

Past and Future Projects funded by the Friends

FoSJB exists to assist in the conservation and maintenance of the fabric and grounds of our historic 12th C Grade 1 listed church. Many local people value and harbour feelings of goodwill towards our church which is very much a part of Findon's heritage. In contributing to the Friends, you are making a positive contribution to this heritage in helping to maintain this ancient building. The money raised does not go towards the day to day running of the church nor towards clergy costs.

Since the formation of the Friends we have helped to fund two major projects; the repair and restoration of the vestry stained-glass window and refurbishment of the tower's two 16th C bells.

The Vestry Window

In 2018 cracks began to appear in the right hand panel of the stained-glass window in the vestry, caused by corrosion of the metal bars which then puts stress on the glass. It was necessary to remove the panel and send it to the stained glass specialists for repairs. The bars were also replaced, as was the external weather protection. Remedial stonework was also carried out on the window surrounds. Needless to say, this was an expensive process and the Friends were pleased to contribute £10,000 towards the cost.

The Bells

In September 2019 our two oldest bells, dated 1530 and 1576, cast while Henry VIII and Elizabeth I were on the throne, were taken down and transported to Whites of Appleton's workshop. The headstocks (the heavy metal frames attached to the top of the bells which allow them to swing) had to be replaced and other maintenance work was done at the same time. The Friends donated £5,000 to help pay for this work.

Future projects

The porch door is currently in need of repair. The veneer on the wooden panels has deteriorated and it has been decided to replace the panels with glass at a cost of £2,600. The Friends have pledged £1,300 towards this.

More recently the church architect carried out the required Quinquennial Inspection of the church and churchyard. Items highlighted for future repairs and improvements include the following:

- Repairs to and replacements for window guards to most of our very special Victorian stained-glass windows at an estimated cost of around £4,000.
- The Sanctus Bell, thought to be over 700 years old, is in need of repair and replacing over the pulpit. It is thought to be one of the oldest bells in Sussex. The cost will be in the region of £5,000.
- The guttering and drains are no longer fit for purpose, allowing damp to adversely affect the interior walls. The work has yet to be assessed but could cost up to £40,000.
- When the damp problems have been solved, the church will require a full re-decoration, which could cost £50,000.

Several generous gifts have been received over the years, but they will not satisfy the expenditures we envisage. Future repairs and improvements can only be undertaken with your generous support and donations, no matter how small, as they play a very important part in keeping this wonderful church in good order, enabling it to continue to play a vital role in the life of Findon Village.

Please consider giving your support to the Friends of St John the Baptist by becoming a member or making a donation.