



The Friends of St Peter and All Hallows Church West Huntspill

Newsletter No.26 Autumn 2026

Dear Friends,

In this newsletter we have included an interesting and thought provoking piece which has been provided to us on the nature of community in a village such as ours. I hope you enjoy reading it.

Sadly, the nature of community is that we lose people from it from time to time, we have recently lost another of our founding members Betty Lambert, she was one of the characters of our village and will be missed.

The Friends is just about to celebrate its 7th birthday and on the subject of community, I just want to touch on the fact that we have not raised our annual membership subscription in this time and currently there are no plans to do so. We choose to keep the subscription low enough to encourage people to join and to remain in the community of the Friends. We will continue to raise additional funds through our activities and, if necessary, with targeted appeals. If, however, you would like to pay a little extra donation on top of your subscription, please feel free!

We will be holding our **Annual General Meeting** at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday October 17th in the Church. One month prior to this, the Agenda for the meeting, together with the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st May 2026 will be sent to you. We warmly invite any interested Friends to attend. This is your opportunity to ask our Council Members questions and share your thoughts on the report. We hope to see you there.

Dave Paul

~~~~~

## What Makes a Community?

As autumn approaches and the days begin to shorten, it is perhaps a good time to reflect on what makes somewhere more than simply a collection of houses. What is it that turns a village or parish into a community and, more importantly, what do we need to do to ensure that community continues to thrive?

For the Friends of St Peter's and All Hallows, this church naturally has a special place in our thoughts. It has stood at the heart of West Huntspill for generations, witnessing baptisms, weddings and funerals, celebrations and commemorations, and countless ordinary Sundays. It is part of the history and character of our parish and provides a place where people can come together.

But a successful community is about much more than any one building or organisation.

It is made up of all the different threads that connect people to one another: our clubs, groups and societies; local businesses and pubs; schools and places of worship; voluntary organisations; community events; sports and leisure activities; and those informal networks of neighbours and friends which we perhaps only really appreciate when we need them.

An important part of that network is our Parish Council and the work undertaken by our parish councillors. Much of what they do may not always be immediately visible, but it plays an important part in maintaining and improving the place in which we live. Parish councillors give their time to consider local issues, represent the views and concerns of residents, look after community facilities and amenities, respond to planning matters and work with other authorities on the many issues that affect village life.

It can sometimes be easy to forget just how much work takes place behind the scenes. Meetings have to be attended, correspondence dealt with, problems investigated and decisions made — often on subjects where it is impossible to please everybody. The willingness of people to give their time and energy to this work is another example of the voluntary commitment upon which a strong community depends. Our Parish Council, like our clubs, societies and other local organisations, deserves our interest, engagement and support.

Even things we might not immediately think of as part of “community life” are tremendously important. Public transport is a good example. A bus service is not simply a means of getting from one place to another. For someone who does not drive, it can be their connection to shops, medical appointments, friends, work and the wider world. Lose that connection and it becomes that little bit harder for people to remain independent and involved in their community.

Our pubs and other meeting places perform a similar role. They are businesses, of course, but they can also be places where friendships are formed, local news is exchanged, events are organised and newcomers begin to feel that they belong.

The same is true of our clubs, societies and voluntary groups. Whether someone sings, plays sport, enjoys gardening or history, helps organise events, supports a charity or simply turns up for a cup of tea and a conversation, every activity creates another opportunity for people to meet. Those connections are particularly important in rural communities, where isolation and loneliness can otherwise easily go unnoticed.

The challenge is that none of these things can be taken for granted.

A pub without customers will eventually close. A club without members cannot continue. A bus service that nobody uses becomes increasingly difficult to justify. A community event without volunteers cannot be organised. A church building without people willing to care for and support it will become increasingly difficult to maintain. And local organisations cannot properly represent their community unless people are prepared to become involved, share their views and, occasionally, step forward themselves.

It is very easy to be disappointed when something disappears from a village. It is much harder to remember, while it is still there, that its survival may depend upon us actually using and supporting it.

Supporting our community does not necessarily require great commitment. It might mean attending a local event, joining a club, volunteering for an hour or two, using the bus occasionally, having a drink or a meal in the local pub, supporting a fundraising event, attending a Parish

Council meeting, checking on a neighbour, or simply taking the time to speak to somebody we have not met before.

Individually, these may seem like very small things. Collectively, they are what keep a community alive.

Our church of St Peter's and All Hallows is part of that same network. Preserving it matters not only because of its history and architecture, but because it belongs to the story of the community that surrounds it. The work of the Friends helps ensure that this historic building can continue to be part of West Huntspill's life and landscape for generations to come.

Perhaps, then, the measure of a successful community is not simply what facilities it has, but how willing its people are to participate in, support and value them.

A strong community is not something that somebody else provides for us. It is something we create together.

And if we want West Huntspill to remain a good place in which to live, work, grow older and raise the next generation, then all of us have a part to play.

~~~~~

Round up of recent activities

Saturday 27th June – Barbeque and Music on the Lawn

The Friends hosted this event which was attended by over 35 people from the village and the Friends.

Music was provided by DJ Joe and then we were entertained by talented local singer, Harrison, with a brilliant performance of show tunes.

Thanks goes to Ryan Hopwood for slaving over a hot barbeque on a scorching day to provide such delicious fare.

This was a joyful event, enjoyed by all who were there – and it also raised a tremendous £305 - after costs - for the Friends funds, from ticket sales and a well-supported raffle.

Saturday 4th July – Summer Fete

As usual, the Friends had a table with a Hamper Raffle based on a spring theme at this popular village event. One of our members kindly made a donation towards the cost of the hamper and so we were able to add proceeds of £90 from ticket sales into the Friends funds.

~~~~~

## SAVE THE DATE – FUTURE EVENTS

### Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September – West Huntspill Classic and Vintage Vehicle Show

Once again, the Friends will have a table at this popular annual village event.

If you have never been to the show, it is really worth a visit. Over 130 vehicles are booked, it is held in the field next to Balliol Hall on Church Road, runs from 11am to 4pm. Tickets are £5.00 for adults with free entry for under 16s. Alongside the vehicle displays, visitors can enjoy stalls, refreshments, a BBQ and guided tours to the top of the church tower.

The proceeds from the show are shared between the Church and the Balliol Hall to support the maintenance and running of these two buildings.

The Friends will have a table on the field where we will be raffling an autumn themed hamper to raise funds - and hoping to recruit a new Friend or two as well. If you would be willing to give an hour or so of your time to help with the raffle, please give Anne a call on 07557 103443.

### Saturday 21st November – Christmas Fayre (Balliol Hall)

We will be raffling a Christmas Hamper at this event.

### The Friends – past and future

If you would like to help us reduce our administration costs by setting up a Standing Order for your membership subscription, you can do this through your bank's online or mobile banking service, by phone, or in a branch using the following details:

Account name: Friends of St Peter and All Hallows Church

Sort Code: 30-96-26 Account No.: 56295868

Amount: minimum of £12 (single) or £20 (joint) Frequency: Annual (on your renewal date)

Reference: Please use your name.

If you do set up a standing order, please let us know, so we do not issue you with a reminder each year.

### Want to contact us?

Telephone 07557 103443 (Anne Paul) or email: [hello@friendsofspaahc.org](mailto:hello@friendsofspaahc.org)

Friends' Council Members:

|                                      |                                 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Chair: Dave Paul                     | Secretary: Ann Hopwood          |
| Membership Secretary: Robert Hopwood | Treasurer: Anne Paul            |
| Elected Member: Denise Godby         | Elected Member: Michael Hopkins |
| Elected Member: Margaret Meadows     | PCC Nominee1: Bronwen Wright    |
| Elected Member: Ann Clapp            | PCC Nominee 2 Janet Hill        |

See our website: <https://friendsofspaahc.org> for the latest news, new membership, renewals and ticket purchases. Follow us on Facebook  for news.