

FoWC Annual Report 2020 – AGM 2021

The constraints of the Covid-crisis (chiefly lockdown) have seriously minimised the activity of the Friends. During 2020 (and to a lesser extent the first quarter of 2021) some Friends have helped in the church phone-around to check whether those on the Parochial electoral roll would welcome a phone chat and/or any help over provisions and prescriptions. None of the usual events took place, and in particular the Rotary Classic Car Family Fun Day planned for August 2020 was cancelled and there was no Christmas fair. The committee agreed to donate £50,000 towards the new build at St Barts. No physical AGM was held in 2020 although an annual Report was issued (and follows this one).

However, looking ahead to 2021 and, given the uncertainty as to when lockdown would be lifted and whether this would be stepwise, the first event planned for 2021 has been the **Rotary Classic Car (and Motor-Cycle) Family Fun Day, scheduled for Sunday 15 August 2021** subject to any Covid restrictions at the time. We hope to celebrate Christmas in our traditional Friends fashion and perhaps have some autumn 2021 events to enjoy the ‘new normal’ if so it proves.

The main thrust of the Friends will be directed at 2022 and the Jubilee Week in early June when there will be a three-day Flower Festival in All Saints church, possibly with organ music played there during Saturday 4 June 2022. It is hoped that other events, including Waldron’s Open Gardens, will also be held. Plans for the Jubilee week 2022 have yet to be pursued, including how it should be organised and by whom, and suggestions are welcome.

Tim Williams
May 2021

FoWC Annual Report 2019 (from AGM 2020)

AGMs are intended to be brief formal affairs although in recent years ours have tended to be protracted and poorly attended and the one planned in March was undermined anyway by the lockdown. It is therefore a relief to learn that some charities no longer need to hold a formal AGM, at least during the Covid crisis. Nonetheless it is helpful to record what has happened and what has changed during the past calendar year, which with chairman’s licence stretches into January (2020) to embrace our pantomime. Perhaps you will let me therefore review the past year’s events in reverse order.

It is fair to say – oh yes it is ! – that **Aladdin** (and his adventures in Waldrjinn) was a huge success, with fresh talent coming to light and established stars shining brightly. A suitably ambiguous and very original script by Nigel Beard – loaded with innuendo and local references – was brought to life in All Saints' Church, Waldron, where the on-stage antics (and a cameo performance by our vicar as Shakira) were matched by the backstage back-up: Andy Delves was able to manage the lighting most professionally on a laptop thanks to the DMX connectivity installed with Friends' funding, and Peter Lewis as usual ensured the sound effects were perfect. The cast were curtained off in the south wing, a welcome innovation. Stagehands worked flawlessly, and the troupe played to four packed houses (even the dress rehearsal was sold out), attended by 400 people who put their hands so deep in their pockets that the production netted £4400 clear profit. Enormous thanks to all involved.

On Sunday 1st December 2019 we again held a hugely successful **Cracking Christmas Craft Fair**, for which we thank Mobbs Pitcher on many counts, not least for the concept (inside All Saints, no longer at the mercy of the weather) and her miniature donkeys, under cover in the lych-gate, beloved by young and old alike. Father Christmas again attended and we thank his alter ego..... The shorter timing (noon until 3 pm) and adjusted programme suited everyone and a healthy £3K was raised. December 1st made it one of the earliest visits of Father Christmas locally area, pre-empting competing events in Heathfield.

I remain grateful to my fellow officers, particularly our Secretary and publicist (and of course playwright) **Nigel Beard** - author of the excellent newsletter - and our churchwarden (one of two) **Ian Dixon** who is such a key figure in the running of our two churches. Our vicar's wife **Mobbs Pitcher** does not hesitate to give it her all – especially where design is concerned, as our pantomime posters always prove. **Roger Dixon** has given sterling service as Treasurer, and like the rest of us is grappling with on-line banking, **Mary Everett Manser** always has a ready smile and helpful ideas especially regarding concerts. **Roger Clark** provides a strong link with Heathfield, and his Rotary Club of Heathfield and Waldron has not only raised funds for the Friends and for Family Support Work but also elevated the profile of Waldron itself with the Classic Car Family Fun Day which was repeated last August on the Cattam and raised over £4K for the coffers which now look to support the structural work planned for the site

of St Bartholomew' Church which has such close links with Cross-in-Hand Primary School.

You may have noted the discreet installation of a Porterloo behind each church, a welcome acknowledgement that some of us are getting older and that many visitors travel from afar.

Once again may I highlight the work undertaken by **Di Steele** to maintain and update the website (www.friendsofwaldronchurches.org.uk). Despite many other voluntary commitments she still finds time to upload items in consultation with Nigel Beard onto the Friends website, which also stood in while the main church website was upgraded; there are hyperlinks between the two. Why not take a peek at it? It displays professional quality photos of the pantomime (thank you Richard Fanshawe) as well as updates on matters such as the state of the organ fund (extant in case of further work being needed) and of course a review of the measures taken to support parishioners during the current coronavirus pandemic which has so changed the way we do things for the foreseeable future.

Since the corona-crisis - as one might style it – has compromised socialising, there have been no Friends of Waldron Churches events this year since the pantomime, nor any committee meetings. Given the ongoing uncertainty, the Rotary Classic Car Family Fun Day, into which Rotary members always put so much effort and expertise, planned for 9 August 2020 has been cancelled but we hope it can be held in 2021. So too may other well established events such as a Quiz Night at The Star and possibly another Village Photographic Competition – who knows what latent talent with camera or smartphone may see the light of day after lockdown ? 'Open Gardens' need plenty of warning – perhaps June 2022 might fit the bill. In the meantime let us hope that a **Cracking Christmas Craft Fair 2020** is not an aspiration too far, though this too may have to be put on hold if a 'second wave' of the pandemic seems too likely. Fingers crossed!

Tim Williams
Spring 2020