

**Minutes of the 7th Annual General Meeting of
The Friends of St John the Baptist Church, Findon
Sunday 10th November 2024 at 3pm**



Present

Executive Committee:

Helena M. Buque – President Gerald S. Hibbs – Chairman Ian Hollyhomes – Treasurer & Membership
Secretary – Ian R. Watts – Secretary
Tessa McCormick – Irene Adams – Rhoderick Henderson – Caroline Hill – Simon Knights

Members:

Gay Hibbs; Alan Holmes; Lindy Laker; Graham & Gill Gostick; Liz Pratt; Liz Henderson; Richard & Sue
Bell; John Haskey; John & Janet Scadgell; Wendy Callister; Ann Hollyhomes; Gay Holmes; Nicky Cussen;
Rev Colin Cox and Chris Buque

1. Welcome

All those present were welcomed by Helena Buque and Gerald Hibbs and Helena commenced with an opening prayer.

2. Apologies for absence

Jan Grange; Kath Hutchinson; Phil Gardner; Andrew Farquharson; Jennifer Goddard, Chris & Gwyneth Frost.

3. Approval of Minutes from previous AGM 15th October 2023

In an attempt to save unnecessary administrative costs and in keeping with previous AGMs, copies of the Minutes were sent together with the Agenda by the Membership Secretary Ian Hollyhomes on 17th October 2024.

Approval of the minutes proposed by Rhoderick Henderson and seconded by Tessa McCormick.

Both the Chairman and the Secretary signed a copy for safe keeping.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Secretary's Report

The Membership Secretary emailed on the 17th September a notice to all the members advising the date, time and venue for this AGM and an advert placed in the Findon News October and November editions. There were also posters placed around the village, including here at the Church, The Village Store and Peckhams the Butchers shop, advertising today's AGM.

In addition, the charity by law, has to provide a Report identifying: -

- The charity's Aims & Objectives which will be covered in this report.

- Fund raising activities completed to date since 13th October 2023 will be included in the Treasurers Report and proposed fund-raising events for the ensuing year will be included in the Chairman's report.
- The Financial results for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

1. Aims & Objectives

The Objectives of the Friends are set out on the first page of our Constitution, which in essence states we are to raise Capital Expenditure funds to preserve and protect the building of St John the Baptist church Findon and its grounds. The Executive Committee work with the Church Wardens to ascertain what Capital Expenditure we can help out on in order to keep our ancient building in good repair.

The committees' priorities have therefore been: -

- Encouraging those living and having association with our village, to become members of the Friends and particularly to attract those not being regular churchgoers or have recently moved to the village
- Organising and promoting Fund raising events
- Keeping members and the local people fully informed on social and fund-raising events through our website, social and local media

2. Committee Meetings

There have been 9 committee meetings since the last AGM which more than satisfies our constitutional requirement to 'meet not less than 4 times a year'

3. The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee in accordance with the Constitution has consisted of:-

- 5 Honorary Officers – The President – Helena Buque, The Chairman – Gerald Hibbs, The Vice Chairman – Chris Frost, The Secretary – Ian Watts, The Treasurer who is also The Membership Secretary – Ian Hollyhomes and
- 5 Co-opted members - Tessa McCormick, Caroline Hill, Irene Adams & Rhoderick Henderson & Colin Cox who resigned last October due to personal circumstances.
- The elected Church Wardens of the time of St John the Baptist church Findon, automatically become members of the Executive Committee. Our Church Warden who many of you know is Simon Knights.
- Our Chairman will not be standing for re-election today but would nevertheless like to remain on the committee as a co-opted member and looks for your support when the election of personnel takes place later this afternoon. I have also decided after 6 years in this secretarial role and with some reluctance, to not seek re-election to the committee for the coming new year.
- We are therefore looking for one more volunteer to join us on the committee together with a new Chairman and Secretary but more about this later this afternoon.
- I would like to place on record my thanks to all my fellow committee members, both past and present, for their support, encouragement and camaraderie which has made it an enjoyable time.

6. Treasurer's Report

Ian Hollyhomes advised that latest accounts are made up to 31st March 2024, which is our normal financial year end, and have been prepared on a cash accounting basis. This simply means the accounts reflect all receipts and payments passing through our accounts during the 12 month period.

Receipts include: Membership Income - £1,940, fundraising - £8,808, Gift Aid - £587, Donations - £18, Bank Interest - £271. So total receipts of £11,624.

Payments made: Costs relating to fundraising - £6,194, Administration and Insurances - £681 and this year an item of capital expenditure - £1,198. This item related to the purchase of a double size gazebo for our outside fundraising activities. Total payments came to £8,073 so the excess of receipts over payments was £3,551. Another successful year.

We were able to donate £5,000 to the church to offset the cost of repairs to the main door and the metal bars protecting the stain glass windows. There is a build up of work to be undertaken, which Simon will speak about shortly, and we fully expect to contribute to the cost of having the work done.

We started the last financial year with funds of £25,618 and finished with £24,169 after all of the above. At the end of October, we had a total of £27,950. Last month we were also contacted by the legal practice acting for the Executors of Anne Brooks estate to say that the Friends has been left a legacy of £25,000. Many of you will remember Anne who worshipped here for many years looking after her Downs Syndrome stepdaughter, Julie, from the age of 15 until she died two years ago aged 60. So, with resources of over £50,000 in the near future we will be well placed to fulfil the main purpose of the Friends in maintaining the fabric of this building.

Just a note on last September's sheep fair: Apart from Helena's tandem skydive in 2018, which raised roughly £3,500, the sheep fair was our most successful event financially. We made over £2,000 with help from 25 volunteers. A remarkable outcome when contrasted to 2023 when we made a loss of just over £100. Events for next year – we will have another quiz night in February and golf day at Hill Barn, probably in June. We're also thinking of producing a calendar for 2026 ready for sale at next year's Christmas Tree festival.

Just a note on membership: our income has fallen below £2,000 for the first time sadly due to the loss of some members. Although we generate more revenue from fundraising, having a larger group of Friends means we can help out more with the maintenance of the churchyard and general cleaning within the church. I will be sending a note out shortly to help clear the leaves which we seem to have more than our fair share of.

For many years our accounts have been examined by Ken Elliott and I would like to record the committees thanks to Ken for always undertaking the examination free of charge. Ken has recently retired and given up his accountancy practice which meant finding another "volunteer". Fortunately, Alan Holmes offered to step in and again the committee would like to record its thanks to Alan.

That is all I have other than to say thank you for your support and I'm happy to try and answer any questions.

Proposed the accounts be adopted by Graham Gostick and seconded by Rhoderick Henderson

7. Chairman's Report

Gerald Hibbs said it is his pleasure to report another successful year and to thank our Trustee and Elected Members for their helpful and ever cheerful attitude.

Our President Helena is an inspiration to us all and she is always there when needed.

Treasurer Ian Hollyhomes who not only deals with financial matters, but he is for ever helping with events and anything else that needs doing.

Vice Chairman Chris Frost is so helpful and is very good at liaising with the Sheep Fair committee.

Caroline Hill has been not only very busy, but so generous in letting us use Findon Place for events and meetings.

Rhoderick Henderson together with his wife Elizabeth have done a sterling job in bringing the website up to date.

Tessa McCormick and Irene Adams are both so helpful, and joining us as Church Warden will be Simon Knights – Simon will be very welcome.

Ian Watts has been our Secretary for the last 7 years, and has done a wonderful job with diligence and an eye for detail that made him an excellent man taking care of the secretarial and constitutional duties. Ian has decided to step down and we wish him all the best and thank him for staying with us until this AGM. Thank you Ian for all you have done.

Gerald reminisced of when Helena approached him on 8th September 2016 and asked if he would consider taking on the Chairman's role. He felt it was very difficult to say no to such a lovely and persuasive person. Present at the first meeting included Irene Adams, Anne Brooks, Helen Butchard, Ian Swales, Hugh Wyatt and Dominic Caldecott. Also present was John Croft who took on the role of arranging the Constitution and he was fundamental in following the Clapham and Patching example and John deserves great credit for getting the Friends up and running.

As a result of Gerald's current ill health he felt the time had come to stand down as Chairman but he confirmed he would like to remain on the committee as a co-opted member which should ensure a smooth and seamless handover to his replacement and allow some continuity as well.

So, we need to find a new Chairman, a new Secretary and we also need more help in the form of committee members. If you are interested in helping the Friends in any way please contact Helena, Ian Hollyhomes or myself.

8. Questions Arising

None

9. Election of Executive Committee

As advised earlier in the Secretary's report, we would very much welcome a further candidate to join our existing Executive Committee and with the exception of Chairman Gerald Hibbs and Secretary Ian Watts the existing Executive Committee wish to be considered and voted for together with Gerald Hibbs as a co-opted member i.e.: -

- **President** – Helena M Buque
- **Vice Chairman** – Chris Frost
- **Treasurer & Membership Secretary** – Ian C Hollyhomes
- **Co-Opted Members** – Tessa McCormick, Rhoderick Henderson, Irene Adams, Gerald Hibbs & Caroline Hill

In accordance with the Constitution, the elected Church Wardens of the time of St John the Baptist Church Findon automatically become members of the Executive Committee.

In order to accelerate the process, it was agreed - proposed by Gill Gostick and seconded by Irene Adams - to elect the proposed Executive Committee, with Gerald Hibbs now as a Co-Opted member and minus Ian Watts, en bloc.

All nominations were duly elected en bloc – proposed by Simon Knights and seconded by Rhoderick Henderson.

Caroline Hill has agreed to stand as the new chairperson – proposed by Tessa McCormick and seconded by Rhoderick Henderson.

Nikky Cussen has agreed to stand as the new Secretary – proposed by Simon Knights and seconded by Graham Gostick.

10. Re-appointment of Examiner

Alan Holmes advised his willingness to serve as Examiner.

Proposed by Ian Hollyhomes and seconded by Helena Buque.

11. A.O.B.

Simon Knights gave a very interesting overview of a number of projects related to the maintenance of the Church building which required funding and highlighted some of the challenges involved, not least the required procedures and administration to implement any repair work.

Gill Gostick conveyed a vote of thanks to both Gerald Hibbs and Ian Watts for their efforts as now past Secretary and Chairman. Helena also conveyed her thanks and appreciation to everybody, both Friends and the Committee, and presented suitable gifts to both Gerald and Ian.

Gerald Hibbs closed the meeting inviting everybody to stay for a cream tea or coffee and thanked Gay Hibbs and Ann Hollyhomes for making the catering arrangements.

The meeting finished at 15.41

