

Draft MINUTES OF THE 14th AGM of the Friends of Long Sutton Church (FOLSC)

Held in Long Sutton School, Wednesday, 6th February 2019

Trustees in attendance: David Aitken (Chairman), Geoff Pringle (Secretary), Phil Godfrey (Treasurer), Michael Brake, Christine Turner, Rob Hartley.

Apologies: Rev Jane Twitty, Sue & Graham Dean, Martin & Lesley Hawkins, Nick & Joan Bond, Jane Farenden

The meeting was attended by 37 members including trustees.

1. 2018 AGM

David confirmed that the draft minutes of the 2018 AGM had been displayed in a public place for the appropriate period. It was proposed by Rob Hartley and seconded by Andy Gough that they should be adopted and the motion was carried by a unanimous vote.

2. Chairman's Report

David asked what does the Chairman say without stepping on colleagues' toes? Consequently, there was not a lot for him to say apart from the fact we had a very successful year and he believes an exciting one is coming up in 2019

He pointed out none of our events can be successful without the sterling efforts of your trustees, and he thanked them on behalf of all members.

He advised we have two trustees standing down this year, Jane Farenden and Kevin Robinson. Kevin has moved to Ash, so his allegiances now lie elsewhere. David thanked them both for the time and effort they have given to FOLSC. As a result, we have two vacancies which he hoped we would be able to fill later in the evening. He therefore invited any members present to put their names forward at the appropriate time.

David then advised Phil Godfrey is relinquishing his role as treasurer as he is threatening to move to pastures new but in the meantime is happy to stay on as a trustee. The chairman confirmed that Rob Hartley has agreed to take on responsibilities as treasurer and David expressed his thanks for doing so.

David concluded his report by thanking the members for their unstinting support of the charity. He mentioned, however, membership is very static and we need our members to pass on the message about FOLSC and try to encourage their neighbours or friends to join us.

The chairman finished by enquiring if the members had enjoyed the latest FOLSC newsletter and he commented it seems to grow every year. He thanked Val Pringle for doing a marvellous job of editing.

3. Treasurer's Report and Adoption of Accounts

Phil confirmed he had distributed a number of copies of the accounts for the period January to December 2018 and advised he had already made a report in the recent Newsletter but then summarised the salient numbers for 2018.

On the income side we received £222 Interest on our deposit account. We have received £775 in 2018 subscriptions. We received £88.17p in donations at last year's AGM plus a very generous £100 from Tom's Place along the Langport Road.

Profits on the events were £1,250 from the Elvis concert, £258 from the summer Pantaloons Theatre and an excellent £1,178 from the Nautical evening hosted by Geoff Pringle. This resulted in a total income for the year of £3,871.

On expenditure, we have just two items. Firstly, £34-65 on refreshments at last year's AGM and in addition £2,370 being the cost of groundworks in the churchyard. Total expenditure for the year was therefore £2,404 resulting in a net income of £1,466 for the year. When added to our starting balance of £55,351 our total reserves, at the end of the year, stood at £56,818. Of that, some £49,218 is on deposit with CCLA and £7,599 is in our current account.

The interest rate on our deposit account is currently 0.55%.

Phil asked to be recorded in the minutes a vote of thanks to Mr Bernard McTernan for once again performing an independent check of our accounts at no cost to the organisation. Finally, he confirmed he would be making a Gift Aid Claim in the next couple of weeks.

No questions were forthcoming on the accounts and the assembled members were asked to approve. Roger Cox proposed and Tony Huggard seconded and these were unanimously confirmed by the meeting.

Membership

Our membership has declined a little during the year due to a couple of resignations and one of our members having unfortunately passed away. At the end of the year we had 29 life and 61 Annual members, making a total of 90. Phil confirmed he was pleased to advise that he has received completed membership forms from Mike and Elaine Cashmore and Charles Walford which will recover the losses. Phil concluded that membership has been fairly flat for several years and perhaps now would be a good time to go on a bit of a recruitment drive.

He asked if there were any questions on membership? Andy Gough advised he knew of several new residents in Knole and he would be very happy to approach them and encourage them to join us. He asked if he could have 10 applications forms, which were duly handed over. Anona Hawkins advised the meeting the Village Welcome Pack has now been updated and this includes details of FOLSC as well as membership forms and could be made available on request.

4. Election of Officers and Trustees

David advised, as mentioned in his report, that Jane Farenden and Kevin Robinson were standing down and we therefore had two vacancies to fill. The remaining trustees are all prepared to stand again and it was agreed these could be re-elected en bloc as in previous years. This was proposed by Jackie Godfrey and seconded by Andy Gough and all were unanimously re-elected. Regarding the election of new trustees Mike Brake proposed Charles Walford who confirmed he would be happy to stand if elected. This proposal was seconded by Roger Cox and he was duly elected. Rosie Cox then put her name forward for the other vacant position and was proposed by Andy Gough and seconded by Sue Creegan. She too was duly elected.

5. PCC Report

Tim expressed surprise at how quickly the last 12 months had passed but advised that time involving church buildings moves at a more sedate pace. Perhaps that is why Long Sutton's Holy Trinity Church appears to be looking good even after 525 years!

He then thanked all the FOLSC trustees for supporting the PCC of Holy Trinity Church Long Sutton. He went on to advise that we are seeing a steady decline in numbers attending regular services, whilst the larger services, such as the Carol Service and Remembrance Sunday, continue to be very well attended. In effect this means that the finances of the PCC struggle to meet increasing costs and they are in a perilous shape, to say the least.

It is this income from service collections and regular giving by the congregation plus special fundraising events organised by the PCC that is used to keep the church open for services, coffee mornings, marriages, funerals and other events that are held in church throughout the year.

On a more positive note, Tim was pleased to report that with the help of FOLSC there was also some good news.

Churchyard Groundworks

A big concern in the early part of last year was the evidence of damp on the back wall of one of the garages along the southern border of the churchyard. This was probably aggravated by the build-up of soil, from digging graves, together with shrubs and elder bushes that had taken root. Fortunately, FOLSC stepped forward and paid the cost of the work amounting to £2370.00 for which we are very grateful.

He also thanked Peter Tulk, Mark David together with son George for carrying out the work so quickly, carefully and expertly.

Church Sound System

The PCC has become acutely aware that the existing church sound system is beginning to show its age. It has been found that the quality of hand and lapel mics is hit and miss and untenable for services and events held in the church. It is important to make sure that all visitors, irrespective of hearing ability, can understand what is being said and enjoy the music played.

In Long Sutton we are fortunate to have Phil Godfrey and Mike Turner with the expertise to recommend exactly the right type of system that the church needs to provide the best audio experience that we can enjoy without the financial expense being prohibitive.

Once again Tim gave a big thank you to FOLSC in getting behind the project for a new system that will benefit all who come to the church for events and services. When the installation is complete, the PCC plan to hold a Poetry and Prose Evening to celebrate the new sound system and raise much needed funds to assist with the ongoing church running costs.

Welcome Pack

In consultation with the various contributors the Welcome Pack has been updated. Tim asked all Roundabout/ Newsletter deliverers to notify Anona Hawkins or Sue Creegan when new residents move in so a Welcome Pack can be delivered to those homes. Included in each Pack is information about FOLSC membership, how to join and methods of paying the membership fee.

Quinquennial Reports – Past & Future

Currently the PCC are awaiting a call from John Beauchamp, the Diocesan approved architect, to arrange the now overdue inspection and report. He is known to be very busy carrying out reports for other churches in the Diocese, so we are probably not a priority at this point in time.

Lavatory

The PCC is continuing to look at the most suitable option for the installation of toilet facilities at Holy Trinity. All the variations available have been considered and a meeting was held in August with members of the Diocesan Advisory Committee including the Archdeacon and our architect. In principle they have given approval for us to have plans drawn up and submitted for consideration. So, the next step is to meet with John Beauchamp and ask how much it is going to cost from here, including all fees associated with a project of this nature.

Church Fundraising

The PCC are only too aware of having to step-up its own fundraising.

So, in the first half of the year in addition to an appeal letter there will be a talk by Jonathan Walker entitled 'Female Agents in WWII' which is on 8th April 2019 in the Village Hall. Tickets are £12.50 per person. Please let Tim or Joan Bond know if you would like to order tickets.

The PCC will then be holding a Dinner & Auction of Promises, at Long Sutton Golf Club, in aid of Holy Trinity on Saturday 11th May 2019. This should be a great evening with a planned ticket price at £38.00 per person.

Finally, Tim concluded his report by giving a further vote of thanks to everyone involved in running and supporting FOLSC and in turn maintaining our beautiful Holy Trinity Church.

Several questions were raised. David Aitken asked if our Parish finances were in such poor shape, could we not reduce the contributions made to finance the Diocese. In addition, he asked if the PCC could benefit from the sale of church owned property in the village and he further queried the significant costs involved in carrying out the Quinquennial report. Tim replied he would certainly look into the contributions made towards the Diocese costs but the house sale funds were off limits as this went directly to the church commissioners. He also confirmed the architect's fee alone on the Quinquennial report could amount to £1,000 but felt the PCC were obligated to carry this out at the specified 5-year intervals.

Peter Brand suggested an auction event held a number of years ago had been very successful for FOLSC and could be reintroduced. The feeling of the meeting was that this would conflict with the PCC's Auction of Promises at the Golf Club.

6. Review of 2018 Events

Geoff advised 2018 had been a very successful year with three fund raisers organised. Full reports have already been published in FOLSC News for all to read but he briefly summarised each for the meeting.

"Elvis was in the building". Performed by Tim Bassett, we had a capacity crowd and raised a record profit of £1,250.

Instead of a summer party, we organised a return visit of the Pantaloons with an off the wall production of 'As you Like it'. Geoff thanked the village school for the use of their grounds and they also benefited from profits obtained from the raffle. Due to the 25/75 split with the theatre company, profits on the night amounted to a modest £258.

The winter event was a vignette of Unpublished Naval Stories presented by Geoff Pringle. This idea was suggested at last year's AGM by Peter Brand and we had an extremely good turn out and delivered an excellent profit of £1,177.

It was suggested from the floor a similar event could be run in future years to build on this success.

7. Preview of 2019 Programme

Geoff advised, due to the PCC's own fund raising in the spring, FOLSC did not wish to conflict and it has therefore been decided for us not to have a spring fundraiser, but it is hoped members and villagers will in turn support the PCC events.

Our first outing is therefore scheduled for Friday, June 14th when the excellent Strode Players will perform "Last Tango in Grimsby" at the village hall. Despite being an amateur group, they have an excellent reputation and we are confident of getting a good turnout, for what promises to be an entertaining evening.

Our winter fundraiser is booked for Saturday, 7th December in the village hall. The provisional event name is "Matt Park & Friends – a Midwinter Concert". Geoff advised Matt and a bunch of his musical contacts will perform a variety of songs to include popular, light opera, songs from the musicals and even some Christmas numbers with the opportunity for audience participation. It is proposed to serve canapes in the interval and it is anticipated, being in the festive season but not too close to Christmas, we will again get a good turn out and will be something entirely new both for FOLSC and the village. Geoff concluded by saying it is a continuing struggle to get entertaining and profitable acts booked and if any members attend an event which may be a possibility for FOLSC, please pass on the information to one of the trustees.

8. AOB

Roger Cox proposed a vote of thanks to Phil Godfrey for all his many and varied contributions **both to** FOLSC and the village in general. This was unanimously endorsed by all those present with a round of applause.

Meeting closed at 20.00 hrs.

Chairman

Secretary

Date