

Friends of St Andrew's and Grafham

Newsletter

August 2023

THANK YOU!

Thank you for becoming a 'Friend' and showing your support for the community in Grafham and for St Andrew's. This newsletter provides an opportunity to review how our first year of existence has gone, and to look ahead to future events and aspirations. Do persevere to the end of the newsletter as you will find there your exclusive advance invitations to what is to come!

This being our first newsletter, it may be helpful at this point to set out our aims and objectives, and also the benefits of membership.

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND BENEFITS

Aims

- Strengthen Grafham's distinct identity as a place
- Enhance sense of community
- Increase pride in our village
- Contribute to the restoration and upkeep of our historic Grade II* listed church

Objectives

- Recruit like-minded individuals to support the Friends' aims
- Organise varied, fun and informative events
- Develop an on-going legacy of the history of Grafham
- Compile documents, pictures and verbal memories

Drawing on our experience of the past year, we are now able to provide the following exclusive benefits to Friends:

Benefits

- First access to tickets for Friends events
- Discount on ticket price (usually of the order of a third off)
- Friends Only 'Thank You' event annually
- A newsletter
- Lots of fun and new friends

With subscriptions of just £25 (£40 for joint membership) annually, and the ability to recoup some or all of this through the Friends discounts, this will hopefully be attractive.

GOVERNANCE

We are administered by a committee appointed by the Parochial Church Council of Grafham, which is a charity, with Friends' funds being held by the PCC in a special designated account.

REVIEW OF FRIENDS EVENTS TO DATE

- **Bat Walk** 22nd September 2022

By kind permission of Charlotte and Rupert de Klee, and guided by the Surrey Bat Group, 20 of us walked around the lake at Honeymead clutching our individual bat detectors. The bats obliged by turning out, and the highlight was a Daubenton's bat skimming the surface of the lake. A static bat detector recorded as many as 8 different species including the rare Barbastelle.

We raised over £200 towards the cost of an ecologist's advice in connection with the bats (Brown long-eared) inhabiting St Andrew's.

- **Quiz Night** 4th November 2022

Held at the Grafham Cricket Pavilion, 8 teams of 6 pitted their wits against each other, and the rounds included questions on Grafham related topics. Fish and chips were also enjoyed by all, and around £400 was raised for the Friends. Another quiz will be held this November – see below.

- **Classical Guitar Recital** 8th January 2023

Jack Hancher, a prize winning young guitarist, played to a packed audience in St Andrew's, which proved itself a superb concert venue, with those at the back able to hear even the quietest passages. It was a spellbinding performance. The Bats in Churches Project gave us a grant towards the cost of the concert, and over £700 was raised which is also earmarked for advice on the St Andrew's bat situation when we come to commission it.

Another concert will be arranged in 2024 so watch this space.

- **Pancake and Puddings Evening** on Shrove Tuesday 21st February 2023

By kind permission of Robin Bertrand, Headmaster of Grafham Grange School, some 66 people consumed many pancakes and puddings in the wonderful panelled ex drawing room in the former home of St Andrew's famous architect, Henry Woodyer. Over £400 was raised, and it was good to establish the connection with the school – Robin wrote afterwards saying he was excited about the school becoming a real part of the Grafham community and that the evening was a lovely start to future relationships.

- **Community Coronation BBQ** on 7th May 2023 in the churchyard

A good number came to celebrate the Coronation, and enjoyed superb food and lovely weather. As with earlier events, every house in the Parish of Grafham received a flyer through their letter box, and we are finding that more and more people are becoming aware of the Friends as we continue to organise activities.

- **Stall at Bramley Fête** on 20th May 2023

The profile of the Friends, and Grafham and St Andrew's, was raised at a stall at the Bramley Fête, with traditional funfair games kindly provided by Colin Thorpe. The amount we raised went into the central Fête fund, and the Fête Committee has kindly made a grant to St Andrew's from that fund which will enable us to improve our signage.

- **Summer party** on 9th July at Old Barns

By kind permission of Colin Thorpe, the Summer party took place at Old Barns, with yet more opportunities to try out funfair games! Once again, plentiful and superb food, alongside good company, ensured the occasion was successful. It was at last year's Summer Party that the inauguration of the Friends was announced, and we appear to have come a long way since then!

MANY THANKS TO ALL OUR HELPERS

Clearly none of these events can happen without the enthusiastic help of a lot of people, too many to name, so hopefully you will have a good idea of who they (and you!) are – it is only because of you that the Friends can exist and we are truly grateful.

FUTURE EVENTS - AND SOME INVITATIONS!

Saturday 9th September at St Andrew's 10 am to 4pm – Heritage Open Day and Ride & Stride

We are inviting everyone – and local publications will be doing the same – to visit St Andrew's as part of the **Heritage Open Days Scheme**. It is an opportunity for us to welcome people who will have never heard of St Andrew's, let alone been inside. Our publicity says that we: 'will be open to welcome visitors and guide you to the ornate and tantalising details of this wonderful Victorian Heritage building. Enjoy discovering this 'Love Letter in Stone' and learning more about the renowned architect Henry Woodyer who was responsible for this Church. Perhaps indulge in some of our delicious light refreshments in the peace & tranquillity of our churchyard with views to the Surrey Hills.'

If any of you are able to help 'man' the church for a stint while it is open, and perhaps contribute some light refreshments, that would be wonderful – do contact Barbara Salvage or Stuart White (contact details at the end of this newsletter) if you can. Parking will be available 300 yards away at the Grafham Room.

On the same day we are opening for the annual **Ride & Stride for Surrey Churches**. We shall be welcoming those on a bike or walking to raise money for the Surrey Churches Preservation Trust & participating churches.

If amongst you there are any cyclists or walkers who would like to participate and raise money through sponsorship for St Andrew's Church then do please get in touch with Barbara or Stuart. The Ride & Stride website gives some further information: <https://www.surreychurchespreservationtrust.org/ride-stride/>.

The idea is that cyclists and walkers are given a list of churches and chapels in their area of choice. They map out their own route to pedal or walk to places of Christian worship having arranged to be sponsored by friends for a fixed sum or donation per church visited. The money collected is divided in two with half going to the church or chapel of the cyclist's or walker's choice, the other half is retained by the Surrey Churches Preservation Trust for distribution to churches in need. St Andrew's has benefitted from the Trust in the past, for example it helped towards the cost of repair of the beautiful tiled floor in the Chancel some years ago.

If you prefer not to 'ride or stride', please consider sponsoring instead – hopefully riders and striders for St Andrew's will soon come forward for you to sponsor!

Friday 22nd September at 10 am – visit to Nic Fiddian-Green's Studio

We are privileged to have been invited by Nic, to visit his studio where he will tell us about his work. His sculptures have become world famous – have a look at his website: <https://www.nicfiddiangreen.com>. This promises to be a fascinating event. The talk will take about 90 minutes, and tea or coffee at the Hilltop Kitchen, which is next to the studio, is included (for how to find Hilltop, see <https://www.hilltop-kitchen.co.uk> – it's in Allden's Lane, GU8 4AP).

This is currently an exclusive invitation for Friends, and will remain so until the end of August. After that, if there is still room, it will be extended more widely. Places are limited so please book soon! Again, Barbara and Stuart are the ones to contact. The cost for Friends is £8; for others the cost will be £12. Please bring cash on the day. We shall have lots of £1 coins to give you change if necessary!

Thursday 19th October – Friends Only 'Thank You' drinks party 6pm – 8pm

Caroline and Simon Whalley are very kindly hosting a drinks party for the Friends in the lovely Drawing Room at Birtley House. This is exclusively for Friends, and it is a free event enabling us to thank you for your support. It will also be a chance for us to tell you more about what we are hoping to do, and for you to tell us how you think we are doing! We welcome more ideas which will help us all further our aims and objectives. Please let Barbara or Stuart know if you can come. Birtley House is at GU5 0LB, and parking is in the field on the left at the end of the drive.

Friday October 27th 3pm-9pm: History drop-in session at Grafham Room

A community is shaped by its history, and the more people know the history of where they live the greater the sense of community. This event is an opportunity for anyone who has any information about Grafham in the past, its inhabitants, its buildings, photographs, diaries, documents, and so on, to drop in to show us anything they can find, and with their stories and memories, to get us started on the legacy history project we want to launch.

This is not only for people who live in Grafham now, but for anyone who has lived in Grafham in the past, or who has any kind of connection with Grafham. They may have been born here and moved away, they may have relatives buried in the churchyard – do encourage all your neighbours to come and tell us! More about this event nearer the time.

Friday 10th November – Quiz in Grafham Cricket Pavilion

Following the success of the quiz last year we are holding another one with a similar format. Again, Friends will have priority booking, and will enjoy a discount on the ticket price. More information to come.

Events in 2024

That's probably enough events to keep us going for the rest of 2023! For 2024 we are hoping to arrange:

- a repeat of Pancakes and Puddings (so do keep Shrove Tuesday, 13th February, free)
- a talk by an eminent speaker about the architecture of Surrey, particularly Victorian architecture, including that of Henry Woodyer, Grafham's most famous son
- another concert in St Andrew's
- a day's outing to Higham Church in Gloucester, which is regarded as one of Woodyer's masterpieces, and which he designed for his close friend, Thomas Gambier Parry, and eminent artist (and father of Hubert Parry, the composer of Jerusalem). Thomas may have had a hand in the decoration in St Andrew's, including our unique collection of banners. Highnam Church is absolutely covered in wall paintings by Thomas, so it will be fascinating to make the comparison – which will probably fire us up even more in our desire to uncover the wall paintings in St Andrew's! The outing could be combined with evensong in Gloucester Cathedral.
- A summer party
- Various other things!

THE RESTORATION OF ST ANDREW'S

St Andrew's is at the heart of the community of Grafham. It is also a hugely important piece of our heritage, not only of local but of national significance (to quote the Victorian Society). It is vital that we all work together to preserve it. You will inevitably have noticed that there are a lot of serious cracks in the walls of St Andrew's. The foundations have been on the move for a long time, and the cracks are widening. We have commissioned engineers to

devise a system of piling which will stabilise the church. Once it is stable we will be able to start the work of repairing the superstructure. The ultimate goal is to restore the church to its full former glory, uncovering and conserving the wall paintings – this is a very major project, and we will need a lot of help from both individuals and grant giving bodies – a large six figure sum is likely to be needed. We also have to address the need to replace the old gas heating system, and improve accessibility and the facilities generally. We will tell you more at the Birtley House event in October.

SPREAD THE WORD!

You, as our existing Friends, are best placed to find us new ones! Do have a think about who you might approach to persuade them to join, and hopefully what's in this newsletter will give you plenty of ideas of what you can talk to them about. The more the merrier! When you find someone who is interested, do put them in touch with Barbara or Stuart, and we can provide membership forms etc as necessary.

GET INVOLVED!

As you can imagine, arranging and running events for the Friends takes a lot of effort, and currently depends on quite a small group of people. We do hope that some of you will be inspired to wish to help with any of the following (by way of example only):

- Providing refreshments for events
- Physically helping with things like moving chairs, putting up tents....
- IT skills – websites / social media etc
- Design skills, eg posters, leaflets, displays
- Church sitting when we open to the public
- Fundraising skills
- Being part of the history / legacy project – are you keen on genealogy, for example?
- Accounting skills
- Anything else!

If you would like to help in any way, do let us know.

CONTACT DETAILS

If you would like to book a place at any of the forthcoming events, or have any thoughts or ideas about what the Friends are doing / could be doing, or would like to volunteer to help in any way, please contact either Barbara Salvage (bjalsvage@btinternet.com) or Stuart White (stuartwhite2023@gmail.com / 01483 892645).

THANK YOU FOR READING TO THE END!