



The Friends of St Peter and All Hallows Church West Huntspill

Newsletter No.14 Winter 2022/23

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year To all our Members

A message from Patron of the Friends and Rector of the Church, Rev. Chris Judson:

Dear Friends,

I'm writing this to you on Monday 19th December and I realise that I seldom get the chance to write to anyone this close to Christmas! This year we have the longest time between the weekend before Christmas and Christmas itself, so when Anne gently nudged me yesterday with both a reminder that I hadn't yet given her anything for the Friends' Christmas Letter, and the kindly assurance that if I was quick it wasn't too late, I jumped at the chance. The encounter was of the 'Oh no!....OK. Now what?' variety, which resulted in a change of plan, hence here I am writing to you.

I wonder if your Christmas has ever been a bit like that? Has a slip-up, disaster, or hiccup ever led you through a bit of a panic, followed by a deep breath and an alternative way forward? I remember many years ago, in this just-before-Christmas-time, our dog (an energetic Jack Russell called Bess), discovered the un-iced Christmas Cake. She can hardly have had a moment, but one corner was suddenly almost non-existent. Amazingly, Bess was not ill.....though she wouldn't have been so happy if my father had got wind of the story. My Mum, sister and I all looked at the un-shapely Christmas cake in horror..... 'Oh No!'.... It was far too late to start again. So, now what? While Mum and I cleaned up the mess, my sister got to work.....and that year we had the most amazing Christmas cake design, with an L-shaped cake that became the stable walls, and the focus of the whole scene was a crib scene, placed directly onto the cake board, where the missing corner should have been. It really was very beautiful.....and no-one ever asked where the missing quarter of the cake had gone! A very successful change of plan.

Through covid we all had to change our plans many, many times, didn't we? The triplet of 'Oh No! OK. Now what?' proved quite useful, and through it all we've picked up some positive approaches to life's challenges. Making use of zoom is one of the helpful outcomes for me – not always, but sometimes it is just the tool for the job.

Last night we had a lovely Carol Service at St Peter & All Hallows Church. It was amazing to see so many people there, all together, enjoying the space, despite the clash with the World Cup Football final. The Christmas Tree Festival provided a powerful representation of many of the different aspects of our active village, and the Church's Christmas Decorations were truly stunning. As I looked around and recognised people from West Huntspill and beyond, it made sense of the hassle of all the building work that we've experienced through this year – all for a purpose....making the church more user-friendly, without losing its core purpose....truly 'saving our heritage and sustaining our community'. It struck me that the same triplet of 'Oh No! OK. Now what?' lay at the root of the entire project.

Throughout this last week I've had the privilege of being involved with school nativities. On Wednesday afternoon I was at West Huntspill Primary School where the younger years performed their very traditional

nativity play – just like so many of us did when we were their age. It was delightful – a real privilege to be there. Like many such events through all time, it too was filled with ‘Oh No! OK. Now what?’ moments, as I’m sure you can imagine. It struck me that this was very appropriate, as actually so is the Christmas story itself – all the way through there are problems encountered, realities faced and new plans hatched. As we look back we may see a bigger plan, but from within, at the time, there were so many twists and turns, all needing to be faced and adapted to – often in surprising ways.

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank you, as Friends of St Peter & All Hallows Church, for all that you do to support the presence of this church in our village. As we face the future there will be plenty more challenges, I’m sure, but I am also sure that together we will cope with any initial panic (the ‘Oh no!’), face the reality together (the ‘OK’), and figure out the way forward, valuing the past, and being open to the future (the ‘So, what next?’). Thank you for your part in this – it is good to be working together.

However your Christmas is shaping up, whether you are on top of things, or like me, still running to catch up, whether you are excitedly expectant or unsure and finding it hard, may you know that you are not alone. The whole essence of Christmas is wrapped up in Emmanuel (God with us). May you know that there is no ‘Oh No!’ moment that God shies away from, but instead he comes and stands beside us, helps us to face the ‘OK.’ And figure out the ‘Now what?’.

May you know peace and joy this Christmas, and throughout 2023, and may all your ‘Oh No! OK. Now what?’ moments be ones that make you smile as you reflect upon them.

Chris

Rev. Christine Judson
Rector of The Huntspills & Mark

Our fundraising activities in 2022.

This year has been a little quieter than we would have wished. The spectre of covid still lingered, particularly in the early part of the year.

We have continued to have a presence at the main annual village events – the Village Fete, Car Show and Xmas Fayre. At each of these events, we raffled a luxury hamper and raised a total of £248 after costs, as well as spreading the word about the Friends and recruiting a new member or two. Thanks to all who came by and brought a ticket.

In April, we held our 2nd Skittles evening at the Orchard. Because at that time the desperate plight of the Ukrainian people was at the forefront of all our minds, it was suggested that the proceeds from this evening be donated to the UNHCR Appeal for Ukraine, with the general agreement of the participants, and £230 was donated to that cause. The Friends also participated in the tabletop sale organised by the Church in aid of Ukraine later that month.

In July, a group of Friends enjoyed an informative and scenic guided walk at Maundril’s Farm. This was very well received and is perhaps is something that we would like to repeat in 2023

As yet, we have no events scheduled for 2023, although the postponed presentation by Geoff Bryant will be re-scheduled as soon as we can. We would love to hear from you if you have a suggestion or would be willing to assist in any way, perhaps by manning the table for an hour or so at one of the village events.

Tower Repairs

2022 has been a year full of change for the Church. We have watched the progress of the long-awaited work to stabilise the Church Tower with interest. Now at long last, the scaffolding is coming down (a lot quicker than it went up) and revealing its clean and smooth new look with the ties gleaming at each corner (shown in the picture in the title banner). We understand that the work is scheduled to be completed and the final scaffolding removed some time in February. It will be a few more months, though, before we hear the peal of the bells over the village as some of the materials used need a considerable time to set fully before this can happen.

This will see the end of phase 1 of the 3 phases of major repairs required to secure the long-term future of the building so the work, and the need to demonstrate support in the village, is far from over. It will be a while before the first stage is signed off and additional phases will follow in due course. Putting these projects together and securing the necessary funding is a mammoth task, particularly these days as the costs of materials and labour is rising so sharply.

Internal Restructuring of the Church

The restructuring of the inside of the Church was completed in the autumn. The back half of the church has been remodelled with tables and chairs, kitchen facilities and easily accessible toilets. A few weeks ago, the space officially opened as the "Huntspill Hub" with a well-attended ceremony which was well documented on the Burnham on Sea News website.

<https://www.burnham-on-sea.com/news/photos-new-west-huntspill-community-hub-and-cafe-opens-in-village-church/>

This is an excellent and welcoming facility for the whole community, not just those who attend the church. It is open every day as an unmanned "honesty café" where all are welcome to come in and use the facilities, make themselves a drink and enjoy the surroundings. There is an interactive screen situated just inside the south door with lots of information about the church and the village. It will be added to going forward and is well worth a look.

At the moment the Church is beautifully decorated for Christmas, including a number of trees decorated by local organisations (including the Friends) as part of the Christmas Tree Festival.

The coffee morning is now held every Monday morning and is very well attended. If you have not been, please do come along and enjoy friendly chat – and the cake! All that is asked is that you make a donation which will go towards the running costs.

The Friends usually have a table at the cafe where cards etc are available for a small donation. We also now have agreement to have a permanent Friends table in the Church to promote ourselves. This will be established in the new year.

A Little Bit of Christmas Cheer(s)

Cranberry Mimosa – Recipe for 4 servings



Ingredients: 1 lime, halved
2 tablespoons sugar
1 carton of cranberry juice
1 bottle of champagne, prosecco, or sparkling grape juice
Orange liqueur such as Grand Marnier (optional)
12 fresh cranberries
4 sprigs of fresh rosemary for garnish

Make sure the cranberry juice and sparkling wine are well chilled.

Using champagne flutes, rub the top of the glasses with the lime and then dip them in the sugar.

Pour 60 ml of cranberry juice into each glass and top up with the sparkling wine (with a dash of the orange liqueur if using).

Thread the cranberries onto the rosemary sprigs and place across the top of the glass to garnish.

Cheers!


Want to contact us?

Telephone the Membership Secretary, Janet Hill on 07840 072351 or email:

hello@friendsofspaahc.org

Friends' Council Members:

Chairman: Michael Hopkins (acting)	Secretary: Ann Hopwood
Vice Chairman: Michael Hopkins	Treasurer: Anne Paul
Membership Secretary: Janet Hill	Elected Member: Christine Stephens
Elected Member: David Holmes	PCC Nominee 1: Geoff Bryant
Elected Member: Carole Baker	PCC Nominee 2: Bronwen Wright

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