

The Friends of St Peter and St Paul

May 2023

The Friends of St Peter and St Paul is an informal active group which may one day may develop into its own Trust, but presently it sits under, and works closely with the Parochial Church Council. We work closely with the Friends of Bolingbroke Castle, the Parish Council, Village Hall Committee and with Heritage Lincolnshire. Our aims are to ensure that our historic Listed church and churchyard, in the heart of the community and the Conservation Area, can be restored maintained and sustained well into the future and be an outstanding community and visitor asset.

Many believe that buildings such as St Peter and St Paul are owned by the Church and that the Diocese, or that the Church of England are responsible for them and ensures their repair and welfare. This is not the case. Unless actions are taken at the local level (within this community), these buildings and green spaces will deteriorate to such a level that they will close or even fall down. The Friends of St Peter and St Paul is designed as a voluntary village group to make sure this does not happen.

Traditional congregation levels are at an all-time low and will I fear continue to dwindle unless new life is breathed into such places. While the church may still be important as a centre for prayer and worship, this is not the future of such buildings. Here in Old Bolingbroke we are lucky that the church has great historical and architectural interest and significant connections with Bolingbroke Castle and John of Gaunt. There are also the English civil war connections when it was significantly destroyed.

So with our fantastic volunteer group the churchyard is now more or less restored, with close mown areas as well as areas left to grow, encouraging wild flowers and wild life. The north older part of the churchyard will take time in this regard, but have patience – it is not unkempt, it is being managed and we keep it under close review. Thanks to generous donations from former residents, from the Parish Council and from the PCC itself the churchyard boundary gates have now been fully restored and I hope you agree they look wonderful.

After a year of hard work we have now submitted an application to the National Heritage Lottery Fund for a £350,000 project to carry out emergency fabric repairs - north roof, stonework, rainwater goods, drainage and ventilation. But that is only a start. A loo, servery, improved lighting, electrics, sound system and better visitor interpretation is also needed. We also have a funding bid in to restore the former Gas House building which sits by the main entrance to the churchyard. Non of these grants are guaranteed so fingers crossed please.

The church now holds a regular ecumenical prayer group- about once per month. It is doing well and all are welcome. If you would like details please approach Judy Lumb, Kate O’Flynn or Alison Tulloch. When there is a church service these are more often than not locally led and themed and as a result attendance levels are rising and the events are welcoming and enjoyable. Keep a look out on the notice boards for details.

July 29th will see the annual church fete, this year kindly hosted by Jane and Edward Robinson. On August 12th we will be welcoming the medieval music group The Lincoln Waites. This will tie in with the re-enactment weekend “Bolingbroke Back in Time”, organised by the FOBC. Look out for ticket details. In September there will be the annual churches festival weekend where we have exhibitions, music, cakes and refreshments and several weeks later our Harvest Festival Service and produce auction/dinner. Carols by Candlelight will be a real treat in December and our bell tower will ring in

the New Year a few weeks later. And speaking of bells, the tower here is becoming quite a learning centre for bell ringing and we are still looking for those who would like to have a go and perhaps seek to learn.

And finally if anyone can lead an hour maybe once a month to assist with churchyard grass cutting or to help out in any other way, please do get in touch. We also have a newsletter, so please leave your details in the box in the church if you might help and we can have a chat about. Please remember, the future of St Peter and St Paul's rests with all of us in the Parish here and any help or ideas will be gratefully received.

With thanks

Steve Lumb

Co-ordinator – Friends of St Peter & St Paul.