your saints have made of human life a pilgrim's progress on the way to glory, grant that we too may be travellers on that road. Protect us from the temptations of Vanity Fair and guide us through the dangers and difficulties of our journey. Then Lord, at the last, help us to the gates of the Celestial City; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*



## AGM Sunday 7 May 2017 at 4.30pm

*Dear Friends,*

You are cordially invited to our 22nd Annual General Meeting in Elstow Abbey, followed by afternoon tea, before Evensong at 6.30pm.

My second year as your Chairman has been one of change at Elstow. The interregnum concluded in November with the licensing of Fr Paul Messam as Priest in Charge. On behalf of the Friends I would like to welcome Fr Paul and his family to Elstow. In his first months he has enthusiastically supported The Friends and I am also grateful for his fresh insights and encouragement to extend our reach to a wider community and grow our membership.

We held two main fund raising events during the year, both of them very expertly organised by Kate Parrish, our Events Officer. In October we were once again entertained by the Alma Singers who gave a superb and very varied concert that also unexpectedly included a professional pianist. In retrospect we probably undersold this concert - the quality of performance warranted a higher ticket price and deserved a better attendance, something that we shall take into account in the future in our bid to provide some more 'up-market' events. None the less, the concert contributed to our funds.

In February we held a concert to launch the Church organ repair fund; some £25,000 being required to replace the decaying internal mechanism with a new electro-mechanical one. Beforehand, our ringing of the tower bells was relayed to the audience in Church via a video link from the bell chamber and ringing room. I would like to express thanks to Alan Freeman for providing this. The programme entitled "Bells and Swells" comprised pieces for bells performed by the Biddenham Handbell Ringers and organ music performed by David Ewbank, Director of Music. Our decision to pre-sell tickets for this event at a very modest price of only £5 turned out to be a good one. The event attracted an audience of almost 150 and our profit of over £800 was considerably more than we have taken at a Friends event for some years.

Last May we also ran a stall at the Elstow May Fair for the first time to promote our activities. Many thanks are due to Sheila and Peter Batiuk for their day-long efforts, which attracted three new members whom we welcome.

Unfortunately we were not able to find mutually agreeable dates for a concert by the Ampthill Parkside Singers in July as originally planned, and for the first time in many years we did not hold a Christmas concert; deciding instead to postpone the Biddenham Handbell Ringers to launch the organ appeal.

On the administration front we have introduced a welcome letter for new members and updated the loose insert for the Friends membership application brochure; both in response to members' suggestions. To provide more frequent updates and avoid ever increasing postal charges, we would like to distribute the annual newsletter and other member communications **via email as far as possible**. If you are happy for us to communicate in this way, then please send an email to [Treasurer.Friends@elstow-abbey.org.uk](mailto:Treasurer.Friends@elstow-abbey.org.uk)

from the personal address that you wish us to use. The Data Protection Act 1989 obliges us to protect your personal information and so we will not pass your email contact details to anyone else, and will always "bcc" (blind carbon-copy) members on any circulars that we send, to avoid publishing members' email addresses to each other. But please do not be concerned if you do not use email - we will continue to post to you as now.

During the past year, the Trustees and Committee have been considering ways to increase participation and raise income from sources beyond our usual events. A number of similar Friends groups operate a '100 Club' and we have decided this could be a great way of furthering our objectives. So I am very pleased to announce the launch of our 100 Club, details can be found in the insert with this newsletter. Please do join if you feel able to. Not only will you have a chance of winning a prize (the odds of doing so are vastly better than with the National Lottery!) but you will also be further contributing to the Friends' valuable work. We very much look forward to attracting 100 participants and making the first draw within a few months.

Finally, I would like to thank the Trustees and members of the Committee for their contributions and continued support during the year. In particular I would like to thank Kate Parrish who continues to organise our events in such a professional manner, and Patrick Luffman who, alongside his normal duties as Treasurer, has led our efforts to establish the 100 Club.

Please do join us on Sunday 7th May 2017 for our AGM, tea & evensong.

*Stephen Stanford*  
Chairman of Trustees

### FUND RAISING

- The Alma Singers with soloists concert on 1/10/16 raised £183.85
- The Biddenham Handbell Ringers and David Ewbank on 25/2/17 raised £811.50 (these proceeds restricted to the Organ Appeal)

### PROJECTS TO DATE

Over the last 5 years, The Friends have contributed **£7900** towards:

- ❖ 2014: Wall Repairs, main entrance & boundary £7000
- ❖ 2012: Heaters for the Vestry £900

In 22 years since our foundation we have raised some £66 000, and spent nearly £60 000 of that, 83% (almost £50 000) on the fabric & structure of the Abbey. The rest was for supporting costs (e.g. publicity for events).

### TRUSTEES AND COMMITTEE

**During 2016-17 the following people have served the Friends:**

**Trustees:** Colin Albon, David Baker, Miriam Clark, Lynne Faulkner, Tracey Hinson, Raffaele Marotta, Barbara Routledge, Stephen Stanford, Charles Whitbread, Roger Worthington-Ellis, Fr Paul Messam (ex-officio).

**Committee:** Rosemary Albon, Sheila Batiuk, Patrick Luffman, Kate Parrish  
**WE ARE ALWAYS IN NEED OF HELP ON THE COMMITTEE; WE DON'T MEET TOO OFTEN AND ARE VERY FRIENDLY. WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN US?**

