

FRIENDS OF BEDFIELD HERITAGE

UPDATE NO. 1

MARCH 2023

It is nearly a year since the Friends of Bedfield Heritage came into being! A lot has happened in that time - both behind the scenes and within the village.

As you might expect, with a new group - there have been quite a few "behind the scenes" activities to ensure that we are set up both legally and correctly, but also that we are clear in our purpose. This meant, initially, the setting up of a committee, deciding on the group's name, its purpose, priorities and organisational arrangements.

But we also managed to arrange some fundraising activities too - and are busy arranging several events in 2023.....

Who are we and what do we do?

The Friends are an independent group of over 60 members of the local community. We are a fundraising group aiming to support the upkeep of the historic fabric of St. Nicholas Church and improve the facilities it offers to be at the heart of village life.

Individuals give their time and their talents to support community events and activities, to fundraise and to help with the maintenance of the church fabric.

The Friends are overseen by a Committee, comprising:

Jane Sullivan - Chair	Lin Ford
Andrew Pritchard - Vice-Chair	Susan Leverick
Chris Leverick - Treasurer	Camilla Rhodes

We are currently seeking Charitable Incorporated Organisational status. This is effectively, charitable status - which will have many benefits including being able to seek Gift Aid on donations.

Our Priorities

We have identified three priority projects:

- a) A Community composting toilet to be sited in the church grounds. This will be open to all and will be fully accessible. A projects team is currently in the process of finalising drawings, ready for submission to both the relevant Church bodies for approval and the District Council for planning permission. This will enable us to make grant applications to various bodies - with the aim of raising most of the required funds this way. In the meantime, a temporary toilet has been provided - which is fabulous - but it is not fully accessible and requires more maintenance than the permanent solution that we aspire to.

- b) The Tower. The aim of this project is to initially examine what is feasible for various elements within the Tower. One aim is to replace the hardboard above the vestry doors with glazing – to allow a flood of light into the church but also to prevent the draughts blowing through the pews. We are also undertaking initial work to see whether the bells can be rung again – or whether structural work and/or repairs are required.
- c) A History Project. There are many historical elements to Bedfield but the records of these are tucked away – or not recorded at all. For example, there are various books and documents, and of course personal stories which individuals have that others would love to be able to view or hear. There is also a need to capture information in real time so that what we do in the village today is recorded for future generations. We are looking for someone to lead on this project to capture this information and store it appropriately.

Our Bedfield Partners

We wish to work closely with all the other groups within the Bedfield community. Of course, we already do so with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) to ensure that our aims and projects are aligned. The PCC also run their own events to cover the costs of the day to day running of the church. We are forging good relationships with the Parish Council, the Bedfield and Monk Soham Community Club, the School and the Bedfield Trust and hope that these relationships will grow in time. After all – we are all serving the same community and there are enormous benefits for all in working well together.

Achievements to date

The Friends have raised over £3300 since May 2022. After purchasing the flagpole and temporary toilet, just over £2000 is available for our priority projects.

The following events were run and activities achieved:

- Provision and erection of the flagpole in the church grounds
- Queen's Platinum Jubilee: eight events were run including Animal World, bingo, cakes, car washing, eating, quizzing and walking raising over £2000 for the Friends and specific charities
- Bedfield Fete craft stall
- Framlingham Market Christmas craft stall followed by online sales and sales at the Community Hub
- Christmas Carol session in the Community Hub and then On Your Doorstep
- Delivery of the printed Church and Village Newsletter to 180 properties throughout Bedfield every month
- Provision and construction of the temporary toilet

2023 Events

6–8 May: Three days of Coronation Celebration are being organised alongside the Bedfield and Monk Soham Community Club.

10 & 11 June: Open Gardens

Watch out for further events this year – e.g. metal detecting, music, the Christmas Craft Fair and carolling – and much more over the next few months.

We are seeking volunteers to help with the events listed above. Please contact Jane (see contact details below) if you can help. The more the merrier!!

Interested in joining the Friends? – We would love to have you on board!

Membership is free and is open to all - without any qualms about whether one attends services or not, what your beliefs are – or were – or whether you have any religious beliefs at all. The group has in its membership some of the most christian, non-Christian members!

Friends can be involved in as few, or as many, things as they like with no pressure – just bring yourself and some laughter.

See the website: Bedfield.onesuffolk.net

Contact: Jane Sullivan: 07580 386015 or andjes@aol.com

Any comments or suggestions? Please get in touch as per the above contact details.

And finally

A huge THANK YOU to everyone who has supported the Friends in its first year! We could not have raised the funds or provided the temporary toilet without you!

We look forward to your support in 2023.