

# **Minutes of Annual General Meeting of Friends of Hessett Church, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2015, Hessett & Beyton Village Hall**

**Present:** Committee: Mark Armstrong, Klair Baully, Jill Carter, Chris Collins, Hazel Halliwell, Brenda Picking, Michael Poulter and Andrew Robinson. Members: Sara Barrett, Phil Barrett, Roger Bennett, Natalie Bennett, Janice Gibson, John Ottley, Madeline Ottley, Peter Newlands, Rita Newlands, Don Picking, Janet Rapley, Jon Rapley, Les Ward

**1. Apologies:** Richard Brown

**2. Minutes** of meeting held on 20th October 2014 - approved. Proposed: Chris Collins, seconded Klair Baully

**3. Matters arising.** None

## **4. Chairman's report**

Michael Poulter welcomed members and gave a summary of the past 12 months.

Over the past year the committee had organised and was continuing to work on several projects. The Christmas concert of 2014 had raised £651, the highest amount from any previous festive events. The WW1 memorial, erected in 1920, had been renovated at a cost of £924, with just under 52% (£479.36) coming from donations following an appeal in the village. A booklet about the lives of the 14 men who died in the war would be ready for the rededication service of the memorial at 2pm on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2015 (Remembrance Sunday).

One of the committee members (Mark Armstrong) had cleared several bags of rubbish and dirt from the Victorian organ in the church, as well as carrying out minor repairs. However, the instrument needs major work and quotations were still coming in. The committee was investigating upgrading the gravel path between the church and the roadside to provide a firmer surface. The French Night in October 2015, jointly organised with Les Ward, had raised £152.

The 2015 Christmas concert would be on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December, featuring Stowmarket Concert Band. Members were asked to send donations of bottles and other items to Klair Baully for the raffle.

Michael reminded the meeting that he had 'stepped into the breach' when Brian and Alison Jones left the village, taking on the role at the same time as chairing the parish council. He believed the FOHC needed new and younger blood, but he would remain as chairman until the new year to 'front' the forthcoming memorial rededication and Christmas concert.

He thanked all the committee for their hard work and support and thanked Hazel Halliwell and Jenny Hawes who were not standing for re-election.

Vice Chairman Andrew Robinson reminded the meeting that the chairman's post was still vacant, should anyone be interested in taking on the role. He proposed a vote of thanks to Michael, seconded by Jill Carter, for leading the group.

Andrew said the church roof was not leaking, apart from a few drips during a south-westerly gale. The church architect had carried out his quinquennial visit, which had involved inspecting the roof and stonework. His conclusion was that about £14,000 of work would be needed over the next few years, including replacing stone on the tower and repairing a window crack. An alarm had been fitted to the roof recently, so that if lead was stolen the insurers would pay for replacement. Andrew was hopeful his speedy application to the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust would result in a 50% contribution towards the cost of the alarm (£5,600). He said among the quotes for the organ repairs was a recent one for £11,000 from a diocese-approved specialist. He pointed members towards the village website where old photos had posed a question about the age of the church clock.

### **5. Treasurer's report**

Chris Collins presented the end of year accounts to 31.8.15. Total receipts in 2015 were £3,567, compared to £4,639 the previous year. This was due mainly to drops in subs, Gift Aid and donations. Interest on the money in the bank was low (£96) because of poor rates.

In summary, donations for the year were £203; Gift Aid claims of £965 had been received (two years' worth); the only organised event of the year, the Christmas concert, had made £651; the war memorial appeal had raised £423 by the end of August (£479 as of end of October); expenditure had included £924 to the stone masons for the memorial and £78 for tap repairs in the churchyard, plus annual insurance necessary for staging events.

The total held in the bank at the year end was £23,500 (compared to £21,442 the previous year).

Klair Baully proposed accepting the accounts, seconded by Andrew Robinson.

### **6. Election of officers and committee**

There were no nominations for the post of Chairman. Michael said he was prepared to continue until the new year. Chris was reappointed Treasurer for a new two-year term, proposed by Michael, seconded by Andrew.

New members welcomed to the committee were Sara Barrett, Phil Barrett, Natalie Bennett and Peter Newlands.

### **7. Forthcoming events**

Everyone is welcome to the rededication service for the memorial cross on 8<sup>th</sup> November.

Tickets are available for the Christmas concert on 4<sup>th</sup> December, details for which will be discussed at the meeting following the AGM.

### **8. Any Other Business**

None