



Friends of St Peter & All Hallows Church West Huntspill

Newsletter Issue 8 – Summer 2021

Barbeque – Saturday 14th August

We are pleased to announce that we are planning to host a barbeque on the Church Lawn on Saturday 14th August at 2 - 5 pm. This is of course dependent upon the relaxation of social distancing rules by 19th July as hoped.

If the weather is unsuitable, the event will take place in the Balliol Hall.

We intend to have a fun afternoon which we feel is needed after the tough year we have all had! The barbeque will be of good quality with meats from Court Farm butcherspork / chicken / burgers and sausages (vegetarian option available if pre booked when buying tickets) These will be served with a selection of salads.

Tickets £10 to include two items and salads (children aged under 12 - £5 to include one item and salads)

PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN CHAIRS, PLATES, CUTLERY AND DRINKS!

This event is being announced in the July issue of the Huntspill News and as numbers will be limited, we recommend that Members of the Friends order tickets as soon as possible. The closing date for tickets will be Friday 30th July.

TICKETS can be purchased from our website <https://friendsofspaahc.org>, via email hello@friendsofspaahc.org or by telephone Janet Hill 07840 072351 / Ann Hopwood 01278 773804



We are grateful to (Church Warden) David Lemon for providing the following update on the ongoing refurbishment of the Church. This requires major funding in the form of grants and while the Friends cannot hope to contribute significantly to these funds, our purpose is to provide additional assistance in repairs which fall outside of the parameters of the project (such as the recent window repairs) and also to demonstrate local community support. Your continuing membership of the Friends is an important part of securing the future of the Church building..

The Roof and Tower Project

Repairs, Renovation and Reordering of St Peter and All Hallows Church, West Huntspill

The development of this Major project has continued despite the coronavirus, albeit at a slower pace than we would have liked. With the Church initially locked many of the surveys, which are not so visible, but so essential to the development of this large project, were not possible. Even when we were able to enter the church with social distancing, many companies were reluctant to carry out site visits, meaning progress was understandably slow. We were able to get the measured survey done just before the first lockdown. This involved the use of very clever equipment which took many thousands of measurements every minute both inside and out giving us accuracy never previously possible.

It was not until the first lockdown was eased that the 'Rope Survey' was possible. This involved men abseiling down the outside of the Church, photographing, examining and recording the condition of the stonework, it was at this point that the men became closely acquainted with the bees nest on the East side of the tower. Samples were taken of the stone and mortar for analysis and matching to local quarries for eventual stone replacement.

As restrictions slowly eased, more surveys took place. The ecologists were able to establish what bats were resident in the tower including a quite rare long eared grey horseshoe bat. The Structural Engineer was able to pronounce the structure of the tower stable although there was some bulging at the top of the tower and designs were drawn up to arrest this movement. An Archaeological report was drawn up to look at the history of the Church before the fire. The Church was surveyed for asbestos, which was only found under the sink in the Kitchen, this will be removed when the reordering happens. We commissioned a conservation report on the two paintings and four charity boards at the back of the Church with the aid of a grant. The paintings were found to be in a poor condition, some work will be needed before we can move them to their new place in the Church. New additional lighting including emergency lighting has been designed for the West end of the Church, and the addition of a lightning conductor has been considered. The Architect, Marcus Chantrey has now brought all the reports together into his report and the Quantity Surveyor is now costing the project, which will be finalised when the tenders come back from the seven contractors who have expressed an interest in the project.

An Option Appraisal has been developed to establish the best layout for the new kitchen and toilets, with a Management and Maintenance plan to manage the maintenance of the Church over the next ten years and beyond.

While all these reports were being drafted we have been developing an Activity Plan for the extended use of the west end of the Church after the reordering, a Business Plan to help that Church community hub to be viable, and an interpretation plan to add interest in the Church and surrounding area. The Diocese have approved a faculty 'B' for the restoration work of the tower. We are yet to get the full Faculty for the reordering, although the DAC are in agreement with all of our application.

At this point we are hopeful of getting almost £500,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and we have raised almost another £50,000 from other grant funding bodies. We are continuing to apply for grants as we need to raise at least another £350,000. The success so far has been entirely due to the very strong team of professionals that make up the project team, and the support of the PCC, the congregation and the village.

Stained Glass Window Refurbishment

It was identified in the Quinquennial (the five yearly report on the condition of the fabric of the Church) that the four stained glass windows in the main part of the Church were in need of repairs to the ferramenta, and repairs to one of the mullions. The repairs to the Wade Window was generously funded by the 'Friends of St Peter and All Hallows', and the others by the Church, they all look so much better now.

Covid-19 Emergency Heritage at Risk Roof Repairs

We were lucky enough to receive a grant of £15,000 from Historic England for emergency repairs to the Church roof, which has just been completed. This will, it is hoped, buy us some time with the roof, while we concentrate on the work of the tower. The roof covering is as put there after the fire and is nearing the end of its life. Once the tower has been repaired, then phase two will be to completely replace the covering on both the North and South Aisle.

Our Church is of national significance, sometimes referred to as the 'cathedral of the levels' and therefore worth preserving. It is up to us at this stage of the Churches long history to preserve it for future generations. It needs everyone's help, especially the 'Friends' to take this wonderful building into the future, adapting it for today's needs.

David Lemon

You can e-mail the Friends Council at hello@friendsofspaahc.org or contact the Membership Secretary, Janet Hill on 07840 072351 **See our website:** <https://friendsofspaahc.org> or **follow us on Facebook**  for the latest news.